

The Sweetheart Connection

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ment
**The Mother
Game**

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S.P.I.C.E.

VII

July 14-18,

1999

Minneapolis, MN

A

Wilderness

Adventure

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Jealousy *causes and cures*

This article appeared in the December 1st, 1998, issue of Bottom Line Personal on page 9 under VERY INSIDE INFORMATION. The author is Ayala Malach Pines, Ph.D. (professor of psychology, School of Management, Ben Gurion University, Israel). We thought it pertinent to our concerns.

Editor

Jealousy is one of our strongest — and also strangest — emotions. It tears some couples and friends apart while, oddly, drawing others closer together.

No matter how solid and enduring your personal relationships, they are all vulnerable to feelings of jealousy. How deeply you are affected by jealousy and whether you can respond rationally to what you are feeling depends on how quickly you can step back and evaluate your emotions

JEALOUSY VS. ENVY

We feel jealous when we perceive an external threat to a relationship that is important to us. The relationship's personal importance may be due to either an emotional or a sexual bond. . .or the self-esteem or social prestige we get from it.

When we become jealous, a physical reaction commonly follows. Your

knees may shake. . .your heart may pound. The cascade of emotions that follows can take the form of rage, fear, sadness or embarrassment.

Many confuse jealousy and envy, but the two are very different.

Jealousy always involves three people — the two people who have the relationship and the outsider who threatens the bond.

Envy involves just two people. One person covets what another person has — wealth ... good looks ... an adoring spouse, etc.

Envy also has an "evil" connotation that jealousy does not have. We feel ashamed when we feel envy. We recognize that it is unfair to want what someone else has.

However, we frequently feel justified in feeling jealous. Our turf has been challenged and we feel that our emotional reaction is the proper response.

WHY WE FEEL JEALOUS

Freud and many modern psychologists and psychoanalysts say jealousy

(JEALOUSY...continued on page 4.)

S.P.I.C.E. Planning...

...continues to develop for this coming July's activities in Minneapolis, MN.

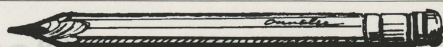
Program Director **De-siree Leigh** and Assistant Director, Onnalee Graham, have been using e-mail and telephone conferencing with Dr. **Walter Bockting**, who is Coordinator of Transgender Services at the Program in Human Sexuality/Medical School, University of Minnesota.

Several of us first met and worked with Walter at **S.P.I.C.E.** 5, in Ontario, California, two years ago, and were most favorably impressed with his skills even as he was with **S.P.I.C.E.**, saying he would not only tell his clients about **S.P.I.C.E.** but strongly recommend they go. Since then Walter has achieved his PhD and a position of national prominence.

The co-founder of Tri-Ess, **Charles Prince**, formally known as *Virginia*, has agreed to be the keynote speaker and will be available for private conversations during the four day conference.

(SPICE...continued on page 5)

Editor's Blue Pencil



"Where did you get that idea?"

Most of our "ideas" are a direct result of our thinking. The sum of our thinking and perceptions results in our personalities. We can argue another time the exact sequencing of these phenomena; we can agree the arrangement is circular. More than one debate has raged as what constitutes reality; even more have puzzled over the apparent differences expressed of reality.

Example: a drawing class working from a live model; the art students ranged in a loose circle surrounding the subject. Easy enough to see that each drawing will differ from the others because of the different view points. Over here are three artists grouped closely together, seemingly sharing the same view, yet the *dissimilarity* of their work is striking.

I like this metaphor, in that I aspire to being an artist...I have done much to accomplish that goal and am still working at it. When I was too young to understand how it could be so, I looked on drawing as a skill that could be taught and learned by anyone willing to practice and work. In the late '70's, a book appeared that scientifically demonstrated that concept (Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards, PhD. J.P. Tarcher, publisher, Houghton Mifflin, distributor)

Most people decry any ability "to draw", mostly because, as Dr. Edwards writes, they tend to draw what they think they know about a thing instead of seeing the information in front of them. This leads to "Don't confuse me with the facts, I've already made up my mind."

i.e. *What's reality got to do with it?*

We keep insisting, by our thinking and precepts, that things are "supposed to be" a certain way and can NOT, therefore be the way they really are. What is gained by persisting in such tunnel vision? usually, some private agenda is served; rarely progress. Result: Stale sameness at least, stultifying boredom at worst.

Also stable and safe. No risks, no consequences.

A reasonable view if...we lived in a world where NOTHING ever changed. That, of course, is antithetical to life. **The one thing that never changes is — change, itself.** Some

things change so quickly, we perceive them not at all. It is said that the heartbeat of a mountain is so slow that one cannot hear even one beat in a human lifetime.

