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Buffalo Belles Newsletters

Madeline Davis Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,
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Buffalo Belles

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BUFFALO BELLES



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HOTLINE: (716) 446-2661

MARCH, 1998

SISTERS IN CHARGE:
JEAN [REDACTED]
CAMILLE [REDACTED]
PATTI [REDACTED]
KATHY [REDACTED]

Hello Sisters

I know I don't have to ask you if you've been enjoying the lovely weather we've been having here in the "Miami of the North". The only ones that have been complaining are the skiers. Not enough packed powder on the slopes. I'm already thinking SPRING and have been digging into my closet pulling out my warm weather wardrobe. I know what you're saying: this is Buffalo / Western New York and there's probably at least one or two big snow storms waiting to pounce on us the minute we venture out in a light dress or strappy sandals. But I'll chance it. And continue to hope for an early warm spring.

If you didn't make it to the Belles meeting on Saturday, February 14, (and most of you didn't!) you missed a splendid time. We had the privilege of being led through some fancy line-dance steps by four members of the Cactus Kickers. Even clumsy me got a

compliment or two. Unfortunately, my 'Macarena' still needs some fine tuning. After the dancing, 'awards' were voted on for best/ cutest cowgirl outfit. It was a tie between Jean and Katy, the daughter of one of our members, Colleen. Yours truly received an honorable mention.

At the business end of our meeting, our new hotline number was unveiled. Please take note: (716) 446-2661. Please use it whenever you have a question or want to check up on any new activity we may be planning for the group.

Please make an effort to pay your annual dues, either by mail or at the next meeting of the Buffalo Belles which will be Saturday, March 7 at 7:00 PM.

After the meeting, a contingent of one, this writer, ventured down to the Stage Door, to catch a benefit show put on by the Imperial Court of Buffalo. Donna and a few friends stopped in to catch the show with me and afterwards we made our way over to 'The Red Party' being held at Club Marcella. It was a sea of red every where you looked. I didn't realize there were so many shades of this fiery color. This was a fun crowd, some of whom had never spoken with members of our

community before. At least that's what I discovered in conversation with some of them. At the end of the night, hopefully they took home with them a little more understanding that we are really like most other people.

Well, ladies, I hope to see you at the next meeting. Hugs,

Camille

Kathy's notes:

NEWSLETTER: This will be the last issue of the newsletter for you if you haven't paid your dues by the next mailing. Please check your mailing label to see your status as of February 21. If you have any question with what shown, please let me know.

On the label, next to your name is PD98 if you are one of the good girls. Otherwise, you'll have R25 or other amount. This is what you owe for dues. So far, as of February 20, fifteen girls have renewed their commitments to the sisterhood. We currently have a membership of 49 girls.

E-Mail list:

Kathy - kathy@aol.com

Jean - jean@aol.com

Camille - camille@mailexcite.com

Crystal - c@juno.com

If you would like yours listed, please send it along.

ATTENDANCE: February meeting:

Jean
Danalyn
Kathy
Colleen with children
Camille
Susan
Sharon
Vaughn
Debbie

Donna stopped by to just give a quick hello on her way to the ball. She definitely wasn't dressed country this night! and the Cactus Kickers: Tye, Phil, Mark, and John

MEETING DATES:

It was unfortunate that the February meeting had to be held on Valentines Day. It certainly kept the attendance down in my opinion. Of the nine girls who made it, only one was married in the conventional manner. Whatever that means. At last years hoe down, also in February, we had fourteen members present.

For the next two months we are back on our regular schedule of meeting on the first Saturday of the month. It is May that we have a problem with.

Our gracious hosts have requested that we have our meeting on **Friday, May 8**. We **ALSO** Can have Sat. May 16th. May we please have some input on which you prefer! Do you prefer waiting for the usual Saturday night against the earlier date.

A CROSSDRESSER'S GUIDE TO STEPPING OUT

INTRODUCTION

I am going to start with an assumption. I will assume that you are a crossdresser who has come to the realization that hiding in your own personal closet is stifling your personal growth as a whole human being. You need to get out into the world! But you don't go out because you are afraid of what the world will say. You are sure that you will be rejected by everyone with whom you have the most fleeting contact; that they will make fun of you. Further, you don't think you will ever look good enough to go unnoticed in the outside world.

