

Renaissance News



Volume 4, No. 2

Vision - Integrity - Quality

February 1990

Special Issue: Transsexual Topics

The keys to success

Exclusive to Renaissance by JoAnn Altman Stringer

Too often individuals within the gender community use their transsexualism as a crutch whenever their professional careers suffer. Many times I've talked with transitional, pre- or post-operative transsexual who seem to be stumbling through a career change just as they are stumbling through their change in lifestyle. The comments heard are like broken records: "I'm not getting promoted because of my gender problem", and, "I can't get a job because I'm a TS." I know this sounds unsympathetic but I say horsefeathers to these grumblings!

Sometimes, I indeed have seen job discrimination based on sexual preference. To set the record straight, M-F transsexuals are entering the business world that tends to be dominated by the male of the species. These women must fight for jobs just like any other woman on the planet. Females in the executive pool have learned that to suc-

ceed you must become a member of the "Team," buying into the "good old boy" ethic without foregoing womanhood. It can be done, but those who have succeeded are very strong people. They know who they are and where they are going. Many transsexuals I have worked with are just the opposite - refusing to take charge of their lives, trying to be meek and defenseless women.

The key that opens the door to "Life" lies not in what you are but who you are. Sex and gender do not make any difference. If you feel secure in yourself as a person, exhibiting a positive attitude about life, then those around you will pick up those vibes of positive self esteem. They will perceive you as a "winner" regardless if you are male or female.

I don't know if you caught the one word that underscores the whole meaning of this discussion: Percep-

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Paradise lost

by Tony, Narcissus, U. K.

It seems such a short time since my decision to begin hormone treatment for possible future gender reassignment surgery. I believed, as I am sure most transsexuals believe, that I knew exactly what I wanted and where my life was heading. Beginning the treatment was the first step along a path which I knew would be difficult and scattered with many problems to overcome, both physical and emotional.

I had tried hard to find out from other transsexuals how they coped with the problems, but few warned me of the tremendous emotional upheavals that would occur within me. I do not know if this is due only to the effects of the hormones or the pressures of readjustment to a completely new way of life.

After only a short time on the tablets, I felt very calm and content. Family and friends said I had become very placid and happy in my everyday life. But soon I became aware of other changes. I had sudden mood swings from happiness to deep depression. For no apparent reason, I would suddenly begin crying. I found it difficult to concentrate and my ability to make decisions was seriously affected.

My bouts of depression became so bad I no longer believed I could carry on with my life as I was living it. The fear of not being able to adjust to my new life or of ending up in a position where I was isolated and not accepted by society in my new role became too great for me to cope with.

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TS also means "Truly Serious"

Louise L. Reader, *Trans-World Bulletin*, The Sunday Soc

Perhaps you may have, at one time or another, wondered why there were so few people in attendance at the local TS club meeting. Or, why the gender services and clinics in an area are either inadequate or non-existent. Or even why important information related to transsexuals is often so hard to obtain. I have.

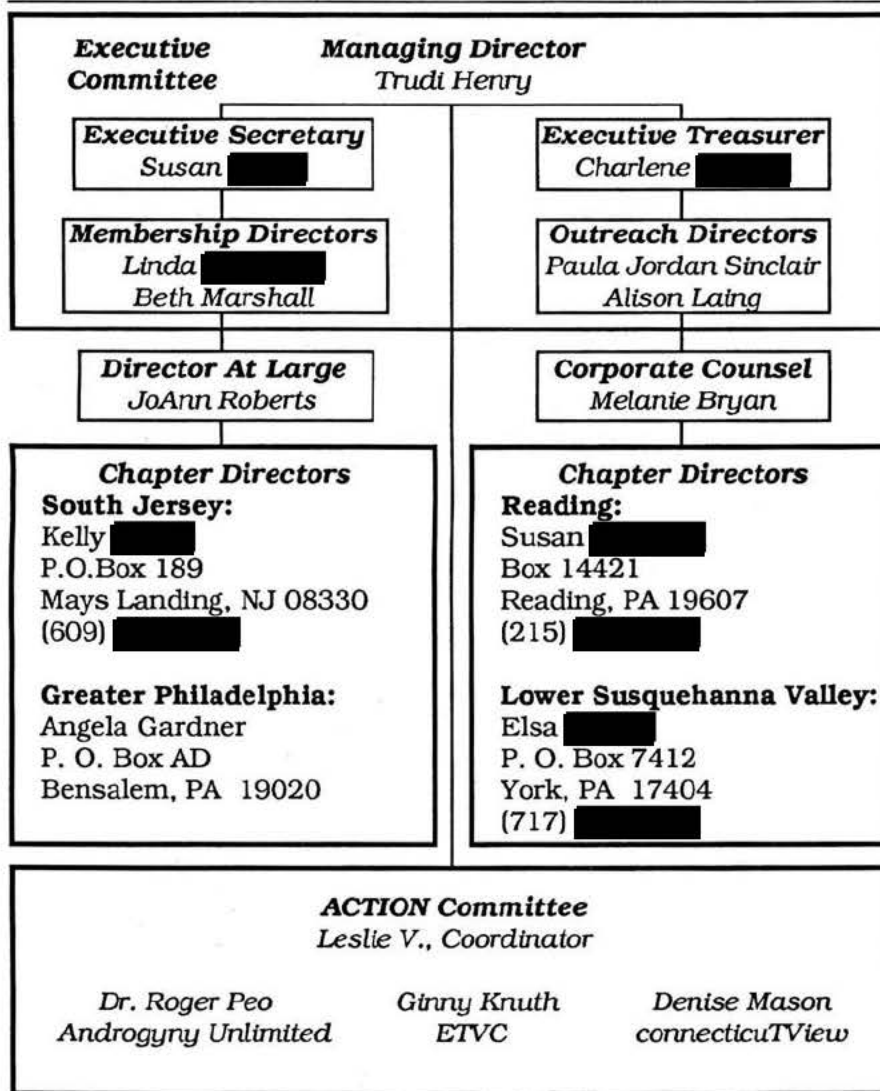
Is it because we all "crawled back into the woodwork?" Or, are we all

