



News & views

Vision • Integrity • Quality

Vol. 9, No. 10 • October 1995

It's No Blarney. Irish TV Scene Lacking

by Judith ■

The Dublin metropolitan area has nearly 1 million people, yet there is only one gay bar and disco. There used to be two gay bars, one of which admitted CDs, TVs, etc., and the other didn't even like lesbians! The friendly one changed hands about 18 months ago. It reopened as a "gay friendly" but straight bar. Most of the gay patrons returned and had no problem. After I had been there a few times I was refused entry. When I asked why, I was told, "We don't want your type here." Now, I took this personally and asked the manager what I had done. She admitted I'd done nothing but repeated, "We don't want your type here." I assumed she was objecting to crossdressing which didn't make sense because she likes to have drag acts! Anyway, I got my own back and told all the gay community — most of whom boycotted the place. The bar is now closed again and reopening, they hope, as a straight bar! They'll be lucky.

In the meantime, we had a stroke of luck. Two things happened. First, a gay friend approached the owner of the George (the second bar) and made a very strong case that I and my friends should be allowed to use the premises. He agreed. Sometime later, the manager, who was the one with the anti-woman attitude was sacked and the new manager is more than glad to have us.

Crossdressers in Ireland fall into two broad categories — those who are simply crossdressers and those who are transvestites. This is a definition I saw in one of the "alt" newsgroups where a crossdresser is defined as somebody whose driving force comes from the clothes and not from her inner femininity. I apologize to any one offended by this remark. It is intended simply to define some sort of label effective in an Irish context and not to demean anybody.

The majority of the crossdressers here belong to a group called the *Friends of Eon* which is an offshoot of the English *Beaumont Society*, in turn an offshoot of Virginia Prince's old *PhiPiEpsilon*. The "Friends" are completely homophobic and this has generated considerable friction between them and the transvestite population. There is no corresponding organization for transvestites as it has been found that they are either in the closet, in which

case they won't join an organization, or out, in which case they don't need an organization.

The only place we have to socialize in Dublin is the George bar, unless you are really passable, then there are plenty of places to go because nobody reads you anyway.

Because of this lack of social locations, a number of people have jumped in to provide what they call "dressing facilities." There, for a huge fee, one can be dressed for a period of time. Unfortunately, with one exception, these places are sleazy dives where the management is only interested in taking your money. I have researched them all. Some are simply brothels or massage parlours while others are a step above, but have a menu of sexual offerings including discipline and infantilism. Not what the regular crossdresser is into.

I am involved in running a help line for crossdressers of all sorts. This operates one night a week and, while most of its business is done by phone, we are always willing to meet a distressed crossdresser for a one-to-one meeting. In addition, we will talk to relatives of a crossdresser in a non-judgmental way. Our advice is always non-directive so we have gained a degree of support among health care workers and the media. The problem with this line, as with all others of its kind, is staffing. It is hard to open your heart to others when your own heart may be breaking.

I'm afraid that the scene in a small country such as Ireland gets incestuous, so we need feedback from the world. I feel the best thing that ever happened to me was getting onto the Internet. I've been reading the *soc.support.transgendered* and *alt.transgendered* newsgroups, but there is very little of help in them — mainly they seem to be a couple of individuals scoring points off each other.

We are trying to make some positive changes and recently had a meeting to organize something more than the nominal setup we have at the moment. I had been getting burnout as a result of trying to run the help line singlehanded. Then Michelle came along and she had a number of good ideas, but the problem was even two of us couldn't manage. We need some sort of organization, and obviously some

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Renaissance

Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

Wilmington, Delaware: meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808 or call 302-995-1396.

New Jersey

South Jersey/Shore Area: Write Renaissance South Jersey, Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ, 08330. Meets first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee City. Doors open 7PM. Call 609-641-3782 for details.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia: Write Renaissance GPC, 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, Pa. 19087. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia. Doors open 8 p.m. all year 'round. Call 610-975-9119 for information.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122 Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (780-1578) for location and meeting times.

Affiliates

California

Orange County: Powder Puffs of California, PO Box 1088, Yorba Linda, CA 92686, or email to <ppoc@aol.com>

Connecticut

Bridgeport/New Haven area: connecticutView, c/o Denise Mason, PO Box 2281, Devon, CT 06460. Monthly newsletter and activities.

Georgia

Atlanta: The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 404-939-0244, or email to <aegis@mindspring.com>. Information resources & referrals.

Atlanta: Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 404-939-2128.

Louisiana

New Orleans: The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 870213, New Orleans, LA 70187-1300.

Maryland

An affiliate is forming in the Baltimore area. Write Tran°Quility, c/o Colleen N. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Baltimore, MD, 21218-3912.

New Jersey

N. Central Jersey: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701 or call 908-219-9094.

New York

Manhattan: Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), write 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, NY 10014, or call 201-794-1665, Ext. 332.

Long Island: New York GIRL & Partners, PO Box 456, Centereach, NY 11720, Call 516-732-5115 for info.

Oklahoma

Central Oklahoma: Sooner Diversity, part of the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance (COTA). Contact, Rachel [REDACTED], P.O. Box 575, Norman, OK 73070.

Pennsylvania

Lehigh Valley/Pocono area: Northeastern Pa. Transgender Alliance, NEPTGA, meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Allentown area. Call for directions and more information, 610-821-2955.

Interested in having your group join the Renaissance family? Write to Co-director of Outreach/Community Relations at the Wayne address above or send email to <RenInfo@cdspub.com>.

Renaissance News & Views

© 1995, Renaissance Education Association, Inc., 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, Pa. 19087.
Phone: 610-975-9119

\$2 per issue, \$16 per year (12 issues). Back issues are available for \$2 per copy plus \$0.52 postage and handling. Send check or M.O. to the above address, attention: Beth Marshall.

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Articles, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor are always welcome. Ideas for articles and opinion pieces should be sent to our editorial office care of Renaissance, PO Box 530, Bensalem, Pa. 19020-0530. Or use email to <bensalem@cpn.com>. Complimentary and irate letters to the editor may be sent to the same address.

Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the transgender community and the general public.

Local Calendar

October

- 14 Ren. South Jersey
- 14 Ren. LSV meeting
- 14 Ren. Delaware
- 14 NEPTGA, Allentown
- 21 Ren. GPC
- 28 Balto. Affiliate
- 31 Henri David's Hallowe'en Bash at the Franklin Wyndham Plaza

November

- 11 Ren. South Jersey
- 11 Ren. LSV meeting
- 11 Ren. Delaware
- 11 NEPTGA, Allentown
- 18 Ren. GPC
- 25 Balto. Affiliate

News Beat & Reminder



Hi ho one and all, it's Fall and soon our sacred day of obligation, Halloween, will be here. What are we wearing? Maybe I'll do something really scary and visit all my usual haunts dressed as a man. Nah, wouldn't scare anybody cause they wouldn't believe it was me. Come to think of it, it's not. I'm Angela, after all and that means I've got to write another column. Oh boy. Let's see... what can I tell you about? Oh yeah! Just get a load of this.

Media Blitz

WPRO radio picked up on our Tyra hunter story (September issue) and I did an on air interview for an hour September 7th on **Marianne Sorrentino's** show. Only one caller (a woman) said we were sick. One guy said they shouldn't talk about stuff like this on the radio. He didn't mind men wearing dresses but he just didn't want to hear about it. All in all it was a positive experience and I'm sure we educated somebody.

That same day the **Richard Bey Show** had drag queens on who said they were *better* than women, that "natural women are fake." That show was a *perfect* example of why we (Renaissance) don't do these show any more. Unfortunately, that means only outrageous DQs who want their fifteen minutes of fame are appearing on the airwaves and they're making us all look bad. They're combative and don't educate anybody. In other words, they're *perfect* guests for talk shows that have descended to the level of the Circus of Ancient Rome. The lions aren't there,

but people are getting mauled.

In another blast from the past, the **Danny Bonoducci Show** (last claim to fame—arrested for attacking a TG prostitute.) called us looking for guests. I got back to them too late to turn them down, and I'm glad. When it hit the air the show featured a "drag race." I think you get the picture on how much respect we got there.

To Wong Foo....

Speaking of respect, how about a few million dollars worth? It's finally out, it's doing big business and now, everyone loves queens. Well, maybe not everyone but at least a few folks have said, "Oh, I guess it's not demeaning to wear a dress if you can look fabulous."

Looking fabulous for all those weeks of shooting has certainly had an effect of **Patrick Swayze**. He appeared on **Letterman** on Wednesday of the week the film premiered, and a lot of drag queen speak slipped into the interview. "Oh no, don't go there!" One fact that was revealed — Swayze in drag looks like **Miss Kitty** from *Gunsmoke*. Letterman had photos to prove it. Patrick sat there and dished with Dave (while smoking a cigar, but a cigar that was held in a slightly feminine manner, if you ask me.)

