

Monmouth Ocean Transgender Group
Affiliate of Renaissance Transgender Assoc.

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Monmouth & Ocean News

February 1998

The President's Corner

Hello Again Girls,
How about January's meeting! Was that a
great one or what? I'll tell you this, if we
keep the programs coming in like Sgt. Della
Fave, then we may need to start thinking
about advertising to the general public!

Now for a reality check - I was happy to see
so many new faces last month. It really is
proving my suggestion that we may double
the size of our group at some point this year.
It would be a huge success if we can accom-
plish this.

So now on to the business at hand - We are
pleased to present the program for this
month: Dr. Lee Etscovitz, "A Transgender
Workshop". This should also prove to be a

very interesting meeting. Hope to see everyone
there!

Other goings on: Get well soon, Elaine; I am
keeping you in my thoughts! Sorry, Frannie, I
was hoping you would enjoy more success with
the store. Telephone Line: We are receiving
about 15 to 20 calls per week; not too shabby!

I am trying to plan future events and I would like
to know if any person is interested in the Miss
MOTG Beauty Pageant. Please let me know
ASAP.

FOOD & STUFF: I am asking that if you would
like to bring some munchies to the meetings,
PLEASE DO! It would be a great help to me
and my staff (read that as Kay, Vikki, Elaine and
Gloria). Some suggestions: cheese + crackers,
cookies, fruit and veggies with dip, pretzels,
chips, cake, or whatever else you can think of.

In closing, I am in need of two reliable persons
to assist at each meeting. Jobs are:

1. Door check person - Duties: collect dues at
door every month;
2. 50-50 salesperson* - Duties: sell tickets and
hold drawings monthly.

*Must be able to add and to divide by 2.

Please see me at the February meeting to apply!

Until next month

Love,
Stephanie

FEBRUARY 28TH - Dr. Lee Etscovitz "A Transgender Workshop"

It's back to the main Church building for
our February meeting. We'll have lots of
space to spread out to welcome our
speaker, who is a trained and experienced
counselor, as well as a distinguished
member of the Renaissance Board.

Coming Out - Part 1: Put It In Writing

by Sarah

In many transgendered people's lives, there comes a time when they feel it necessary to "come out". Feelings of great apprehension usually accompany the idea of coming out. But preparing for this important event can help you stay in control and decrease your apprehension. Also, the way you come out has a dramatic effect on the reactions of the people to whom you come out. This article is the first in a series that will look at different aspects of coming out, and are based on my and other's experiences.

I feel strongly that a written letter is the best mechanism to use when coming out. This article's purpose is to convince you of the same, and to help you construct your own coming out letter. I believe that a letter can honestly describe many ranges of gender identity, gender confusion or even gender ambivalence. This article is my opinion, you are free to disagree.

By coming out in a letter, you achieve several things:

- You **allow your recipients to have their own private reaction**. Whether it be shock, disbelief, or blithe acceptance, people deserve their own initial reaction without you being there to see it. Because they care about you they will *want* to have a good reaction, but not everyone has an instantly favorable reaction to

this sort of news.

- You **allow your recipients to reread** the letter. This is impossible with a face-to-face conversation, or a phone call. One friend of mine was completely floored when he received my letter. It wasn't until two days after the initial reading that he could pick the letter up again, reread it, and give it full consideration.
- You **avoid the 'rumor-mill'**. By sending a letter, everyone has the same information and receives it at roughly the same time.
- You can **get the letter 'just right'**. Some people are better speakers than others, but when it comes to something like this, there's a lot to say. You want to be convincing, caring, and thorough. Spend the time to carefully put your thoughts on paper. Read it over for spelling and grammar mistakes. Have a friend (who already knows) read it and give you feedback.
- You **save time!** Let's say you want to come out in-person or over the phone. In my estimation, you will have to spend an hour with each person. In my experience, it can be quite a lot more time than that - some people are very curious! How many family members, and friends do you have?