afraid of getting involved? Is it because there is "a secret organization" out there destroying transsexuals? Or, is it because of something else that we may not have considered before.

After reading a copy of Veronica Jean Brown's pamphlet, "Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Transsexualism," I began to

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Renaissance News

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Events Calendar

February

- 3rd Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 3rd Ren LSV Chapter
- 7th Ren. Reading Chapter Membership Meeting
- 10th Ren. Reading Chapter Dinner Social
- 17th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter Dr. Richard Friend
- 22-25 Texas T' Party San Antonio, TX
- 25-28 Mardi Gras, New Orleans

March

- 3rd Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 3rd Ren. LSV Chapter
- 7th Ren. Reading Chapter Membership Meeting
- 10th Ren. Reading Chapter Dinner Social
- 17th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter A Transsexual's Journey
- 27-1 IFGE 4th Annual Conv. Natick, Mass.

April

- 7th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
- 7th Ren. LSV Chapter
- 11th Ren. Reading Chapter Dinner Social
- 14th Ren. Reading Chapter Membership Meeting
- 21th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

And, don't forget about...

- The last of the Benjamin books, *The Transsexual Phenomena* are back in stock. When these are gone, there are no more. The Deluxe Edition is \$39.95 and the Regular Edition is \$35.95, postpaid.

- 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.

- If you'd like information about starting a Renaissance chapter in your area, or about becoming an affiliate of Renaissance, write to Alison Laing c/o the office.

Opinion - Information FORUM

A special report: 9th World Congress of Sexology

An exclusive interview with Ari Kane for Renaissance News.

From December 2 to 8, Ari Kane, Executive Director of the Outreach Institute, attended the 9th World Congress of Sexology in Caracas, Venezuela. Kane's presence at the conference was significant because he was invited by the director of the conference to present a paper and conduct a workshop on gender issues.

Kane's presentations to the congress included a twenty minute paper titled, "Social Dynamics of Gender Shift," followed by a question and answer period, and a 4 hour workshop titled "Counseling Strategies for Helping Professionals working with the Gender Conflicted." Both presentations were well received with the maximum number of participants permitted attending each session.

Renaissance News Editor JoAnn Roberts spoke with Kane shortly after his return from the congress. Here is the transcript of that interview.

Renaissance News: What is the significance of this conference? Where does it fit in in the "world" of sexuality and counseling?

Ari Kane: This particular conference attempts to put all the various aspects of human sexuality into a single discipline under the category of "sexology." The gamut of interests run from medical aspect of sexuality (e.g. a lot of emphasis on AIDS and AIDS education) to psychological aspects to psychiatric aspects. The congress deals with human sexuality on a much broader scale than we tend to do here.

Generally, the type of people who attend the congress are university researchers or clinicians. There are very few people who have reached "guru" status in the rest of the world, like Dr. John Money.

The overall purpose of the con-

gress is the opportunity to exchange current views on human sexuality from a cultural standpoint.

RN: What was the value in having you attend? What benefits, if any, might we reap from your presentations there?