Opinion in the transgendered community on how good the film is ranges from, "Oh, what a wonderful film!" to "Yeah, it's ok, but (insert your particular agenda here.)" Well, in his article for *New York Magazine* **Charles Busch** thought the film will give **Bob**

Dole a "conniption." In an interview for *Entertainment Weekly* Busch said, "Realistically, it makes no sense. Even a woman takes off her girdle eventually. *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* seemed more rooted in the real world. This is *E.T.* with falsies."

In the same piece, disco diva/party promoter (and GG) Susanne Bartsch cut up the Swayze's costumes, "A man in a twinset and pearls doesn't really turn me on." Well, it has turned on the box office and I think it may turn on a little bit of respect for us.

I caught the flick at a local Philly movie house and I thought it was a great fantasy presentation of the world of drag. I started to tear up at a few emotional patches but fortunately my mascara is waterproof and I didn't leave the theater with raccoon eyes. There are a million things that we can say are inaccurate or downright wrong with the plot devices that keep the thing afloat but anyway you slice it, this is the first big film with major stars that is giving a positive message about people who do drag.

Go, have fun, enjoy.

The screen writer has informed the media that his contract has a clause that covers the option for Universal to build a Wong Foo ride for their Florida or California theme parks. I think it would be great. They could have a big drag contest like at the beginning of the film and tourists could be made over to get interactive as drag queens. It boggles the mind. Park spokespeople have denied any plans to create a drag ride and I suspect the clause in Beane's contract is a standard thing for any deal with a screenwriter, but just think... sequins and boas for all those tourists. Picture hats for everyone! This time I get to be Chi Chi.

Sure, I'm kidding but they did around \$9 million in the first week. When a film makes that much cash, anything can happen.

Have A Snort

One of the bit players in *Too Wong Foo* is the always exciting, and not yet mentioned in this month's column,

continued next page

News Beat...

Miss RuPaul. Ru was **Rachel Tensions** and she presented the crown and scepter to the winners of the pageant. I have said before in these pages that she has done it all and the only thing left is giving birth. Well, she has added another charm to her charm bracelet of great gigs. She is the newest spokesmodel for Bailey's Irish Cream. Drink up girls, it's not a little old lady drink anymore, it's a big old drag queen drink.

In Sync With Lypsinka

It was a most intense experience, I must say. Lypsinka mania hit Philadelphia and I dragged myself (in a very short black dress) and my friend Leslie down to the Arts Bank theater and we caught *As I Lay Lip-Synching*. **John Epperson**, the fella in a frock behind the legend of Lypsinka, is a marvelous talent. The show goes for an hour and ten minutes and he really creates the illusion that all that stuff is coming out of his mouth. Literally hundreds of clips from films, soundtrack albums and Lord knows what all found their way into the performance. Having worked in audio production, I have to mention the engineer who put it all together. Alex Noyes of Studio Pass in New York must have spent hours editing the show's soundtrack. Lypsinka didn't miss a beat. The performance level, and the demand on the audience, is so intense that no matter how much I liked the show, after around 55 minutes I started to check my watch. The human brain can only process so much lip-synching. Even so, I highly recommend *As I Lay Lip-Synching* as a example of what can be done with a humble performance genre that has been turned into a true art form.

TC Videos: What's New?

A lot is new in the video arena. The **TLA Video Summer/Fall Gay & Lesbian Catalog** lists many films of interest to the transgendered consumer. The cover of the catalog is graced by a TS in a demure frock who

is the star of a film called *The Sex of the Stars*. It's described as (from *New York Newsday*; they gave it three stars) "A beautifully told coming-of-age story about an adolescent girl having to deal with her father's sex change." Get a couple boxes of tissue for this one girls.

Inside, under the title *Boys Will Be Girls!* there are eight films available. The most notable being, *The Queen*, the documentary about the Miss All-American Beauty Pageant of 1967 and *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. I'm surprised that *Just like a Woman* is not in the catalog since I have seen it advertised in another Philly video store.

Under *Comedies* we find the *Best of the Kids In The Hall*, those cross-dressing Canucks and *The Curse of the Queerwolf*, (no, Jack Nicholson isn't in this one) the tale of an all-American guy who turns into a campy drag queen when the moon is full. NO! Lock me in! I mustn't see the moon! On second thought, it's too late. Hand me my boa, would ya girlfriend? Sounds like fun. You buy the videos and I'll bring the popcorn. Call TLA at 1-800-333-8521 and ask them for a copy of the Gay & Lesbian Video Catalog. They'll send the catalog and videos anywhere and the call is free.

Your Papers Please

I got an advert in the mail from a company called TDC. They're promoting a thing called either the "Certified Personal Identification," the "Identification Card," or the "Certified Photo Identification Card." (I hate it when they can't make up their mind.) This handy little card is guaranteed to "help you complete your personal acceptance of your second self." And, it only costs \$9.99. Gosh, if it only costs \$9.99 for me to achieve personal acceptance I think I'll order two. A girl can never be without proper ID. *Which this isn't*. All they do for your money is take your photo (which you must take yourself or have taken) and stick it on a card with your "personal statistics... and other information including date of birth." The entire thing is bogus, including the disclaimer at the bottom of the application that says you will "...hold harmless TDC or any and all of their affiliates in

the use, production or legal ramifications that may occur in my attainment of this identification card."

If you want an ID card stick your picture on a piece of card stock. Type your info on it, go get it laminated for a buck or two and cherish it forever. Don't ever give it to the police if they ask you for ID. It's not legal, official or useful. Give the police your driver's license and registration. Don't give TDC, whoever they are, any personal information about yourself, or any money. It's better you should spend the \$9.99 on more makeup or a pleasant lunch.

A Promotion I can Live With

Shelley [redacted] from Huntsville, Alabama sent me a note about a radio station promo spot that has been running on WZYP radio. WZYP is promoting itself as the station for all listeners. One of the lines in the spot is, "Whether it's cross-training or cross-dressing, ZYP wants to be a part of your active lifestyle." Now that's my kind of radio station. Wanna bet the Program Director is a big fan of *Just Like A Woman* and *To Wong Foo*?

As Dina once took advantage of a crossdressing reference on a sports talk radio show and turned it into a good bit of publicity for the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Renaissance, if there are any groups in Huntsville, they oughta get on the phone to ZYP and set up some interviews. When we get included in stuff like this, it makes us more a regular part of society and less of a bunch of freaks. Remember, it wasn't that long ago that gay men had to pass as straight if they didn't want to pay a heavy price. Gays are now becoming more widely accepted and transgendered people must learn to walk that same road to tolerance. We get closer to it every time we are included in something as a segment of society that may be no different than people who are into cross-training. Personally I'm into training bras but I guess we'd better move on.

The Women Are Fellas

In 1937 Clare Boothe Luce (try saying that three times fast) wrote a play

called *The Women*. Perhaps because she could foretell the future, or just because she was a perceptive observer of human nature and knew that any play with that title was going to attract queens like a flame pulls moths, she instructed her estate to not allow any drag versions of the play. Well, some of those queens are just not impressed by restraining orders and law suits. (Chanel suits will work wonders but a law suit will get you a couple of finger snaps.) Since "the play's thing," or in this case the *Miss Thing*, the script was trotted out, dusted off and performed as a one night benefit in aid of T.W.E.E.D. (Hey, we don't know what it means, so don't ask!) It quickly sold out so a second show was scheduled. Among the queens participating where Miss Coco (a lovely young lady whose one-drag-queen show I have had the pleasure of seeing), David Dukes, Lypsinka (who actually spoke her lines instead of lip-synching them), Joey Arias, and Charles Busch. A fab time was had by one and all and another blow for non-traditional casting was struck. Maybe now that he's done *To Wong Foo*, Wesley Snipes might be interested in doing a drag version of *The Color Purple*. Malcolm Jamal Warner might be cute in that and then there's Will Smith from the *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and the guy who plays his cousin Carlton. He's already had experience wearing a dress on the show. Yes, I think this idea has potential. Get their agents on the phone. We'll put this deal together.

Last Minute Notes

There are a couple of publications you might like to check out and since I know you will always love your *News & Views*, I will pass them along to you. The first is *TNT*, which stands for *Transsexual News Telegraph* which bills itself as "the magazine of transsexual culture" and covers a lot of issues important to the TS segment of the transgender community. To get a sample issue, send \$5 to *TNT*, 41 Sutter Street, #1124, San Francisco, CA 94104-4903.

Another segment of the transgender community that's gotten its own magazine are the hermaphrodites. More specifically, *Hermaphrodites with Attitude*. You may have guessed, this one comes from SF too. If you want to get four issues (it's a quarterly) send a check or money order for \$12 payable to ISNA, PO Box 31791, San Francisco, CA 94131. I love the title. Of course, I think anything goes better with attitude. Or as they say here in Philly, "add-e-tood."

There is a new support group called DC Boys forming in Washington, D.C. "to facilitate the exploration of masculine gender in women." It's for "Boychicks, FtMs and Butch Lesbians." If you fit those categories, or if you are dating one, tell them about this group. Contact them by email <ii@clark.net> or write PO Box 2727, Kensington, MD 20891. As a chick-dude myself, I can appreciate a handsome boychick.

