

Renaissance News



Volume 4, No. 5

Vision - Integrity - Quality

May 1990

Celebrate Spring & 3rd Birthday

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter, in concert with Renaissance national, will host a Spring Ball and Birthday Party at the Great Valley Hilton hotel on Friday May 11, beginning at 9:00 PM.

The chapter plans for the Spring Ball to be an annual event. Angela Gardner, chapter leader, says, "A Spring Ball is the perfect partner to our Holiday Party." Dina Amberle, chapter director, adds, "We wanted a warm weather event where everyone could dress up in fancy formal. Sort of like a senior prom."

The event will also serve to celebrate the third anniversary of the first Renaissance meeting, originally held in King of Prussia. Back in May of 1987, twelve people attended that first meeting. Quite a contrast to the 70 or 80 people who now regularly attend the Philadelphia Chapter meetings.

The organizers would like this event to be very memorable for all

Renaissance members and their friends, so they are asking that everyone dress accordingly for the occasion. Prom gowns, evening and cocktail dresses would be very appropriate attire. And, if you can talk your partner into it, your escort should be in a tux or a dark suit. But, no one will be turned away. They understand that not everyone has or can afford fancy gowns.

The Ball includes a full course sit-down dinner, dance music and a professional photographer. The cost is only \$30 per person. There is also a special \$2.00 rebate if you bring canned goods for donation to the Red Cross.

The Great Valley Hilton is located off the Route 29 exit of Route 202 South, just minutes from the regular chapter meeting location. The Hilton has special weekend rates, should you decide to stay overnight. Call 215-296-9800

Growth

Terry McCorkell, Greater Philadelphia Chapter & 3R

A short year and one half ago, at a Pocono weekend for "wayward" girls, I came out of the closet as Teresa for the first time. That frightful cocoon of secret dressing at home with the shades drawn tight was finally and irreversibly shattered. The terror that someone, somehow might find me out and discover me in women's clothing suddenly began to ebb. I lived with much fear and guilt about my crossdressing desires and activities, much of it self-imposed and unwarranted. I thought that I would be emotionally destroyed if anyone ever knew. Happily, I was wrong. That weekend I met many other TVs, TSs, TGs, and other very supportive people. I realized that I no longer had to live alone with Teresa.

I had spent a lot of time and en-

continued on page 6

A brief history of Renaissance

As we approach our third anniversary, newcomers—as well as those who have been with us from the first—may find instructive to trace the steps we have taken on this journey together.

It started in 1986 when Trudi Henry and JoAnn Roberts met at a Joyce Dewhurst Pocono weekend. Finding they shared an interest in sports cars, Trudi and JoAnn became fast friends and stayed in contact after the weekend. Trudi was the first transvestite that JoAnn had met who lived close by.

Later that year, JoAnn met

Angela Gardner through a listing in the *TV/TS Tapestry*. JoAnn and Angela also shared some common interests: science fiction and rock'n roll music. Angela also lived nearby.

Early in 1987, Angela invited JoAnn to attend a meeting of the Phi Chapter, a now defunct group based in South Jersey. It was at that meeting that Angela and JoAnn met Alison Laing and Melanie Bryan. The stage was set.

These five people all lived in the greater Philadelphia area and could not understand why no support group existed on their side of the

river. Resolved to correct that deficiency, the five met in March of 1987 and planned a meeting for May of that year. The name Renaissance was chosen for the group.

Dr. Bill Stayton graciously offered his office suites as a meeting place, and that first meeting saw nine transvestites, one transsexual and two spouses in attendance. It was a very un auspicious beginning.

After that first meeting, Alison, JoAnn and Angela retired to JoAnn's home where the question was raised: now what? Angela suggested a press

continued on page 4

Chapter info

New Jersey

South Jersey: Kelly [REDACTED], chapter leader. Write Renaissance SJ, c/o P. O. Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 641-3782

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Angela Gardner, chapter leader. Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Meeting starts at 9:00 p.m. No phone.

Pennsylvania

Reading: Susan [REDACTED], chapter leader. Write Renaissance RDG, Box 14421, Reading, PA 19607. Meets twice a month. There is a dinner-social held at THIS IS IT, 801 Walnut St., Reading, second Wednesday of the month and a membership meeting on the second Saturday. Call (215) 376-8886.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Elsa [REDACTED], chapter leader. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 7412, York, PA 17404. Meets on the first Saturday of the month in Camp Hill, Pa. Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. Call (717) 767-4095 for info.

Important information

✓ Renaissance has a new mailing address, please correct your records: P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa., 19406.

✓ Renaissance has a new phone number as well. Call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day for current information about events and activities.

✓ The board of directors has approved a new policy for the development of chapters and affiliates.

—Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit in-

stitution in their home state (except Pa.) before asking for chapter status.

—Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance affiliate will pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlimited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

And, don't forget about...

• Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 7-What Is Renaissance?, and 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics. A

paper on transsexualism is in work.

• 3R addiction recovery support group meets at King of Prussia on third Sat. of the month.

• The Pen Pal Project. If you are willing to write letters to pen pals, please let Alison know. Write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

• A few copies of the Deluxe Edition of Dr. Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* are still available at \$39.95 postpaid. Make checks payable to Renaissance.

Renaissance News

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\$2/copy, \$12 per year, 12 issues.

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For current information call (215) 630-1437 24 hrs. a day.

Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the gender community at large.