Whatever you may have thought of *The Bridges of Madison County*, the Clint Eastwood character made one sagacious remark about change, saying that people rather counted on change, depended on it; for change brings not only the joys and pleasures of life, but also removes the stresses and pains to which we are subject.

We bend the world, even attempt to legislate, against change. Or agitate for it. **Example:** The election of reform/third-party Jesse Ventura as governor of Minnesota. Already some who elected him are grousing about his proposed changes.

Damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Quote: "*What a piece of work is man. . .*" William Shakespeare's female leads were men or boys in dresses and wigs, for the stage was perceived as an unseemly, certainly unlady-like, venue for "good" women.

Now, your husband/partner is assuming a second role in your life script. "Well, *that's* different" is one "Minnesota Speak" flat reaction. The more frequent perception is one of being threatened, his "femme persona" as an intrusive interloper to your relationship, a third party for which you had not planned, certainly have not been "trained" to expect or deal with. (*Come to think of it, many children arrive that way...ah, parenthood: a massive do-it-yourself project; no manual of instructions included, no warranties or guarantees.*)

Some cope with change by ignoring it in the hope it will go away (it won't), restrict it to the underground only (where it builds to seismic pressures), others merely extend the "mothering" role to surround the phenomena. Trouble is, everyone has to leave "mother" sooner or later. Some wildly embrace the new "sister" or "girlfriend" only to later discover they have lost the "boy" friend. Various changes elicit a variety of perceptions and consequences.

Ah. . .but variety is the Spice of life! True enough; until life gets a little too spicy to swallow! (Natural medicine remedy for too spicy food: a spoonful of honey!)

Annalee

Interesting post-ings on the CDSO.

I have been reading the new *Femme Mirror* Winter 1998 (for those of you that don't know what the *Mirror* is.. it is the official publication of Tri-Ess)... There was an article that struck my fancy. It is titled "Rules for Crossdressers" It was reprinted from *The Cactus Flower*.. no author was credited. It is a really good article...but one thing really hit home...

Rule #6 states: "*Decide early on whether you want to keep the marriage. That is the principle decision. If that is a priority, then the decision and compromises you make concerning the crossdressing become a bit easier. It is easier to decide that keeping the marriage together is more important than insisting that she go shopping with you, for example.*"

I have never seen this verbalized before. I, personally, think that this is such an important statement that it should be #1!... If the commitment is not there for BOTH parties, then all the work and understanding in the world is NOT going to make things better. I submit that this is the most important question you can ask your husband? Does he want the marriage? Bev

Hi all,

Kimmy here (I also made sure that this letter was sent to my spouse as well. It made her know of how much I love her. It helped our relationship grow to new heights.) My marriage is the most important factor of my life. Yes, I will admit that knowing of my spouse's 2nd life has been quite an adventure. I am proud of myself that I am making every effort to accept this life, as well as make the limits that are needed for myself.

As many of you know, my spouse was contemplating about whether or not she should go through the process of becoming a woman. That day was the most terrifying of my life. I did not want to lose the person

whom I love so dearly. Of course, she thought that I had married a man and not a woman was probably the biggest thought that came to mind.

The day that she went to a therapist to find out if it was possible was the most emotional day of my life. When she came home that day, she was afraid that I had left for good. She was so relieved to find me at home. The first thing that Pauline/Chloe had said to me was "You and our marriage are the most important parts of my life, and I don't want to give up the greatest gifts that came into my life." A tremendous emotion came over me. I cried in relief and love, knowing how much I mean to her.

If the hardest part of my life is to accept the 2nd life of my spouse, then this is the greatest accomplishment I have ever made. Just to let you know that on that day, when she went back to work she was fired. No

The Sweetheart Connection is published four times yearly. No boundary trashing. No bashing of any kind.

Our guideline for every issue will be that which shapes productive resolution to many problems:

1. What is going on?
2. Who's in charge?
3. What do you want?
4. Where do we go from here?

Each quarterly issue will deal with all four questions but will focus on one question in turn.

Subscription costs are \$15/yr for four issues; a wife/partner may join Tri-Ess separately from her partner for a cost of \$12. She will receive membership and the Sweetheart Connection. If she chooses to receive The Femme Mirror, her annual cost will be \$25. Letters, comments and articles are encouraged and may be sent to the editor.

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one at her employment knew about the CDing. The firing is a very long story which we are currently in the legal process. When I found this out, it was much easier for me to arrange the items to help my spouse with this let go of work. Yes, there were many questions I had about how our lives will be affected...i.e. losing our home. But, the point I am trying to make is that because of the challenge we went through with the CDing, and the change issue [other problems seemed less]. I loved her even more; I am dedicated to her.

She has found out that I love her no matter what, CD or not...job or no job. I am willing to make the effort and or sacrifices to make our marriage and lives the best it can be.