Finally, and on a sad note, we are sorry to announce a benefit for Daneé Russo, well-known female impersonator who has made her home in New Hope, Pennsylvania. Ms. Russo is very ill and the local drag community has come together to help her out. Of course, we're talking about the drag community, so, naturally, it's a show.

This will be a star-studded event at the Cartwheel in New Hope, on Sunday, October 15th, at 6:00PM. Minimum donation is \$15 (we know you'll give more). The cover includes two drink tickets and a buffet.

Word is that noted FIs from all around the country will be performing in support of Daneé. Tickets are available at the Cartwheel (215) 862-0880 or by contacting Berrie Lyndon at (215) 862-5629.

Daneé has always been supportive of the crossdressers who frequented New Hope and here's a chance to pay her back for that kindness.

That's it for another month kids. If you're in Philadelphia for Halloween don't forget Henri David's Ball. It's on the 31st this year and has moved back to a hotel environment. Don't know which one but if you want to know call information and get the number of Henri's store. What's it called? What else? Halloween.

Chow kiddies. (I know that's not how it's spelled. But that's the way I like to spell it.)



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Restaurant Reviews: Rainbows & Ravens

by *Babs and Carol*

During a recent weekend, we had an opportunity to test and enjoy the fare in the dining room of the popular gay Pocono resort Rainbow Mountain Lodge. Set in an atmosphere of comfortable, sort of "contemporary cozy" colonial, those who are seated in the outside rooms are treated to a spectacular view of the valley below and the mountains beyond.

There were a wide variety of appetizers, all of which were enjoyed, with an honorable mention for the shrimp kabob. Entrees were, in general, well prepared, with adequate sized portions. Among the outstanding dishes were the duck, very crisp and tender with a choice of semi-sweet fruit sauce that was unanimously enjoyed, and the Chicken Oscar, a well-prepared dish that featured very generous portions. The steak au poivre was more than adequate and the only complaints were with the seafood, as the Shrimp Scampi and the tuna steak were a little dry. The red snapper served on Friday night was consistently overcooked.

We were reminded to save room for dessert, which was difficult considering the lure of the thick, homemade style, multi-grain bread that was light, yet full of body and possessed of almost a semi-sweet taste. Somehow though, we did save room. The strawberries in Chambord sauce were simply heav-

enly, just sweet enough — like us! The "Santa Fe Apple," a warm apple over vanilla ice cream presented in a cinnamon tortilla, took the concept of pie a la mode to a new height.

Service ranged from good to excellent. On Saturday night, our hostess was decked out as a lovely "Queen" in our honor and constantly made sure there was no problem. Bill, our waiter, somehow kept our large party wanting for neither food nor laughs. He was professional, quick and accurate, with an infallible memory for our names, as well as the food orders, plus he displayed a lively sense of humor.

With such a positive experience, since the restaurant is open to the public, it's worth a trip just for dinner!

Rainbow Mountain Resort
Mount Nebo Rd.
Marshall's Creek, PA
717-223-8484 Reservations

The Raven: Elegant and cozy, surrounded with rich dark woods, and overlooking a formal patio, The Raven reminds one of an English country club. The well appointed multi-tiered restaurant is sufficiently set apart from the adjacent bar, which is sometimes noisy and raucous, so that the genteel ambience is preserved.

Then came the "Ladies!" Our party of 8 requested a non-smoking table. We were told that they didn't have a

non-smoking section, but we were seated in a medium sized, yet cozy room, separate, but within view of the "main" room. We were assured that only non-smokers would be seated in this particular area. The room later filled with only non-smokers. They kept their word.

The food was uniformly good to excellent. Appetizers, salads, and entrees ranging from steak to salmon, crispy duck to a tender marlin, were thoroughly savored and enjoyed without complaint. The prices reflected the quality and ample portions served. Service was professional, respectful, and reflected an apparent effort to welcome and please us. Subsequent visits confirmed the high quality of both food and service.

The menu is changed on a seasonal basis and always includes daily specials. Veal Romagnola, an excellent dish akin to Saltimbocca, was highly rated, as was a semi-sweet raspberry chicken surrounded by kiwi-fruit. A tart taste for a tart! Dinners with drinks, tax and tip average \$40-\$45.

We plan on another return visit to "check out" a particularly "cute" waiter with whom one of our "local" friends recently flirted!

The Raven
385 West Bridge St.
New Hope, Pa
215-862-5171 MC, VISA

Irish TV Scene...

sort of funding. The other problem is that one particular person who is running a "dressing service" for crossdressers has got solidly in with some media people and is continually appearing on radio and television making all sorts of ridiculous statements — "All TVs are straight. Transvestism is only a fun hobby," and we find that we are being marginalized, while at the same time the helpline is flooded with distressed callers because of this inaccurate information. One or two people

can't be on top of all the work.

Back to the meeting, it was attended by a very political post-op transsexual, Aine, Michelle, myself, Jackie, a wife who helps counsel other wives, and a very political gay man who has been involved with many of the gay organizations over the years. I think meeting is too strong a word for what we had. It was mainly a brainstorming session. Anyway, we now have a clearer picture of what we want to achieve: to make a space where all those bending or testing their gender perception will be safe; examine this space; explain it to those involved; and

educate those who need education. Very political, but I told you Aine was very political.

A very tentative name being examined is Gender Identity. The help line will continue but we have to examine funding with a view to getting some sort of small office or alternatively perhaps a mobile telephone number. This would enable us to operate the help line other than once a week. It is vital to remember that people have problems in their time and not at scheduled help line times!





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Ms. France's next point is a more subtle and serious analysis of drag. "Women may be forgiven for not joining drag queens as they embrace corsets, girdles, high heels, false lashes, and other inventions most of us have happily discarded. The underlying message is that drag queens not only make good women but make *better* women because they are willing to suffer more." She notes that the use of drag queens as models in the fashion industry is the ultimate in impossible standard-setting, "one that women quite literally could never attain."

She feels that if it weren't so politically correct now to favor drag (because it is tied in with gay rights), drag would be "hopelessly politically incorrect." And if the queens say that they are "honoring" women, well, "that is exactly how Al Jolson felt about his minstrel shows."

Crossdressers (as distinct from drag queens) can find much with which to agree in Ms. France's essay. The public relations thrust of organized cross-dressing has been that we eschew the caricature of dragdom in favor of a more down-to-earth expression of femininity. And I always enjoy seeing someone take a contrary opinion, bucking the tide of chic trendiness as does Ms. France. That having been said however, methinks the lady doth protest too much.

The drag queens she refers to in her essay are performers and the nature of the performances require outsized characterizations. If we ever get to a point where the public would pay to see a drag actor doing subtle evocations of female characters, then the caricatures would be tossed aside. Further, in my opinion, this fascination with drag is a fad that will be replaced by the "next big thing" and the troubling questions brought forth by Ms. France will be moot by its disappearance from the public consciousness.

PASSING MAY BE FAILING

The Pinnacle, newsletter of the Transgender Education Assoc. in Arlington, Va., carried a personal essay titled "I Missed My Chance" by Debbie [REDACTED].

It is the day after the Miss America pageant as I write this. Need I ask how you all cast your votes for the inclusion of the swimsuit competition? Or did your feminist conscience get the best of you? Nah, me neither.

We've got our own swimsuit competition coming up in these pages in February. Of course, we're not competing against each other, we're competing against something much tougher: the laws of nature.

Close to a million people spent 50¢ to cast their votes for the big pageant, which comes out to a cool \$500 grand. So we're hoping that maybe a million of our subscribers will pony up to cast their votes about *our* swimsuit issue. If you want to see a completely irrelevant cavalcade of skin, dial 1-900-DEPILATE and if you wish to maintain our dignity and your lunch, dial 1-900-GET-REAL.

WE ARE NOT AMUSED

In last month's column, I covered an article in *New York* magazine about the current popularity of drag. In that issue, the magazine ran a sidebar piece called *What's Wrong With Drag* by Kim France that I thought deserved separate coverage.

Ms. France is a real woman (it's getting so you have to identify the gender of everybody anymore) and she makes some interesting comments about feminism and the current drag vogue.

She begins by saying "It's easy to admire the moxie it takes to be a crossdresser... to cheer on drag's infiltration of the mainstream. Further, one could [argue] that our culture is enriched – or at least pleasingly complicated – by the fact that... there are

dancing boys... wearing cone-shaped bras." But here Ms. France gets to the point of her article: "But it is precisely because there are so many reasons to applaud the drag boom that... its underlying message of misogyny is so often unaddressed."

While appreciating the "loftier reaches" of artistic performance drag, Ms. France is troubled by the "lowest common denominator drag" that is most visible in this new phenomenon of crossdressed guys. "It is played almost entirely for laughs and... barely concealed contempt for women." She hears the queens preaching the message of bringing "the female side of their personalities to the surface... which is fine. But why does it so often turn out that the women inside them are screechy, demanding, emasculating bitches? Why do they, over and over again, have to be Joan Rivers, Joan Crawford, Diana Ross, and Barbra Streisand?"