(Continued on Page 9)

Calendar of Events

Mar 24-29, 1998—IFGE "Crossing Borders" Convention,, Toronto, Canada, 781-899-2212. E-mail address: XBorders98@aol.com. Website: www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/5710/

Jun 10-14, 1998—The 16th BE ALL Convention, Pittsburgh, PA. For more information, write to: BE ALL '98, P.O. Box 15408, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

July 15-19, 1998—6th Annual SPICE Convention for spouses and partners, with special workshops for the men. Atlanta Airport Sheraton Inn. Contact Dr. Peggy Rudd, PO Box 5304, Katy, TX 77491 (fax 281-347-8747)

Oct 30-Nov 3, 1998—Halloween Weekend Cruise to Fantasy Fest on Royal Caribbean's "Sovereign of the Seas". Special Rates available. Call Florence at 800-958-6299 ext. 2258. The group pin number is 388987. Or contact Carol and Babs by e-mail at BC and Co@aol.com for more information.

Nov 5-8, 1998—Paradise in the Poconos A getaway weekend for crossdressers (and spouses) at a new deluxe facility. Contact JoAnn Roberts, CDS, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 9406, Phone 610-640-9449, e-mail address: Poco@cdspub.com. Website: www.cdspub.com.

MOTG CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 28, 1998

DR. LEE ETSCOVITZ

MARCH 28, 1998

APRIL 25, 1998

MAY 23, 1998

JUNE 27, 1998

JULY 25, 1998

AUGUST 22, 1998

SEPTEMBER 26, 1998

ANNIVERSARY PARTY

OCTOBER 24, 1998

NOVEMBER 28, 1998

DECEMBER 19, 1998

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Views from Gloria's Gallery.... ***(a column for partners and spouses)***

This month I'm devoting my column to reprinting a very special article by Frances Fairfax of Tri-Ess. Vikki is currently compiling a list of books in our MOTG library, so watch for it in next month's newsletter.

A Request to the Crossdressers Reading this Article: **PLEASE SHOW THIS TO YOUR** **WIFE OR PARTNER**

As always, you are encouraged to write to me at my e-mail address: [REDACTED]@HOME.COM, or at the P.O. Box. If you wish to call, my phone number is: 732-[REDACTED].

Crossdressing 101 - A College Course for Crossdressers' Spouses by Frances Fairfax

If you are a crossdresser's spouse or partner, (or a crossdresser, for that matter!) you've probably been bombarded by book recommendations. Each friend you chat with has her own favorite, one she found most useful when she was first trying to cope with crossdressing, or one she found most insightful several years later. Let's assume you have just been given, as was a friend of mine recently, a "care package" of several such books:

My Husband Wears My Clothes by Dr. Peggy Rudd
Vested Interests by Dr. Marjorie Garber
You Just Don't Understand by Dr. Deborah Tannen
Coping With Crossdressing by Dr. JoAnn Roberts
Crossdressing, Sex and Gender by Drs. Vern and Bonnie Bullough
Crossdressing With Dignity by Dr. Peggy Rudd
The Cross and the Crossdresser by Vanessa S.
Crossdressers and Those Who Share Their Lives by Dr. Peggy Rudd

What a wonderful care package! Just don't try to gobble all those cookies at once, though, or you'll have an awful case of mental indigestion! But where DO you start? If I may be so bold as to suggest a spouses' "Crossdressing 101" curriculum for the 1997-98 school year, it would go something like this:

Your Fall Semester would start out with the Peggy Rudd classic, *My Husband Wears My Clothes*. Take your time and digest this one, and don't be afraid to enter into your emotions, even the stages you've already "put behind you." For homework, review the communications techniques Walter Bockting taught us at SPICE, then practice them with your husband. Schedule some time to talk over some of the issues with your husband. Take it in very small doses. You will not be graded, and there is no term paper due this quarter!

Next, I'd tackle *Coping With Crossdressing* by JoAnn Roberts.

JoAnn is a crossdresser, but this is a practical, down-to-earth sort of book. It's good to know what an experienced community leader thinks is important for wives to understand. By this time you and your husband should be talking on a regular basis. ("Yeah, sure!" you might say, but this is important. If the two of you don't talk until there's some big bad issue to talk about, you've let those easily handled mole hills turn into Mt. Everest!)

Now I'm going to assign some outside reading! (I might as well confess right now.... I'm one of those teacher types. I might have turned into the "old maid school teacher" my mother herself wanted to be, except my dear husband came along while I was still in college.) Anyway, get your hands on Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand*, about the different male-female communications patterns.