Events Calendar

May

- 5th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 5th Ren LSV Chapter
- 11th Ren Spring Ball & 3rd Anniv. Party Great Valley Hilton
- 12th Ren. Reading Chapter
- 19th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter
- 17-20 CDS Spring Paradise In The Poconos

June

- 2nd Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 2nd Ren LSV Chapter
- 6-10 "Be All"-Pittsburgh Contact Transpitt
- 9th Ren. Reading Chapter
- 16th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

July

- 7th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 7th Ren LSV Chapter
- 14th Ren. Reading Chapter
- 21st Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

August

- 4th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 4th Ren LSV Chapter
- 11th Ren. Reading Chapter
- 18th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

JoAnn Altman Stringer SURVIVAL™

Most of us in the gender conflicted community look at medical professionals, in fact, any professionals, as always having all the answers. Some have good answers, true; but their knowledge is based on their education and practical field experience. Educators know true wisdom comes not only from their student's answers but also from their questions. If the students ask the wrong questions, they get wrong answers. If those false answers are the basis of the professionals' education, then future clients are the ones who get hurt.

Glenn W. Humphrey, Ph.D., is one such post-doctoral student and working professional. I recently received a partial copy of his doctoral dissertation through the California School of Professional Psychology. After reading Dr. Humphrey's paper, I found his conclusions to be in error. Those conclusions were drawn from what he *believed* was good data.

Humphrey's general thesis was that clothing serves as some sort of security mechanism for transvestites and transsexuals, i.e. gender conflicted people crossdress because the clothing makes them feel better. That hypothesis was derived from studies in 1976, 1984 and 1985 which suggested transvestites and transsexuals were unstable in the area of self-identity (security), and referred to them as possessing "borderline personalities."

His test groups were made up of a random sampling of seventy-one biological males who were assigned to control, transvestite, pre-operative, and post-operative transsexual groups based on DSM-III-R criteria (Diagnostic & Statistics Manual, Third Edition, Revised).

The conclusions reached by Humphrey's study are:

1) Both transvestites and transsexuals may use female clothing as a transitional object to dissipate

anxiety, lift depression, and enhance feelings of calm and soothing.

2) Lower scores of the pre-op transsexuals on the calming variable were interpreted as failure of the clothing to soothe, resulting in a merger fantasy (i.e. sex reassignment surgery) seen as an antidote to insecurity.

3) High scores on the clothing-to-soothe variable by post-op transsexuals could suggest an underlying sense of security has not been gained by SRS.

4) Support is offered that SRS may serve as a momentary palliative, but doesn't resolve the transsexual's elusive search for security.

There were other findings but none too earth shattering.

I know it's hard for someone to quickly assimilate my very brief description of his theory, study and findings, but there isn't enough room to print the entire thesis here. So, let me get to the specific flaws of his conclusions.

If you know anything about statistical analysis, you would understand that a sampling of seventy-one participants in select groups is a very small number upon which to base any type of scientific theory. Moreover, those seventy-one (I was one of them) were divided among four groups which means an average of 18 people per group.

Considering the estimated 6,000 post-op transsexuals in the U.S., and an estimated pre-op population of 120,000, the 18 post-op transsexuals represent a mere 0.006% sample of the post-op population, and 18 pre-op transsexuals represent a sample of only 0.00016% of the total population. Most scientists would consider these numbers too small to make any general conclusions.

Another error in his research design is very fundamental; he compared transvestites to transsexuals in order to arrive at one

conclusion. This has been done by some researchers in the past. Transsexuals and transvestites do what they do for totally different and separate motivations. Just because two genetic males, one a TV and one a TS, wear female clothing, doesn't mean they do it for the same reasons. More importantly, he is reading into his study something that should not be there; transvestites and transsexuals get the same calming/soothing effect from clothing of the opposite sex.

Humphrey also did not take into consideration any type of economic indicators for both pre/post-op transsexuals. The majority of TSs don't go through with SRS because of serious economic or familial issues. His findings conclude pre-op TS women don't see clothing as a soothing factor to their pre-op anxieties. Of course not. Their anxieties, which he did not measure, stem from an entirely separate motivational factor (economic/family issues).

The hard and cold truth is, and he would have discovered this had he asked the right questions, transvestites are partly motivated by the feel of women's clothing while transsexuals wear female clothing, not for arousal, security, or calming, but because they identify with the gender who wears that clothing. Same effect with two different causes. I don't wear women's clothing because it soothes my anxieties, but because it's the attire that is appropriate for my gender (female). Society expects me to wear what other women wear because they perceive me to be a woman.

Since male-to-female transsexuals align themselves with the female sex, Humphrey should have done a comparison survey to find where genetic women score on the clothing is calming/soothing test. Transsexuals should be compared to genetic women, not transvestites,

continued on page 8

A brief history... from page 1

release be sent to all the local papers. JoAnn was incredulous.

The release was drafted and sent to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Philadelphia Gay News*, *Au Courant*, and the *Daily News*. The gay papers were the only ones to pick up the release.

Paula Sinclair, a gay transvestite, and Kate Bornstein, a post-op transsexual, saw the release and contacted the new group. Kate and Paula were very influential in molding the philosophical basis for Renaissance. The stage was now set for Act II - Growth.

In July of 1987, JoAnn registered Renaissance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a non-profit corporation, started the process for winning tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, and selected the first board of directors: JoAnn Roberts, Paula Sinclair, Trudi Henry, Angela Gardner, Ali-

son Laing, Melanie Bryan and Kate Bornstein. Kate later resigned and left Philadelphia.

The first issue of the *Renaissance News* was published in August of 1987. It contained four pages.

Official election of officers was first held in December of 1987 and the original six directors were retained in office.

Angela Gardner produced an AIDS Benefit that first year and Renaissance was able to make a nice donation to "We the People with AIDS and ARC."

JoAnn and Trudi tried to host a professional conference, *Voices*, which was a flop due to poor response from the professionals.

