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February 1998

Buffalo Belles

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BUFFALO BELLES

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NU PHI CHI

FEBRUARY, 1998

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

Hello, Sisters.

Hope all of you enjoyed the holidays in one fashion or another. This year I said I was going to take it easy and keep it as stress free as possible. I actually did manage to keep the hectic holidays at a manageable level. But as far as taking it easy, well... I did have a good time visiting with friends, running around and generally enjoying this festive time of the year. I hope that you spread some kindness and good cheer around when the opportunity was there.

Our first meeting of the new year occurred on January 3rd and the turnout was a respectable " 13 Members and 2 guest ". We welcomed a new member, Cindy and her wife, and look forward to many more pleasant evenings together.

At the business part of the evening, we were reminded that our annual dues are payable now. The amount you owe will be on the address label of the newsletter envelope. Please pay

as promptly as possible.



Jean has again obtained the services of the Cactus Kickers to lead the Buffalo Belles through an evening of

line dancing at our next scheduled meeting on February 14th. It's being held on the 2nd Saturday due to a schedule conflict with our site hosts. For those who may have a problem attending on the meeting date (it's Valentine's Day), I would suggest a romantic evening on Friday or perhaps an earlier celebration. There's nothing that says you have to celebrate love on Valentine's Day. Why limit it to just that day? Be original! Be creative! Surprise that special someone by not following the crowd.



As an incentive to be at the next meeting, there will be prizes for the "best" western/cowgirl outfit and best "Valentine" outfit. Whatever your reason, throw on some comfortable shoes and head on down, partner.

After the meeting, about eight of us met at the Stage Door and experienced some of the best singing ever heard on Karaoke Night. Later a smaller contingent ventured over to the Underground for a few more drinks and dancing.



On Saturday, January 17th, the Belles had an off site meeting originating at Attilio's Salon in Kenmore. Although only five attended, all agreed it was well worth it. The staff of Attilio's was very friendly and were eager to please. Doreen and her crew truly made us feel at home. What pleased me, besides a great makeover and wig restyling, was the fact they didn't 'push' us to purchase any product or service. That will always work for me. The three hours spent there went by so fast I couldn't believe it was time to go when the church tower across the street struck nine. I'll be back.

The evening wasn't over, though. We had a grand opening of a new bar to attend. The place is called Finley's

(located on Bailey Ave. about a half mile from the University of Buffalo Main St. campus). It will be catering to a gay crowd mostly, but this night it was a mixed crowd of straight and gay. It was also invitation only, something we didn't know about ahead of time. But using some feminine Belle charm and assurances that Finley really wanted us there, we were in the door and soon enjoying the food and drinks, the music and the well dressed crowd.

After a couple of interesting hours there, Patti and myself were overwhelmed by the urge to dance (and the need for a less smoke filled place) and soon headed downtown to Club Marcella. Donna and a friend soon followed and this group of Belles managed to stretch the evening to last call. The next day, once again my feet had a conversation with me about wearing comfortable shoes. Some day I may listen.

What does this all mean, besides wearing comfortable shoes? Just that you should try to get out and enjoy yourself, if you're not already doing that. After a Buffalo Belles meeting perhaps. Or at our off-site meetings during the week. Or just pick a place and go. You're not getting any younger, girlfriend. How about an out of town convention where no one would know you? There's one coming up at the end of March in Toronto, Canada (IFGE's Crossing Borders '98). Just a two hour drive. If you find your sense of adventure, have the means and are interested, check your past issues of the

Buffalo Belles for information on attending. Maybe I'll see you there. A few last items I want to tell you about. I visited a clothing consignment shop named "Flash Point" in Cheektowaga. A very nice selection of all kinds of clothes from casual to formal. The owner, Phyllis, is one of the most friendly and pleasant people I've met in a long time. I chatted with her for over an hour before I tried anything on. Very accommodating to the needs of our community. She can arrange to close the store for you, if you give her a call before you arrive. (897-2995, located at 2972 Genesee St.)

If you're looking for a seamstress who understands the tailoring needs of us ladies (and who has sewed for some of Buffalo's best drag queens) try Tina Mack (896-3571).

Hope to see you at the next meeting. Stay warm.