The next book in the regular fall curriculum ought to be *Crossdressing With Dignity*. Can a crossdresser (can his wife?) move beyond stereotypes, fear, guilt, shame, etc., to find not only self-acceptance but peace and dignity? Peggy shows us how in this very practical book, full of personal anecdotes and hope. Don't skip over the research summaries and tables in the back. You must have them memorized by the end of the semester! (NOT!)

For light reading over your mid year break, browse through *Crossdressers* and *Those Who Share Their Lives*. You'll meet some interesting people through the photos and text. And no, that's not Peggy's Melanie on the cover!

The Spring Semester of "Crossdressing 101" takes you into some upper-level material (If you'll look in the Course Catalog, it's the equivalent of History 300), but don't let that scare you. *Crossdressing, Sex and Gender*, by the husband-and-wife team of Drs. Vern and Bonnie Bullough, is a comprehensive multicultural history, right down to current explanations of crossdressing and what to do about it. It's fascinating! This one book will take you all the way to next June and a college degree!

Now you're ready for Graduate School. *Vested Interests* is by Harvard English professor Marjorie Garber. The book jacket calls it a "tour de force of cultural criticism" - and that's an understatement! It's best taken in small doses, but you may be unable to put it down, even if you've never heard of half the books and plays she mentions in which some form of "crossing" occurs. This one isn't about us coping with crossdressing; it's about our collective culture coping with "crossings" of all sorts. If you have another whole summer to spend reading, just start on *Vested Interests*.

You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned *The Cross and the Crossdresser*. I'll get back to it at another time. The religious issues involved in crossdressing, and the available books and articles on the subject, deserve a course description of their own!

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Other Support Groups of Interest

Western Central/New Jersey Support, meets 1st Saturday of the month at Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing. Call Susan at 973-████████ or Dorothy at 215-████████ (weekends only). Write to Po Box 0034, Montville, NJ 07045 or e-mail: ██████████@aol.com.

Delaware Renaissance, meets 2nd Saturday of every month. PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808. Phone 302-376-1990 or email to: ██████████@aol.com.

Transit (TS -oriented support group), meets 2nd Wednesday of every month. Phone 908-722-9884.

Chi Delta Mu (Tri-Ess CD support group), meets 2nd Saturday of every month. PO Box 1, River Edge, NJ 07661-0001. Hot Line 800-484-7593 (code 4985). E-mail: cdm@carroll.com.

Renaissance Greater Philadelphia, meets 3rd Saturday of every month in King of Prussia. Write to Renaissance GPC, 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, PA 19087. Call 610-975-9119 for information. Website: <http://www.ren.org/LibertyBelles.html>.

Sigma Nu Rho (Tri-Ess CD support group), meets 4th Saturday of every month. Write to Sigma Nu Rho, 1092 St. Georges Ave., Suite 234, Rahway, NJ 07065. Contact: Carol Ann ██████████. Phone/Fax (908) ██████████. E-mail: ██████████@MCIONE.com. Hot Line 800-484-7666 (code 1257).

Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), write 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, NY 10014, or call 201-794-1665, Ext. 332. Group meets in Manhattan.

Imperial Queens and Kings of NY and NJ, meets 1st Friday of every month. Call 212-229-1968.



THE FOUR PERCENT CHANCE

By Holli

As I scan graffitied walls
My eyes behold a stark truth,
As my heart hammers and falls
Through the crux of my gut,
To flush my masculinity
Into anxious hysteria,
To breach my anonymity
In this inverted temple,
Where my shroud begins to fray
Into the crucible of exposure
Where my femininity's held at bay
And immersed in ruptured softness.
As we stand within our presence
Your extension hinged our plight,
As I condense in clutched reason,
We consider our possibilities tonight.