If any of you understand the story I have just told, great!!! I want to say accepting Chloe was a difficult time in my life. Chloe losing her job was not. I work and I will make every effort so that our finances will not be compromised. Yes, she is looking for work. Just feels extremely depressed about losing the job.

You see before I knew about Chloe, my spouse was always there for me when I was in a great time of need. My great time of need in my history had nothing to do with Chloe. When I talked about being a rotten spouse in a past message, it was because of the trying times I put him/her through.

Our marriage is the best it has ever been. I want to make sure that it will never change.

I want to thank you all with the deepest gratitude for all of the support you have given me. I hope this may help any of you out there, who may be going through the same situations.

Kimmy

U. S. News and World Report has overheard buzzing in the Washington D.C. political beltway:

"Lawyers firmly believe in the innocence of any client until proven broke."

(JEALOUSY...continued from page 1)

has its roots in our youth. They say that when children are at the Oedipal stage, around age two, they're "in love" with the parent of the opposite sex but face a bigger, stronger rival — the other parent.

When we grow up, any "triangular" relationship reawakens the powerful and painful emotions we experienced during our childhood.

Darwin and the evolutionists go back in time even further to find jealousy's roots. They propose that it evolved to advance survival of the species. Warding off threats to your relationship helps ensure that your genes will be passed along to the next generation. They point out that animals display jealous behavior, too.

MEN, WOMEN & JEALOUSY

Men and women feel jealousy with equal frequency and intensity. It is usually triggered by similar situations, but there are differences.

In men, jealous passions are provoked by sexual infidelity. Women become most jealous at signs that their partner is involved with someone else.

Individuals vary widely in how readily and strongly their jealousy is aroused. Almost anyone would become jealous if his/her mate were sexually unfaithful, but some take it in stride, while for others it is catastrophic. **Examples:**

Would it make you jealous:

*To see your mate laughing with a stranger at a party?

*Attending an out-of-town conference with a coworker of the opposite sex?

*Glancing with obvious appreciation at an attractive person at the next table?

In extreme cases, jealous fantasies are aroused by the slightest clues — a phone call returned two hours late or a fond greeting.

**What am I feeling?
Is it rage?
Fear of loss or abandonment?**

The key to an overly strong jealousy response may be hidden in early life. **Examples:**

*A child of either sex who was unloved or neglected by parents often becomes an adult who is never convinced of his/her spouse's affection.

*People with older brothers tend to be more prone to jealousy.

*A parent's sexual infidelity can leave a lifelong legacy of jealousy.

WHEN JEALOUSY IS A PROBLEM

Most of the time, jealousy is an occasional event that causes some distress but little real harm. It can even have some positive effects. **Examples:**

*When your relationship feels threatened, you may stop taking your partner for granted — the most common cause of "couple burnout".

*A jealous episode turns up the heat and rekindles passion.

But when jealousy is persistent and disproportionate, it means real suffering and can ultimately un-

dermine the relationship. Even the most faithful of partners may be worn down and driven away by constant suspicion.

If you realize that you are excessively jealous, turn your attention away from your partner and toward yourself. Questions to ask yourself...

*What exactly am I feeling? Is it rage? Fear of loss or abandonment?

*Are my feelings truly relevant to the present situation? Or are they the emotional baggage from childhood? Did I feel less than special as a child? Did I witness a parent's infidelity? Do I harbor doubts about my own worthiness and attractiveness?

When people make the distinction between the current triggers of jealousy

and its roots in early life, they are often amazed to see how much easier their emotions are to handle. The pain may still be there, but they don't find they have to act on it by showing jealousy.

It also helps to talk about your emotions with your partner. Share your discovery that your present-day jealousy has its origins in your childhood but that it is still painful and you would appreciate his/her help.

This kind of discussion clears the air and enables partners to reassure each other. Together, you can agree on mutually acceptable ways for your partner to allay your jealousy.

Example: "When you are talking to others at a party, it would be nice if you would periodically come over and sit with me...or even introduce me to them as your partner."

It may also be helpful to try "relabeling" what you are feeling. Rather than thinking of jealousy as "excruciatingly painful", perhaps you can label it as "exciting" or "provocative", even an "aphrodisiac". Instead of brooding "All those beautiful people around him, what if—" substitute, "but he is mine and is loyal to me."

IF YOUR PARTNER IS JEALOUS OF YOU

A frank, open discussion about what triggers his jealousy and what reasonable things YOU can do to minimize it may be helpful.

Effective approach: Change the dynamics of your relationship. If you are the nonjealous member of the couple, start behaving as if you were jealous. Call your partner six times a day...ask detailed questions about his every move. The jealous partner usually loves the attention...calms down...and feels more secure.

