

Renaissance News



Volume 4, No. 12

Vision - Integrity - Quality

December 1990

Officers chosen to lead Renaissance in 1991

Officers have been elected to lead the Renaissance national organization and local chapters during 1991.

On the national level, Paula Jordan Sinclair was named managing director, succeeding Trudie Henry who becomes a director at-large.

Sinclair has served as director of outreach (public affairs) since Renaissance was formed. That position will be assumed by Angela Gardner, the former director of the Greater Philadelphia chapter. This puts Gardner on the Renaissance executive board.

The other executive board members will continue in their previous jobs: Susan Crane, secretary; Charlene Galenti, treasurer, Allison

Laing, outreach; Elsa Larsen and Beth Marshall, co-directors for membership; and JoAnn Roberts, director at-large.

For Greater Philadelphia:

- Dina Amberle is the new managing director.

- Charlene Galenti was elected to the position of secretary.

- Gloria A. Lange will continue as treasurer.

- Michelle Lynn will serve as membership director.

- Maryann Kirkland will assume the position of outreach director. She is also the chapter representative to IFGE.

The South Jersey chapter officers are:

- Kelly Harris, director;
- Debbie Anderson, vice director;
- Emily Sheldon, secretary and IFGE representative; and

- Sharon Williams, treasurer.

In the Lower Susquehanna Valley:

- Brenda Davidson is the chapter leader and IFGE rep.

- Heather Brown is the program and meeting coordinator.

- Dawn G. is treasurer.

- Richelle B. is secretary.

- Chapter directors at-large are Delma Wagaman, Allison Lovell, Rose Z. Parsons, L. Vogel, and Elsa Larsen, who is also responsible for membership, outreach and the LSV newsletter.

Now hear this...

Light reading from the new editor

Hi, I'm Pamela Westin, the new editor for the newsletter. Some of you girls already know me and most have heard of me or read something about me, but I'll give a little background on myself and tell you what I hope to accomplish with the newsletter.

I'm quite new to the community. I moved to the Philadelphia area in April and had my first contact with Renaissance in late May. Before that I lived in southern California, and the only thing I knew was that Renaissance existed. At the time, however, I didn't have the nerve to make contact. Yes, I was an extreme closet case, afraid that I might be discovered. However, an incident during my move to Philadel-

phia made me realize that I am a transvestite, that it is a very important part of my life, and that I won't hide it any longer. That's when I decided to write JoAnn and find out what Renaissance is all about.

I was extremely surprised at how quickly I received a response to my letter and how soon after that a personal contact was made. This really relaxed me and I became very comfortable with Renaissance as a support group. It was much more than I expected, and I couldn't wait to become a part of it.

I attended my first meeting in June and was overwhelmed by how many other sisters I have. I was also accepted very well, something that I have had trouble with ever

since I was very young.

After that, I began to really accept who I was and started enjoying life the way I should have all along. I had the great pleasure of attending the Paradise in the Poconos weekend in September where I realized that I might have something to offer the community. In October, I participated in the "Evening Magazine" story about Renaissance as an educational group and I also started doing college classes with the outreach program. So what, you ask? Well, this is a way I feel I can help benefit Renaissance and other transvestites like myself. By helping others to accept themselves better and trying to help the outer

(continued on page 7)

CHAPTER INFORMATION

New Jersey

South Jersey: Kelly Harris, chapter leader. Write Renaissance SJ, c/o P. O. Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 641-3782.

.....
* * *IMPORTANT * * *
Until Further Notice
The Reading Chapter
Has Suspended Operations
.....

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Angela Gardner, chapter leader. Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Winter hours: starts at 8:00 p.m. Call (215) 946-8887.

Pennsylvania

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Brenda Davidson, chapter leader Write LSV-Renaissance, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets the first Saturday of the month in Camp Hill, Pa at 8:00 p.m. Call (717) 780-1578.

NATIONAL INFORMATION

✓ Renaissance has a new mailing address, please correct your records: P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa., 19406.

✓ Renaissance has a new phone number as well. Call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day for current information about events and activities.

✓ The board of directors has approved a new policy for the development of chapters and affiliates.

— Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit in-

stitution in their home state (except Pa.) before asking for chapter status.

— Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance affiliate will pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlimited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

AND, DON'T FORGET ABOUT...

• Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 7-What Is Renaissance?, and 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics.

• 3R addiction recovery support group meets at King of Prussia on third Sat. of the month.

• The Pen Pal Project. If you are willing to write letters to pen pals, please inform Mary Ann Kirkland or write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

• A few copies of the Deluxe Edition of Dr. Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* are still available at \$39.95 postpaid. Make checks payable to Renaissance.

• Call the new Transsexual Hotline if you need need someone to talk with. Call (609) 561-1135 between 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST, or FAX (609) 561-5799. This service is provided by the South Jersey Chapter.

Renaissance News

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For current information call (215) 630-1437 24 hrs. a day.

Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the gender community at large.

Events Calendar

December

- 1st Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 1st Ren. LSV Chapter
- 8th Ren. Reading Chapter
- 9th Holiday Party @ The Inne
- 15th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

January

- 5th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 5th Ren. LSV Chapter
- 19th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

February

- 2nd Ren. So. Jersey Chapter; J.M. Kauffman, M.D. to speak on endocrinology and metabolism.
- 2nd Ren. LSV Chapter
- 16th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter
- 22-24 Texas 'T' Party B&P, San Antonio, Tx.

CORRECTION

Last month's item about a DelMarVa crossdressers' group contained an incorrect phone number. The correct number is (302) 628-9032.

S JoAnn Altman Stringer **SURVIVAL**™

Most people wish they could be younger, possibly even go back to their youth. Often those years are filled with priceless memories. Sometimes they are filled with heartaches and broken promises. In *The Electric Horseman*, Robert Redford is a broken down and disillusioned former rodeo star who laments that life “turned out different” than he thought it would. It would not be too much of a shock to learn that many people feel the same way, wondering “What if I could go back and do it all again?” George did.

George — actually Georgette — did. In a recent episode of the new *Carol Burnett Show*, the grand dame of comedy put on her serious face by portraying a post operative M-F transsexual named Georgette who once was named George.

George was the coolest guy in high school. You know the score — football quarterback, et cetera. Throughout those tormented years, he dated the most beautiful girl in the school. Everyone believed they were a Barbie and Ken couple who would get married after graduation and live happily ever after. Pop the bubble.

After high school they didn't end up together; each went their separate ways. Life didn't turn out the way either expected.

The girlfriend married the school nerd, the first of her four marriages. She became a loud, boisterous lush — the type everyone ignores in the bar. George's path followed a somewhat different course. Several years later, after finally discovering the cause of his inner turmoil, George underwent SRS (sex reassignment surgery) and became Georgette. She found peace and direction following the surgery.

Fifteen years later, the characters come on stage again. The scene is the high school reunion.

Georgette finds everyone has changed in one way or another. She tells her former football teammates about her “change.” Most don't believe her and so Georgette is forced to call some old plays to prove her identity. One former close friend understands Georgette's need to live life differently, but most find her “new” self hard to take. The ex-girlfriend enters.

Georgette is shocked by the changes that have taken place in her old flame. Several times she talks to Georgette without realizing who she is (was). Georgette then confronts her in the ladies' room with the story of how they danced the king and queen dance at the senior prom. As one might expect, you could have knocked the girlfriend over with a feather. After a long heart-to-heart talk, the two are reunited as genuine friends. Life didn't turn out the way either of them expected, but they were able to cope with the changes.

A similar story happened to me, but in a different way, this past August. From 1965 to 1972, I was a member of Up With People (UWP), a musical organization that travels around the world advocating social unity. I was chosen to become a member — one of the original founding members — on my personality alone. During those years UWP became so much a way of life that eighteen years later I still carry with me their thoughts, ideals, and positive outlook on life. My husband says that I am the most positive person he has ever met. This is partly due to Up With People.

One of the traveling international casts swung through my town of

Greely during their Fall, 1990 Colorado tour. I wanted to be part of what they were doing so badly I ached inside. Hesitantly, I called one of the advance team members (a job I used to do) and explained that I was an alumnae and one of the founding members. The warm reception I received was more than I dared to expect, and was literally greeted with open arms and hugs.