Well, there is hope. I have just described the early feelings of almost every crossdresser with whom I have discussed this subject. On the other hand, there are a large number of ETVC members who are perfectly willing to brave the outside world, and do it without incident. The purpose of this article is to help you notice some of the things you must address to make a successful transition.

SELF IMAGE

Let's start with the single most important step of your exodus from that little closet - self image. Quiz time! When you look in the mirror when crossdressed, what do you see?

a. A guy in a dress, b. A truly ugly woman who could derail a train with a passing glance, c. An average looking woman, or d. A real knockout.

Answer: a. A guy in a dress. At least this is the answer unless your self image is firm. Regardless of your physical appearance, be it anywhere from "b." to "d.", the people with whom you interact are going to notice something not quite right, and will soon, if not instantly, see a guy in a dress. What do they usually notice? Well, it could be a flaw in appearance, or a display of masculine gestures (knees together, dear), but more likely than not, it will be a manifestation of abject fear. If you are truly afraid, you might as well wear a large sign, because your fear will show. When it shows, people are going to wonder what you have to be afraid of, or nervous about, and then they will pay close attention to you and figure it out.

So, how does one get over that abject fear? After all, we do something society scorns. Well, you could do it the hard way, like I did. I just started going out, late at night and never inside any place for a lot of years. Then I went where people were, got read, got laughed at, and ran. After a while I got used to it and I was not as afraid. I also did not get noticed as much. I'm no whiz at math, but I can add two and two, and usually end up with four as an answer.

Fortunately, that is not the only option. I had not heard of such a thing as ETVC, and I did not know any other crossdressers. If you are reading this, you are probably a member of ETVC. There is an easier way. Go to a meeting. Go in male clothes if you must. Just go! At the meetings, particularly the educational sessions, you will learn details of improving your appearance and deportment, and you will meet people who share your needs and will help you develop your self image. Also, it is non-threatening since you will be surrounded by other cross-dressers.

All right, now you know that you have a safe place to go, and that you don't have to work on this alone. It is time to develop that self image. Shall we begin?

A healthy self image starts with the heartfelt knowledge that you are not sick, perverted, or strange. You are an individual with a need to experience, as much as possible, the full gamut of the human experience. That's right, human. All you want to do, really, is to bring out the feminine side of your personality, and you choose to do it by assuming an externally female role. Society, as a whole, frowns on this because a man should not be feminine - that is weakness, and that is wrong. That attitude, however, ignores one very crucial and inescapable fact - women are human too. So, in actuality, all you are trying to do is to be fully yourself, and fully human. There is nothing wrong with that. Those who feel femininity is somehow inferior to masculinity are anachronisms. They should be fossilized bones, existing to be unearthed by archaeologists, instead of walking the streets, but they do still walk - male and female alike. And, unfortunately, crossdressers who brave outside world must deal with them. The first step, therefore, is to be at peace with yourself. If you can accept yourself, then fear will not give you away. Most people are not terribly observant, if you don't give them anything to observe, and will accept what they see at face value. If you look like you have always been female, you will be accepted at face value. Even when you are read by someone, you will likely be accepted at face value because your self image is strong. People seldom confront others who are truly self-confident and comfortable with themselves.

Work on self image, but don't expect it to bloom into full fruition overnight. Come to ETVC, RGA, or such other meetings as there may be in your area, and let others help you. This is a difficult task, and there is no reason to go it alone.

APPEARANCE

Make-up:

No, this is not a make-up class. There are hundreds of sources for that information. I only have a couple of things to say on that subject. Make sure your beard does not show through your make-up. A beard is a uniquely male characteristic and a five-o'clock shadow will completely ruin an otherwise perfect presentation. The other is to make sure your make-up fits your age and the occasion. No amount of make-up which is acceptable for street wear will make a forty year old face look twenty. It only attracts attention, as does formal make-up in the mall. I would also recommend a stage make-up class at your local junior college. There you will learn about the variety of marvellous things you can do with make-up, and about the effects of highlight and shadow. Since you learn the theory, and not simply a mechanical application of one person's method for applying make-up, you can effectively design a make-up plan to soften and compliment your individual face.