Hugs, Camille

KATHY'S NOTES

Dear Sisters,

It is my duty to pass along some sad news. We have lost a dear friend to many of us, as Ann Hill suddenly passed away New Years Eve. Many of you had met Ann at either Riverside Gala Weekends, or when she came up to Buffalo on an outing with her sisters from NW PA.

Ann was really special. She had a warmth in her heart that will always be remembered. Let me

give an example of the caring nature she had, that we can all learn from and emulate. At RGW a couple of years ago, I spent much of one evening sitting and talking with her in the bar. She was a great conversationalist. Her tales of her life, both the good times and the bad were very interesting. During this time, she always kept her eye out for sisters who were alone. When one was spotted, she immediately would go and bring them over to our table. By the time last call was made, there must have been at least ten girls sitting together, all thinking they were the most special one there that night. She even brought a couple of "townies" over to join in our wide ranging discussions. Each of us that night thought we had just made one of our best friends ever. And we were right!

It was Ann's son Gary, who was the photographer at RGW, if you have had your portrait done at one of these events. To Gary, we can only offer our deepest sympathies.

In a related event, Ann had just been elected a couple weeks earlier to be President of Gemini. With Sarah Wall having left for the left coast in the fall, and Muriel and Claire Chandler in the process of moving to Florida nobody was left to pick up their past able leadership and the group has voted to disband. It is a shame, especially as their newsletter was so good and provided us with many articles we have reprinted in the last year or more.

Go in peace, Ann: you have done well.



Ann Hill

ATTENDANCE JANUARY MEETING:

JEAN ■
 PATTI ■
 DANALYN ■
 KATHY ■
 MICHELLE ■
 ANGELLA ■
 CAMILLE ■
 SUSAN ■
 KAROLINE ■
 VAUGHN ■
 DONNA ■
 DEBBIE ■
 CINDY ■ & CATHY ■
 BRENDA-guest

A special welcome for Cindy and wife Cathy, as they made their debuts with our group that evening and hope we will be seeing them often in the future!!!

SPECIAL MEETING AT ATTILIO'S:

Patti ■
 Angella ■
 Susan ■
 Donna ■
 Barbie-another new member making her debut, at an "out" meeting, no less!!

ANOTHER special weekday meeting is planned for March 18 at the Stage Door on Allen St. These are primarily held for those who say they can't make our usual weekend meetings because of work/family commitments. And for the rest of us, just another night for "Girls, just gotta have fun" For those who haven't been there in the past, there is a large changing room upstairs where we'll be meeting. Come on down, go on up, and break up the week long drab!

This is also the night the Cactus Kickers do there dancing downstairs, so you'll be able to kick up a leg with all those cowboys if you want. Another chance to wear that country outfit you put together for the line dancing night in February!

FREE COMPUTER anyone who wants to start learning a bit about commuters for the right price? Jean has an old Radio Shack 1000TL with 286 processor, 3.5 & 5" drives, monitor etc. available to anyone who is interested. Won't get you on the internet, but has a slew of basic programs with it. Also a printer. Contact her or Kathy. You have to write an article for the newsletter as payment!!



CHRISTMAS PARTY

With the IFGE Converntion in Toronto, in March, a reprint of a reprint
The Femme Mirror

Crossing the Border

by Janice ■

ED.NOTE: With our own Holiday En Femme coming up this fall in Calgary (See ad on opposite page), some members have expressed concerns about traveling across the U.S.-Canadian border en femme, going through Customs, etc. Here is a timely article from the Buffalo Belles newsletter on that very subject!!

With several girls talking about going to Xpressions First Annual Spring Gala, I have been asked about crossing the border while dressed. (Don't be a blonde! You know I mean crossdressed. I still haven't tried a nude crossing.)

This is something I cannot truly recommend. I have never directly contacted Customs on either side of the border to discover the potential legal consequences of doing so. The nearest I came to this was when I was talking in an unofficial capacity to a U.S. Customs official at the Genesee Air Show. I inquired if I could ask an unusual question, then I explained that I go up to Toronto quite often to visit friends. I asked what problems, if any, I might have if I were to cross the border (in either direction) dressed as I was in the photograph I then proceeded to show him. Needless to say, in the photo I was dressed, wearing a semi-formal, almost ankle-length blue dress with gold trim, and my favorite blonde wig. He examined the photo for a short period of time, glancing frequently from it to me. He eventually said he couldn't speak for Canadian Customs and didn't have all the U.S. requirements memorized, but he knew of no problems. He went on to say, "You might have to answer a few more questions than normal, but I'm sure you are not the first to do so, nor will you be the last." I thanked him for his time and proceeded to the flight line.