A week before the performance the advance team held a dinner at a host family's home in my honor. The rest of the advance team were there along with a couple of other local alumni I had never met. After a scrumptious feast of Hawaiian/French cuisine, we all sat around singing many of the songs I had written years earlier when I was a cast member. The new UWP members and I stayed up until midnight talking about the changes that have come about since I left “Cast A.” Needless to say, the night was wonderful.

When “Cast E” arrived in Greely, I was invited to spend the day with them. I was introduced as a kind of a godmother to the younger cast members (though I'm only 37). Have you ever been hugged by 165 people all at once? I didn't think I was going to survive that greeting. I ended up spending the day talking with more than half of the cast. It had not happened in years so I was surprised when they even asked for my autograph! Pardon my moment of egomania. I didn't think myself as anyone special, but they seemed to.

Even though my husband grudgingly accompanied me to the performance that night, he ended up thinking it was a good show. My impression was that their cast was not as good as our last cast of '72.

(continued on page 4)

Wanted:TV/TS history. Help needed

If you've been around the Delaware Valley transgendered community for some time, Emily Sheldon wants to talk to you. She is attempting to assemble a history of organized crossdressing in the area.

She wants to talk to or receive letters from anyone with knowledge of events, meeting places or other activities of the Phi Chapter GGA, Tri-S, and a group possibly called FPE. She is particularly interested in information about these groups prior to 1983.

She also is researching the history of the Philadelphia transsexual support group and any predecessor groups.

"I am also seeking any records retained by past officers, old copies of newsletters, programs and event flyers back to the '70s and before, if available," she said.

"I hope to present a program to Renaissance, possibly at an annual banquet," she added. "This will also be part of an overall history to be compiled by IFGE."

"I will soon be contacting some of the important people in our past who are no longer in this area. But input from anybody with a story to

tell or assistance of any sort is most welcome. Just remember, this is history we're gathering, so 'Just the facts, Ma'am.'"

Emily can be contacted at P.O. Box 4457, Greenville, DE 19807, or at most Greater Philadelphia and South Jersey chapter meetings.

Survival (continued from page 3)

But the show brought back so many memories of the thousands of performances I had been in some twenty years earlier; so many memories.

Lying in bed that evening, my husband turned to me and asked if I wished I was still on the road with Up With People. "No," I said, "I don't. It was an absolutely beautiful experience, but there were some very hard times. I'm glad I did it,

but I wouldn't want to do it again." I realized that I really enjoyed what my life had become. My work as a college professor and fine art photographer and my marriage to Joseph is all anyone could ask for.

Like Georgette, I had the opportunity to go back. The new friends I made and my new memories outweigh all of the old times that weren't so good. Sometimes going back is worth it!



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The naked, decomposed body of a French gay pastor and gay activist who had been missing since July was found in a rural French forest in October. While published reports have implicated government agencies in the minister's alleged kidnapping and killing, no proof has been found.

The Rev. Joseph Doucé was the founder of Center of Christ the Liberator (CCL), a spiritual and service agency for sexual minorities, including transgendered people. He was last seen leaving his apartment with two men claiming to be plainclothes police officers.

Rumors reported by several European newspapers that the Groups des Enquêtes Réservées undercover police had been involved with the CCL were confirmed recently when a police inspector was fired for leaking the reports. According to the story, the police tried to infiltrate a pedophile support group that met at CCL to gain politically valuable information. Police admit that they also tapped Doucé's telephone.

The European Forum of Lesbian and Gay Christian Groups, of which Doucé was past president, has called for a candlelight vigil outside French embassies and consulates in this month to draw attention to the ongoing investigation into Doucé's death.



We are confident that the wheels in justice in France will eventually find those responsible for Rev. Doucé's murder, just as justice triumphed in Texas recently when Denise Wells was acquitted of charges that she used a men's rest room during a concert at Houston's Summit sports arena.

Putting into practice the old saying "When you gotta go, you gotta go," Wells became impatient at the long, slow moving line outside the women's room, and when she saw a man clear the way for his date to use

the men's room, she followed along. The other women slipped out before police arrived, but Wells was apprehended as she was leaving the stall. She was evicted from the concert.

She testified that had no intention of raising "a ruckus;" she simply took the only alternative available to her.



Another legal case ended in Colorado recently when an Army court-martial convicted a 17-year colonel on eight counts of conduct "unbecoming an officer" and "prejudicial to good order and discipline." But the court acquitted him on two criminal counts on indecent exposure.