AK: The value of my attendance is that we made connections with other major parts of the helping professional world community. We tend to think that our network in this paraculture is small, although growing, and sometimes ineffective. But, in comparison to Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa, we in North America have the most comprehensive and active network, bar none. Our paraculture has more social contacts, more educational contacts, more public speaking and appearance engagements to aid in understanding transvestism, transsexualism and transgenderism than anywhere else in the world.

The other value is the presentation of a new approach for helping people with gender conflicts. As I stated earlier, the congress is primarily medical, psychological and psychiatric in nature. The Outreach Institute has developed the approach of examining social dynamics and culturally determined sexual attitudes as part of a way to help gender conflicted people survive in the real world. This is a new idea to professionals from many of the Old World countries.

Here in the U.S., we're starting to recognize the socially determined aspects of sexuality and there is a movement toward gender diversity. We see it in the changing roles of both men and women in the workplace and in the social structure. If we can include gender diversity, i.e. transvestism, transsexualism, and transgenderism, into these redefined roles, we have a real chance at helping some people become more at ease with who they

really are.

The greatest value in my attendance was presenting this approach to our New World colleagues.

RN: How did you get the invitation to present at the conference?

AK: Well, the Outreach Institute has shifted its emphasis somewhat from exclusively the paraculture to include more contact with the helping professionals. I do a lot of workshops and programs for the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex (Quad-S) and American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists. In November of 1988, I was attending the national Quad-S conference in San Francisco where I met the head of the World Congress of Sexology, Fernando Bianco, M.D., who is also the director of the Medical Sexology Institute in Caracas. It was he who invited me to present.

RN: How did the attendees at the conference respond to you as a person with gender issues?

AK: That turned out to be a very interesting experience. You have to remember that we're talking about a country (Venezuela) where "machismo" is important and commonplace. As the director of the Outreach Institute, and as a professional male, I was accorded a great deal of respect. And while I did not hide the fact that I sometimes crossdress, I was hesitant about bringing Ariadne out of the suitcase, so to speak. I decided to seize the opportunity and attend a cocktail reception as Ariadne. There were about 1,200 people at this gathering.

John Money took me by the arm, led me into the reception and introduced me to several of his international colleagues. Their reactions to Ariadne were very positive and there was a lot of non-verbal support, lots of smiles, etc. I was talking with some people from Japan, who spoke English very well, and eventually

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Sexology...from page 3

our group was joined by some others from Latin American countries. It was quite a round robin of questions and answers which required the services of a translator at times. My Spanish isn't that good but my Italian was very helpful.

RN: How did these professionals respond to the concept of a "well adjusted" transvestite or transsexual?

AK: They were both surprised and unaware that such people exist. People with gender conflict are deeply closeted in Latin America and other parts of the world. Image is very important. Many of these professionals had never met a crossdresser before, let alone one

who was also a professional and familiar with the issues.

RN: What message did you leave with the congress?

AK: My message to the congress was that there are other avenues, like the paraculture network we have here in the U.S., that can help people to find a fuller expression of themselves as sexual human beings. And that we, perhaps, have a new tool—social dynamics—to provide help for people with gender conflicts.

RN: What message or lesson did you bring home from the congress?

AK: We still have a lot of work to do here educating our community and the public at large. We need

more outreach programs like the kinds you have at Renaissance, college lectures, public appearances, information packets, etc.

We need to get more people out of the closet. A closet is such a dark and lonely place and it is no place for people in our paraculture. We need to open the doors, let in the light, let in the air and share with our sisters.

RN: I want to thank you, Ari, for granting us this interview. The work you do on behalf of the Institute and our community is invaluable. We hope that 1990 brings you and the Institute continued success.

"Truly Serious"...from page 1

appreciate why it is often so difficult for a transsexual to achieve important goals.

Veronica listed various groups of gender dysphoric people, by percentage, based on her personal re-

search. At first, I was so shocked by her findings that I found them difficult to believe. But, after getting opinions from other transsexuals, I began to appreciate the validity of her findings.

The findings list four groups, and although Ms. Brown did not use the labels and terminology that I use here, I am taking the liberty to do so to emphasize the importance of the

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It used to be that drag was on television only during "the sweeps weeks," the periods when the rating companies count the number of people watching television. To attract more viewers, Geraldo, Donahue and their ilk would always trot out a transvestite or transsexual to boost ratings. But now drag is big in prime time too.

Last month CBS debuted a mid-season replacement for the failed "Snoops." The new show, "Max Monroe; Loose Cannon", stars Shadoe Stevens in the title role as a maverick cop, and features Bruce A. Young as Monroe's best friend. As Young tells it, "I play a retired cop, married with two kids. I own a hot night spot, and when I'm there I work in full drag." But early episodes didn't show this facet of his character.