The way my so-called thought processes worked, I finally concluded Customs could not refuse to let me back into the States. At the most, they could give me a hard time, pull me over, and go over a large number of questions, but eventually Spring 1995

they would have to allow me entrance. They might not like who I am, or how I represent my nation, but they couldn't deny or revoke my nationality, no matter how much they might wish to. I also concluded that the maximum Canadian Customs could do would be to refuse me admittance and tell me to return to the States.

If you are considering any crossborder crossdressing, the logical and smart thing to do would be to contact Customs directly. However, I have never been accused of being either logical or smart.

In the past couple of years I have entered Canada close to a dozen times, and come back into the U.S. well over a dozen times, crossdressed. In fact, for the last several months I have gone no other way. These have included four day trips. One of these trips was a couple hours' walking trip over the Rainbow Bridge to view the Falls, and then back again.

I don't remember the date of my first trip back into the States. It was most likely in early 1993. My first trip into Canada was Christmas Day 1993. This was the easiest crossing ever, dressed or not dressed. I was asked only one question: "Do you have any gift over \$20.00?"

In all the times I have gone (I will not say "passed") through Customs, I have been requested to supply my Driver's License three times, once going into Canada and twice coming back to the U.S. The time I was requested to supply my Driver's License entering Canada (I wasn't even driving, I was on foot) I was also asked for my Social Security card. The two times I was asked for my license upon entering the U.S., I believe it was more a matter of observing my reaction to offering my license than actually viewing the license itself. I know one time the agent was looking at my eyes and didn't even glance at my license.

The majority of the time Customs asks the same two or three questions:

1. Nationality?
2. Purpose of visit?
3. Anything to declare?

I have never been asked why I was dressed the way I was, or what I thought I was doing. However, when they have asked if I have anything to declare, I have always been tempted to reply, "Isn't this enough?"

Despite my lack of recommendation, if you might still be considering a crossborder crossdressing trip I do highly recommend:

1. Above all, be honest. Do not lie. Give them your true name and address.
2. If requested, show your identification in a relaxed and expedient manner.
3. Definitely do not obtain or use a false name or address, or use false papers of any sort.
4. Try not to act either arrogant or intimidated.

There is one other item. While I will be going to Niagara-on-the-Lake April 1st, and will be very tempted, I will not reply to Customs, "April Fool's!"

And Straight From Calgary...

I have recently had a conversation with a senior officer of Canadian Customs & Immigration, who informs me that there should be absolutely no problem in this regard, providing that:

- a) our visitors can show some identification indicating they are U.S. citizens (or other nationality with a valid passport);
- b) they can explain the purpose of their visit to Canada and how long they expect to be in the country;
- c) they have no criminal record and are not carrying pornographic material;
- d) they present a reasonable appearance to Immigration officials and avoid wisecracks. (They may be asked a few more questions if traveling en femme.)

See you in November!

- Audrey ■

ALPHA OMEGA SILHOUETTE

OUR IMAGES...OUR SELVES

By Maria

Okay... I'll let you girls in on a little secret ritual of mine. On meeting days, I'm usually filled with anticipation of getting made-up and dressed for our once-a-month get togethers. I'll often spend the day doing chores in some state of "dress"... and to help me get in the mood even more, I'll steal away a half hour or so at my local library and browse through the "Girl" magazines... You know, *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, etc. I thoroughly enjoy this look inside the female psyche vis a vis the articles. The fashion suggestions and make-up/hair tips can be valuable, too. I adore looking at the gorgeous models flaunting their wares... subconsciously wanting to be like one of them while engaging all my femme fantasies.

Then the wet dishrag of reality hits me squarely in the face as I traipse home to begin my transformation. Try as I might, I'll never approach the threshold of femme perfection I've just spent the last hour poring over at the library. As exhilarating as the magazine trip can be, that's how much of a downer it can sometimes be, too. While my CD journey is rife with the struggle to accept Marla as she is, I still need outside inspiration, as I imagine many of you girls do, also.