Col. Edward L. Modesto had admitted that he dressed as a woman on three occasions and that he had a male lover. He was sentenced to 9 months in a federal prison and a discharge from the military for engaging in oral sex with his male lover, dressing as a female in public, and posing with two other men while in drag "in a sexually explicit fashion."

Modesto's attorney said that after the ruling was reviewed by military authorities, he would probably appeal through the civilian courts.



The plight of uniformed crossdressers is just as difficult closer to home. A New Jersey state trooper has been forced to resign after authorities learned that he is a transvestite.

According to Michael Federico, state police authorities demanded that he resign from the force early in 1988 after they threatened him with administrative charges for frequenting a beauty shop where he tried on a wig and had his makeup done. He sued for reinstatement, claiming that his resignation came after duress.

But Superior Court Judge Francis Piscal ruled that the resignation was made freely, and that Federico

could not be returned to the force. At the time of the ruling, Federico's attorney would not say if his client would appeal.



The fact that Trooper Federico's crossdressing took place off-duty had no bearing on the authorities, for they displayed the same knee-jerk reaction to transvestism that Juneau, Alaska, lawmakers manifested when they dropped a proposal that would ban discrimination against gays and lesbians in city hiring.

Opponents of the proposed ordinance alleged that enactment would have allowed male transvestites to dress as women while teaching in public schools.



Not content with waiting for a response from the law, a Swedish surgeon allegedly took matters into his own hands and changed the man who stole away his wife into a woman. But he surgeon was acquitted on the charge.

Dr. Lars Lindgren was accused of a plot that involved tricking his wife's boyfriend into entering the hospital and then switching patients' records so that a scheduled sex change was performed on the boyfriend instead of the intended transsexual patient.

The former boyfriend testified that she first learned of the error when she woke up in the recovery room and the nurse called her "Miss Engman."

"I told her, 'I'm Kurt Stern.' She said, 'No, you were Mr. Engman. The surgery went well and now you are a woman.'"

The judge acquitted Lindgren, saying that he was not present when the sex change was performed on Stern and that there was no evidence that he had a hand in switching the medical charts.

Stern has been under psychiatric care since the surgery.

(continued on page 6)

NewsQueen...

While there may be those in the transgendered community who would welcome a surprising but free sex change, Brandi Alexander, Miss Gay America 1990, may not be one of them. Having made her mark with illusionary femininity, she has found a new calling that puts to use the equipment she was born with.

In October, she entered the jockey shorts contest at a Dallas gay bar called the Village Station — and won.

By the way, her appearance came during the same month that Valerie Lohr of Dallas won the 1991 Miss Gay America title. In fact, four of the top five finishers were from Texas. Second Runner-Up Tiffany Bonet is from North Carolina.



That to the work of computer graphic artist John Cook, Tiffany may no longer be the prettiest drag queen in the Tar Heel State. Using a campaign poster for Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and an illustration from *Vogue* magazine, Cook has produced an illustration showing Helms in drag, complete with shoulder-length blonde locks and a summer straw hat covering his ample bosom.

"It is possible that Jesse longs for a life-style his constituents wouldn't approve of?" wondered Cook. "I made the portrait so that Jesse could see what he looks like in drag. I just want to see him happy."



Speaking of politicians, a Pakistani transvestite mounted a serious campaign in October to gain a seat in the provincial assembly.

Aslam Khusra (whose last name means "transvestite" in Pakistani) told voters, "You tried out the men to rule this country, and even a woman. They have all failed. Now give use a chance."

Khusra's initial power base came from a "clan" of transvestites and eunuchs he organized to oppose centuries of oppression from a macho and conservative Islamic code. As in India, transvestites and eunuchs serve an important social function — dancing at weddings and other celebrations — yet they are severely looked down upon by society. All members of the clan have taken Khusra as their surname.

Of his campaign, Khusra said, "It started out as a joke because people had enough of these politicians. Now, everyone is taking me seriously because God has chosen me as the voice of the poor."

Being transgendered has its advantages in Pakistani politics. Unlike male politicians, he can speak directly to veiled women voters.



If the public's acceptance of rock stars is any indication, Jesse's constituents won't react negatively unless they begin to believe that Helms always does drag.