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Essentials for Every Crossdresser's Purse

by Diane

What items should every crossdresser have in her purse? Though it may appear to be, this is not a set up for a joke. After years of going out in public dressed as Diane I have developed a list of essential items that I always carry. Some of the items are very obvious, but many only became apparent after I needed it and didn't have the item on me. Hopefully, I can spare some of you the inconveniences I have dealt with myself. I decided to break the list down into two lists. The first is the list of items that should never leave your purse unless being used. All of the items in this list are inexpensive and therefore reasonable to leave in your purse. The second list is of things that need to be carried by you everyday whether you are in boy or girl mode. These items require you to move them into your purse when needed. Both lists are not meant to be all-inclusive. Yes, all this stuff will fit in most purses, except maybe those really teenie weenie ones.

Items kept in Purse all the time

- * **\$5 or \$10** - Some emergency cash should be stuffed away in a side compartment. If you forget to move your cash from your wallet to your purse at least you have some cash.
- * **Phone card** - The card should have at least ten minutes time on it. Unless you only call local, this is a good idea.
- * **Xerox copies** of important documents - Documents like your AAA card or proof of health insurance for example. Used only as a backup.
- * **Aspirin** - Clubs, bars and meetings can be very loud. You don't want a headache ruining your good time.
- * **Safety pins** - These can be a life saver if you lose a button or snap. Two or three in different sizes are good.
- * **Concealer Stick** - Very handy to touch up small areas. Be sure it is in the same shade as your foundation.
- * **Folding hairbrush and/or comb** - Let's face it, if you have no way to fix your hair after coming in from a windy night you're going to be self conscience and miserable.
- * **One dose of any medication you may need** - I carry an allergy tablet with me because sometimes smoke will bring on my allergies. Someone else might carry antacid or a dose of a prescription they need on occasion.
- * **Important phone numbers** - If you have a friend or family member that knows about your crossdressing, always keep their number handy.
- * **Exact change** - Good for local phone calls and tolls. If you don't mind driving through the manned toll booth and have a phone card it is not necessary.
- * **Qtips** - Too many possible uses to list. It is preferable if these are of the makeup type (one end flat like an applicator and the other pointed).
- * **Tissues** - Like Qtips, a million and one uses.
- * **Barrette or scunchie** - If you have long hair sometimes you're going to need to make sure it keeps out of your face or isn't blowing around.

- * **Condom** - Even if you think you will never need one of these babies it can't hurt to have it. Of course if you're married you better never be needing one!
- * **Band-Aids** - Not only for cuts. In a pinch these can be used to fix a fallen hem line.
- * **Breath mints** - You don't want to be known as the woman with the dragon breath now do you?
- * **Pen and paper** - To jot down names, notes, numbers, etc..
- * **Nail clippers and file** - If you keep your nails long like I do you already know what a pain it is when a nail breaks or gets a rough edge to it.

Items to be put in Purse before you go out

- * Address and phone number of where you are heading
- * Cash
- * Drivers license
- * Health insurance card
- * AAA or other auto club card
- * Credit card(s)
- * ATM card
- * Any other important papers you need to carry
- * Car keys
- * House keys
- * Beeper

That's it. Really I am sure each of you can add to the above lists. Even after several years I still from time to time discover some new "must carry" item. I guess what you carry with you while crossdressed is only limited by your imagination and of course the size of your purse.

Diane

If you enjoyed this article and want to read more, check out my web site at: <http://members.aol.com/diane1962/diane.html>. My E-mail address is: [REDACTED]@aol.com

COMING OUT

(Continued from Page 2)

- Are you really willing to spend *that* much time repeating the same things over and over again? I know I wouldn't, and that would make it hard to do an effective job with every person. In addition, if you're coming out at work, a letter will probably be your *only* vehicle for educating many of your coworkers, and getting your message across.

These are the reasons I believe that coming out in a letter is preferable to "word-of-mouth". Writing a letter is more work initially, but I think it saves time in the long run.

Of course, a letter can save even more time by answering many questions your readers will have before they even ask them. Next month, I'll look at some common questions people ask when you come out. If you put them in your letter, you can avoid answering them to each person.

Some Thoughts From a Friend Who Has Flown South...