Young may look familiar in a dress and heels. One of his most widely-seen roles was as the crossdressed prostitute in *Risky Business* with Tom Cruise.

CBS has ordered six episodes of the hour-long program. It is airing on Friday nights.

♣ ♣ ♣

Drag takes center stage on another prime time series, this time on NBC. Scott Bakula of "Quantum Leap" time travels into the body of a harried single mother. This plot device must be popular with the show's writers, earlier this season Bakula played a female secretary.

It also seems to be popular with Bakula, who said being in drag "is more interesting the second time around. The first time I got so much grief from the crew. They were doing cat calls and whistles, calling me madam and opening doors for me. Now it's basically, 'Oh, there goes Scott in a dress again.'"

He added that playing women has been "very wonderful for me. I learned the difficulty of just wearing women's clothes; literally how

painful they are. My wife had a ball. Every time I came home complaining about how cold I was on the set, freezing in stockings and a skirt, she'd say, 'See.'"

"Looking at everything from a woman's standpoint," he said, "how you're treated, how people hit on you, how uncomfortable it made me feel, even though I'm an actor playing a part, even though I'm a man, maybe because I am a man being hit on by other men—the reality is this is not pleasant. Its irritating."

♣ ♣ ♣

Despite the apparent acceptance of drag in Hollywood, there still are parts of California where crossdressing is illegal. San Bernardino County, for example, only allows drag "in public celebrations, holidays, parades or events." Although no one has been arrested or prosecuted since 1972, a local man and woman, who routinely appear in public in the clothes of the other gender, are challenging the law, saying that it is unconstitutional, vague, and unenforceable.

♣ ♣ ♣

In those places where crossdressing is not illegal, a guy can still get into trouble with police while wearing women's clothes. Ask Frank Mascari, 56, of Brooklyn. In December, New York City police arrested him for being the "queen pin" of a burglary ring that had preyed on posh Long Island homes for at least ten years.

Headline writers at the *New York Post* had a field day with the story. "DRAG-NET NABS THE 'QUEEN' OF L.I. THIEFDOM" they wrote above the report that called Mascari "the man behind the mascara." The story quoted police officials as saying that Mascari's crossdressing "aided him in that he would be able to walk in the target areas without causing suspicion. The sight of a middle-aged woman exiting an expensive late model car is not the

picture of a common burglar."

Police also said that Mascari had a taste for the finer things. When he was arrested, along with two accomplices loading stolen items into a 1988 Lincoln, he was wearing designer jeans and a mink coat.

♣ ♣ ♣

Mascari might have claimed he was only doing "cultural research" as a defense. Ad agencies are paying big bucks to find out what consumers really think about products and other subjects. One behavioral research firm, Holen North America, sent cultural anthropologists to New York City drag bars on an assignment for a major corporation.

Leading advertising agencies and large corporations nowadays often watch people in public to see what they really think. The rationale is consumers sometimes answer interview questions the way they think they should. But when they are observed secretly, they react to products naturally. Candid observation also helps explain feelings that a survey can't touch.

That's how the drag bar stake-out came about. To find out what Americans now consider to be glamorous, Steve Barnett, a former cultural anthropology professor at Princeton and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and who headed Holen before becoming the director of product strategy for the Nissan Motor Company, sent his colleagues out to watch transvestites. "When these men dress as women, they have to think more carefully about what is glamorous because they have to construct it from the ground up," he said.

While Miss Sinclair claims to read several newspapers each day, she is evidently lying, for both Lisa and an unidentified correspondent last month sent in items she had missed. But Miss Sinclair was not piqued. This because those contributions carried the name and date of publication. Should you find an article of interest, send it to Miss Sinclair care of the *Renaissance* office.



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Paradise Lost...from page 1

By this time, my close friends realized the difficulties I was facing, and gave me all their support and help at a time when I was close to desperation. I cannot thank them enough. Without their presence, I could well have done something stupid.

Ultimately though, the I was the only person who could reach a decision about my future. I had to decide if the life ahead was what I really wanted, regardless of cost. I also had to face the the very real possibility of living a life as lonely as the one I was living as a male, if not lonelier.

It is a very hard decision to make. My whole life, for as long as I could remember, was aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of becoming a woman. I felt so certain that nothing would stand in my way. How could I admit at the final stage that I couldn't go through with it.

My life was completely shattered. There was just an empty void. Where once I had purpose, now I had nothing. I knew within myself there was only one decision I could make. I stopped the treatment.

Many of you, I'm sure, will think I'm just being silly; that I did not give myself a chance. Ever since I started, I have tried to be realistic. It is no good kidding yourself that you can achieve the impossible. You *must* accept your limitations and, most of all, you must be honest with yourself. It is no good going blindly ahead with such an important step in your life without being 100 percent certain you can cope with the tremendous pressures that you will face in the real world.

