

Letters



Man at work. No children, no mortgage: readers could spend that R3 000 a month better.

Girl by night, father by default

Because this letter could cause great suffering I should like my name and address withheld. It refers to the article about transvestism, Man by Day, Girl by Night (YOU, March 3).

Although I was deeply distressed by it I have the greatest compassion for someone who keeps a low profile and protects his wife and children from the trauma of his new lifestyle.

But I know personally of a case where the vulnerable developing children were exposed to unbelievable shocks watching their father turn from a presentable male into an unrecognisable woman. They have become confused and bewildered by transvestism in a society where many people still do not accept it.

Their mother has her hands full trying to re-establish a stable, normal homelife for them - without the support of their father. It is greatly to her credit if she can succeed in the face of unbelievable difficulties, particularly when

people do not realise that she has this problem.

The daughter especially, who was very close to her father, has become so embarrassed she refuses to see him. The son, who is at the age of puberty and not yet settled in his own sexual role, disguises his uncertainty as anger and rejects his father.

Mother's well-meaning attempts to compensate him for the absence of a man about the house so upset the boy at times that he rings his father to complain - the only way they are a family is that they have family rows . . .

This man left his wife and children to satisfy his need to live as a woman and does not provide her with money. He talks of his affection for his children, and theirs for him, while failing to support them - even failing to help her to do so.

Meanwhile with the money his family needs for food, clothing, education, he is buying, as your article says, "high-heeled shoes, soft skirts, attractive jewellery and make-up". Where is the justice in this mess?

Name and address withheld.

Colour it black

The British want us to remove their flag from ours. I agree, colour it black.

We don't have to remove it, just colour it black in memory of the innocent women and children who died in the concentration camps.

And the hundreds of coloureds and Africans killed by order of Baden-Powell in the occupied cities: their crime, found eating food that was only for the whites.

Colour it black in memory of the thousands of our boys who died at Delville Wood so that

England could be free and in memory of our boys who died at El Alamein, in the airforce and navy, for England.

Barbara Mann, Lakeside.

Our R30 for the week's best letter goes to Fed-up stepmother.

**Address all correspondence to:
Letters and Readers'
Forum
YOU
box 7167
Cape Town 8000**

R3 000 monthly is poverty?

Sixty rands for a cut and blow wave (YOU, February 25) must get you some hairdo!

As your reader is "battling" to come out on R3 000 a month for the two of them, has she considered just a cut for about R14 and blow-waving her own hair?

Her servant is another luxury. Dozens of women, even with families, do their own housework these days.

Jenny Hayward, Castaways Caravan Park, Munster.

• Battling on R3 00 a month? Then I am a miracle-worker . . .

I'm divorced with a high school son who never stops eating, a daughter in first year at tech - and R1 120 a month.

My daughter pays for her train fares and books from the part-time job she has had for two years. I have no maid, no car, no insurance; my one luxury is the TV.

We manage to survive but what a struggle. After 12 years it would be nice to have some jam on the bread.

Mrs Irene Anderson, Wynberg.

• I have three children, my husband makes about R3 000 and we do not have a baked potato for supper.

The secret is that we both started saving to buy our home as soon as we started work, right from Day One. This is where young single people go wrong, they blow the whole salary.

When they decide to get married it is too late to start saving. They get very jealous of people who have everything, and do not realise these people have both worked hard and saved.

Happy wife and mother, Bluff, Durban.

• Life policies are unnecessary for a young couple and can be cashed in. Church donations can be suspended.

A char is a luxury. It won't take Beloved long to whip round with a duster and put everything in its place; tidiness is threequarters of the battle and the exercise will make his gym unnecessary.

R50 for entertainment is acceptable but their groceries should cost R100 more, nobody can eat properly on R250 a month.



Male body and feminine mind

Parents do not know where to turn for help when a son aged about 10 wants to dress and act more like a girl than a traditional boy.

The father may try to force him to play rough games, which is the worst thing he can do. The mother may then become over-protective and family quarrels result. Nobody benefits from that and a psychologist may be consulted.

The psychologist does not work on the basis of personal experience, of course, but from textbooks – and these do not cover this situation successfully.

The psychologist's advice can be based on the misunderstanding that the child's choice is between being male, becoming female

through a sex-change operation, and being a homosexual.

In fact it is often gender and not sex that is involved so your translated article (YOU, March 3) should have called a sex-change "a *sexual* solution to a *gender* problem". It referred unfortunately to a "sexual" problem.

The difference will be discussed in a booklet the Phoenix Society hopes to bring out soon, The Transgender Phenomenon, to help professional and lay counsellors give the right advice.

In the society we help people in this position to learn to live successfully in the style of someone of the opposite gender. You can have a feminine mind with a male body and still find fulfilment in life.
Joy, Phoenix Society, Box 375, Parow.