According to a survey of rock fans conducted by MTV, androgyny and crossdressing seems to be an ac-

cepted "component of rock imagery as long as fans can be assured that its just an image."

Speaking of those fans and their level of acceptance, Boy George said, "They don't mind the heavy metal bands. I mean, they do look like tarts.... The thing people didn't like about Boy George was that I actually walk around like that full time."



We'll close this column with note of the passing of two major personalities in the imagery of female impersonation.

The first was Ugo Tognazzi who portrayed the more normal of the pair of gay lovers featured in the original *La Cage aux Folles* films. He died after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. He was 68 years old.

The second drag celebrity to die recently was Craig Russell who delighted a sometimes shocked audiences with his impersonations of Mae West, Judy Garland and Peggy Lee. He starred as a cabaret performer in the 1977 film *Outrageous* and the sequel *Too Outrageous*. For years he was among the best-known female impersonators in North America. But a decade ago his career soured after an incident while on tour in Western Canada. He died of AIDS at the age of 42.

Thanks to Phaedra on the Isle of Wight, Joan Hoff of Massachusetts and Lisa from Miss Sinclair's home state of Michigan for sending clippings. You can earn her thanks too by sending along news items regarding crossdressing. Be sure to note the name and date of publication.

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Sinclair sets goals as new managing director

Charles Dickens could have been thinking about my life last month when he wrote the opening of *A Tale of Two Cities*. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." Two very different, yet closely related events happened in November that brought about my ambivalence. The first (and worst) was my resignation from the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Sexual Minorities. The second (and best) was my selection as Renaissance managing director for 1991.

The resignation from the commission came after only a few months of service to that panel. Our parting came in the wake of several misunderstandings that probably would not have occurred if the members had understood these words from feminist lesbian poet Audre Lorde: "we do not have to become each other in order to work together." And this is how the sad event that opened November relates to the happy event that closed the month — being named to lead this organization for the next 12 months.

Since its founding, Renaissance has prided itself on being an open organization where all transgendered people — and others — would be welcome. This has become our hallmark, the one thing we have that many other transgendered

groups emulate. Yet, as I look ahead to the coming year, I find myself wondering if we actually have made good on this promise. Do we celebrate our diversity, or simply tolerate it? Have we really brought different groups of transgendered people together, or have we only papered over the cracks that divide us? How many of us think that we could work better together if we became more like each other?

These questions have no easy answers. Indeed, answers may never be possible. But even insoluble problems need to be examined, if only to keep the organization on its toes. And so this in my agenda for the coming year — to make sure that we expend every effort to make Renaissance an open organization in both word and deed; to serve all

members, but especially those who are most different than me; and to help everyone understand that being different is not the same as being deficient.

I could not assume this post without expressing my deepest appreciation to those who have served before me: JoAnn Roberts, the first managing director, followed by Allison Laing, and then by Trudy Henry. By far they had a tougher job than I face; they established an organization from nothing and worked out all the kinks. Thanks to them the mechanisms are well broken in and the wheels are turning smoothly. My primary job after taking the conn is to stay on course. With the help of my colleagues on the board and with your support I shall.

Paula Jordan Sinclair

Light reading from the new editor

(Continued from page 1)

community better understand us.

So what's all this been leading up to? Very simple, Renaissance has made a large impact on my life and I hope that through the newsletter I might be able to help other transvestites and/or transsexuals.

I realize all too well that JoAnn Roberts is an extremely tough act to follow, but I'll give it my very best. No immediate changes in the format are planned; if something isn't

broken why try to fix it, right? I do, however, hope to possibly expand it a little to give more room for future information. I feel that because of support groups like Renaissance more is happening and everyone wants to know what's going on in the community here and elsewhere.

I'm going to do my best to continue bringing you the information you want and the way you want it. I'm always open to comments and suggestions.

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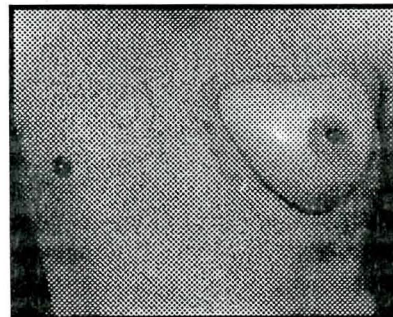
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Pen Pals?

'Oh, Please! Give me a break.'