Ms. France recognizes that the massive amounts of cosmetics necessary to transform the male visage into something approaching femininity makes a subtle impersonation nearly impossible. "Having achieved an effect that is closer to outsize caricature than real femininity, why would the drag artiste choose anything other than an over-the-top persona?" She says the two hottest impersonations in dragdom are the outrageous Patsy and Edina from the show *Absolutely Fabulous*. In her mind, portraying such stereotypic women also plays into the stereotype of outrageous gay drag. If the straight world is beginning to like drag, it is because it gives them "an acceptable venue to openly laugh at gay men."

Debbie started by talking about their group going *en femme* to a theater production. Debbie felt as though they were in a fishbowl because eight crossdressers will naturally draw attention from other theater-goers.

She points out that no "incidents" took place and the public treated them kindly. Still, she felt uncomfortable being part of a spectacle. Apparently, though, some of the group enjoyed the attention and took the opportunity to interact with audience members.

Here Debbie's essay turns introspective and she hits on something that many crossdressers should remember. She recounts her impressions of a former crossdressing acquaintance whom she always felt reflected poorly on our community because she was un-passable and shamelessly so. When the friend attracted attention, she took the opportunity to interact with others and through politeness and good humor projected a positive image, despite the supposed negatives based strictly on appearance.

Meanwhile, Debbie, who tells us she has spent countless hours and dollars in her effort to "pass," was never comfortable in any situation where she was read by anyone. Reflecting on her feelings, she now recognizes the paradox of "passing" and positive public acceptance. If one "passes," one does not receive acceptance because one is (theoretically) invisible. But if a non-passable crossdresser wins over her public by her good nature, it is possible that the non-passable crossdresser has done more for our community than do any of the stealthy "passing" queens.

My position on this type of thing has been stated many times. The public is much more likely to accept a person who is comfortable with themselves and not embarrassed by being "read" than they are to admire a crossdresser who is surreptitiously trying to blend into the woodwork. People relate to people, not to some idealized model of "proper" crossdressing (which they don't understand anyway).

Don't let yourself get hung up on being a role model for crossdressing society. You may be doing more harm than good.

BRING BACK R.H.T., A.S.A.P.!

Our newsletter exchange brought forth an interesting new publication called *The Legster Newsletter* published out of Scottsdale, Arizona. The focus of the publication is on the female leg and classic women's hosiery.

The Legster is a well-produced, tastefully written, 30 page publication that features articles, photos, stories, and advertisements specifically related to shapely legs encased in sheer nylon stockings. And these people know their stockings. In some of the articles and letters from readers they mention very specific brands and denier (the measure of a stocking's sheerness) and recall the old brands the same way classic car buffs wax romantic about a '57 Chevy. As I read through the July-August issue, I kept seeing reference to "RHT". I finally figured out "RHT" is Legster shorthand for "Reinforced Heel and Toe" stockings. If you like the sight of a seam running up the length of a shapely leg, there are some nice photos of real Legster women to illustrate the timeless appeal of RHT.

We will have the July-August issue in our Library and if you wish to become a subscriber/member of the Legster Society and have \$20 that's burning a hole in your RHT stockings, address it to Frank Sinclair & Assoc., TLN-SUB, PO BOX 5314, Scottsdale AZ 85261-5314.

TESTING STREET SMARTS

The *Tennessee Vals* newsletter printed a multiple choice test on "Street Passing" that was downloaded from the Internet, posted there by someone named R. O'Conner.

The test is designed to let each individual measure their "passability" on eight standards of physical feature and acquired ability. While well intentioned, the "test" allows each taker to grade themselves on some very subjective appraisals and also on some laughable objective physical standards.

Let's take a few examples:

Crossdressers who are 6 feet tall get 8 points on the passability scale; 5 feet 6 inches scores 14 points; less than 5 feet tall scores 20 points. Of course there

are additional rewards for crossdressers under 5 feet tall. They have an excellent chance of riding the next Kentucky Derby winner.

A thin waist and wide hips scores 4 points apiece for those lucky queens. "Visible breast cleavage" scores 10 points all by itself. I think R. O'Conner is really a pseudonym for Russ Meyer.

A "non-European face" (whatever-the-hell that is) garners 4 points. It would take a combination of two of these remarkable attributes to equal that score: a small nose, no Adam's apple, feminine cheek bones or plucked eyebrows. So if you're standing next to a non-European with plucked eyebrows, you might as well throw your wig in the trash and take up stamp collecting.

A score of 65 or over means you can dress almost anywhere. Scores below 35 mean you should stick to evenings only and preferably indoors. I might add "with the lights out and all mirrors taken from the walls." But if you find yourself coming up short on your score, let me suggest these "extra credit" projects to boost your passability: give yourself some "visible breast cleavage" and check your family tree for any non-European bloodline.

THE STRAW THAT BROKE THE CAMEL'S BACK?

In last month's column, I went public with my story of sexual harassment during my short-lived secretarial internship on Bob Packwood's staff. Two weeks after publication, Senator Packwood announced his resignation.

Nineteen women came forward with similar stories and the Senator fought them off for two years. My story comes out and he's history in a matter of weeks.

The moral of the story (for you executives out there) is the next time you see a transvestite bent over a file drawer, watch your ass... not his, I mean, hers. Well, you know what I mean.



Remembering Him

From the Washington Blade, Aug. 4, 1995, by Jessica M. Xavier.

He was such a big part of my life, yet I really don't remember him. Perhaps, we become forgetful when we get older. Perhaps, we like to forget moments of great pain in our lives. Perhaps, it was the Halcyon addiction that wiped out his memory.

1989, the year I almost died by my own hand. But in lieu of me, he died, sparing me. Him. Me. He and I. He was me. I am a transsexual woman.

Like many of you, I grew up differently. Everyone I know who is gay or lesbian has a Coming Out story, each as unique as the human being behind it. I knew I was different when I was six years old. Feminine things fascinated me, and I started crossdressing completely when I was 11 years old, although I had no idea what it meant. Sure, I felt sexually aroused and often masturbated when I crossdressed, but there was more to it than just the auto-eroticism. When I looked in the mirror, those were the only times that I saw her, myself, the real me.

But who was this person, she who danced before the mirror? I was so terribly naive when I was a child. I remember watching a news report referring to Cuban homosexuals being persecuted by the new Castro regime as "feminine men." So that's who I was. Then I heard some boys at school sharing their disgust about men who had sex with men, and being asexual at the time, concluded that wasn't me. Later, I discovered the term "transvestite" and decided that's who I was. When I finally read about April Ashley, the British Christine Jorgenson, who had such a difficult life, I thought, "thank God I'm not a transsexual." I spent the next 20 years in psychotherapy trying to prove that, while the girl in the mirror gradually assumed control of my psyche.

Transsexualism is far more complex than merely altering sexual anatomy. No one really knows what causes it, but the latest folk-theory is a rare, ran-

dom bathing of opposite birth-sex hormones while in-utero. Although the origins may be the same, I know the female-to-male experience is different from my own. I most certainly did not want this to happen to me, and I fought it long and hard.

Male-to-female transsexualism is simply not a choice. Sane people born with male genitalia in a patriarchal society do not choose to wake up in the middle of their life, suddenly abandon a vested male identity with its accompanying privilege, spend tens of thousands of dollars reinventing themselves in the midst of a second, hormonally-induced adolescence, all while facing nearly universal discrimination and disapproval. Anyone who aspires to do all this is, in my informed opinion... nuts.

So I tried 20 psychotherapists with different approaches, searching for a non-existent cure, desperate for alternatives. A near-total failure with heterosexual women, I had sex with gay men, even though I knew I wasn't one. I tried relaxation therapy, aversive therapy, and even entered in an NIH study testing a new drug for sexual Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders. Nothing worked and I ended up with a diagnosis of transsexualism from three different therapists. I drank and drugged myself until those coping mechanisms failed, until I came so very, very close to permanently ending my pain in 1989.

Choosing self-acceptance over suicide meant I had to "transition," or switch my gender from male to female. Even though I knew I was due to be laid off from my job because of a lack of funding, I went ahead and transitioned in October 1991.

Two months later I found a new job on my first interview as my true self. Looking back, I was terribly lucky, compared to the horrible transition experiences of many other transsexual people I know. They lost their jobs, careers, savings, houses, families and friends. Some lost their lives.

Since I'm out about my transsex-

uality, people ask me if my surgery was painful, or how I could withstand the pain of four years of facial electrolysis and three hair transplantation procedures. None of this physical pain comes close to the emotional agony of gender dysphoria. I cannot possibly express here that unique torment that comes from the mis-assignment of sex at birth. Gender follows birth sex for almost everyone, and thus is a given, taken for granted. But not all of us are so fortunate. To be born transgendered is to be at war with your own body. Although my sex reassignment surgery saved my life, it did not take away this pain, but only ameliorated it. I cannot go back in time to experience the girlhood of a non-transsexual woman. Those years, half of my life, are lost to me, as is my ability to become a biological parent, a loss I feel even more keenly. But I am still alive.