Body Hair:

Shave it, pluck it, bleach it, get electrolysis, or cover it. Those are the options. Ignoring it is not an option. Don't let hairy arms or legs ruin your appearance. No matter what method you use, however, hair on the back of your hands, and particularly your fingers, is not acceptable. The lack of hair on a man's hand is not really noticeable, but a pair of hairy hands is very noticeable on a woman. Ditto on feet and ankles unless you wear opaque tights or boots.

Body and Clothes:

That's right -body. You need to pass from the neck down as well as up. Your proportions need to be female as much as possible. A lot of women do have broad shoulders, thick waists, and narrow hips. Most of us, unfortunately, have broader shoulders, thicker waists, and narrower hips than these women. If you have any trace of a spare tire or "beer belly" it is time to invest in a corset or waist cincher. Unless you are blessed with very wide hips, then pad them. If you refuse to pad them, then wear clothes that make them look bigger. Broad shoulders can only be camouflaged with clothing. There are a number of good books to be found on dealing with various body types and clothing tricks to hide figure flaws.

Clothes should be appropriate to your size, weight, and age, and should fit. Blouses are not to be worn to show off your muscles. They should drape, not stretch, over your torso. And don't forget that you will have breasts to contend with also. Unless you are young and willowy, you have no business in a tight, black, leather mini-skirt. If you are forty, dress for forty and forget those bygone years of youth and lost opportunity. You are trying to go unnoticed now. Finally, dress for the occasion. Look around you. How many women your age wear evening dresses and high heels in the mall? For that matter, how many wear a dress at all? Most of them will be in pants or a comfortable skirt, and comfortable shoes. You are sure to be noticed if you dress like a peacock while visiting the hen house.

As far as breasts are concerned, they should look natural. That means, unless you have managed to grow your own, that you will need artificial breasts. First, make sure they are large enough for your torso, without effecting the Dolly Parton look. They should be the right shape, meaning that several pairs of socks will probably be too lumpy. They must also have the proper weight to look natural. The weight gives them the proper movement and helps them attain a realistic contour. Foam rubber will not do unless you only need a little padding to add one cup size to your natural assets. Silicone is expensive, but probably the best. You can make do with well-sealed plastic bags filled with water. (Balloons won't do, the shape is wrong.) Whatever your choice, be sure not to cinch up your bra straps too far. Breasts should go slightly below your armpits, not your collar bone.

DEPORTMENT

Gestures/Body Language:

As I sure everyone has noticed, men and women have different ways of moving, standing, and gesturing. Your complete image requires that you learn move your body like a woman. The best way is to be coached by an expert. Failing that, watch the way women walk, sit, rise from a seated position, eat, stand, and gesture. You may be surprised, for example, to find that walking like a woman is not just a matter of moving your hips back and forth. Women have a lower center of gravity and walking is a matter of moving from the hips and letting the rest of the body come along. It is balanced. Men walk by starting to fall over and moving their feet underneath to give support before they finish falling.

STEPPING OUT

Sitting should be accomplished with good posture, knees together, and arms close in - not taking up much room. If you sit with legs apart, shoulders hunched forward, and elbows on knees, you need some work.

Learn, and practice, the differences between the way men and women move. A video camera can be a valuable tool. If you need some outside help, enlist a friend or bug the ETVC Education Co-Chairpersons about some sessions in movement.

Voice:

If you get everything else right and never have to speak, you will be fine. That is a little unrealistic, however, so let us cover a few key issues on voice. Contrary to what you may have heard, a high-pitched voice is not absolutely necessary. If done wrong, raising your pitch too much can damage your vocal cords. If you try a falsetto, you will only sound like Mickey Mouse. What to do? Well there are advocates of a number of methods for developing a passable voice. The following is simple and will get you off to a good start.