In November of 1988, the IRS granted Renaissance a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

Paula Sinclair embarked on a public relations campaign that was to lead Renaissance spokespersons

onto several talk shows, not the least of which was the infamous Morton Downey Jr. Show. The campaign was successful beyond anyone's wildest dream.

In May of 1988, Renaissance celebrated its first birthday with about 125 members. Photographer Mariette Pathy Allen was on hand to record the event. Later, in December, the board adopted a comprehensive anti-discrimination policy designed to keep Renaissance open to all transgendered people.

In January of 1989, the board approved the creation of chapters, and the stage was set for Act III - Expansion.

During 1989 and into 1990 Renaissance approved the formation of four chapters; Greater Philadelphia, Reading, South Jersey and Lower Susquehanna Valley. Which is where the group is today with over 350 members and still growing.

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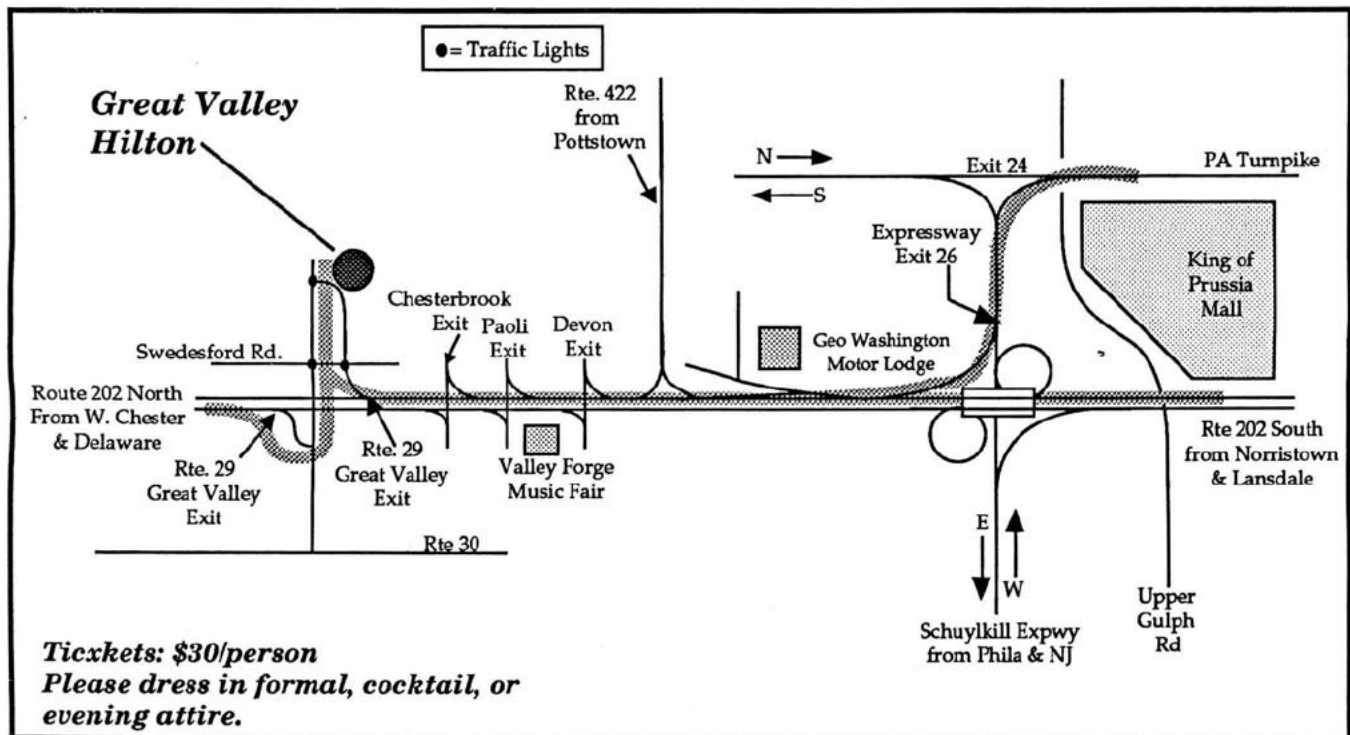
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Greater Philadelphia Chapter Spring Ball and Renaissance 3rd Anniversary Celebration Friday, May 11, 1990



Spring Ball Registration

Yes I am planning on attending the 1990 Renaissance Spring Ball.

Please reserve _____ spaces for me. Enclosed is my payment of \$_____

I would like: _____ Chicken Dinner _____ Vegetarian Dinner

Send tickets to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail to Renaissance GPC, P.O. Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020

Tickets MUST be purchased before May 7th.

ATTENTION *** ATTENTION *** ATTENTION *** ATTENTION

Betty [REDACTED], Rachel M. and Sunny, partners of Renaissance members, have talked about a Couples Social on the fourth Sunday of each month. This would be a non-crossdressing function. The social would be held at The Woods in the late afternoon. They would like to begin the socials in June. Couples interested in attending this social function should call Betty at 215-[REDACTED]. Leave your name and a phone number for her to get back to you. If there is sufficient response, the women will set a firm date for the first social.

Lower Susquehanna News

Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter of Renaissance Education Association, Inc.

Volume 2, No. 3 - Elsa [REDACTED], Editor, P O Box 7412, York PA 17404 - May 1990

Chapter Meetings

LSV chapter meets the first Saturday of each month at Classic Designs Hair Care Center, 250 S 15th St, Camp Hill.

Summer Hours beginning May 5:

Doors open 9:00 p.m. Program 10:00.