Yet beyond the enormous difficulties presented by this uninvited dilemma, to be a changeling is a mystical experience. We transgendered have existed since the dawn of time, since followers of the Great Earth Mother Goddess Cybele penectomized and castrated themselves to become her priestesses. We were the shamans and healers of earlier civilizations which honored us for our unique difference. After all, we do understand those twin mysteries, male and female, much more completely, and that wisdom is our gift to the non-transgendered. But only in cultures that don't persecute us for possessing it.

Occasionally I'll get a question prefaced by "When you were a man..." I was never a man, just an extremely unhappy, suicidal, wanna-be/don't-wanna-be male in denial. I'm not in denial anymore, about who I am or who I was. So I can admit to having a few recent flashbacks of him, maybe sparked by a dream or a photograph. Although his pain now seems so distant, he looks so sad, so fearful, so incomplete. He and I are indeed very different people. Lately I've felt I should do a ritual to honor him. After all, through his agony and death, he gave me life. I should feel grateful for his sacrifice. And remember him.



Erie Anchor Regrets Remark

by Michael Mahler

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On the 11:00 news on WICU-TV12 (Tuesday, September 5, 1995), local anchor Chris Knowles offended gays and transgendered people by referring to them as freaks. WICU-TV 12 is the local NBC affiliate in Erie, PA. One of the anchors, Renee Phillips, noted that *To Wong Foo* was opening this weekend and said she was looking forward to going to go see it. Chris Knowles responded with, "Are you kidding? If I want to see freaks, I'll turn on *Jerry Springer*." He then paused and added, "No, I wouldn't." Some had perceived this to refer to the topic of gay/transgendered people as being too offensive, but it was understood after that Mr. Knowles was referring to WICU-TV having very recently dropped *Jerry Springer* from their line up.

The station was deluged with calls after the broadcast. Many people, locally and nationally contacted the station by phone and fax expressing their outrage over Mr. Knowles offensive, though extemporaneous, remark.

Letter from Michael Mahler to WICU on 9/6/95

I wish to complain in the strongest terms possible about Chris Knowles remarks on your 11 pm news broadcast on Tuesday, September 5. When Renee Phillips mentioned she was going to see *To Wong Foo* when it opened this weekend, Chris responded with, "Are you kidding?! If I want to see freaks, I'll turn on *Jerry Springer*.... No I won't."

This was blatantly bigoted and homophobic! Mr. Knowles has shown he thinks gays and transgendered people are sub-human and vile. This is exactly the kind of sentiment that was expressed when Donald Kremer was murdered in 1991. (Donald Kremer was a local gay man murdered in December of 1991) and the float was vandalized in May of this year (Erie's lesbian community had a float in Erie's Bicentennial Parade on May 26 that was vandalized 36 hours before the parade.

Volunteers (gay and straight) rebuilt it.) Is it acceptable to slam any group of human beings as freaks? Mr. Knowles owes the entire community a public apology immediately!

As one of the editors of the *Erie Gay Community Newsletter*, you may be assured we are committed to providing our readers accurate, balanced and complete coverage. We await further comment from your station.

Sincerely,

Michael Mahler

Reply from WICU on 9/7/95

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your communication of 9/6/95 expressing your concern over the extemporaneous remark by news anchor Chris Knowles in the closing moments of Tuesday evenings 11 pm news.

WICU TV's policy is also committed to presenting the news in an accurate, ethical and unbiased manner. We have been doing that for more than 46 years. Mr. Knowles has never violated that policy, and this is the first such complaint by anyone with regard to his performance. I have spoken with Mr. Knowles regarding this matter. He says the ad lib comment was made without intent to slander or demean anyone or any lifestyle. Mr. Knowles is willing to discuss this matter with you, either in person, or by telephone. WICU TV regrets that you, or the staff of your newsletter, were offended, and assure you that we will continue our efforts to serve ALL the community with fairness and equity.

Sincerely,

Bill Knupp

Assistant Station Manager

Followup: Mahler to Knupp

Dear Mr. Knupp:

Thank you for response of 9/7/95 to my letter of 9/6/95. I would like to speak with Mr. Knowles. Would meeting at your stations offices at noon this Saturday be acceptable? I believe Greg Valiga would like to meet as well. I would not object if others from WICU's staff might wish to be present. You stated in your letter that WICU-TV was committed "...to presenting the news in an accurate, ethical and unbiased manner" and that Mr. Knowles has

never violated that policy. You further state that the ad lib comment was made without intent to slander or demean anyone or any lifestyle.

I certainly can accept that Mr. Knowles remark was off the cuff and that WICU-TV and Mr. Knowles are normally extremely professional and fair. What I cannot accept is the use of the word "freaks" and that the sentiment implied behind it can be construed, by any rational person, as anything other than hostile and demeaning. If the group referred to as freaks had been hunters, *Star Trek* enthusiasts, Baptists or TV news anchors, would you honestly suggest that they would not consider this to be insulting and demeaning? Would you feel anything other than that you had been defamed if you were referred to as a freak? If the shoe were on the other foot, how would you react?

I can believe that neither Mr. Knowles nor WICU-TV normally make on air bigoted statements. I also accept that this was not planned. But the insult was nonetheless delivered. I only ask you to deal with us fairly and equitably. I still believe an apology should be made publicly.

Sincerely,

Michael Mahler

WICU-TV 12 did make a sincere apology on the air. This is the text of what was read by Assistant Station Manager Bill Knupp on the September 8th 11pm news broadcast.

"It happened Tuesday night in the closing minutes of our late evening news. Anchor Chris Knowles in an extemporaneous ad lib remark in reference to a preview of the movie *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar* used a word that was of-

continue on page 14

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Hot•Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



"Diplomacy is the art of letting someone have your own way."

— Daniele Vare

Just about everyone heard about the United Nations' Women's Conference held in China last month. There was even a Female-to-Male transsexual who addressed the assembly. What many people may have missed was the pre-conference hoopla over the term "gender." It seems that one of the position papers used the term extensively. A woman from South America, I believe, wrote to a committee asking for a clarification of "gender." Apparently some languages, especially some Middle Eastern languages, do not even have a word for gender. That may seem unthinkable to us in the U.S., but it points out clearly that we must begin to think globally. If the U.N. can't define "gender," how would we ever define "transgender?"

By this time *To Wong Foo...* has come and maybe gone, but let's hope it has the appeal and earning power of *Mrs. Doubtfire* and *Tootsie*. In case you missed it at my web site, MCA has set up several web pages for the movie with tons 'o info. The URL is <http://www.mca.com/universal_pictures/to_wong_foo/index.html> You better go [there] girl!

I promised to mention this last month,

but I forgot. MtF crossdressers and transsexuals have special problems getting makeup that really works. The drugstore variety of products are mostly water based formulated to impart a little color over a "peaches and cream" complexion and do little to hide beard shadow. Now there is a makeup collection designed specifically to meet the needs of these people: Face In A Box. Carla Fong has been working in film and video production for over 20 years. She is making professional, theatrical makeup products available to the gender community at a price that is very reasonable. The Face In A Box kit includes: 6 foundation colors, 6 lining colors, beard toner, blush, lipstick, mascara, lipliner, eyebrow wax, latex adhesive and finely milled translucent facial powder. Also included are professional quality applicators such as brushes, sponges and powder puffs. All for just the introductory price of \$45... that's about half of what less pigmented products would cost at the drugstore, and way below the salon price. And Ms. Fong offers a Money Back Guarantee; If you are not completely satisfied with the kit, return it in unused and salable condition for a full refund. Contact: Carla Fong, Corporate Media Services, P.O. Box 1130, Mt. Angel, Oregon 97362. Send a postal money order for \$45 plus \$4 (\$49 total) to cover shipping.

Plans for the Second International Congress on Crossdressing, Sex and Gender Issues forge ahead. Vern Bullough, Ph.D., Cal. State Northridge (Dr. Bullough co-chaired the first congress) and Sheila Kirk, M.D., International Foundation for Gender Education, have agreed to co-chair the Program Committee. A Call for Papers was due out late September and may be circulating as you read this. The exact date for the second congress is not yet set, but it will be held in the Spring of 1997, possibly late April or early May. Mark your calendars and watch this space for more info.

Women of size (that's size 14 and up) are finally getting a fashion break as more and more manufacturers and retailers realize they are the *major* market. The average fashion model is 5'10" tall, weighs 123 pounds and wears a size 8. Meanwhile, the average American woman is 5'4", weighs 142 pounds, and wears a size 14 or 16, and many wear a size 18. Liz Claiborne Street Styles and Marina Rinaldi are two lines that make stylish clothes in larger sizes. In the lingerie department, both Vanity Fair and Vassarlette make bras and panties that are feminine, sexy and larger. I had to laugh, though, when an article in *Glamour* suggested that larger women shop in the Mens Department.

That same issue of *Glamour* (Oct. 1995) has an article titled "What Is This Thing Called Style?" I want everyone to go out and read this article. I'm tired of seeing fashion victims everywhere. Style means that you take some time to think about the clothes you wear. You look "put together" not "thrown together." And while I'm on this rant about style, if you're over 50, leave the micro-mini skirts to the 20-somethings. Dress your age. On the other hand, leave the Mother-of-the-Bride dresses on the clearance racks. Why do you think they were put there in the first place?