First, you should get your voice warmed up. This is easily accomplished by humming. Go up and down in a range that is comfortable. As you warm up you will be able to go a little higher. When you switch to speaking, stay in the higher part of your natural range. If you have to strain at all, you are too high and may hurt yourself. Drop down a little until you are comfortable.

Now, forget what you have heard about having to make your voice breathy. If you listen to women who have passed their teen years, you will find that very few of them have breathy voices. What you will find is that their voices are not loud and booming. Men shout at each other (listen at work - it's true) in comparison to women, who speak with quieter, not breathier, voices. Support your voice from the diaphragm and let your voice resonate in your head, not your chest. These two things will not only eliminate breathiness, but will also make it easier to maintain a higher pitch. It will also eliminate that bass rumble that makes a voice undeniably male. In this one area I will go into detail as I learned this years ago while taking voice lessons (for singing) and don't know of any particular outside reference.

Start by standing. Maintain good posture and stay relaxed. Place one hand on your chest and one on your abdomen. Take a deep breath. Did your chest move or your abdomen? You should feel your abdomen move first if you are breathing from the diaphragm. Your rib cage will follow. Practice this because you will need air to support your voice and your diaphragm provides it. It is also hard work, so you will need to get your breathing muscles into shape. Now place the fingertips of one hand on either side of your nose, and the other on your chest. Start humming, going up and down the scale? You should feel strong vibrations in the sinuses on each side of your nose, and none in your chest (or very little). If your chest is vibrating, work some more on breathing out with your diaphragm rather than your chest muscles. What you feel in your sinuses is resonance. The sound is vibrating in the sinuses, an effect forced by humming. You want to include more than your sinuses in this, however, or your voice will be intolerable nasal. You can easily hear the difference between full resonance and nasal resonance. Tighten your jaw, mash your lips together, and push your tongue up into your mouth, like you were trying to avoid taking foul tasting medicine. Now hum and listen. You should be making a very pinched, whining sound. Now, still humming, slowly relax your lips, jaw, and tongue. Go ahead and let your jaw drop (keeping your lips closed). You should feel the vibration spread to your tongue, lips, and even your teeth. Do you hear the difference? This tone should be full and pleasant, even though you are humming through your nose.

By using your diaphragm to breathe, you will be able to relax your throat and mouth when speaking. You will find that this not only allows you to maintain a higher pitch without hurting your vocal cords, but produces a clear tone which is pleasant to hear. You can also be more convincing by changing your speech habits. Don't lecture (a tough one for me), but discuss. Make statements as questions rather than demands. For example, when calling the Lane Bryant catalog department, don't say, "I would like to place an order." Instead try, "Could I place an order, please." That precise difference in phrasing was once given to me as an example, and it works, so I pass it to you. Finally, avoid speaking in a monotone. Speak with energy and enthusiasm and your voice will have a tendency to fluctuate in pitch, another common characteristic of the female voice.

CONCLUSION

Even though I have only touched upon some highlights, clearly, there are a lot of things to consider when deciding to venture into the outside world. This should not, however, frighten anyone away from their goal. Simply remember that you will be learning different habits and give yourself adequate time to learn. If you are impatient, then attend meetings of the gender community organizations, because there you will be appreciated and accepted even if you have not yet learned to do everything, or anything, right. And no matter what, just remember the most important element of all - believe in yourself.

----- Acknowledgements:

Although most of my discussion here has been based on years of trial and error and research, I have had the assistance of many others since joining ETV. I would particularly like to acknowledge the contributions of my wife, Jackie, Evelyn [redacted], and Donna [redacted] to this article.

...AND WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK CHI DELTA MU FOR WHENCE THIS ARTICLE CAME.

Great thought for the end of the day.

Imagine there is a bank which credits your account each morning with \$86,400, carries over no balance from day to day, allows you to keep no cash balance, and every evening cancels whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day.

What would you do?
Draw out every cent, of course! Well, everyone

has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow." You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness and success. The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of ONE YEAR
Ask a student who has failed his exam.

To realize the value of ONE MONTH
Ask a mother who has given birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of ONE WEEK .
Ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of ONE DAY
Ask a daily wage laborer who has ten kids to feed.