Wow, did Lofofora Contreras, the inmate at the California Correctional Institute, ever lay a guilt trip on you. While you make believe TS Queans (sic) are gorging yourselves at the finest of restaurants, the true TS is languishing behind bars, unable to receive 'support.' Oh, Please! Give Me A Break.

Lofofora, and others of her ilk, are in prison, not because they missed Sunday School for a month, nor because they crossed the street against the light. They are there because they are the most selfish, immoral, people in our society. They would rather beat up on old women to take their retirement checks, roll drunks, hold up "mom and pop" grocery stores, or extort money from honest people using threats of bod-

ily harm, rather than put in an honest days labor. In other words, they are nothing more than leeches on society. They suck the blood from honest men and women rather than contribute to society. Let the sucker work, we'll take it away from him. A great motto to live by if you think like Lofofora and her cell mates.

Though I am not a transsexual, I have heard/read many stories of transsexuals who have resorted to self mutilation, much the same as the convicts alluded to by Lofofora, with one great exception. These transsexuals worked hard for their place in society. Many worked at skungie, dirty jobs for 12 and 16 hours a day to get what little they have. They never once shoved a knife

between someone's ribs to take their earnings from them.

But now Lofofora is doing the same thing, not with a knife or gun, but with guilt bathed words. It's gimme, gimme, gimme. It's always "gimme" with Lofofora, never give. Lofofora is where she is because she has no respect for her fellow human beings.

Jesus, in many of his teachings, said, "Love thy neighbor as thy self." Lofofora's letter reeks of self-hate and envy. Your love and dedication will be rewarded with grief. A selfish person, such as Lofofora, will take all she can get, and leave you swing in the wind. No amount of compassion and help will ever satisfy "inmates" of this world.

Keep your eyes open.

Joan Hoff

And then:

A sister in prison comments...

Just a few lines to comment on the letter from a sister in prison, Lofofora Contreras. I am currently in prison. I'm also truly thankful for your monthly newsletter. Ms. Contreras sounds like she wants everybody out there to feel sorry for her.

Oh, its very, very difficult in here, with all the "wanna-be" husbands, pimps, and harassment from officials. Then there are the individual prisoners themselves, how mentally strong and able they are able to cope with these surroundings.

Its much more difficult for us TVs and TSs, especially for clothes. We're lucky enough to get away with our panties and cosmetics, but all we can do is sit back and day dream about our micro-minis, our dresses, and our gowns. That, alone, gives me something to look forward

to. Plus, this girl has not burned her bra, and I don't have to get fat to maintain my bustline. I don't know where Ms. Contreras is coming from, but thank God for my gynecologist. He gave me hormone injections and pills that must have really, really been different from hers.

It should be understood by all of us girls in different prison systems in different states that there truly is only so much and so far any group or social program can go. We also have to take into consideration the cost of it all.

I understand that cost. If you're having luncheons and gala events, I'm happy. If they're successful, I'm overwhelmed. Ms. Contreras should remember the cost of everyday life. Every girl knows that bills add up. Remember your credit card bill that came last month? "Oh my, I didn't

realize I spent that much on a mini skirt, garter belt, nylons and, yes, those adorable spike-heeled shoes."

I want you all to know, I'm very happy receiving the *Renaissance News*. I look forward to it each and every month. Please keep up the good work; I love it. Please keep sending it.

Lisa Leggett

On both accounts, Joan and Lisa criticize Miss Contreras for the guilt trip that she seems to be laying on the rest of us. I feel like a personal shot was taken at me. And I'm sure I'm not the only one. For some it's no easier outside of prison from what I've read and have been told, and of course know from personal experience. Anyone else out there have a comment?

Editor

THE **ICONOCLAST**™

JoAnn Roberts

PHILADELPHIA, PA. - It seems as though I did not make myself crystal clear last month when I changed the name of this column, so I'll try once again to explain.

I wrote the National Gender News column; always did. I felt, as the senior editor, I didn't need to have my name plastered all over the newsletter, so I wrote the column anonymously, until now.

My critics still carp over my use of "twenty-five cent" words. Sorry, but that's not going to change. It's the way I write and that's that. If you don't understand what I'm saying, go look up the words. God forbid, you might learn something.