It was during one of these Saturdays a few months ago that I found a happy medium (pardoning the bad pun... it's an occupational hazard). It's called *Mode Magazine*... and I found it quite by accident on the magazine rack at a local convenience store. *Mode* bills itself as the magazine for "style beyond size." This extremely well-produced magazine features the best in sizes 12, 14, 16 and up. The layout is exquisite in its tastefulness... The articles are as compelling as anything the reader would find in *Cosmo*... and the larger sized models are simply gorgeous... helping this girl realize that she does not have to be a size 6 to feel good about herself.

A quick browse can yield some great inspiration for outfits that we "slightly more endowed" girls can wear with zest. *Mode* also can help us with hair, make-up and accessory ideas. The magazine is also filled with tasteful advertisements for slightly larger sizes of everything from lingerie to evening wear... Most with toll-free telephone numbers for more information or ordering.

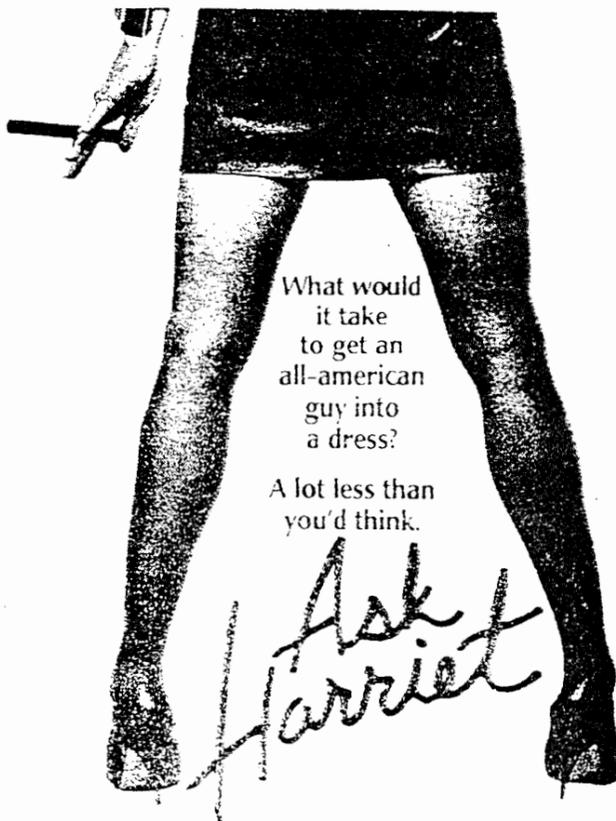
The overwhelming response *Mode* has received from inaugural readers and advertisers has prompted the publishers to take the magazine monthly beginning February, 1998... So look for *Mode* at your newsstand or library the next time you want some womanly inspiration... and leave *Cosmo* to the twenty-somethings. I'll never be a size 6... But thanks to help from *Mode Magazine*... I can still feel better about Marla.

Reviews

ASK HARRIET is a brash new half-hour comedy in the tradition of "Some Like It Hot," "Tootsie" and "Mrs. Doubtfire." New York's most popular advice column, "Ask Harriet," has always been written by a woman, until now! Super macho Jack Cody (Anthony Tyler Quinn), a notorious womanizer and hothead who wrote the tough, opinionated column "A Man's World," has been fired from most of the dailies in town and when a multi-million dollar harassment suit catches up with him, he's sent packing from the last respectable paper. He applies for the "Ask Harriet" job to take revenge on his editor and former flame, Melissa Peters (Lisa Waltz). And he is desperate for a job to keep his alimony up to date and his 10-year-old daughter Blair (Jamie Renee) in ballet lessons. With best buddy Ron (Willie Garson), a restaurant critic, in tow, Jack secretly applies for the position of writing the advice column on the death of the current "Harriet," confident that there's nobody better to tell women what they should do when faced with jerks like him. He thinks he can write the column from home, until Melissa insists on meeting the new "Harriet," so Jack goes to work transforming himself into one helluva good-looking woman.

8:30 PM

Thursdays FOX Network



OUT FOOLISH....

Franciene

Hard Work

I've been told, real women,
Not those like you and me,
Would rather not wear dresses,
But opt for jeans and a tee.

I've also heard that skirts are
out,
And most make-up too,
Long hair has also lost some
ground,
To a short and sassy 'do.

For years there have been loud
complaints,
'bout party hose and heels,
And I'm told they really hate,
The way a brassiere feels.

When straps are slipping, hose
is running,
And you're falling off your heels,
It's times like this it can seem,
That femininity reels.