To realize the value of ONE HOUR
Ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of ONE MINUTE
Ask a person who has missed the train.

To realize the value of ONE SECOND
Ask a person who has survived an accident.

To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND
Ask the person who has won a silver medal in Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have! And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special... special enough to have your time... and remember time waits for no one ...

Submitted By Sara Day



BANGKOK - Transvestite boxer, Parinya Kiatbusaba, created a stir at a popular Bangkok boxing stadium on Tuesday when he refused to go naked for a weigh-in prior to a fight as required by regulations. "The rule is unacceptable, how can I strip in public," said Parinya with tears rolling down his cheeks.

The beautiful Thai kick boxer who wears make up, lipstick and a hair-band to keep flowing hair in place, fought 22 fights in the provinces before coming to Lumpini Stadium for his first big fight in the city. Not used to the rule of stripping naked for the weigh-in, Parinya's shock at the requirement and gushing tears won over local boxing regulators—they allowed the boxer to weigh-in wearing only underwear.

The shy, sixteen-year-old Parinya looks fragile but can be a terror when in the boxing ring according to local boxing experts. "So I would like to warn my opponent not to get distracted by my yes or my smile because this smile has knocked 18 boxers out in 22 fights over the past two years," Parinya told Reuters.

The northern Chiang Mai-born boxer said deep inside him, he felt like a woman but his aspiration was to be a great fighter. Thai boxing is regarded as a tough and raw sport because boxers are allowed to use their feet, knees and elbows as weapons during a fight.

Parinya's opponent, Pongsak (Oven) Sor Banna, who has seen 28 fights in his career, said the bewitching smile would not distract him at Tuesday night's fight. "I will not be shaken by his smile tonight. I will give him a big lesson so that he will learn that Thai Boxing is the game of a real man," Pongsak said.

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For those of you who think boxing is a great "sport", a place you might want to visit when you are downtown paying your garbage tax, is city hall. Nestled among those hard working public servants on the seventeenth floor is Buffalo's Boxing Hall of Fame. Perhaps we should make it a destination for the next night out.



"Just think my very first party dress.
You're the best Mom in the whole world."



"Hey, Pop, may I borrow your padded bra?"

REVIEW

Movie

BOYS WILL BE GIRLS

*A chromosome dilemma among the children*By NICOLE PERADOTTO
News Staff Reviewer

IMAGINE a screenwriter pitching the script for "Ma Vie en Rose" to Hollywood: "It's the heartwarming tale of a 7-year-old boy who wears makeup, fantasizes about becoming a bride and pees sitting down."

You can bet your blockbuster's budget he'd never eat lunch in that town again.

In the American entertainment machine, the taboo is often treated as low comedy or high Jerry Springer. It's either Patrick Swayze in drag or a sobbing husband confessing to a daytime talk show host that he likes to fondle his wife's stiletto heels.

That's not the case in Europe. It embraces the untouchable and doesn't need high jinks to pull it off. Take Louis Malle's "Murmur of the Heart," for example, an endearing drama about no less a hush-hush topic than incest.

Translated, the title of the Belgian import "Ma Vie en Rose" is "My Life in Pink." That's the color of choice for Ludovic, a boy who would be girl — and will be once he finds his missing X chromosome, he matter-of-factly tells a friend. He'll do anything to switch genders, even if it means locking a female classmate in the bathroom so he can play Snow White instead of a dwarf.

Made famous by chanteuse Edith Piaf in her song "La Vie en Rose," the idiomatic translation of the movie's title means seeing the world through rose-colored glasses.

In that respect, Ludo is not alone.

Everyone in his neighborhood wears the same prescription. While Ludo expects that his taste in lacy frocks will be greeted with approval — a delusion that can be attributed to his youth — the adults in this prosperous suburb create their own utopia without the age excuse.

And then Ludo (an impish charmer named Georges Du Fresne) and his friend Jerome (Julien Riviere) are caught playing bride and groom. The neighborhood, outraged that the facade of perfection is being pulled back, retaliates.

What begins with subtle put-downs ends with outright banishment.