For many women these days, fashion is irrelevant. It seems to have less and less to do with the real world and more and more to do with fantasy. Almost no one can afford the clothes shown on runways, and, if they could, most women with any style at all wouldn't be caught dead in runway clothes. The flip-flopping trends every five minutes are all bids by designers for attention. What they haven't yet seemed to realize is that women aren't listening anymore. Get real!

What is heartening, however, is the return to understated glamour and femi-

HOT•BUZZ

ninity. Clothing this season is far more figure conscious than in years past and women are showing off their figures. For example, *the* dress of the season is a sleeveless fitted sheath. Simple, yet elegant, these dresses usually have one distinctive feature: a plunging neckline, a wild print, a well-defined waist, or an above-the-knee hem. Two nice examples are the \$54 version by Esprit and the \$79 version from Benetton.

We've spent so much time talking about *Too Wong Foo*... hardly anyone has mentioned *Clueless*. Not that it has anything to do with crossdressing, but it does have to do with fashion and style. Alicia Silverstone is priceless as Cher, the local high school fashion maven. This is a "must see" for the fashion [un]conscious and just plain fun.

Fashion movies seem to be almost as popular as crossdressing movies. In addition to *Clueless*, we have *Unzipped* and *Pret a Porter*. The former is a documentary while the latter is Robert Altman's swipe at the fashion industry and it does contain crossdressing. Danny Aiello is a crossdressing department store buyer who gets his/her picture snapped in a TV bar by accident. *Pret A Porter* is making the rounds of Pay Per View right now and should hit regular cable in a few months. Watch for it.

The hot color for this Fall is fire engine, sizzling red. This color is appearing on everything from the simple sheath above to \$5000 Chanel suits. Xpress/Limited stores have a really nice sweater set in red for less than \$25. Check it out.

How long does it take you to get dressed? (I'm addressing the feminine readers.) Angela Gardner and I were having this discussion the other day. We both know people who takes hours and hours to dress, no matter what the occasion. We both agree that if you have *any* skill at all, the time from shower to front door shouldn't be more than one hour, and two hours (max) if you're going ultra-glam for the evening. Anything

over that and you're just wasting time.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and just because your breasts might be purchased rather than naturally grown is no reason to ignore the potential dangers of this disease. Some males do develop breast cancer (even those *not* on estrogens). The fashion industry is doing its part to help raise research funds. Estée Lauder and Clinique, among the cosmetic houses, will donate part of their retail sales for the month. And, on October 14, QVC will offer shoes from the likes of Donna Karan, Esprit, and Timberland for \$20 and up. They expect to sell 50,000 pairs.

Philadelphia jeweler, party impressario, and all around unique person Henri David tells me that his biggest-on-the-East-Coast Hallowe'en party will be held on... Hallowe'en, i.e., October 31st, *but* it will be at the Franklin-Wyndham Plaza this year, not the Convention Center.

Long nails are making a come back this season. Gone are the short, stubby nails of yore. Long nails, however, need to look perfect, so here's some tips... Leave sides straight for strength and gently round the ends... Apply a base coat to keep nails from staining and make polish last longer... Apply two *thin* coats of polish and let dry for at least 30 minutes... Seal with a top coat. Some colors to try are: Sally Hansen Blackberry Wine Fest; Chanel Metallic Vamp; L'oréal Sangria; and Revlon Blackberry.

There's a neat book out called *Are You Normal* (St. Martins Press) and *Made-moiselle* (Oct. 1995) excerpted some of the data. Maybe you'll find these "factoids" interesting. I do not know what the sample size was... 3.9% of women do not wear underwear... 40.5% wear bikinis... less than 20% of men have cried at work as compared to some 60% of women... the average shopper spends 4 hours a month at the mall, down from 8 hours ten years ago... 32% of all people cannot snap their fingers (pity the drag queen who can't do that!)... 30% can raise one eyebrow... only 25% can cross their eyes... less than 10% can touch their nose with the tip of their tongue...

favorite colors: blue, red, green, white, pink, purple, orange, and yellow (hey what happened to black?).

Whoever thought they should bring back hip-huggers should be taken out and throttled with a pair. The current rash of celebs sporting hip-huggers look like they bought their clothes in a second hand store and in the wrong size.

Outlet shopping has become such big business that many retail stores are buying stock especially for their outlets. Huh? Yep, even Loehman's, the store that started it all, has been quietly buying not-so-bargain items for resale. For those few stores that still look for last season's stock, like Sym's, it gets harder and harder to find a real bargain anymore. My partner, a highly skilled bargain hunter, says that you can often get better deals on clothes right in the retail store when they go on sale and at least you'll get them *this* season. Her other shopping tip: only wear natural fabrics like wool, silk, cotton or leather. There are two exceptions: Rayon and anything made from microfiber.

Errata: I owe an apology to PPOC. Last month, I displayed my ignorance of Southern California geography by placing them in the Burbank area. Wrong! Try Orange County. Next, I said they were a co-sponsor of Cal Dreamin'. Wrong again! PPOC is the *sole* sponsor of the Dreamin' event. I regret the errors. You've finally seen me apologize.

Last month I talked about *Code Blue* and *Miracle Boost* jeans. The September issue of *Glamour* gave the butt-boosting jeans a test drive and they were uniformly liked. Testers said you could see every curve and one called them "tarty" (That's all we needed to know. Where do I sign up?). Another said they don't pinch, bind or creep and you won't get a wedgie either.

So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? If someone wants their buns to rise, I think they oughta use more yeast. Comments? Email them to <[redacted]@cdspub.com>.

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AEGIS Board Sets Affiliate Policy

Decatur, GA, September 10, 1995

The Board of Directors of AEGIS, the American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc., has approved a policy which would allow affiliate organizations. The matter was brought up at the previous Board meeting because of a request by Oklahoma New Men and Women, a part of the C.O.T.A. consortium of groups in Oklahoma. JoAnn Roberts, Board Chair, and Dallas Denny, Executive Director, prepared an affiliate policy which was approved at the Board meeting today.

Any group interested in transgender and transsexual issues can apply for Affiliate status. Transsexual, open,

FTM, drag, and heterosexual cross-dresser groups are all welcome.

Those who wish a copy of the Affiliate policy can send e-mail to Dallas Denny at <aegis@mindspring.com> or write AEGIS at P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033 FAX (404) 939-1770.

In other news, Tennessee Vals founder and President, Marisa Richmond, was unanimously approved as a new AEGIS Board Member. Ms. Richmond is a crossdresser of color and part Native American. She brings diversity and a unique perspective to AEGIS.

Erie...

fensive to some viewers. Some of those offended have communicated their indignation by phone and by fax. WICU-TV's policy is to present the news in an accurate, ethical and unbiased manner. We have been doing that for more than 46 years. We agree that Mr. Knowles comment was inappropriate and insensitive, and we have discussed the matter with him. WICU-TV has expressed our regrets for the comment through written communication with local representatives of the offended parties and Mr. Knowles has expressed a willingness to meet with these representatives.

In an effort to put an end to the issue, WICU-TV management now expresses that regret publicly, on the air, with the assurance that we will continue our effort to serve all the community with fairness and equity."



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Renaissance Spans The Country: PPOC Hops On Board

by Dee Grady, President PPOC

Powder Puffs of California is a not-for-profit social/outreach organization and support group serving the crossdressing community since 1987. Membership in PPOC has grown steadily since then to well over 200 members. Most of us are ordinary guys that wish to have an outlet to express our feminine side. Powder Puffs offers a place and an opportunity to meet others who share the same interests. It also gives us a chance to lay aside our "traditional" macho image and dress and act our most feminine. The club also provides a place and means of assistance for those more skilled in the "art," and to provide a warm, welcome atmosphere for those venturing forth. We are **not** a sexual contact club, so one can relax and feel secure with us. For those fortunate enough to have an understanding spouse, significant other or loved one who knows and accepts, or wishes to learn more about this, we encourage and welcome them to come to the meeting as well.

What are we exactly? We are crossdressers, more commonly known as transvestites. Nearly all of us are heterosexual, married, or have been married in the past. We are loving husbands, fathers: the type of person you would find next door. We work in banks, drive trucks, work construction: literally all occupations. Some of us are doctors, lawyers or even your friendly

police officer. We are white, black, red, yellow, young, old, rich, poor, and everything in between. In other words, perfectly normal people you meet from day to day. Some of us have been gifted with the ability to pass completely unnoticed in public "dressed," while others will never be able to, due to physical size, build, etc. But we do the best we can to be as real as possible, if only for a while. We also strive to make the novice or first-timer at ease while our meetings are informing and entertaining with a varied program of topics.

What is new at Powder Puffs?

First of all and maintaining a "firm grasp of the obvious," Powder Puffs has become the first West Coast group to join the Renaissance Education Association as an affiliate in August of 1995. Also in August, we started holding a monthly social evening on the first Saturday at OZZ supper club in Buena Park, California. OZZ is primarily a gay/lesbian establishment, but over the past three years has been the sight of many transgendered social happenings. At OZZ, we can enjoy fine dinner and beverages, along with a very entertaining Cabaret show or dancing in the disco. This October 28th, Powder Puffs is sponsoring the 2nd Annual TC Community Halloween Party at the Burbank Holiday Inn, site of the first five CALIFORNIA

continued on page 16

Wet Spandex!