When I saw the surgeon, Dr. Reid, for the first time, I asked him what percentage of transsexuals are successful in adjusting to their new life. He said about 90 percent are successful. I find this very hard to believe, and it does not bear out what I have found with many of the transsexuals I have met.

Life is not very easy at the best of

times, but for a transsexual living full time it is much harder. Personally, I don't think neo-transsexuals are made aware of the difficulties. They seem only to be told only the good things. The problems are not given enough prominence. I believe that many transsexuals live in a total fantasy world, either not wishing to admit their limitations, or not caring how other people see them. Most transsexuals seem to believe that once they have had the operation, all their problems will be over. To be honest (which few transsexuals appear to be with themselves) the problems are just beginning.

It has not been easy for me to give up the treatment, but I believe I have made the right decision. I hope others contemplating a similar course of action, will give it much serious thought. It is not a step to be taken lightly.

I do not know what the future holds for me now. I need time to think and to plan my life but I hope this letter may be of help to some of you who find themselves in a similar situation.

(Stacy Novak's, *Narcissus* editor, comments)

This item may worry some of you, or even shock you. It may make me look cold and unhelpful, but I can never be the one to tell anyone what they should or should not do, I can only advise them accordingly in the ways of a woman.

When Tony first approached TransEssex, he was adamant where his life's path should be going. He had lived an unsocial existence for many years, and showed many feminine qualities with a gentle manner. He quickly became an active working member of the group. Tammy and I went with him to visit the good Dr. Reid. On our return, Tony felt relieved and calm, but when realization set in, he saw so many difficulties with the male form becoming female. The likelihood of passing 100 percent he saw as not only difficult for him, but also for

many other transsexuals, plus, the usual problem of voice. Listening to this person's problems really made me think. A transsexual once said to me, "You can get up in the morning, throw on a jumper and a pair of jeans, and still everyone will recognize you as a woman." But in truth I have to work hard at it too. Another transsexual told me I would never have any idea what it was like to be a real woman. I looked at the 6' 4" person in amazement. After all, I was classified female at birth!

So, we are looking at problems of male-to-female appearance, dress, voice, etc. Anyone who has had a life of male experience and developed all the outward behavior patterns of the male and who now wants to live the female role has got it hard. Many make the grade successfully. Many, after the operation, though mentally feeling so much more relaxed and being "right," are still shunned by society and, as Tony says, living a life of extreme loneliness.

What worries me most about the people I try to help is how many are just substituting the transsexual role for the female companionship they have never had, or the lack of friends, or a social life. This worries me more now because so many post-operative transsexuals seem to be still living incredibly lonely lives, in many cases, with no job or partners. It would seem, as Tony says, they swapped one lonely existence for another. Please do consider all the aspects, and do not rush blindly into hormones and operations. Remember there is a real world out there, and it can be a cold, lonely place.

(JoAnn Robert's, *Renaissance News* editor, comments)

Stacy Novak is a genetic female. She is the coordinator for the TransEssex TV/TS support group and she is the editor of *Narcissus*, the TransEssex bimonthly publication.

Tammy, who is mentioned in the piece, is Stacy's S.O. and a post-operative transsexual.

Success...from page 1

tion. You are the person that others perceive you as. Simple as that. Quite generally, initial perceptions last forever. It almost takes an earthquake to shake the foundations of a good or bad initial perception. The perception of you that others carry has an impact on how successful you can be in your job. If they perceive you as a weak person - regardless of gender - then you will not succeed professionally. But if they perceive you as a winner, then they will want to do everything they can to help you succeed in your mission because everyone wants to be associated with a winner. Nobody wants to be associated with a loser.

That's the first lesson that I want you to learn: positive self esteem, and how it ties to perception. The second is how you see yourself as a person. A great many TS folks out there identify themselves as transsexual being somewhat proud of the nomenclature (for some unknown reason). But "transsexual" is nothing more than a medical term. If you identify yourself as transsexual then that is how others will perceive you, with all of the negative garbage that may be encompassed by that term. Should those M-F individuals identify themselves as women, instead of transsexual, then they will be treated as that. The same is true (except in reverse) for the F-M gender conflicted members of society.

In my mind, I have never thought of myself as anything different than a woman, a female, and that is the persona that I project to others. Therefore, that is the person they perceive me to be. I have never let my gender issue cloud the reality of who I really am, nor have I let it cloud the minds of others as to whom they are dealing with.

If you have the tools of positive self-esteem, and proper self image, you can be as successful as you want to be. One major problem in this area is few people know how to channel success. It's like the electricity from a lightning bolt; what do

you do with it after you capture it? This is the primary reason why so few people actually succeed at anything in today's world.