I will bend this once. The title of this column literally means "one who breaks images." Figuratively, it means someone who breaks with tradition. I'm certain many will agree the title is apropos for me.

• • •

INDIANAPOLIS, IN - We mentioned Elaine Edwards of the Indiana Crossdressers Society (IXE) last month as someone we'd want on our staff. This month we're sure of it.

In the Nov. issue of their newsletter, Edwards makes a counter-

point to a JoAnn Stringer piece titled *Keys to Success* (Feb. '90).

In it she says, "It has been my suspicion that low self-esteem is the ultimate source of the vast majority of transsexualism." Now, there's a political bomb just waiting to go off.

Actually, we agree with Edwards in part. It seems to us that many of the so-called "secondary transsexuals" have extremely low self-esteem as males and "think" they can find it by posing as women. Edwards puts it best, "Self-esteem can only be found when you learn not to fear the thoughts of others and when you learn not to fear ... the reality and truth of your life."

• • •

PAROW, SOUTH AFRICA - Maybe this explains the sudden interest in South Africa...

Diane Knoetze writes in the July issue of *Fanfare* (Phoenix Society) that she had a most unusual experience concerning her transsexualism.

Due to a physical problem, it was recommended the Knoetze have treatments of the drug Androcur, which will cause chemical castration. This appealed the Knoetze and

she agreed to the treatment.

It was also recommended that she submit to some counseling which she did and here's where it gets interesting.

Knoetze does *not* want reassignment surgery. The clinic she was visiting performed a battery of tests and psychological evaluations on her, finally concluding that she was, indeed, transsexual. But, because she was seeking only a castration and not total reassignment, she was told that the clinic could be of no further service to her.

These "helping professionals" could see no advantage to our sister of not being reassigned, and, if she refused the surgery, they wanted nothing more to do with her.

We know a lot of folks who will now want to go to South Africa for reassignment.

• • •

ISLE OF WIGHT, U.K. - The Gender Transient Affinity (GTA) has a new family member writes Miss Phaedra Kelly.

Marigold is a "he" that was a "she" and "he" turned up on the doorstep of Miss Kelly's mother's house with a note.

(continued on next page)



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THE **ICONOCLAST** TM
JoAnn Roberts

Marigold, it turns out, is a chicken that started life as a hen but developed into a rooster. This is the type of story that often ends up in the *Weekly World News* or some other such tabloid nonsense, a fate says Kelly, worse than the cookpot.

Marigold still acts like a hen despite his cockscomb and male genitalia. He is also very quiet, neither "buck - bucking" nor "crowing." Kelly thinks he is working out his own ideas on speech therapy.

Marigold was, of course, immediately inducted into the GTA family where he will be cared for until he dies of natural causes, at which time he will be sent to the taxidermist so that he may take his place amid the GTA museum collection.

We have a friend with a M-t-F transsexual cat. Could this be an area of research the **John Money** and **Richard Green** missed?

• • •

PROVINCETOWN, MASS. - That stuff on her face is egg, not blusher...

We are very difficult to embarrass but one of sisters succeeded during the Awards Banquet at the 16th Annual Fantasia Fair.

Joni Chrissman representing the **City of Lakes Crossgender Community (CLCC)** was the "MC" for the banquet. During her introductory remarks, Chrissman sprinkled throughout her speech what we're sure she thought were jokes. The problem was no one else thought they were funny.

We blushed deeply as she told of a supposed visit to **Dr. Stanley Beiber**, the well known sex reassignment surgeon, and recounted her "horror" at finding the final step of the operation was to "sew in the anchovy." The rest of her humor was just as sexist and puerile.

And, since the room was full of the "luminaries" in our community, we don't think Chrissman will have another speaking engagement in the near future.

Meanwhile, P'town Rumor Central was buzzing with stories of **JoAnn Roberts** taking over the fair next year. (That is patently untrue as we're too busy writing this column to run the fair.)

However, there is a great deal of truth to the rumor that **Roberts** and **Virginia Prince** were seen hugging each other at a cocktail party.

Prince made some very emotionally moving remarks at the Unitarian church on Sunday, October 14.

Roberts asked Prince to "bury the hatchet" to which Prince good naturedly replied, "In whose back?"

Roberts and Prince agreed to disagree and to work to promote community harmony.