Why does Angela look so sad? No ladies room on the beach? Afraid to pee in the ocean? No, she's worried that no one will take that trip to the seashore or pool side and get their photo taken in a swimsuit. She has four pictures for the fabulous Swim Suit Issue in February, but she needs more. Before it gets too cold, and your whole body is covered with unsightly goose bumps, get out there and get those pictures. We'll even accept bathing beauties posed playfully by the wading pool in the backyard, if that's all you've got. Send them to: Swimsuit Issue, c/o Renaissance, PO Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020.

No photos will be returned and the Editors reserve the right to not use your picture if it's in bad taste, or if you look better than we do in a two piece.

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Lobby Days/ENDA News

Phyllis Frye Invited To The White House

International Conference on Transgender Law & Employment Policy (ICTLEP) Executive Director, Phyllis Randolph Frye, received an invitation to meet with Presidential Assistant, Marsha Scott, at the White House during National Transgender Lobby Days, October second and third. Ms. Scott serves the President as liaison to minority interests which include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender concerns.

ICTLEP's goal is to educate everyone about just how bad the employment situation is for ALL transgenders — from crossdressers and drags who

simply want to keep their jobs if their "hobby" becomes known to their employer, to women who can still get fired if they wear pants to work, to transsexuals who are transitioning on the job or seeking new employment.

ICTLEP wants to insure that those folks on the Hill and in the White House understand that Title VII's "sex" protection does not cover transgendered individuals and that the current Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) sponsored Employment Non-Discrimination Act's (ENDA, House 1863 and Senate 932) "sexual orientation" protection will not cover

transgendered people. The needed language deals with the area of "gender identification" and appearance.

Frye hopes to extend the invitation to include others from ICTLEP, and also representatives from the TG Men's community, It's Time America, and Transsexual Menace.

For more information contact the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, Inc., [redacted] Houston, TX 77035-5515 USA, Phone: 713-[redacted] (answering machine, returned collect), fax 713/723-1800, email: [redacted]@aol.com>.

Imperial Court Tells HRCF To Include TG's

On September first the Imperial Court of New York wrote to Elizabeth Birch of HRCF encouraging the inclusion of transgendered individuals in the ENDA bill. In its letter, the court reminded HRCF that the exclusion of tg's by the lesbian/gay/bisexual population is reflective of the current conservative political atmosphere.

In describing itself, the court stated it was one of over sixty such imperial courts around the USA and Canada and is "a diverse and eclectic group of individuals — men and women, gay and lesbian, drag performers and leather men, transvestites and transsexuals, and even a few heterosexuals" which RAISES FUNDS for lesbian/gay/bisexual charities.

Phyllis Randolph Frye said, "I salute the Imperial Court of New York. I encourage you to share this with your local imperial court."

TG Activists Meet With HRCF

On Sunday, 17 September, nine members of the T-community met with the HRCF Washington DC staff. The meeting was at the request of Elizabeth Birch, HRCF Executive Director. HRCF covered a large portion of expenses for the meeting.

Representatives for our community felt that for the first time HRCF's Washington staff understood and has initiated a path of commitment toward equal rights. The following is a jointly drafted official interim statement. (A more detailed statement will be issued after more coordination.)

September 17, 1995

HRCF has made a commitment to work with representatives of a spectrum of the transgendered community with a specific focus on hate crimes.

continued next page

PPOC...

DREAMIN' Conventions. And speaking of CALIFORNIA DREAMIN', our next convention in 1996 will be held at the Golden Gate Holiday Inn in San Francisco! We at Powder Puffs are very excited about this next convention. We are working very closely with ETVG and the Diablo Valley Girls to help make this our best convention yet. More news on this event will be forthcoming.

PPOC Officers/Board Members

Dee Grady: President, Librarian, Social Director, and Chairperson for California Dreamin' 1996

Patti [redacted]: Vice President and Board Member

Joan Goodnight: Secretary, Treasurer, and Co-Founder.

Sue [redacted]: Board Member, Vendor Coordinator, and Co-Founder.

Tommi [redacted]: Board Member, Official Photographer of Cal Dreamin'.

Diane [redacted]: Board Member and Outreach Director

Cyndi Silk: Newsletter Editor

For additional information please write to: Powder Puffs Of California
PO. Box 1088 Yorba Linda, CA
92686 or email <PPOC@AOL.COM>.

[Ed. Note: Of course, our newest affiliate is the North Eastern Pennsylvania Transgender Alliance. Their contact information is on page 2.]



ENDA...

HRCF has also committed to assist transgender representatives with an amendment strategy in the context of ENDA. The strategy does not include re-introduction of the current ENDA: the language of the current bill remains as is.

Both Groups will work in good faith to continue dialogue and to build coalition in the context of ending violence and discrimination against this community.

Note by Sarah, Tere and Phyllis:

We want you to know that the community reps held firm in their commitment to the *full* spectrum of our community, and we plan to hold firm in future negotiations that everyone is protected.

We believe Elizabeth Birch needs more time to educate the HRCF Board. Therefore, in good faith, we ask that no protests of ENDA exclusion be held in New Orleans at HRCF's Board meeting next weekend.

TG Reps Present

Sharon Stuart (representing by their request, Tri-Ess and IFGE); Karen Kerin; Jessica Xavier; Gary

Bowen; Kitt Kling (With spouse Reme David observing); Riki Wilchins

Sarah DePalma; Tere Frederickson; Phyllis Randolph Frye

(Note: We were especially proud to have our men participate. Their influence proved to be a pivotal hinge-pin. We wish we also had people of color adding their perspectives to this T* liberation movement, and we invite them to participate in the future.)

HRCF Representatives Present

Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director; Daniel Zingale; Nancy Buermeier; Michael Roybal; Chai Feldblum; David Smith; Don Temples

FYI: Flicks With A TG Element

Too Wong Foo and *Tootsie* aren't the *only* films out there with fellas in frocks. The whole male-actors-in-dresses thing has been building for a while. Check out some of these gems on video:

Escape, starring Timothy Bottoms. (made for television). Tim plays an American caught smuggling drugs, and sentenced to a dismal Mexican

prison. He escapes with the help of his wife, by masquerading, quite convincingly, as a pretty young woman. (1980)

A Fine Mess, starring Howie Mandell and Ted Danson. Howie dons drag to pose as the maid. (1986)

Freebie and The Bean, with James Caan and Alan Arkin. A cops and robbers chase film with a murderously beautiful

hit "lady" played by Chris Morley. (1974)

The Goddess of Love, a 1988 TV movie starring Vanna White. David Leisure does some time as a blonde woman to help crooks steal the statue of Venus.

We'll bring you more titles from time to time. Thanks to [redacted]@aol.com>, the publisher of the Gender Sci-Fi List for putting the information out there.



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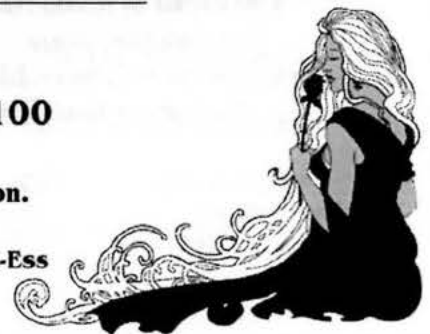
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Changes At Tri-Ess/SPICE

The Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess) announces with deep regret the resignation of Linda Peacock from its Board of Directors, where she served as Director of the Department of Spouses and Partners Support and its Spouses and Partners International Conference for Education (SPICE).

Linda was also the publisher of the quarterly newsletter for spouses and partners, the *Sweetheart Connection*. Linda assumed responsibility for the newsletter and SPICE under adverse circumstances in January 1993, and brought them both to their present high level of success.

Well known throughout the transgender community, Linda also serves on the Board of Directors of

IFGE, where she is now in her second term. Earlier this year, she received IFGE's coveted Trinity Award for her outstanding service to the transgendered community. She has also been twice awarded Tri-Ess' highest honor, the Leader-Servant Award.

Assuming Linda's Tri-Ess leadership role is Dr. Peggy Rudd. Dr. Rudd is the well-known author of *My Husband Wears My Clothes*, *Crossdressing With Dignity*, *Love Calendar* and, just released this year, *Crossdressers And Those Who Share Their Lives*. Peggy has counseled hundreds of crossdressers, spouses and family members since publication of her first book.

A popular presenter at SPICE and other conventions, Peggy's message to

wives and crossdressers alike has been one of mutual love and acceptance. Organizing the popular Dignity Cruises, Peggy has demonstrated to the public that transgendered people are truly First Class. For her many contributions to the transgendered community, Peggy received an IFGE Trinity Award in 1993, and was the 1994 recipient of the Tri-Ess Leader-Servant Award. Peggy brings to her Department and to SPICE superb administrative gifts and a wise and loving heart. With the complete support of the SPICE Planning Board, she pledges continuity of services to the spouses and partners of the transgendered community as they work together on SPICE 1996.