How rough it is to be a woman,
Why would we want that life?
I guess I just can't empathize
with,
My long suffering wife.

But now real women have
denied,
The male-made fashion laws.
And though I wonder if this is
true,
It makes me happy because,

I shop the malls, boutiques, and
stores,
And I observe with glee,
If women just won't wear these
clothes,
They must be all for me!! ♡

Gender EUPHORIA

PRESS RELEASE

On December 18th, 1997, just days before the Christmas holidays, internationally known Transformation artist Jim Bridges, and his marketing director/model Gina Lance took to the airwaves of Southern California.

Invited by the producers of the Number 1 rated AM radio talk show on KFI 640 in Los Angeles, the "John & Ken Show", the stage was set for a forum/debate on cross dressing.

Ms. Lance, a listener to the show, had e-mailed the hosts and sent a copy of the Jim Bridges Catalogue priority mail when she overheard co-host John Kobylt declare that the one thing in life that he couldn't handle were "men in dresses"!

For an hour the subject was a heated topic. Radio co-host Ken Champeau was neutral, but his partner, John kept the fires burning. Four female callers phoned in, with their opinions ranging from acceptance to horror. One, the happy wife of a cross dresser, explained that her husband's feminine side made him a more complete person.

Jim Bridges explained that the average age of one of his customers was mid-forties, and that the majority were married or in a solid relationship. All held good, steady jobs; most highly paid professionals.

Gina Lance added that she was in a relationship with a professional woman and explained to Mr. Kobylt her history of cross dressing. From age four or five to the present. A common one indeed.

After an hour of talk, no minds had been changed at KFI Radio, but the airwaves of the 50,000 watt station were certainly buzzing with hot discussion over a nine state area!

IFGE/ TRANSGENDER TAPESTRY MAGAZINE

PO BOX 229, WALTHAM, MA 02254-0229

781/899-2212 (FAX) 781/899-5703

Email: IFGE@world.std.com

December 11, 1997

Buffalo Belles

PO Box 1701

Amherst, NY 14226-1701

Dear Ladies:

Happy Holidays from all of us at IFGE! Enclosed you'll find a complimentary copy of our second printing of *Aspects of Gender* by Lesley Gordon. We hope you enjoy it. If you wish to purchase more copies, an order form is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely,

R. Scott Gerdes

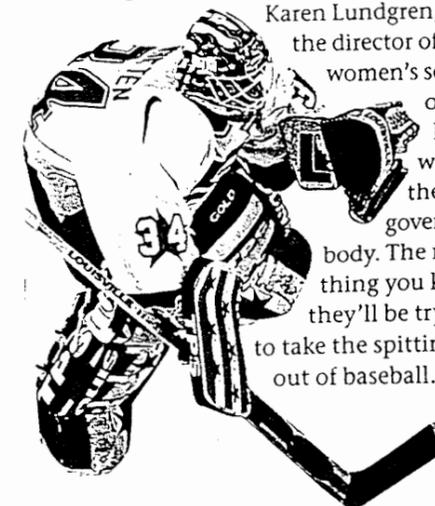
R. Scott Gerdes
Associate Editor, Transgender Tapestry

Enclosures: 2

NO HOLIDAY ON ICE

WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS TRIED TO REFINED men. Now they're trying to refine a traditionally male sport—ice hockey. In February, most people will get their first look at women's hockey—a game that is rapidly gaining popularity among girls and young women in North America—when it debuts as a medal sport in the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. What they'll see is hockey without checking, the vigorous and frequently violent body blocking that is intrinsic to men's hockey. "Because it's a nonchecking sport, women's hockey is faster, more skilled, and it requires more concentration," says

Karen Lundgren, the director of the women's section of USA Hockey, which is the sport's governing body. The next thing you know, they'll be trying to take the spitting out of baseball.