Above all — avoid blaming, and remember to take responsibility. The exasperating jealousy is a problem that must be solved together.

View from the beach

I am the manager for the CDSO list. I don't run it by myself, but I am usually the "front line." I don't mind, in fact I love it. The "newbies" often come to us with their hearts in their hands. They want someone...anyone.. to tell them it's all gonna be okay. In most instances, it will be "all okay".. They (we) just need some time to regain our sense of equilibrium.. to put all this into a new perspective.

With that in mind, I wrote this to a lady on our list that asked, "how do I get past the societal taboo of crossdressing?" I know.. this has been batted around for eons! but to those that are new...it is a NEW question.

I never sent this to her. By the time I got it ready to send, another one of our wonderful ladies had sent our shaky newbie a wonderfully uplifting post.. That's the beauty of CDSO... there are enough of us to go around! There is always a shoulder, a smile, a hug.

But I am ready for the next time... the next time a wife has just learned about her husband's crossdressing, and is standing at our door...and wonders what this means..I am gonna write to her.....

Don't push... just take it a

bit at a time. "Society".....well, who is society.. WE ARE!.... I do understand what you are saying when you exclaim "I just can't get past it!" . I was raised to be a "good" girl. (although the "bad" boys always attracted me..(big grin)

You do what is expected by your mom, dad, church, school, ethnic group, and financial and social status. It's really hard to imagine anything outside that realm. There has never been any reason to question things. You know what is expected of you, and you can meet it with no sweat.. then along comes something that knocks the very breath out of you!.. Your world turns upside down... You love your husband...and will do anything for him...Wow!

Then you scramble to find something familiar, something you recognize, a reference point to judge the horizon...anything...just to gain your balance. Finally, you find a footing... and look around..And there you are, Robinson Caruso...with no man "Friday", surveying the distinctly unfamiliar territory. No recognizable landmarks... just an unmarked horizon.

For a long time you wait for the ship to rescue you from this island you find yourself marooned on... Days past, and a sense of self-preservation takes over. Finally you build a shelter (education), then you find a

way to feed yourself (self-esteem), you meet the "natives" (cdso) and they are friendly.. kind.....They offer you tidbits ("dealing" skills) and make wonderful jewelry for you (praise for your good stuff... sympathy for the bad) but you still wait for something, anything to happen that will free you from this new and frightful place... something that can take you home....where you already know all the "rules"

Time passes... a ship finally appears on the horizon!... do you send smoke signals?... do you rush to the shore to wave it down? Maybe. Maybe you get on the ship and never look back, convincing yourself it was all a bad dream.....On the other hand, maybe, just maybe.. you DO look at what you have built.. the new life, the strengths you have found, the friends, love...the "new" society in which you have been accepted, and "judged" fairly.....and you decide to stay... You were "home" all the time. In the end, it's your decision.

bev



The Clothing Lens Effect

by Michelle Kingsbury

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in "Crossroads Chatter". It is the first of two installments.

It is nothing new to hear someone claim that cross-dressing allows a person to release his "girl within", to express those personality traits that are normally not permitted to those who are locked into the male role. (The philosophy was first expounded by Virginia Prince's *Understanding Crossdressing* and Bruce's *The Expression of Femininity in the Male*.) According to such advocates, people are socialized into two general categories — masculinity and femininity, each of which has its own distinctive list of do's and don't's. The personalities and behaviors that go with these two categories are more or less mutually exclusive. That is, those behaviors that are reserved for the masculine category are not reserved for the feminine category and those behaviors that are reserved for the feminine category are not reserved for the masculine category. Masculine and feminine roles function as the sum total of all the personality traits (and corresponding behaviors) that make up a particular category. To Prince's advocates, cross-dressing serves to unlock the barrier which separates these two categories and allow men who are normally trapped in the masculine role to "escape" and experience the feminine role.

The basic message here

is, of course, the androgynous ideal. One who crossdresses would be able to expand his horizons by using (albeit temporarily) the opportunity to tap both the masculine and feminine for his desired brand of personality expression. However, one implicit message in this philosophy which may be open to question is the belief that clothing/crossdressing is necessary for experiencing this androgyny. Nor is it necessarily true that a person can only exhibit traits appropriate to his current outward appearance (that is, solely choosing from the feminine category while dressed as a woman and solely choosing from the masculine category while dressed as a man).

At least as early as the 1930's (with J.C. Flugel's *The Psychology of Clothes*) and the 1950's (with Lawrence Langner's *The Importance of Wearing Clothes*), clothing researchers have praised the value of garments in bringing about certain behaviors and attitudes within individuals. Essentially the "clothes make the man" adage, they support this common sense belief with such examples as: a man dresses as a slob, therefore he feels and acts like a slob; a woman puts on a stiff and professional suit, therefore she feels and acts like a professional, and finally, a man dresses up in soft, feminine attire, therefore he feels and acts feminine.

