



GIRL TALK

Powder Puffs of California — Serving the California Gender Community Since 1987

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August Meeting

It's hard to believe, but August is upon us. Soon September will be here with "Back-to-School" and all that stuff.

Here at Powder Puffs, we will hold our annual fund raiser for Laura's House, a shelter for battered women. Last year, the membership made a generous donation which resulted in both California Dreamin' and Powder Puffs being listed as a \$100 -plus donor in the annual report put out by Laura's House.

The whole issue of the battered spouse is a very complex one. However we, the transgendered community, can participate in the solution and these shelters are an excellent place for us to begin. In the process, we can show others that we are concerned with things other than the next clothing sale at Nordstrom's.

Thus, for August we are asking the members to dig into your closets and bring one or two pieces (or more!) of clothing to donate for our auction. We all have those "mistakes" which for some reason looked *sooo* good on the model in the picture or on the rack but for some reason ...

So join us on August 16th and have a lot of fun while helping a worthy effort.

Date: August 16, 1997

Place: Placentia Holiday Inn

Time: 8:00 pm.

Agenda: A Fund Raiser for
Laura's House

Man Dies of Gunshot Wounds Received in Robbery Attempt

Taken from the Los Angeles Times
(Orange County), July 1997

Submitted by Teresa

A 46-year-old Placentia resident died Saturday of injuries he suffered when he was shot during a July 3 robbery attempt in Artesia, authorities said.

Paul fix died at St. Francis Medical Center in Lynwood, where he was taken immediately after being shot in the upper body, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

The robbery took place shortly after noon in the lobby of the Best Western motel in the 16900 block of Pioneer Boulevard, when the assailant approached him and demanded money, according to Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Bob Killeen.

Though Fix, who was attending an electronics show in the area, was attempting to comply with the robbers demands, the gunman shot him once and then fled, Killeen said.

Within an hour of the shooting, deputies arrested Robert Cervantes, 31.

Cervantes remains in custody and is being held without bail. He is expected to be charged with homicide.

Reminder: In September we will be holding out Ten-Year Anniversary Soireé at the fantastic Crystal Room at the Burbank Holiday Inn!



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Membership rates. \$30/yr, \$12/meeting; \$150 covers dues & meetings for entire year. A Renaissance Education Affiliate.

RELIGION & CROSSDRESSING: INSIGHTS FROM KATHY HELMS

by Melanie Yarborough

Last fall, Tri-Ess Alpha Chapter President Kathy Helms spoke on the relationship between Religion and Transgenderism. As she pointed out, "This is significant because an awful lot of folks in the gender community are religious". Moreover, some on the fringe element of the Christian Right are seen as attacking the transgender community. As the focus of religious ire, we are forced to deal with these issues.

Kathy noted one tragic recent event, cited by IFGE's Merissa Sherrill Lynn at the Spring '95 Atlanta Action leadership convention. As it happened, two of the representatives there were coincidentally members of the Christian Coalition and Focus On The Family. They themselves were made the focus of resentment by other gender community members, who vented their frustration on them for past attacks from the Religious Right. This was, Kathy said, the equivalent of drawing a circle around these people and casting stones. What kind of community are we if we vilify and scapegoat our own members?

Warming to the topic itself, Kathy explained that religions are a way people make sense out of life. They tend to fall into the category of either MONAST or TRANSCEDENT.

Monast religions see everything as a continuum and interrelated, and aren't surprised at transgendered behavior. Hinduism teaches about reincarnation, so crossdressers may have been female in a previous life. Or Native American Shamanism teaches of the Berdache and Two-Spirit people, an affirmation of the feminine spirit.

Transcendent religions by contrast see things in terms of polarity: Good Vs Evil, Black vs. White, or in our case, Male vs. Female. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are all transcendent religions. To these duality-minded religions, confusion of the sexes is seen as unnatural.

The centerpiece of this argument is the Old Testament verse Deuteronomy 22:5. It says that men shall not wear what pertains to women-any who do so are detestable in the sight of God. On the surface, this is a pretty damning passage. When we hear someone quote this at us, it's the ultimate rejection; "It's as if your own religion tells you you're trash," as Kathy puts it.

But what does this verse actually mean? Many people who quote it have not done serious biblical study around it. Scholarly research reveals that the actual purpose, the "Framer's Intent", was a reaction by the Nation of Israel to pagan polytheistic practices of their neighbors.

Other religions of that time had both Gods and Goddesses. At certain Goddess' temples, some of the male priests would crossdress and offer themselves sexually to congregants as a representation of the Goddess herself. "It was this cultic temple prostitution which was being prohibited," Kathy notes, and not the broader issue of social crossdressing. On that subject, the Old Testament is silent. Any blanket condemnation of transgender behavior stemming from this would be the commentator's own biased interpretation, not the scripture itself.