Success is nothing more than a combination of a destination (or goal) and a road map. All you need to do to succeed is set your destination and draw up a road map of the route you will follow to get there, say, in the next five or ten years. You can also make a "laundry list" of exactly what it will take to accomplish that plan. We'll call the items on this list your set of goals. Each element is a goal or rung on a ladder that needs to be achieved before final success is realized. On a second sheet of paper break down each step or element to identify exactly what it will take to accomplish that step.

Tackle only one step at a time, accomplishing everything needed to finish that goal. When it is done, rapidly move to the next step. It is also important to set a reasonable time period to finish each step. Give yourself a "To-Be-Done By" date for each step, and stick with it. At the end of the five or ten years, I think you will see that each step has been accomplished, and the major goal achieved. You are a successful winner! Believe me, it is easier than you think.

After eight years of service, I was asked to leave the U. S. Army because of my gender issues. I made up my mind that I wanted to return as a commissioned officer. I set the commissioning day as my final goal, and then set up each step needed to achieve that final goal. Everything went ahead as planned, and I became a Second Lieutenant on June 30, 1984. (We'll talk about my initial release some other time.)

I was promoted to the rank of captain, and ultimately became the first officer in the history of the United States Army to officially be recommended for sex reassignment surgery. Yes, that was in my "battle plan" too, but not really part of my military career.

Since that time in 1986, I also made the decision to get back into

the world of professional photography that I had been involved in for the past 20 years. My primary goal was to be a working free-lance writer and photographer, since my old correspondent days had been with major networks. I wanted to do this on my own without letting gender interfere with my success. Today I have had material used by *LIFE* magazine, *Air Classics*, and I'm a regular contributing editor to *Women & Guns*, along with a host of other publications. My success came because I aimed high and dreamed big dreams. One who dreams small dreams will never achieve big goals.

I also wanted to test the waters in a profession that has, to date, been closed to individuals of the transsexual persuasion; education. Mustering all of my positive self perception as the woman I am, I applied for a teaching position at a local community college and was hired to teach an advanced photography class. After securing that position, I designed four other courses at the college which I'm busily employed teaching. Plus, I've designed a major national photography contest to be implemented by the college in the spring.

I'm perceived as a knowledgeable, professional photographer who also happens to be a woman. Though I have spoken on gender issues to psychology classes at the college, I am perceived as totally female, nothing less.

I've proven that gender does not have to get in the way of your success if you have the right self image, and project that image onto others. There are many other pre- and post-operative individuals who are also successful in their endeavors for the very same reasons. But a large percentage of those afflicted with gender problems are still stumbling and bumping into the shadows of their own fading careers, and blaming their career failure on the gender issues. Open the door marked "Life." You have the key to open up the pathway to your success, not as a transsexual, but as a person!

"Truly Serious"...from page 4

groups.

The first group is the 90 percent group, which I like to refer to as "The Lip Service Group." This group likes to talk about gender dysphoria and how they would like to be more congruent, while doing nothing more than that to achieve it.

The second group is the nearly 10 percent group, the "Do Something Group." This group, at least, will usually do more than just talk about their problem. They may read a book or two, perhaps even try electrolysis just to find out what it feels like. Usually, they're able to convince themselves that they're doing, or have done, all that they can. After all, who wants to lose their job, risk divorce, alienate themselves from family and friends and possibly have to start a new life all over again? That's just too much to ask.

The third group is the nearly 5 percent group, the "Serious Group". This group is composed of individuals who have already done some research on their condition. They have probably joined a transsexual

support group in an effort to find intellectual and emotional support; already live or are planning to live some part or all of their lives in their chosen gender; are having electrolysis (if m-to-f); and are receiving or in the process of receiving approval for hormone therapy. These people have already taken considerable risks to their psychological and financial status, and are probably considering the next step—reassignment surgery.

The "Dedicated Group" is the fourth group and by far the smallest. It represents between one and two percent of all those who have claimed to be transsexuals. This group has made it "over the top," had their surgery, achieved "ultimate congruity," and can look forward to an emotionally fulfilling, happy life (if all has gone well during their transition). After all, they've suffered enough to get there.

May we all achieve this goal some day soon! That is, those of us who really want to.

This is not a put-down of any of

the aforementioned groups nor is it an attempt at polarization. It's merely an effort to indicate that different groups have different goals. I was not previously aware of the situation and there may be many others out there who are also unaware of these percentages.

Society, in general, is even less aware and will consider behavior by any other gender group to be a reflection on all of us, regardless of the degree of our convictions or personal dedication to achieving goals.