Such specific examples seems to be part of a general principle where clothing serves as a lens to bring out, nurture, project and amplify personality components which are already within an individual, but for some reason are blocked, slowed, or stifled by some source (usually socially constructed roles or norms). This is not to say that a person cannot act in a certain way without the aid of clothes. To use the above examples, there are, of course, well-dressed slobs, casually dressed professionals, and masculinely-dressed men who are feminine. These traits already exist within an individual to begin with, so they may be expressed at any time. However, clothing serves as a lens, to amplify these traits, to make it easier for a person to express them. (This idea can appropriately be named the "clothing lens effect".)

Why clothing functions as a lens is open to speculation. Perhaps the clothes function as a crutch, to support people through socially difficult situations. Perhaps they serve as a concrete definition or reference point on how to act, much analogous to how an individual will turn to other persons in order to define how he should act (especially in an ambiguous situation). Perhaps it is a differential treatment mechanism, where observers view a person dressed a certain way and treat him in a way that corresponds to the schema the clothes trigger. This in turn causes the original person to act in a way that corresponds to his clothes. Or perhaps there is

...why clothing affects behavior.

some intrinsic quality of the clothing itself, such as materials or texture, that brings about specific behaviors. Whatever the explanation, the effect of clothing on behavior is a very observable phenomenon in everyday life, despite the lack of empirical research which has been devoted to the subject.

It is also unknown why clothing affects behavior in some people more than others. Perhaps it depends on some individual variable, such as that person's sensitivity to outside cues, or perhaps it depends on that person's need for a lens to help express his personality. Or it may depend on outside factors, such as how many barriers interfere with one's personality expression. Nor can we be certain why the effects of clothing on behavior tend to lessen over time for some individuals (e.g., a student with disciplinary problems despite wearing a professional uniform). The answer to this latter question, I would hypothesize, would either be simple adaptation (repeated exposure/use dulls its power), the possibility that incompatible personality traits override the clothing lens effect (in the case of the student, he may have strong anticonformist tendencies) or the perception that a person is being forced to dress in a certain way (people like to believe they are in control over their own destinies and rebel when they feel otherwise), thus canceling any positive effects the clothing may bestow.

Crossdressers appear strongly sensitive to the influence of clothing on personality. Among the most common effects are increased extroversion, femininity, and self-

confidence. Furthermore, they appear capable of maintaining this sensitivity over long periods of time. They dress up because they want to, not because they feel they are forced to; they usually dress up irregularly instead of every day, thus reducing adaptation effects.

Assuming that an individual can be significantly affected by clothing in the first place, there appear to be three possible avenues that this effect can take. First, the person may eventually stop expressing personality despite still dressing up in certain clothes. This can be due to adaptation of the clothing, newly formed incompatible personality traits, the perception that he is forced to dress up, or he may discover that after trying out these new traits that he does not necessarily like them. Second, the person may continue on as before, relying on the clothing as a crutch to lean on or a lens to help penetrate various barriers to personality expression. Usually in this case there is a perception that the clothes are necessary for the trait expression. This is the philosophy Prince has advocated. Third, and most important for this paper, the person may begin to internalize these new personality traits into his psyche, amplifying them and ultimately being able to express these traits on his own, without the use of clothes.

This is the concept of "merge".

The second installment will appear in the Spring Connection. Editor

New Year's Giggle...

This was doing the rounds on the CDSO and other forums over the holidays. We have it compliments of Jas-JenJan, otherwise author unknown.Ed.

One day in the Garden of Eden, Eve calls out to God, "Lord, I have a problem!"

"What's the problem, Eve?"

"Lord, I know you've created me and have provided this beautiful garden and all of these wonderful animals, and that hilarious comedy snake, but I'm just not happy."

"Why is that, Eve?", comes the reply from above.

"Lord, I am lonely. And I'm sick to death of apples."

"Well, Eve, in that case I have a solution. I shall create a man for you."

"What's a 'man,' Lord?"

"This man will be a flawed creature, with aggressive tendencies, an enormous ego and an inability to empathize or listen to you properly.

All in all he'll give you a hard time. But he'll be bigger and faster and more muscular than you, he'll be really good at fighting and kicking a ball about and hunting fleet-footed ruminants, and not altogether bad in the sack."

"Sounds great," says Eve, with an ironically raised eyebrow.

"But you can have him, only on one condition."

"What's that, Lord?"

"You'll have to let him believe that I made him first."

I've always wanted to be somebody, but I can see now I should have been more specific.