When asked about the proper response to gender-baiting, Kathy counsels "Don't demonize people who would disagree with you-refuse to respond in kind". She also recognizes that there are some people so full of anger that they cannot be

Please see Religion, Page 5 

President's Message

by Dee Grady

Have you heard the joke about the bank clerk who called a customer claiming their checking account is overdrawn? When confronted, the customer exclaimed, "I must have money in my account. I still have checks!". Well, folks, I'm down to my last check AND our club's checking account is down to \$300. True, IFGE owes us some money for expenses accrued for the *Cal Unity* convention. But let's face it, one can't get water out of a rock. Until we get reimbursed we'll be making a few adjustments.

Additionally, few things have changed with Powder Puffs since last year. Most obvious is our new meeting room. Not only is the new management more friendly to work with, but we have the added bonus of greater security — very important for us. Many of you remember that two couples were robbed at gun point at the Pioneer Best Western while walking to our meeting room. Well it seems the violence has escalated (see *Don't Look Back*, Page 1). Fortunately, the Placentia Holiday Inn is set back from the freeway, and (hopefully) not such an easy target.

But this added security is not without cost. Our meeting room is more expensive. Also, it is more difficult for me to find food vendors. Those I have located are a bit more costly. As of this writing, our meeting expenses are running about \$370 per month. Other expenses, like newsletter & phone, are around \$170 per month.

So in light of all of the above and other factors such as lower attendance over the last several meetings, the Board (with an eye towards balancing the budget) voted to take more prudent fiscal measures. Thus, the meeting fee will be changed to \$15 per TG person. Of course, we will maintain the "Ladies Free" policy. Always have. Always will.

Additionally, starting this month we'll eliminate the changing room in order to help keep costs down. Spending \$65 for only one or two people is difficult to justify. However, we'll try and bring it back for the October Vendor Night meeting.

Speaking of October (nice segue, No?). The Holiday Inn needed to rent the meeting room for three consecutive days which conflicted with our meeting night. As a show of good faith, they offered us the room on another night for FREE! We choose the night of October 4th, because of less interference with the other groups in the area. So **NOTE: October's Vendors Night is the First Saturday, October 4th.**

Also, the Board voted to adjust the yearly membership dues to \$36 per year. At present, we have 45 registered members. This change, along with the others, will help cover some of the monthly expenses. This averages to a nice, round \$3 per month per membership. Membership runs from October 1st through September 30th. Still rather inexpensive, but necessary.

At the July meeting, only 16 voted for some very important issues. After getting the final vote total from Price-Waterhouse, I can proudly announce a new member to your Board, Jeri [REDACTED]. Not surprisingly, Jeri has already rolled up her blouse sleeves and is digging right in. Along with Diane, she has agreed to help plan some new social events. The dynamic duo of Jeri & Diane will also be getting new brochures printed and distributed to some of our local vendors and social spots. After the first of the year, look for some fun outings from these two. Thanks Girls!

I'd also like to thank Loren Wingert for serving on the Board. She was very helpful in volunteering for some duties during the last convention even though it is her busy time of the year. As she transitions I wish her the best of health and luck. Go Girl!

Another hot ballot issue confronted in this year's election was the question of becoming a Renaissance Chapter. The membership voted this down, mainly due to the fact that REA is re-organizing their newsletter and other issues. When things get settled for them, we'll look again at joining them as a Full Chapter. In the meantime, we'll remain an Affiliated Group.

Also, on the ballot was a question asking, "What do you expect from PPOC in the future?". The biggest response was the to have more social evenings. As mentioned earlier, Diane and Jeri are working on something after the first of the year. We will be having our Ten-Year Bash next month at the magnificent Crystal Room in the Burbank Holiday Inn and the Halloween Monster-Mash in October at the Fullerton Holiday Inn. After the first of the year, we'll plan some more fun things to do about 3 or 4 times a year.

Other responses included better food and speakers. I'll take the blame on this one. Since moving the meeting to Placentia, I've yet to find as many places which will deliver there as we had at the Best Western. But I'm still working on that one. When it comes to new speakers ideas, well, I'm running on empty. Any suggestion? Call, write or e-mail (PPOC@aol.com) No need to panic though, we do have the next couple of months planned. The Board will be helping me in this matter also. So look for improved meetings in the future.

Anyway, I think I've covered all the important things I needed to convey to you. I hope to see everyone at the August meeting. That night I'd like to try and raise at least \$100 for Laura's House in San Clemente. I wanted to do this in June, but only 14 people showed up and only three of them brought clothes to auction off. Please everyone contribute. Laura's House is a fine organization supporting the battered woman. They are VERY APPRECIATIVE of our unused clothing. Also our small donations to a long way to help save a mistreated woman. Show everyone that we as a community have a big heart and bring a least one piece of unwanted clothes. You'll feel better.