Directions: I-83 to Exit 22-Lemoyne, right at light onto Third St (from I-83 N, you can only turn right), at second traffic light on Third St, turn left on Market St., bear left onto State St (Hess gas station) and go about a mile to Classic Designs, on the right just past the West Shore Plaza and a NAPA auto parts store. Use the parking lot on the west end of the building. Enter door facing the parking lot.

LSV Phone: (717) 767-4095

Our answering machine has a special message segment with late-breaking news and events that can be accessed from a tone phone.

To speak to a human being, please leave a name and phone number or call back most evenings or weekends. When no one is available, the machine will pick up on the fourth ring.

Classic Designs, 250 S. 15th St, Camp Hill, offers full hair, wig, cosmetic and electrolysis services to our community. Private areas available for all services.

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Can I Trust You?

*For most of my life,
I asked if I could trust you,
but the answer was, "No."
Then, for years,
the answer was, "Maybe."
Weary of "Maybe",
I thought you might be ready,
but heard, "What if ...?"
Then, I realized that
"No, Maybe, and What if ..."
were not your answers
but my own fears.
So I shared myself with you,
And you accepted me as before
And I did not need my secret.
Of course, you were trustworthy.
It was I who could not trust.*

Chapter Notes

March 25, Heather, Richelle, Brenda and Elsa provided a panel for York Support.

At our April 7 meeting, Treva, stylist at Classic Designs, provided a comprehensive program on hair and wig care and styling.

Plans are underway for a first anniversary party in July.

As of April 7, LSV has 28 members.

1990 LSV Dues are \$18

LSV Reviews: MONK

A great fringe benefit of sharing is learning other people's idea of a good time. When I shared Elsa with my Pink Panther friend, she shared her latest copy of *MONK*.

I've never seen anything like it. It is simultaneously friendly, outrageous, thought provoking, '60s, New Age, practical. Sort of a combination of Charles Kuralt and *Nuns on the Run* with overtones of *Mad Magazine*.

MONK, The Mobile Magazine, is published 3 or 4 times a year (an occasional quarterly) by Michael Lane & Jim Crotty (The Monks) using a solar-powered Macintosh as they roam the USA in their motorhome visiting places we've all remembered or wondered about and talking to the kind of people we'd all like to meet. They started in 1986 with a newsletter to their friends and families and grew by 1987 into a nationwide magazine.

The Monks seem to have a fascination with drag. The pictures of Mike & Jim have more than a family resemblance to the likenesses of Granny and Ellie Mae that grace several pages. In issue #8 about the Ozarks, they report on the King of the South pageant in Fayetteville at which their host, Orville, transforms into Miss Paige Turner. There's also some fine reporting on the integration of Central High in Little Rock (by drag queens).

Until the monks get to a Renaissance meeting, we'll have to subscribe to follow their travels. \$10 for 4 issues, \$18 for 8 issues. Address correspondence to Monk, 369 Montezuma St, Suite 137, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

Thanks to Thelma of the Phoenix Society of South Africa, we lead off the month with some real (and serious) news instead of the inane oddities that normally fill this column.

The tribal wars raging among black South Africans prompted an a crossdressing escapade in March that could have been a variation of the *Some Like It Hot* plot were it not so tragic. But instead of hiding from fictional Chicago gangsters, school boys in the East Rand township of Tembisa were hoping to escape real murderers bent on revenge.

In early March, a group of pupils apparently took sides in, of all things, a feud between rival taxi cab associations. Because the dispute had tribal implications, one faction demanded revenge by threatening to kill the young boys. In order to hide their sons from the murderous gang, mothers in the township dressed the boys as girls, making them trade their shorts for dresses.

The ruse was successful in preventing more bloodshed in that troubled land, and the boys have now returned to their short pants



On a happier note, this year marks the 25th anniversary of North America's Imperial Court System, an informal network of primarily gay crossdressers who devote their time, energies and fabulous wardrobes to a variety of fundraising and charitable activities which are not limited to the gay community. One could say they are Shriners in gowns (one *could* say that if one wanted to risk a lawsuit from the exalted Masonic order).

More than 2,000 members of the Imperial Courts from a number of cities gathered in San Francisco in March to mark the silver anniversary. We celebrate the occasion here with selected items about female impersonators of various types.



Just as the queens were packing their finery for the trip to San Francisco, two supermarket tabloids broke the story that Richard Pryor's 27-year-old son Richard Jr. is living a secret life in Peoria, Ill., where he holds the title of Miss Gay Peoria.

By day, the younger Pryor has a job at a television station in Peoria. But by night he is "Rainy McKnight," the toast of the Club Peoria and other drag bars in central Illinois and Indiana. He apparently took his drag name from his sister, Rain Pryor who stars in the television show "Head of the Class."

The newspapers printed photos of Richard Jr. in drag. A gay paper in San Francisco confirmed the story by checking with people familiar with the drag scene in Los Angeles. Lola Flamaroma said she remember seeing the younger Pryor at several L.A. clubs. "He used to do drag at the clubs and has been around for awhile," she said. "He also used to go out in drag for the fun of it." After seeing the tabloids' photos, she commented, "Obviously, he needs a good Elizabeth Arden makeover and wardrobe assistance very badly."

One paper said that the elder Pryor was at first shocked to learn his son is a queen, but the comedian has come to accept it. It quotes him as saying "he's still my son even though he dresses like my daughter. He's a good guy and I love him."



Maybe if Jacques, a drag club in Boston, booked Rainy McKnight the neighbors would stop complaining about it. Members of the Bay Village Neighborhood Association say the 50-plus-year-old bar is noisy and attracts illegal activity to the area. But manager Donald Richards said "people in the neighborhood don't like to see drag queens."

Jacques didn't begin as a drag bar, but several years ago it became the center of Boston drag life when

the queens' main wateringhole, The Other Side, closed in the face of pressure from the neighborhood association.