Lily Tomlin

A Second Life

by Cheryl

When Megan and I divorced five years ago, I cut myself off from all connections to the CD world. I no longer attended my local Tri-Ess meetings nor did I communicate with any of the members including my friends. I thought that since I was no longer in a relationship with a CD I could no longer be a member. Ironically, it was like a purge. Months flew by and I was miserable. I didn't have anyone to talk to who could really understand what I was going through. How could they? They hadn't been married to a CD turned TS (supposedly). Their lives hadn't been broadcast throughout the city. I was alone in this.

Finally one day I'd had enough. I had been emotionally crippled. My life was in shreds and I knew I had to find some answers. I reached out to the only person I felt close enough to - Gloria. She was the first person I had

met at Alpha Omega. She had taken me under her wing at my first meeting. She had helped me before, would she now? I should never have doubted. One of the first things she mentioned was attending the meetings. It was like a ray of hope. Could I really? Maybe there I could find some peace. She and I talked for hours but she couldn't convince me. Tri-Ess was for "heterosexual crossdressers AND their significant others". I felt that I didn't qualify anymore. I had no crossdresser in my life anymore; therefore, I wasn't an SO either. How could I attend? By this time, I really wanted to. In fact, I was beyond wanting to, I needed to. I had to regain some sense of my own self-worth and I had the feeling that in A-O it could be done.

The decision was made and I attended my first meeting alone. I was just as nervous opening that door as any new member. Would anything

be said about my not belonging? Would I be shunned? Or would I, too, be accepted? As I look back and remember, a smile is crossing my face. The old members that had been there before greeted me with hugs and expressions of love and concern. They allowed me to talk and cry freely. Not a one said for me to leave but each made me welcome. I've never left.

Why did I come back to Tri-Ess, Alpha-Omega? Because I too needed acceptance from those who understood. In the last four years since my return, I have, indeed, found peace. More than that, I have found that I, too, have something to offer - my experiences; I share them freely.

Cheryl

Almost five years have past since Cheryl returned to her friends. In that time she has met and made another special CD friend from the group with whom she now shares her life. Don't you just love happy beginnings?

Editor



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In the Reading Room

by Sofronia Anne

Having created something remarkable in the CDSO listserv for the wives and partners of CD's, from feedback, Bev hit upon the idea of a similar listserv for the CD's themselves. This resulted in the opening of the CD Tri-Ess Forum last Spring.

JoAnne Roberts has suggested that it is important to keep the CD's and their wives separated in a dialogue about these issues so that neither the men nor the women feel intimidated by the presence of the other. Hence, we have operated two separate forums (except in the few cases where unethical persons have chosen to infiltrate the inappropriate forum.)

As these two forums progressed, we noticed a growing movement to bring the men and women together in one place. This is certainly a desirable objective. However, we are aware that when we put the men and women in one

place, the women tend to stop talking and give way to the men. How, we wondered, might we get the men and women to talk to one another openly and frankly about crossdressing issues? We were not sure it could be done. So deep is the enculturation, we suspected it might not be possible.

The idea of the Tri-Ess book club was also Bev's. It was a brilliant thought. There is certainly a huge body of literature out there that enlightens us about these issues. If we could read some of this material, express our reactions to it and share those reactions it certainly had to be helpful to us all.

So we set up the CD Tri-Ess Book Club to do just that. It was not our intent to create - nor is it in fact - a couples forum. Admittedly, there would be both men and women participating in it; we realized it might be a means of encouraging men and women to talk to one another about crossdressing issues. If the book club did that, it would be all to the good.

Our first Book Club selection was *Coping With Crossdressing* by JoAnne Roberts PhD. The reason

for this choice was not only appropriateness but the enthusiasm for this work by the women attending previous S.P.I.C.E. meetings.

We have been talking over this book for about eight weeks. The character of the dialog has been excellent. After defining her terms, Dr. Roberts discusses the nature of sex versus gender and the unknown origins of the crossdressing phenomenon. She asks us to consider the social issues associated with crossdressing, then delves into our feelings and partner's issues. She continues with a discussion on the nature of relationships then goes to the means of negotiating our transvestite issues with our loved ones.

In my view, the dialog has been helpful and curative in nature. We look forward to our next bookclub selection, *My Husband Wears My Clothes* by Peggy Rudd, Ed.D. After that we will consider the definitive text on crossdressing, *Crossdressing, Sex and Gender*, by Drs. Vern and Bonnie Bullough. We invite you to join us. We are doing good work on the CD Tri-Ess Book Club; we expect you will find it enlightening and stimulating.