Obviously, those of us who are most dedicated will be hardest hit and again, as always, we will be the least able to absorb the impact. The recent reassignment surgery mutilations involving former M.D., John Ronald Brown, despite his record, is proof of this. Misunderstanding of us by others and disunity among ourselves as a group is conducive to this kind of situation which can only get worse the longer it is allowed to continue. *Let's all do our part to ensure a positive reflection on our community and on our cause.*

Former member of local board airs charges against local, national

A member of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter widely circulated a letter in which she charges members of a local board and the national board with various misdeeds.

Therése Aigner, formerly the outreach director of the Philadelphia group, sent a strongly worded letter to Alison Laing, managing director of the national board at the time. Aigner's response was to a letter from Laing to Teri Kay, the former chapter leader, addressing complaints from chapter members about local services and activities.

The national board has the responsibility to oversee chapter operations in compliance with both local and national by laws.

Aigner also sent copies of her letter, along with the letter from Laing, to various groups and individuals. "We know copies were received by IFGE and *Feminine*," says

JoAnn Roberts, in charge of chapter development at the time. The text of the two letters was printed in *Feminine*. Aigner charged her former sister directors at the chapter with being "moles/suppositories" and "spies" for national. She further claimed that she was prevented from performing her duties by a national board member. Finally, she accused another national board member of interfering in her client-counselor relationship with the therapist she was seeing at the time.

Members of the national board who were not the object of Aigner's charges examined each charge with her and found no basis for them.

Aigner also claimed that the chapter had been denied a copy of the national by laws and that national board members were drawing salaries. "Both claims are specious, without foundation," says

Roberts. "I personally hand-delivered Chapter Handbooks to each chapter leader. The handbook contains a copy of the by-laws. Aigner didn't know it was there. As for drawing a salary, thanks to the fine efforts of our executive treasurer every penny that comes into the national organization is fully accounted for. Aigner, or any other member, could see for herself where the money goes simply by asking for a statement. None of it goes into board members' purses."

Aigner has also made public allegations about the private, personal lives of members, charging them with felonies and misdemeanors.

Aigner lost her bid for chapter leader in the recent election. She was defeated by a 2-1 margin.

The new board of the Philadelphia chapter is working to upgrade services and plan new activities.

From around the TV/TS community
NATIONAL GENDER NEWS™

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA. —We received a press release from our friend **Thelma** in South Africa. Two members of **Phoenix** have received a literary award from the **Elaine Barrie Project (E.P.B.)**, a TV/TS support group in Australia. The award was given to **Joy Wellbeloved** and **Diane Marlene Knoetze** in recognition of their joint authorship of the Phoenix Society publication *The Transgender Phenomenon*.

As part of the Phoenix Society's ongoing educational policy, *The Transgender Phenomenon* was distributed free of charge to magazine and newspaper editors, agony aunts, members of the medical and legal professions, social workers and others of influence and authority throughout South Africa. The publication has been reprinted and distributed by a number of sister organizations overseas.

Knoetze and Wellbeloved will each receive a 'Golden Pen', a Citation and the E.B.P. Literary Certificate. This is the first time since its inception in 1986 that the award has been given to anyone outside Australia.

At the annual E.B.P. Awards Night it was announced that, in addition to the yearly literary presentation, a new award of merit had been instituted, A Certificate of Merit and a very handsome trophy was presented, in absentia, to The Phoenix Society. The citation read: To the Phoenix Society of South Africa for their steadfastness, courage and fortitude in the face of adversity.

In a message to the members of The Phoenix Society, published in E.B.P.'s magazine *Nu-Scene International*, Elaine Barrie says of the Phoenix Society, "Your organization has done more for friendly relations than all of the people in high places. Your government could do worse than appoint every member of Phoenix to the posts of overseas ambassadors."

NGN

HOUSTON, TEX. — The Tri-Ess folks at **Tau Chi** are once again embroiled in a controversy, this time over children. The new president of the **Gulf Coast TV Chapter (GCTVC)** decided that children should not be allowed to attend the "Fantastic Weekend" next spring. The event

was jointly sponsored by GCTVC and Tau Chi last year.

The Tri-Ess group objected to the exclusion and dropped out as a sponsor. One observer commented, "I think it's going to look like the crossdressers here in Houston are shooting themselves in the foot again. It's not going to encourage attendance next spring."

We can see both points of view. Having children present may make some people very nervous and uncomfortable. But, sometimes, putting yourself into that uncomfortable situation is the only way to overcome the discomfort. Like the first time you went out in public. Remember back that far? On the other hand, having children around can be very positive if the kids are accepting. They give people a chance to talk with a child who has learned to deal with the issue and get some pointers on dealing with their own kids. What surprises us is which group is on which side of this issue. If we had to choose, believe it or not, we'd side with Tau Chi on this one.