Richards said he has made many concessions to neighbors, such as removing speakers from the sound system, banning dancing among patrons and closing at midnight. "It's like a church in here compared to what it used to be," he said.

The Boston Licensing and Consumer Affairs Commission is investigating the neighbors' complaints, and has promised to act only if the bar violates laws regarding noise, traffic or illegal or disruptive conduct. The Boston gay community is closing ranks behind the bar. "It's like a living landmark—we can't loose it," said lesbian historian Donna Penn.



Living next to a drag bar must have some drawbacks. For example, there are all those sequins and feathers littering the sidewalk. Wonder if the folks in Louisville, Ky., complained early last month after 80 queens from 39 states converged there for the Miss Gay USA 1990 Pageant held in the 1,500-seat MacAuley Theatre, home of the Louisville Opera and Symphony.

Cezanne, the former Miss Gay Georgia, won the crown. Rita Ross of Nashville (Miss Ohio Valley), was named first runner-up. The second runner-up is also from Nashville—Bianca Paige. Bianca was the first runner-up in the Miss Gay Tennessee pageant. Mahogany, the first runner-up in the Miss Gay Gulf States pageant, was selected as third runner-up for Miss Gay USA. She is from Mobile, Ala.

The girls competed during five days of rehearsing, performing, and judging. But that hectic pace was merely a warm-up for Cezanne. As Miss Gay USA, she will travel to 55 preliminary pag-

continued on page 7

Growth...from page 1

ergy agonizing about that part of me that wanted to crossdress. Most of the time I tried to repress those feelings. I thought they were nothing but some horrid sexual fetish that no one should ever find out about. I, of course, included myself among those who should remain ignorant. I never took an honest look at that side of me and hoped it would just disappear. I had a vague awareness that other transvestites existed but made no attempt to contact anyone. I preferred to live with my secret and its cycles of obsessive expression, repression, purges, and guilt.

How did I come to face my feminine side and thereby allow Teresa see the light of day? After a period of long overdue honest self-reflection, I realized that the crossdressing is a physical and emotional expression of a side of my personality that is both real and perfectly natural, at

least to me. My feminine side, therefore is just as strong and just as integral to myself as is my masculine side. Consequently, my femininity is just as worthy of my care and nurturing as the rest of me.

I no longer have to spend so much energy attempting to repress that feminine side. This is a great relief. My masculine energies are now freed from my attempt to conform myself to that which I thought I was supposed to be. Growth, as scary as that seems to be, in and of itself, is now my order of business. I look now to integrate both masculine and feminine interests, desires, aspirations, energies, and spiritualities. The battle between the genders is hereby called off, at least within me. I can no longer afford the price of having one side trample down the other.

Fortunately, I came out of the closet in a very supportive, nurtur-

ing, and stimulating environment. Communication and interaction with other crossdressers as well as all gender conflicted people is absolutely vital to my own growth and acceptance. Today, I attend both the South jersey and the Greater Philadelphia chapters of Renaissance. These meetings and the support they give me are invaluable. Through them I have made many contacts and friends in the gender community and I try to keep up regular telephone contact with my gender friends between these monthly conclaves. Today, I have a lot of gratitude for all the help and kindness offered freely to me as Teresa. Today, I know that I am growing as a woman and as a man. Today, I know that I no longer am alone.



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NewsQueen...from page 5

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♣ ♣ ♣

As exciting as the national competition was, it couldn't compare to what happened in March at one of the local preliminaries.

Columnist Lucy the Lip wrote in the Indianapolis *New Works News*, "all Hell broke lose when Blake Adams was crowned Miss Gay Indianapolis. Apparently contestant Meagan Houston thought that she should have won, for at the precise moment of the announcement of the winner, Meagan approached the judges' table and threw a drink in the face of judge Jamie Douglas. It took Jamie just about one second to fly out of her chair and across the judges' table, driving her fist into the well-used face of Mr. Houston... Well, one thing led to another, and before it was over approximately 20 contestants and patrons were having at it."

Last year several gay bars in the Hoosier capitol city tried to ban crossdressers from the premises. The action seemed unfair at the time, but now...

♣ ♣ ♣

We can just picture the Indianapolis brouhaha—sequins, bugle beads, and wigs flying everywhere; we imagine the wigs were the first to go. This brings to mind Dolly Parton's response when a fan asked her how long it took to do her hair. "I don't know, honey. I'm never there."

♣ ♣ ♣

Police in Henderson, Tenn., had an easy arrest when they picked up Millissa Fox, 26, on the charge of rape by fraud. The only problem was making the charge stick.

The charge was preferred by a man who said that he thought Fox was a woman.

Sumner County Assistant District Attorney Dee Gay agreed that the man had a valid complaint. "What happened was despicable," she said. "But as a matter of law it

was not rape."

♣ ♣ ♣

Prosecutors in L.A. were luckier in the case of Anita "Mistress Anne" Murray. The dominatrix pleaded guilty to five misdemeanor obscenity counts for distributing pornographic films. She was given a suspended one-year jail sentence, five years probation, a \$10,000 fine, and ordered out of the movie business.

Police arrested Murray, 45, after they entered her home with a search warrant and found her and her husband, 51-year-old Richard Henry Lichy, baking a cake and wearing matching negligees. Murray's films often featured her dominating Lichy and "forcing" him to crossdress. (Perhaps she should have been charged with fraud as well.) Police said Murray made \$50,000 a year selling masters of tapes to adult film companies.

Murray's attorney advised his client to go for the plea bargain because "the nature and subject matter" of her films made them nearly impossible to defend on First Amendment grounds.