S.P.I.C.E. VII REGISTRATION

Call hotel direct for room reservation: Sheraton Airport Inn, (612) 854-1771

July 14 thru 18, 1999

Minneapolis, Minnesota

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____ E-mail _____

Male partner's name _____ Attending? Y N Support groupname? _____

Check the package you want with number attending: Circle One* (If any *)

_____ Wednesday thru Sunday (July 14-18) _____ Thursday thru Sunday (July 15-18) _____ Thursday & Friday (July 15 & 16)
\$172.00 per person (Picnic/Recep + 6 meals) \$147.00 per person (6 meals) \$115.00 / person (4meals)

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Let's Talk About -

by Marsha and Richard
(Rachel) Miller

...will not be offered here this issue; the Millers found themselves over committed and unable to provide their column in time to meet our deadlines. Editor

The Mother Game

This is the fourth and last excerpt from Richard Docter's 1998 book "Transvestites and Transsexuals" as offered by "Jackie". Editor

The themes of this game are dependency and subordination by the TV; he seeks to transfer the responsibility for his need-fulfillments in all areas to his wife — the idealized, all-giving mother. Perhaps he has selected a wife who was comfortable with certain managerial and leadership tasks. But it is highly unrealistic for him to assume that she ever expected to take on such responsibilities with regard to his crossdressing. Here is the scenario for this game:

1. The husband seeks a wife who will function in a mother-like relationship with him, giving direction, control and parental authority over his life. He wants to be dependent, to be passive, to be controlled — but

at the same time he resents this. As with teenagers, there is both a need for compliance and a contradictory desire to break away from parental jurisdiction.

2. In general, the wife is pleased to be cast in the role of the mother. She is more comfortable calling the shots, managing, giving directions and issuing orders. However, she is not interested in giving direction to her husband's crossdressing, and has no desire to encourage this behavior.

3. The husband values his crossdressing and wants his wife to give the same love, direction, approval and control to this activity as she may be giving to the other activities that he enjoys. He wants his wife to help improve his feminine image and teach him how to be a girl. These responsibilities do not appeal to the wife.

4. Instead of showing unconditional acceptance and approval of crossdressing, the wife begins to take charge by telling her husband what he can do and cannot do, when to do it, where to do it, and how much to spend on crossdressing. Since she has been effective in the past by being a no-nonsense leader in the family, she continues to use this managerial style. She is surprised to dis-

cover that her husband resists her efforts to regulate or control his transvestism.

5. The husband attempts to break away from the dominance of his wife and crossdress as he wishes. As he does so, she tries harder to take control. More orders are issued. There are threats, rules and demands by her.

6. When the wife becomes aware that she is losing the battle, despite her husband's promises to mend his ways, she becomes angry and resentful. She may consider his crossdressing to be out of control, although he may see this very differently.

7. The outcome of this power and growth struggle will depend largely on the wife's ability to share control over crossdressing and to partially give up the mother role. On the husband's side, the challenge will be whether or not he can take steps to carry out his crossdressing in ways which are either satisfactory to his wife, or at least offer minimal annoyance to her. Possibly he will learn that as he takes responsibility for his expression of transvestism, he can also do so in other areas of his life. The experience of discovering and working on his own dependency needs may help him to become a more assertive person.

One Big Happy: By Rick Detorie



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Julie writes... Limits

by Julie Freeman

When significant others find out about their partner's crossdressing, they are quite often bewildered, shocked, some even devastated. They question their own femininity; Their self esteem is lowered; and often they wonder if there are other secrets they they know nothing about.

If they find a support group, they come to recognize that their problems are not unique, that most wives have had the same reactions and fears and that in time with knowledge they may come to a better understanding of what crossdressing means and how they can incorporate their husband's need to crossdress in their relationship.

But many times the crossdresser is unaware of these concerns and fears. In coming out to his wife, he may believe that he is now free to crossdress when and where he pleases, that he is now able to purchase clothes, make-up, jewelry and wigs at will. He may even push his wife away emotionally, not wanting to face her reactions. Perhaps he may feel that he has lost her already, so why try.

If the crossdresser were willing to set limits on his crossdressing when he first tells his partner, he might find that his partner would begin to meet him halfway.

Perhaps he might need to limit his activities from several a month to one or two every other month. Instead of buying two wigs a year, perhaps only one.

He definitely needs to consider his wife's feelings when he goes out — during day light hours may bother her, but she may not care about night. Going to public places may scare her, but attending a social in a private home would be okay.

She should not be pushed into going where she does not feel comfortable nor should he involve himself in activities which make her worry and fret.

He needs to recognize that consideration of her feelings is primary and necessary, and that it will take time, a lot of time, for her to become secure in her new role as the wife of a crossdresser. That limiting his involvement now in the short run and being considerate of her feelings may actually benefit him in the long run when she becomes more adjusted and less fearful.