NGN

CHICAGO, ILL. — The December
continued next page



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From around the TV/TS community NATIONAL GENDER NEWS™

issue of the *Chi Tribune*, the publication of the Tri-Ess Chi Chapter, carried news of the first annual meeting of the board of directors of Tri-Ess. Yes, the first. Up to now, Tri-Ess was privately run by **Carol Beecroft**.

The board moved to adopt a constitution which defines the purpose of the group: to act as a non-sexual support group for the heterosexual transvestite. An editorial comment accompanying the article quipped, "Tri-Ess should define its purpose and not let outsiders place labels on who and what we are."

In addition to excluding non-heterosexuals from membership, the board also adopted a policy which excludes transgendered people in prison from receiving *The Femme Mirror* or any Tri-Ess publications.

We can't wait to hear the rationalization that goes with this one.

NGN

SAN ANTONIO, TEX. — Meanwhile, if the cold weather turns your mood blue and well as your toes, consider a jaunt down to the **Texas "T" Party**, from the 23-25 of this month.

Last year's gathering surprised everyone by drawing over 125 people from all over the country. The good folks at the **Boulton & Park Society**, who sponsor this event, expect a larger crowd this year.

This is a "best bet" if you can only attend one or two of these events during the year. Contact B&P at P. O. Box 169652, San Antonio, TX 78280 or call (512) 657-2540.

NGN

OWEN SOUND, ONTARIO — The bad word is spreading about **FantasyLand** and owner **Deb Pyke**.

A recent letter to the editor in the *Transie Times* complained about being given the "bums rush" by Pyke after she took the person into a transformation.

The magazine replied that they had received several such complaints and had stopped carrying

advertising for the shop.

"Sic transit gloria mundi."

NGN

CHICAGO, ILL. — We can always find something of interest in the *Primrose*, from the **Chicago Gender Society**.

The December issue carried these "random" thoughts from **David Maxwell**, CGA president.

- People over 6 feet tall always look foolish in miniskirts.

- Sexy is not the same as sleazy.

- Being in drag is no excuse to forget your age.

- Hip pads make you look fat.

- If you are serious about passing, you must dress to satisfy the expectations of others, not yourself.

- If your breast forms cost more than your wig, you should reexamine your priorities.

- As a rule, people who write articles for newsletters know much less that they pretend to know.

Amen!

NGN

TORONTO, ONTARIO — It just looks like we received news from only three locations this month. We can't be held accountable for a lack of interesting news.

Lesley gives a 6 month progress report on her laser voice surgery in the December issue of *TransNews*.

says that while her pitch is raised the habitual intonation of male speech remains. To complete the voice changover will require sessions with a speech pathologist.

She says the surgery/pathology sessions can be a long and tedious process but also very rewarding.

Also from the Great White North we understand from our friends **Paddy Aldridge** and **Veronica Brown**, that a local nightclub has been sponsoring a *Bizarre Fetish Night* once a month. The dress code (to be strictly enforced) includes: Leather, Rubber, Lingerie, High-heels, Shiny PVC, Crossdressing,

Trannies, and Drags.(sic) Crossdressing bizarre? Fetish?

We can't say much for their command of the English language (they are Canadian) but it does sound very reminiscent of the **Dressing for Pleasure Ball** put on by **Mistress Constance** in New York. If any of these "bizarre fetishes" are in your bag of tricks and you're in the Toronto area, check out the Tazmanian Ballroom at 101 Jarvis St.

NGN

TORONTO, ONTARIO — But wait, you say you need some help before you go to the ball. Well, you're in the right place at least. **Take a Walk on the Wildside**, just down the road from the Tazmanian, will help you get ready for any evening out on the town in Toronto. They provide a full transformation service. Call (416) 864-0420 for details and an appointment.

NGN

WALTHAM, MASS. — Anyone planning on attending the 4th Annual **"Coming Together"** convention, sponsored by the **International Foundation for Gender Education** and **The Tiffany Club of New England** had better get a move on. Hotel reservations must be made by the 25th of this month. The convention will be held March 27 through April 1 at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza in Natick Mass. Call the hotel at (508) 653-8800.

Complete information about the convention is available from IFGE at (617) 894-8340.

NGN

DENVER, COLO. — And speaking of IFGE and conventions, this just hot off the wire.

The **Gender Identity Center of Colorado, Inc.** (a.k.a. GIC) has been chosen as the host group for the 1991 "Coming Together" IFGE convention. The site location is Denver. A date has not been set at this time.

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