Hi Gang:

Thought you would enjoy the story below, which I wrote for *Tapestry*. To all of you, who have harbored those fears, I am sure Vikki, Elaine, Teri and others will vouch your fears are harmless. Go to a meeting just once, meet others and you are out of that "damn" closet of self "Put Downs". That first step out of the closet is your first step on your own voyage to Star Trek. It's like the first step into a new job. We all had those first butterflies. Afterward we thought, "What was I worried about?" Such groundless fears! Just integrate your other side with your male self and the rest follows. You don't have to flaunt your other side, but you don't have to be ashamed of it either. If Cinderella got to go out to a Ball, can't you go to a meeting? I did, and you can go 12 times a year to MOTG. Oh, you can talk about cars, home repair or that frock you wanted to wear. You can indulge in girl talk, showing baby pictures and telling about yourself, and somewhere it does all come about. Fear need not be a lifelong chain about our ankle. Once we shed it, we take off showing some common sense. Keep in mind (even if a nonsmoker) the Virginia Slims commercial, "You have come a long way, girl". Now go and enjoy life. I did.

I am off to the beach today in my two-piece, cooler and umbrella. I might be read, but then I can go home, put on a nightgown, make model planes and even watch the Dallas cowboys get wiped out again, and think "Cinderella did it, why not me?" She feared all would only think of her as a scullery maid. Once you realize you are far beyond that put down, you are out of the closet. I know I was. So what are you waiting for?

Take care now.

Love,

Dianne, "the Beach Princess"

THE GREEN BIKINI

By Dianne

Hi there. My name is Dianne. I have always, more or less, been like a little Barbie Doll sitting on your shoulder, my legs crossed, in my green bikini, fluffing my hair and filing my nails. I have even been known to jab you with my nail file. I was the one that talked you into trying on your sister's dress. Wasn't it fun? Oh, how you worried about getting caught as we twirled in front of the mirror. You promised never to do it again, but we did.

High school came, with all those proms. With a roving eye, we switched back and forth—sitting there in that old stuffy suit, trying to decide whether we liked the pink or the yellow dress best. We went to sleep dreaming of OUR very own prom dress.

I remember crossing my arms in utter disgust, turning bright red when you and the "good old guys" went four-wheeling. Such

unladylike language, and those jokes! Really! I had to contain myself, remembering you had to protect your macho image. However, all that beer gave me a headache. Your breath would have fried a dragon. All I thought was how nice some *Taboo* would smell at the moment. You went home and decided to pump some iron. Then you woke in a sweat and went into a cold shower. But it didn't work—I was still there. I changed into a nice little leotard, worked out also, and then went into the shower with my green bikini. "Please go away," you said. I shrugged. "When will he ever learn?" I thought.

I remember being called in one day "Up There". The Big Guy sat me down. "Are you packed?" He asked. "All set," I said. "I have two extra green bikinis, a spare nail file and a bottle of polish". He cringed. He doesn't approve of my green bikini. Anyway, He reminded me that this was a lifelong assignment. "Take it very seriously, watching over another. See you back in eighty or ninety years", he said as I smiled sweetly. I noted he hunched his shoulders and shook his head as I left. He muttered something about "green bikini".

Watching over you has been very trying at times. That is one of the reasons we are having this long talk. Your eating habits have to change—all that red meat and fattening food! I don't want to go back early. Being an angel is very tough. I have always been there in your ups and downs. "I am not much of a man," you cried at times. "Really," I said, "if you would only listen". I am very proud of you. You gave up Monday Night Football to watch the kids in a school show; you changed many diapers; and when your wife was sick you acted almost like an angel, hovering about. You see, it does rub off. I am not that bad to be stuck with. When I left "Upstairs", I grabbed an extra bag of sunshine. Bet you never know that. That's why when you see a rainbow or a sunset, you smile. I made sure you had them always in your heart.

I keep a ledger, writing down all those warm smiles and the good deeds you have done. That way, when we go back up there we can bypass all the paperwork, zip through the gates and get your set of wings. Gabriel always waves. I think it's my green bikini. Not as bad as you thought, huh! Me, I get another gold star on my forehead, like those spelling contests in first grade. I am up to five. I get to pick my next assignment. No more smelly gym rooms. Nope. Next time, I want a job in one of those places like Victoria's Secret. Who knows, I might see you again. We have to keep in contact. It's that "Girl" thing. You know, you have your harp and wings and someone comes in with you perched on their shoulder. We wink and they say, "Do you have anything in the way of a green bikini?"

Being an angel is a tough job, but someone has to do it!