Julie

SPICE...continued from page 1

The permit for Wednesday's picnic/ beach party is in hand; a pavilion tent and canoes will be available. You will be able to go swimming, learn how to paddle a canoe and enjoy a "Shore Dinner". Miles of wooded hiking/ biking trails wind along the banks of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, where the state began in the 1820's with the construction of Fort Snelling, now a State Park and fully restored with "living history."

The Sheraton Airport Inn is a short walk to the Mall of America; the hotel offers free shuttle busses for shopping trips and, of course, the airport.

Don't miss the chance to see Minnehaha Falls and recall Longfellow's epic poem of *Hiawatha*.

Now is not too soon to make plans for your vacation to include the headwaters of the Big River [Itasca State Park], the Big Lake [Superior], the Big Woods [Chippewa and Superior National Forests], the world's biggest Iron Mines [both open pit at Hibbing and under-ground at Tower-Sudan] or maybe even the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness out of Ely.

Start planning now!

Desiree Leigh

Blonde: By Dean Young and Denis LeBrun



11

Too late but too good to pass up *Or, better late than never...*

This appeared on the CDTRIESS forum on December 9th, 1998, via Kathy Lorraine who got it from a friend. We thought it too pertinent to ignore just because the season had passed. Editor

I think Santa Clause is a woman.

I hate to be the one to defy sacred myth, but I believe HE is a SHE.

Think about it. Christmas is a big, organized, warm, fuzzy, nurturing social deal; and I have a tough time believing a *guy* could possibly pull it all off!

For starters, the vast majority of men don't even think about selecting gifts until Christmas Eve. It's as if they are all frozen in some kind of Ebenezerian Time Warp until 3pm on December 24 when they — with amazing calm — call other errant men and plan for a last minute shopping spree.

Once at the mall, they always seem surprised to find only Ronco products, socket wrench sets and mood rings left on the shelves. (You might think this would send them into a fit of panic and guilt, but my husband tells me it's an enormous relief because it lessens the 11th hour decision-making burden.)

On this count alone, I'm convinced Santa is a woman. Surely, if he were a man, everyone in the universe would wake up Christmas morning to find a rotating musical Chia Pet under the tree, still in the bag.

***I'm convinced
Santa is a
woman***

Another problem for a he-Santa would be getting there. First of all, there would be no reindeer because they would all be dead, gutted, and strapped onto the rear bumper of the sleigh amid wide-eyed, desperate claims that buck season had been extended. Blitzen's rack would already be on the way to the taxidermist.

Even if the male Santa DID have reindeer, he'd still have transportation problems because he would inevitably get lost up there in the snow and clouds, and then refuse to ask for directions.

Other reasons why Santa can't possibly be a man:

*Men can't pack a bag

*Men would rather be dead than caught wearing red velvet.

*Men would feel their masculinity was threatened to be seen with all those elves.

*Men don't answer their mail

*Men would refuse to allow their physique to be described as anything remotely resembling a "bowlful of jelly"

*Men aren't interested in stockings unless somebody's wearing them

*Doing the HO HO HO thing would seriously inhibit their ability to pick up women

*Finally, being responsible for Christmas would require a BIG commitment.

I can buy the fact that other mythical holiday characters are men. Father Time shows up once a year unshaven and looking ominous. Definite guy! Cupid flies around carrying weapons. Uncle Sam is a politician who likes to point fingers. Any one of these individuals could pass the testosterone

screening test. But not St. Nick. Not a chance. As long as we have each other, good will, Peace on Earth, and Nat King Cole's version of "The Christmas Song", it makes sense what gender Santa is. I just wish she'd quit dressing like a guy!

I've never been known for originality, but just being a bureaucrat. Kathy

Sharing this with our daughters by e-mail, the older responded with the observation that "Santa" is the feminine form for "Saint" in Latino languages. Editor

Changing . . .

This marks the beginning of the third year since we agreed to do this job. It has been, by turns: rewarding, exasperating, informative, frustrating, exhilarating, tiring, fulfilling, frightening...and *fun!*

Originally, considering doing this work was dependent on the willingness of a friend's offer of his technical equipment and expertise. There is just so much one can impose on such noble volunteerism. That person, plus a building resident, has now assisted me to gather my own equipment; this is the first result of that investment.

Though we are the length of the Mississippi River apart, **Bev** has been quick and able to provide answers to my "dummy" questions of how best to do a thing.

Bulk Mail postage rates as well as all other mail rates have been steadily increasing. Therefore, subscription and membership dues are rising to meet those costs.

A form to register for **S.P.I.C.E.** will be found on page 9; as the Registrar, I would appreciate clear and careful printing of your information from which material will be prepared for your use at the conference. Tell us *how many* people for each package choice. Detach form and mail to me with check payable to **SPICE**. For Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover charges, we need a donation of 4% of the total amount to be billed.