♣ ♣ ♣

A former doctor who specialized in sex change surgeries didn't get off so easy in a San Diego court recently. He was sentenced to three years in prison for initiating sexual reassignment procedures without a license on a 30-year-old Orange County man.

A December criminal trial found John Ronald Brown, 67, of Chula Vista, Calif., guilty of three counts of practicing medicine without a license. His license was revoked in 1977 for gross negligence, and he had been convicted of the same charges in 1985.

During the latest trial, Deputy District Attorney Robert Eichler characterized Brown as a "con artist" who performs surgery "at the drop of a check." Eichler detailed several operations performed by Brown that nearly had tragic results. In one, he tried to create a

vagina for a male-to-female transsexual by using the patient's colon. When the patient almost died from infection, Eichler said, Brown and his wife "dumped" the patient on the steps of a Los Angeles hospital. Because he could not legally practice medicine in California, Brown performed many operations in Mexico.

Brown's attorney called as witnesses several transsexuals who said they were happy with Brown's work. His attorney said Brown had performed 500 successful sex changes during his 40-year medical career.

In addition to the three-year prison sentence, the judge ordered Brown to pay \$10,000 restitution to the Orange County man on whom Brown had performed breast surgery and two scalp transplants.

♣ ♣ ♣

Even without quacks like Brown, the road to a sex change is seldom easy. Look at Sarah Luiz of Portsmouth, N.H. More than two years ago she began taking hormones in preparation for surgery. The medication was prescribed by her doctor and paid for by Blue Cross. But eventually the health insurance giant discovered what the treatments were for and disallowed further claims because their policies exclude sex changes.

Sarah had counted on Blue Cross to pay for her surgery, and now is suing the company for \$30 million. When her suit bogged down in the courts, Luiz offered a prognosis that possibly owes more to legal strategy than to medical science. "Doctors say I needed to have my sex organs removed two years ago," she said. "If I go off hormones without surgery, I'll go back to being a man. If I don't go off the hormones, I die."

♣ ♣ ♣

Miss Sinclair does not want to risk missing any news item relating to crossdressing. If you spot one, kindly clip it out, note the date and name of the publication, and send it to her in care of the Renaissance office.

Meeting Comments...Sheri Lynn K.

My name is Sheri and I was lucky enough to be able to attend your Greater Philadelphia area Renaissance meeting in February of 1989. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to be able to express myself publicly and I thank you for providing this opportunity.

I have received your newsletter for five months and have become an at-large member due to the distance involved. I am glad to see that chapters are spreading. Maybe someday there will be one in which I will be able to participate regularly. I would like to share with you some of my first impressions.

As a crossdresser, one of my greatest frustrations has been a way of expressing my femme self in a safe environment. Renaissance certainly provides such an environment. My pre-meeting anxieties were strong. Would I be presentable? What would others be wearing? How will I measure up? What if I am over/under dressed? My decision to dress was finally reached when I understood that the main purpose for me to attend this group was the opportunity to express my femme self in a safe environment. I came dressed and felt comfortable.

I was fortunate that my wife had come with me. While our arrival at The Woods was traumatic, we mustered the courage to enter. We were not sure what The Woods was. I guessed it was a banquet facility which shared a private entrance for this select group. I was surprised and apprehensive upon arrival. Was this the right place and what do I do if it wasn't? In your introductory brochure it might be helpful to describe The Woods.

We waited until we saw someone who we thought was a crossdresser and began to exit the car. My wife had a panic attack (highly unusual for her). She refused to go in, feeling she would be the only woman there. I told her I couldn't go without her and she pulled it together and we went inside.

I was greeted warmly, and was pleased and delighted when a sister complimented me on my appearance. I was given the Carnation identifying me as a first-timer and told orientation would commence shortly. Somehow I didn't hear the announcement and I missed some of orientation. Orientation was helpful, but, I felt, superficial. I wondered if a more in depth opportunity for first-timers was a possibility. I was filled with feelings that I wanted to share, but somehow the opportunity didn't present itself.

My wife had a good experience, although she felt alone. While she and Sheri are getting to be friends, she was uncomfortable there alone. We had read about the spouse support aspects of the group, but both of us were disappointed at this portion of the evening. There were other wives present, but they had other agendas. We had an agreement that whenever either of us felt uncomfortable we would leave. We left about 11 PM.; early, but richer.

I really enjoyed that night. I would like to be with you again, possibly on a regular basis. Distance may preclude that and my work requires Sheri remain a secret expression. Even if there were a chapter in my area I might be hesitant.

I feel there is a need for a stronger orientation segment and possibly even a Big Sister Program for first-timers. Also, a more intentional program for spouses would have been helpful. I hope that these comments will be helpful for you.

I have become more secure in my femme identity over the last few years. My experience at the meeting helped me to see how comfortable and secure I have become. I left feeling I had accomplished something by being able to carry myself with dignity; that felt good, very good.

I continue to look forward to your newsletter each month and join you in support all of our sisters.

Survival from page 2

for feelings and motivations. Sometimes doctors treat symptoms not causes and this is a case of a doctor studying a symptom (crossdressing) and not considering the separate causes (transvestism or transsexualism).

Instead of having separate control groups for transvestites and transsexuals, he lumped his controls into one group.

I believe that his "finding" of post-op transsexuals not having security is an error due to his small population. If his sampling had been at least 10% of the population, his conclusion might have validity. Most of the post-op transsexuals I know (M-t-F/F-t-M) are very happy and secure with what they've done in their lives.

Humphrey also used a reference by Dr. Richard Greene to link gender dysphoria to homosexuality, a myth we have been trying to break for decades. He states M-t-F TSs are homophilic in their object arousal (genetic male sexually aroused by genetic male). Most male-to-female transsexuals have a sexual orientation of the opposite sex (female), however, making them heterosexual, not homosexual. Sex (either hetero or homosexual) is what we do; gender (either male or female) is what we are.