Hugs to all of you in the Community,

Dee





Editorial

by Kym Richards

MY FINAL COMMENTARY

I have had a month since the demise of *Cross Connection* to think about what I wanted to say as my final words to all of you. Given that this year saw the demise first of *Cross-Talk* and then the BBS, my original thoughts were to blast some connected angry thoughts. However, even as I prepare to bow out from the transgender community entirely, I feel a responsibility to try, one last time, to impart truth that you may not want to hear, but need to. (After all, that's what I used to do every month in the magazine.)

My honest opinion is that my use of the term "transgender community" is less than accurate, because what I have seen and experienced does not qualify as a "community". A community has a mutual support infrastructure, and lately an attitude of selfishness has had the effect of destroying the infrastructure I -- and many others like myself -- worked very hard to create for you.

This is not going to be a case of sour grapes, because the loss of the two resources I was operating is not the only loss you are facing as a result of your inability to provide financial support to those who have tried to be of service to you. IFGE is on the verge of defaulting on the lease for their headquarters, on the heels of being left with a substantial uncollectable balance with a magazine distributor who filed Chapter 11 early this year. Renaissance recently sent a letter to its members indicating that they no longer have the funds to publish their newsletter, and they are probably likely to have to give up their office space next. AEGIS has been given an ultimatum of sorts by Dallas Denny to become financially viable by the end of the year or risk losing the ability to continue publishing "Chrysalis" and provide resource information. ICTLEP is waiting for someone to deliver the eulogy after Phyllis Randolph Frye professed her exhaustion and no one has been able to adequately fill her shoes. Tri-Ess operates on a virtual shoestring and I find myself wondering how much longer they can continue.

What I do not believe any of you realize is that the loss of these support mechanisms seriously jeopardizes your freedom to express transgender identity. We live in an era where lawmakers, dependent upon the Christian conservative organizations to fund their re-election campaigns, will attempt to legislate anything "immoral" out of existence. How long will it be before we, the

transgendered, become their target? And if all the organizations and leaders who spoke up for you have been run out of existence because you didn't give them the support they needed to continue helping you, who is going to fight your battle for your freedom?

No one, that's who.

We may well find ourselves thrust 40 years into our past, where crossdressing took place completely in secret, with clandestine organizations ... where raids will result in drag queens being hauled away en masse ... where sex reassignment surgery will only be legal in a handful of countries, and you may not be able to return to your country of origin afterwards ... where there will be no weekend events where you can express yourself full time for a few days.

Sound farfetched? I suggest you think about it while you count the money you've saved for that new dress, or wig, or prosthesis, or whatever ... money that you *could* have given to IFGE, Renaissance, AEGIS, ICTLEP ... even for a subscription to *Cross-Talk* or *Cross Connection*.

I can tell you where I will be when those dark days come to pass. I will be somewhere, living my life, presenting an image to the world that is so conformingly "normal" that no one will realize the new restrictions should apply to me. Having spent the last ten years trying to be of service to this so-called "community", I am now going to look out for my own interests and self-preservation. In other words, I am getting on with my life and leaving all of you behind like a bad dream.

I realize that many of you are going to want to reply in anger to this final missive of mine. Save your time and energy: By the time you see this I will have shut down the Internet server at *Cross Connection* permanently, so I'll never see your response. And that's the way I prefer to make my exit ... unreachable and deliberately detached.

So, at least for me, the battle is over. For the rest of you, it is likely just beginning. Good luck to you all. You'll need it.

Kymberleigh Richards

Former Publisher, *Cross-Talk*

Former System Administrator, *Cross Connection* BBS

Former National Director, Tri-Ess

The times,

they are a changin'

— Bob Dylan 

'Miss Coco Peru' a Gender Bender

Taken from the Press-Telegram

July 16, 1997

"Miss Coco Peru," a funny, poignant coming-of-age story that's a hit in New York and London and with fans like Liza Minnelli and Melissa Etheridge, opens tonight at Masquers Cabaret, 8334 W. Third St., Los Angeles. Miss Coco is the alter ego of Clinton Leupp, who says he's not impersonating a woman but playing a man in drag. Says the New York Post, "Funny and thoughtful . . . the show speaks to both straights and gays." It continues at 8 p.m. Wednesday for an indefinite run. For tickets, \$10, call (213) 653-4848.

California TG Hate Crimes Legislation Meeting.