In the LIBRARY

The GLAADAlert is the weekly activation tool of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation

Ally McBeal's Botched Transgender Tale

The December 1 episode of Fox's critically acclaimed new show Ally McBeal botches a major transgender storyline, despite undoubtedly earnest intentions. When Ally becomes the attorney for Stephanie (played by openly gay actor and GLAAD board member Wilson Cruz), a transgender fashion designer who has turned to sex work to pay the bills, the lawyer finds herself offering an unorthodox defense for the solicitation rap: An insanity plea based on "transvestite fetishism." While Ally makes it clear that she does not think that Stephanie is crazy, and that it is just a defense tactic, Stephanie expresses great reservations and eventually refuses the strategy, noting she left home to escape being called "sick." Still, Ally calls upon psychological "experts" to diagnose Stephanie with "gender dysphoria," and one of them says that "He's [Stephanie] more like a woman, or thinks he's one," and calls Stephanie "confused." After Ally makes a deal with the judge to postpone ruling for a year while Stephanie works at Ally's law office, Stephanie finds a largely accepting environment, though is still faced with a few insensitive remarks. But Stephanie goes back to prostitution, and is murdered by, as a cop tells Ally, "A John [who] went crazy when he found out the Jane was a guy." Ally wonders why Stephanie would go back to the streets if she had a job, but applies Stephanie's last coat of lipstick as a way of trying to honor her in death.

Throughout the episode, confusion prevails among many characters-What pronouns should be used to address Stephanie? Is transsexuality a mental disorder? Does being comfortable with one's transgender identity make a person "not well?" The only one who is not confused is Stephanie, who has a clear sense of who she is. If this were the only message, the episode would have been a strong exploration of trans identity. Unfortunately, there are many unresolved assumptions which left a bad taste in the mouth of many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their friends who viewed the program. Without psychologists to counter the assertion that Stephanie is "confused," the viewer is left with the impression that she may have been mentally ill because of her gender role, even if she saw it otherwise. Also, the show fails to give a larger context to the reason Stephanie returns to the streets after getting the law office job. If one knew nothing about transgender people beyond this show, it would be easy to think that the murder had been caused by Stephanie's hooking, without recognizing the real threats all transgender people-not just sex workers-face in a society that is frequently hostile and violent towards their very existence.

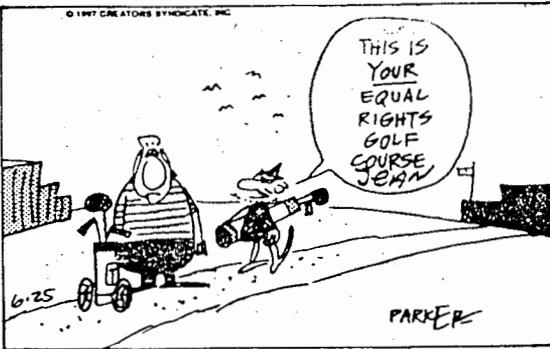
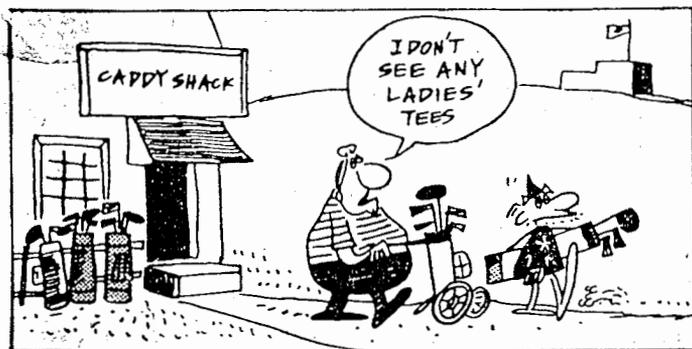
Please let Fox and David E. Kelley Production's know that their exploration of transgender themes is noteworthy-but that the character got lost in the show's "confusion" about how to address the larger issues of societal transphobia and reliance on the stereotypical media representation on transgender people as sad, desperate hookers.

Contact:

Brett King, Programming Director, Fox Broadcasting Company, PO Box 900, Beverly Hills, CA 90213-0900, fax: 310.369.1433, e-mail: askfox@foxinc.com

David E. Kelley, Executive Producer, Ally McBeal, David E. Kelley Productions, 10201 W. Pico Blvd., #80/26, LA, CA 90035, fax: 310.369.3037.

WIZARD OF ID



Tired feet, sore legs, backache. Need an excuse to wear heels to the office? A quote from John F. Wolher, Jr., MD, Chief of the Foot and Ankle Section, Lenox Hill Hospital, NY "An ideal heel height for a woman is 1 1/2 to 2 inches. This is not a magic number, simply the most comfortable. If a man wore a 1 1/2 inch heel he'd be more comfortable than with the traditional 3/4 inch heel."