Though his dissertation was not meant for public consumption, my concerns stem from the erroneous conclusions deduced from improper questions. His study groups are unquestionably too small to derive useful data. And Humphrey's lumping of transvestites and transsexuals together with a generalized motivation is also in error. Using his format of evidentiary conclusion, I might conclude, through the study of cats, that elephants can't climb trees because they don't have fingers. Doesn't make much sense you say? Neither does Dr. Humphrey's study or conclusions.

Peer pressure and the gender community...

Jill B. & Donna R., Gender Identity Center Newsletter, Denver. Colo.

A topic which is discussed quite frequently within the gender community is peer pressure. The majority of our community is usually willing to discuss peer pressure if it relates to discrimination shown in society towards TSs and TVs. However, only a small minority of TSs and TVs are willing to admit that this pressure exists within our community. Peer pressure *does* exist within our community and this can change.

There are two common types of peer pressure within the gender community. The first type is when the gender community is split by TSs or TVs degrading or belittling one another; such as back stabbing, competition, shifting of power within the community etc. Not only does this undermine the cooperation within our community, but when these actions are viewed by non-gender community individuals our reputation is at stake.

This pressure may often be heard from the TS segment as:

"Those frigging TVs, all THEY ever want to do is party."

"Can't THEY understand that this is serious and not just a game."

"THEY will never pass with that beard, even with a gallon of that 'heavy duty' make-up."

"THEY are making a mockery of US when THEY go out in public looking like that."

From the TV segment, examples are:

"Those damn TSs, THEY think they have it so rough."

"THEY are too serious all the time."

"Hormones and surgery, surgery and hormones, that's *all* THEY ever talk about."

"Thank God we don't let them into Tri-Ess."

The gender community has suffered from this division far too long. As we attempt to represent our-

selves as supporting each other, we appear hypocritical when these statements are made. If, as a community, we are ever going to receive respect from society, we must learn to respect each other.

The second type of peer pressure is the demand for conformity within the gender community; within the TS segment, or within the TV segment. These are pressures to comply, follow, obey, and/or observe behaviors and rules set by that segment. Although these pressures are usually given as statements of support, they are actually the enforcing of 'norms', 'standards', or minimums as identified by that segment, much like the 'norms' set by society. These pressures undermine individuality, sabotages freedom of choice, or may divert a person into a course they may not have chosen to take if left alone. Non-conformity, when these pressures are present, may result in rejection or ridicule, and is essentially the opposite of support.

Within the TS segment the demand for conformity includes:

"When are you going to start electrolysis?"

"Have you gotten your letter for hormones yet?"

"Get your surgery as soon as you can so that you can become COMPLETE."

"When are you going to change your name?"

"Do you have an 'F' on your license yet?"

Within the TV segment the conformity list includes:

"How big is your wardrobe?"

"Is that the only pair of shoes you have?"

"Just play around with crossdressing, don't change your life over it. You don't need to understand why you crossdress."

"Who cares why you crossdress, just do it."

"There is a drag show tonight.

You'll be there won't you?"

There are also examples of pressures common to both segments, such as:

"Let's go shopping TODAY."

"Go out in public TOMORROW."

"Get OUT OF THE CLOSET."

"Why don't you come around more often?"

"If you want to buy a dress, just go to a store and buy it, it's not a problem."

"Forget (deny) your fears."

Each of the examples given within this second type of peer pressure displays a pattern of competition within that segment. When support is the goal of a group, concern for each other can include the encouragement to proceed at an individual pace; towards a lifestyle that is custom tailored for that individual. Support is not a contest.

None of us can allow prejudice within the gender community to continue. We are all in this together. We share (although some may disagree) a certain degree of common bonds. Each individual has the choice not to allow statements, such as the examples given, to bother them. Peer pressure is only the pressure you allow it to be.

Notes:

Ed. Note: Humphrey's study has engendered much debate within the community. This article is by no means the end of that debate in the pages of this publication.

Anyone interested in obtaining copies of Dr. Humphrey's complete dissertation, "Cross Dressing in Males: The Attempt to Retain the Comforting Object," may order them from University Microfilms, Inc. 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346, or call 800-521-0600.

From around the TV/TS community NATIONAL GENDER NEWS™

WALTHAM, MASS. — The International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) has sent out a notice warning all transgendered people to steer clear of the *North American Transvestite & Transsexual Dating Service* in Seattle, run by Philip [redacted], who is not to be confused with another *persona non grata* in our community Michael [redacted] of over-priced lingerie fame. (Although we have been told the two gentlemen are related.)

It seems that the West Coast [redacted] is holding almost 300 issues of the IFGE publication *Tapestry* for ransom. He wants the exclusive right to distribute the *Tapestry* on the West Coast, and won't pay his bill until he gets that concession. [redacted] tried a similar stunt with another community publication.

IFGE Executive Director Merissa Sherrill Lynn is outraged over [redacted]'s actions, and the organization has started legal action to recover their property.

Lynn also informed us of a certain boutique in Florida that has been photocopying copies of *Tapestry* and other publications. If any of our readers comes across one of these bogus publications, please inform

the rightful copyright holder so that appropriate action may be taken.

NGN

SPRINGFIELD, MASS. — JAWS...the revenge?

The March issue of *Twenty Minutes* carried the script of a fictional telecast between two transsexuals, one at the **Twenty (XX) Club** headquarters and one at IFGE headquarters. The script contained allegations that IFGE Executive Director Merissa Sherrill Lynn forced the resignations of JoAnn Roberts and Veronica Brown from the IFGE board.