• • •

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. - Today, Sunday night sitcoms. Tomorrow, the world!

A new TV show included positive remarks about TVs. (Isn't that cute!)

The opening show for *Good Grief*, starring **Howie Mandel** as the proprietor of a funeral parlor, dealt with a deceased man who wished to be buried in a dress. The man's family reacted with shock, outrage and denial. The dialog included tidbits like this:

"I never believed he lost his eyebrows in a carburetor fire.

"Why did you always go to Hal- lowe'en parties with you as Sonny and him as Cher?

"Everybody knew about Daddy's dressing up.

"Just because your father was good with a razor doesn't mean he was a homosexual.

"Research has shown that 85% of all crossdressers are functional heterosexuals."

Finally, the wife concedes to her children, "He was faithful. He believed in God. Who cares how he dressed in private - he was all man to me. Any woman would have been proud to let him wear her bra.

"My husband was a transvestite!"

Saying it for the first time, I feel 50 pound lighter!"

We applaud Fox Broadcasting for their positive treatment of our community. These are the same people who explored the reversal of sex roles in *Alien Nation* last year.

Maybe we are having an impact on society after all. If you'd like to thank Fox yourself, write to them at Fox Broadcasting, 10201 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064

• • •

SPRING, TEX. - The Fall 1990 issue of the *Femme Mirror* (Tri-Ess national) just arrived, looking a tad better, typographically, than it did last time but with a much better editorial attitude.

Joan A., the spouse of a crossdresser, writes, "I DON'T feel crossdressers should make common cause with [gay rights] or do anything that reinforces the negative stereotypes that crossdressers are by definition gay and therefore sexual perverts, hookers, child molesters, etc." It appears Mrs. A. is indulging herself with stereotypes about gays; exactly the thing she fears for her husband.

To their credit, the editors replied, "It was our intent to bring attention to the positive elements in both the Gay and Women's movements. Assuredly, we are aware there are elements in both with which we are not comfortable. However, on the whole, there is more to our benefit in being cooperative ... in lieu of being antagonistic."

This spouse needs a lot of help in dealing with stereotypes, not only about gays, but about lesbians, feminists, and crossdressers. She is clearly uncomfortable with *any* person of difference

It is our sincere hope that the editors of the *Mirror* will continue to explore paths of open communication and cooperation to dispel myths and stereotypes about *all* minorities, not just crossdressers.

Louise Baltimore FUTURE PERFECT

Hi! My name is Louise Baltimore. Maybe you've heard of me? I was featured in the movie and book *Millenium*, by John Varley. No?

I'll fill you in then. I come from your future, about 1000 years from now. My main job is saving the lives of people who are going to die in plane crashes. We need them in the future because your time mucked up the world so badly, our genetic material is severely damaged.

So, now you're wondering what that has to do with transvestites and transsexuals. Well, one thing we *have* learned in the future is that people will be whatever ever it is they need to be. We have the technology not only to change the sex of a person, but to change it back as well. Yeah, we have people doing it all the time. You can read about it in any of Varley's other books.

Anyway, I caught Hell back home for telling him, but since it's out of the bag now, it can't do any more harm. It's been so long ago for me and I've switched so many times, I've forgotten what sex I started with. I like being Louise now.

Anyway, I plan to drop in from time to time and talk about things that you can do to make the world a better place for yourselves. See, it was one of you trans-persons that saved what little is left of humanity. We owe you — big time.

I know, I know. I don't want to hear about paradoxes and time-quakes. I get that from Sherman all the time. He (or rather it) is my purse-onal computer. He's useful but a real pain in the ass.

Anyway, if I read my history chips correctly, you all have this thing about people who are different. Well,

listen kids, I hate to tell you, but you ain't that far removed from apes. Did you know there's only a one percent difference in your genetic makeup between you and your great apes? That's all it takes. Hell, our genes are damaged only one hundredth of that and most of us can't even have kids. So, let's cut out the difference crap, eh!

Anyway, the one thing that binds you together is that you're human beings. Got that? *Beings* not *Doings*. It doesn't matter what you do as long as you aren't imposing your will on that of another *being*.

You people need to learn to live free. Get rid of that ugly baggage you bring with you everywhere. If you look past the surface, you'll find something fine and admirable in almost everyone you meet.

Vivre la difference, eh!



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