I received word from Trans-Action in San Diego that there will be a meeting put on by Life Lobby to discuss TG Hate Crimes Legislation for California. The Meeting date and time is August 9th, at 6:30pm. Location is the Holiday Inn, 595 Hotel Circle South. Ask where the TG legislation meeting is being held. The Hotel phone number is 619-291-5720. For further info contact Ellen McCormick 916- or Delores Vickerson of Trans-Action at 619-2

Submitted by: Shirley Bushnell The Transgender Menace Southern California 213-

The above was e-mailed to Powder Puffs. It is for your information only. Powder Puffs assume no responsibility for its content.

RELIGION

Continued from Page 2

rationally talked with, and she quotes the passage "Don't cast your pearls before swine". In other words, dialogue with those who are capable of dialogue.

It's crucial to educate yourself on religion and be able to respond with intelligent, researched arguments. One book recommended for those so inclined is, "Is It Okay To Call God Mother?" by Paul Smith, available at many religious bookstores. In it, the author does a study of female similes used in describing God. For example, Tertulian says "God is a Mother who nurtures us at her breasts".

Kathy concludes by saying "The [traditional] concept is that God is one gender. But God shows both male and female sides. If God can do this, why can't humans as well?"

10th Anniversary Soiree

Powder Puffs will be holding it 10th Anniversary Party in the Crystal Lounge at the Burbank Holiday Inn on September 20, 1997. For those of you who have attended the California Dreamin Convention there, you will remember it as the Lounge with the million-dollar view.

Ticket prices will be \$25 dollar and includes a light buffet. A no-host bar will be provided. Dress for the evening is designated as formal. this will be a great opportunity to get a little more wear out of that "I-Just-Got-To-Have-It" gown you bought (but shouldn't have). However, if budget constraints (or will power) have kept your wardrobe sensible, not to worry. Please plan on attending anyway. We want everyone to attend. Call up past Powder Puff members, friends, associates, whatever.



Miniskirts for Miniminds

By Erma Bombeck

Taken from the Press-Enterprise, November 22, 1995

You would have to be out of it not to notice that the more mindless TV becomes, the shorter the dresses.

Hemlines have gone from ankle to midcalf to the knees to slip-a-glycerine-tablet-under-my-tongue-she's-crossing-her-legs. Few women are endowed with two dangling appendages they can call attention to. Just because legs are thin does not mean they are shapely.

Take Murphy Brown and Corky Sherwood (whom I love). They are in the right profession — one where their knees are hidden under a news desk on TV. When they walk across the floor, I am reminded of the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

I think everyone remembers where he was and what he was doing the day Kathie Lee Gifford appeared not only in a skirt the size of an oven mitt, but sat on a stool and crossed her legs! I prayed she didn't drop her interview cards.

My philosophy of skirts has always been: Never wear anything so short it will leave visible wicker marks on the back of your thighs.

I know it's the current style, but before you buy a skirt that hangs two inches longer than your jacket, ask yourself these questions:

1. When does a skirt stop being a skirt and start to look like your underwear?
2. Bleacher seats, bus-stop benches and metal chairs are cold. Do you need a flu shot or do you plan on never sitting down?
3. Does your place of employment cater to women who wear short skirts and provide ramps in place of steps?
4. Do you have the physical strength to control a skirt that starts to curl from the bottom and won't stop?
5. Do your legs go straight all the way up or do they tend to go their own way at the knees?

A reader wrote me the other day and asked, "Whatever became of polyester pantsuits?" I can tell you what happened. Hard bodies that ran on treadmill to nowhere, climbed stairs to oblivion and had NordicTracks at the foot of their beds wanted the world to see what all their hard work produced.

For my generation, who were cautioned by their mothers to keep their knees together or they'd go blind, it takes a bit of getting used to.

Television has revealed every part of the human body there is to see. Where does it go from here? How about a plot or a story line?

Universal

Colors

Taken from Allure's *Little Book of Beauty Secrets*

Makeup comes in more colors than Sherwin-Williams, and the effects are equally dizzying. But just as interior design has eggshell — the shade that goes with everything from chintz to sisal — beauty has its universal colors.

Here's our shopping list:

- ✓ Shu Uemura Glow On blush, Amber
 - ✓ Revlon Naturally Glamorous Blush-On, Tawny Peach
 - ✓ Christian Dior eye-shadow compact, Discretion
 - ✓ Trish McEvoy Enhancer 6 eye shadow
 - ✓ Il-Makiage eye shadow, shell
 - ✓ Shu Uemura Pressed Eye Shadow, 390
 - ✓ Estée Lauder Natural Brow Filler
 - ✓ Chanel Translucent Loose Powder, Light
 - ✓ Stila Lip Glow, Rose Shine
 - ✓ Lorac lip gloss, Pewter and Pink
 - ✓ Poppy Sheer Power lipsticks
-
-