Roberts, allegedly, was forced out by Tri-Ess leaders who threatened to withhold monetary contributions to IFGE because of their anger over Roberts' criticism of Tri-Ess membership policies. Brown, allegedly, was forced out for her militant stance against a "non-understanding crossdressing majority" in power at IFGE.

Roberts responded to the allegations saying, "As I stated in my public announcement, my resignation was based on purely personal reasons. Merissa had nothing to do with the decision. While we have our philosophical differences, there

are no problems between us. We respect those differences."

Lynn responded to the allegations saying, "I did not force Veronica [Brown] to resign. I am very disappointed that she did."

In the same article it was "announced" that Sister Mary Elizabeth would be the 1990 recipient of the **Virginia Prince Award for Outstanding Achievement**. The purpose of the award is to recognize the efforts of specific individuals working for the gender community.

The "correspondents" in the script muse that if Sister Mary Elizabeth accepts the award, it might alienate a portion of the TS community, and if she rejects the award, it will alienate the TV community. The comments were couched in the same terms as the old joke, "When did you stop beating your wife?" Sister Mary Elizabeth and IFGE both lose no matter what she does.

We didn't seek out Brown for comment; she wrote the script.

NGN

TULARE, CALIF. — Speaking of Tri-Ess we have confirmed reports that change is in the wind for that beleaguered organization.

continued next page



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From around the TV/TS community

NATIONAL GENDER NEWS™

Responding to internal pressure from members who want a greater say in the organization's management, Tri-Ess national has new by-laws and a real board of directors. Of course, **Carol Beecroft** and **Virginia Prince**, the doyennes of Tri-Ess, are permanent members of the board. Beecroft is the executive director and Prince is treasurer. But, we noted an interesting paragraph in the by-laws that permits the board to remove the executive director by a majority vote.

After all these years, the largest national support organization for crossdressers finally moves from feudalism to democracy.

Well almost... We heard a report that Prince was invited to visit a Tri-Ess chapter in the Southwest. They rolled out the red carpet for the "Godmother." Was the royal Prince impressed? Apparently not. As one member put it, "She treated us like [expletive deleted]."

Maybe Sister Mary Elizabeth should reconsider keeping that award from IFGE.

NGN

DENVER — Where there's smoke there's fire. At least there seems to be a fire building at the **Gender Identity Clinic** here. The last two newsletters received have mentioned vehement discussions about smoking in the meetings. One member with asthma wrote an "open letter" to her sisters asking for a no-smoking policy. She apparently has been the butt of severe criticism from a smoking majority.

We smoke ourselves, but always try to respect the rights of non-smokers. Even we had difficulty breathing at Renaissance meetings when smoking was allowed in the office area. We were more than happy to have the smoking moved outside, even in cold weather. We smoke less when shivering.

It would seem that a no-smoking policy in the meeting areas would

be a benefit to any group. After all, are they there for gender support or because they can't smoke at home?

NGN

PORTLAND, ORE. — The **Northwest Gender Alliance** is also taking the no-smoking question into consideration. It seems that smoke-filled board meetings are taking their toll on some members. They will probably move to a no-smoking policy at all meetings.

While they ponder that hazy question, they're in the midst of planning their 10th anniversary party. We'd like to send our congratulations to NWGA and wish them 100 more anniversaries.

NGN

SEATTLE — While we're in the great northwest...

Some members of **Emerald City** are unhappy with the arrangements for the club's **90 In 90** party. The title of the event refers to the hope of getting 90 percent of the members to participate in 1990.

The problem, it seems, is the event is planned for Port Angeles, described as a fishing and tourist village. Some members are afraid of a violent backlash from the blue collar workers in the little community.

That is certainly a possibility, but, if the Emerald City planners did their PR job correctly, the event could be seen as an opportunity to do some education and outreach. We hope that all goes well for the group with no ugly incidents.

It's tough being on the front lines. Leaders are always taking flak for something or another.

NGN

HARTFORD, CONN. — At the opposite end of the country...

We've got a "new" group up north, **The Connecticut Outreach Society**. This group has evolved from a former correspondence club newsletter, *the connecticut View*, started by **Denise Mason**. The newsletter will keep the old name.

Editor **Judy** says they have secured a meeting place at the Society of Friends Meeting House, in West Hartford. Their first membership meeting was held March 17. We hope they had a good turnout. This area has needed a good support group for some time.

NGN

PHILADELPHIA — Maybe we should hand out flak jackets after elections...

On this third anniversary of the first Renaissance meeting we'd like to take the time to say "thank you" to some people who don't get enough thanks, the officers of the chapters.

Too often members show up for meetings and never give a thought to how much work goes into preparing for a meeting; planning programs, writing newsletter articles, preparing food, buying beverages, and more importantly, cleaning up after the meeting is over.

So, the next time you see one of your club officers, go over to her and say, "Thanks for all the work you're doing on my behalf. I really appreciate it." You'll be surprised how those few words will brighten her day.

NGN

CHICAGO — We received a pleasant note from **I. Y. Murphy** owner of **Yvonne's Plus** a small mail order company specializing in large size lingerie.

Murphy is offering a 15 percent discount to members of support groups and a free catalog to those who write. Send your requests to Murphy at Yvonne's Plus, P.O. Box 148096, Chicago, IL 60614

NGN

PHILADELPHIA — There was a new ad in issue #16 of *EnFemme* magazine. **Rita**, of Bristol, Pa., is offering her services for dressmaking and alterations. This could be a boon for many local Renaissance members. If you've always wanted a custom-fitted dress, suit or gown, give Rita a call at 215- [redacted].

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