Jerome asks his teacher if he can move to another seat. When she wants to know why he doesn't want to sit next to Ludo, he replies in his father's voice, "I don't want to go to hell."

A petition drive forces the self-described "girlboy" from school.

After his father (Jean-Philippe Ecoffey) loses his job, Ludo wants to know if it's his fault.

"No," his dad answers. "People are s---."

His closest ally, his mother (Michele Laroque), starts losing her grip and blames Ludo for the family's woes. Only his grandmother (Helene Vincent) manages to wrest herself from the hysteria. A hipper version of her daughter, she drives a yellow sports car and longs to be her younger, wrinkle-free self again. It's only natural that she would sympathize with her grandson's longings.

The little boy also finds comfort in Pam, a Barbie-like television vixen who blows gold dust on her targets to make them act the way she wants.

When Ludo turns to his sister (Cristina Barget), she pulls out her biology text and explains the chromosomal difference between boys and girls. From that, he figures his distress can be explained as a "scientific error":

When God was passing out the X's and Y's from heaven, one of his X's was accidentally knocked into the garbage. Then a stray Y flew down the chimney and his fate was sealed.

While the beginning of the movie is shot in vibrant shades of red and pink, the colors change to somber hues of blue and gray as the backlash against Ludo heightens. Even though it ends on an upbeat note, reality has set in.

Most satisfying about "My Life" is its conviction to keep the action far from the psychiatrist's couch. There's no attempt to define Ludo's predilections. He is what he is. Maybe he won't be that way in the future; maybe he will.

MOVIE

Ma Vie en Rose

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ½

A 7-year-old boy creates mayhem in his neighborhood when he decides he wants to be a girl.

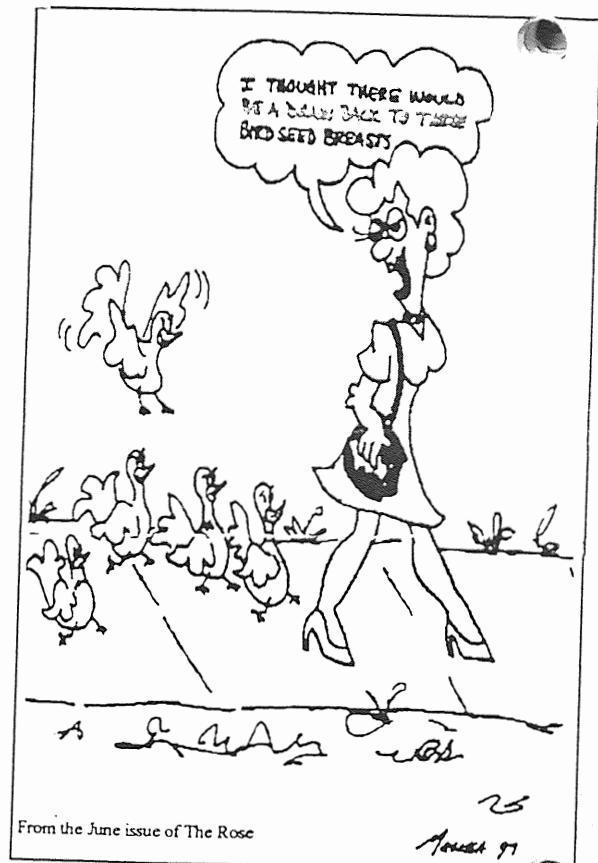
Directed by Alain Berliner. Stars Georges du Fresne, Michele Laroque, Jean-Philippe Ecoffey and Helen Vincent.

Rated R, opening today in the Amherst Theater.

Such a straightforward approach is possible only because the story is told from the youngster's point of view.

From a 7-year-old vantage point, a preference for dancing and dolls isn't the result of an overcontrolling mother, as one neighbor speculates, or his parents' desire to have a girl instead of a boy.

To him, girls have all the fun. Take that, Hollywood.



From the June issue of The Rose

FINAL REMINDER, THIS IS YOUR
LAST NEWSLETTER IF YOU HAVEN'T
RENEWED!!! WE'LL MISS YOU!!!!