The Truck Stop Incident

by Georgia [REDACTED]

Imagine a nightmare. You are sitting at a truck stop restaurant, en-femme, surrounded by red-necked cowboys all decked out in their finest Saturday night duds. When all of a sudden, some young ladies point you out and start talking about you. You try to see if you can disappear under the table, but there is no room and too many of them! What now?

It really happened to some Texas crossdressers. The girls, Sandi, Bonnie and her wife Peggy, Marge, Gina and Georgia all led by Ashley; decided to have breakfast after leaving a local les-

bian C&W club which had followed a Tri-Ess meeting in Arlington, Texas in early 1992.

The innocent, trusting, ladies drove to a local truck stop, where the parking lot was crowded with 18 wheelers and 4 wheel drive pickup trucks and the silly girls, foolishly, allowed themselves to be persuaded by the dangerous duo with the initials "A" and "G" to go in. The following report of the incident was extracted from the participants after the event.

We arrived at about the same time as the Saturday night cowboys who often went there after the redneck clubs

had closed. They had filled the parking lot with pickups. But with admirable courage, we hitched up our skirts, and saying, "What do we have to lose but our pantyhose," went in.

Two secluded booths were soon located where all sat down to order breakfast. It seemed that everything was going well. The waitress was very nice, the food good, and the coffee hot and plentiful. When a stream of young "bubbas" and "bubbettes" flowed into and out of the rest rooms which were located right next to one of the booths. According to Ashley, two of the

continued next page

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Truck Stop...

bubbettes asked, "Are they, you know what?" and a deep voice answered, "They damn sure are!" Then a round of name calling and laughter began. Later a young lady sat down next to Ashley, and in a loud voice declared, "You're all men. Aren't you?" And began a friendly encounter.

Sandi, looking around for someone to blame, picked on Peggy, Bonnie's wife, and accused her of giving us away. Others in the group joined in to Peggy's embarrassment. Peggy, to her credit, toughed it out through all the accusations. Shortly, two police officers arrived to settle down the natives and, eventually, instructed the cowboys to mind their own business or leave. To Georgia, the excursion seemed to be about to end badly.

The young lady next to Ashley called over the ladies who had been pointing us out, and asked them to talk to us, which they seemed reluctant to do. Meanwhile, the police were escorting the "bubbas" out. Ashley claimed that she would have assisted the officers but had "just finished putting on a fresh coat of nail polish," and would, in no way, "help while my nails are wet."

At that point the manager came over, and in no uncertain terms, asked the two girls to leave. The young lady, who had sat down with Ashley explained that the girls had caused trouble in the past and that the management was happy to have an excuse to get rid of them. Then, the manager apologized to us for having been embarrassed and asked us to come back again. The invitation was, we were sure, offered only as a courtesy, but what had occurred was hardly what we expected. Instead of rudeness and a

confrontation, we were treated with politeness, and what appeared to be, appreciation for our business.

As we had been getting ready to leave, and in fact had already paid our bills; we thanked everyone for being so nice and left relieved, happy to still have our pantyhose, and thinking, maybe, just maybe, attitudes are changing.

We are going to keep the location of the truck stop secret. Or will try to. We don't want to inundate them with a flood of unwanted crossdressers. They were pleasant and friendly, but, perhaps a regular clientele of "diners en-femme" might not be appreciated. Also, unless they are ready for interesting adventures, everyone is warned to steer clear of Ashley and Georgia whenever they suggest a fine place to eat, or to at least have bail bond money handy.



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Shopping With Jessica

Jessica
Brandon

Greetings, girlfriends. To paraphrase The Who: "Here's the new column, same as the old column!"

Yes, ladies, *RN&V's* shopaholic page is back, but with a new writer at the keyboard! When approached by Supreme Editor, Angela Gardner to take over the shopping column, I was flabbergasted! In fact, I still am! [Supreme Editor's note: Jess, no need to suck up. You already got the job.]

I mean, it was barely four years ago when I timidly stepped out of my closet, scared and nervous as could be. Now I'm a full fledged columnist in one of the finest publications in the transgendered community. All things considered, not bad for a one time major league wall-flower!

I plan on making *SWJ* as much fun as possible, as I bring you the best of what the stores, shops and mail order houses have to offer.

First, I want to share my personal philosophy when it comes to shopping "en drab" as I often do. At the risk of plagarism, my motto is, simply: **Go For It**. Because of time and job constraints, I can't dress as much as I'd like, so I do all my shopping in my male guise and it's nowhere near as embarrassing as some might think.

For dyed in the wool veterans, this is hardly a revelation, but to newcomers who might be reading this, I'm here to tell you that shopping for women's things as a guy is no big deal. For starters, apathy rules. If you're in a department store and people see you eying some nice

dresses, you don't have to worry about them calling security. Nine and a half times out of ten, no one will give you a second glance.

Second, as a consumer, you have the right to buy anything you want. In short, money talks... and keeps nosy sales-people quiet.

The important thing to stress when shopping en drab is to be calm, cool and collected. Acting tense or nervous, as if you're afraid to be seen just looking at women's clothing, will surely attract attention and make people wonder what you're up to. Oh, sure, it's not easy to master at first, but once you realize just how little John & Jane Q. Public really care about what you're doing, then your expeditions will truly be fun. The only thing that's better is shopping en femme. In the months to come, I'll relate a few tales about my forays in the stores which I'm sure you'll find to be interesting.

Enough philosophizing, now it's time for the juicy stuff.

To begin, I'd like to echo statements made by JoAnn Roberts regarding the much hyped WonderBra. In the language of "the hood," **Believe the hype**. The damn thing really works! The WB, with its 54 piece construction, available in three colors: black, white and red and three cup sizes does indeed enhance the bosom of both the real McCoy and the "mammarily challenged" (my politically correct term for flat chested), meaning us. The WonderBra is available in up-scale department stores like Macy's as well as mail order outlets like J. C.

Penney and Spiegel.

I don't think this next item has been mentioned before, but for those of you who might be on the lookout for a better way to remove nail polish, there are nail polish remover pads. These are small (2" x 2"), individually packed tissues soaked in remover that work every bit as well as the bottled variety, but without the waste, mess or spillage. Something like this is a boon to anyone who travels en femme and packs light (an oxymoron if I ever heard one) or who just hates the hassle of using polish remover from a bottle. Nail polish remover pads can be found in any drug store or five and dime.

Last, a little mention about one of *RN&V's* new advertisers, The Courtly Lady. This is a mail order business that specializes in quality fashions at reasonable prices such as skirts, blouses, undergarments, Country & Western attire and, get this, Doo Wop fashions from the 50's, something which caught my attention since I love oldies music and the 50's culture. They also have outfits for special occasions and offer personalized service and sizes for the big and small girl. The Courtly Lady has a catalog for \$5.00 which is refundable with a first purchase. Contact Julie Gilbert at P.O. Box 2165, Cincinnati, Ohio 45201-2165.

Well, girls, that's it for now, hope you enjoyed my first column. If you have comments, opinions, ideas and especially places to shop that you wish to share with me, send all correspondence (be it email or snail mail) to Angela and she'll forward it to yours truly. Until next month, and I plan to be around for a long while, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping, sisters!



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Coming Events Calendar

October

- 5-9 Tiffany Club Fall Fling on Cape Cod. Write: TCNE, PO Box 2283, Woburn, MA 01888, or call (617)-891-9325.
- 7 ETVC Gender Fair, Noon till 5PM, at Jelly's Pier 50, 295 China Basin Way, San Francisco, CA. Call 415-334-3439 Box #5275 for more info.
- 12-15 Dressing For Pleasure at the Meadowlands Hilton. Write Constance Enterprises, PO Box 43079, Upper Montclair, NJ 07430. Or call (201) 746-4200.
- 14 Awards Dinner Dance sponsored by the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of New Jersey, Inc., honoring Dr. Kathleen Casey and Richard Norve, at the Berkeley Carteret Hotel, Asbury Park, New Jersey, in the Crystal Ballroom. Cocktails at 6:30PM. Tickets \$50. Charge tickets by calling The Record Store, 908-905-9056.

October

- 15-22 21st Annual Fantasia Fair (the oldest continuous running event in the world) sponsored by the Outreach Institute for Gender Studies and held in beautiful Provincetown, Mass. Contact: FanFair Registrar, PO Box 941, SE PA 19087.
- 22 Miss New York City and Miss Greenwich Village Pageant. Tickets: \$15 — available from Randy Riggs Productions, (212) 807-7239.
- 25 Jim Bailey at the Society Hill Playhouse in Philadelphia, for two weeks. The first week he will do Barbra Streisand; the second week Judy Garland.
- 26-29 The Fifth New Woman's Conference. A weekend retreat for post-op MtF transsexuals held in Essex, Mass. Cost is \$310.00 plus \$70 for a single room. Call (207) 676-5870 for info.

October

- 28 Sigma Nu Rho's Evening at The Rocky Horror Show (The stage production). Midnight, Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Pa. Contact the theater for reservations and ticket price.
- 28-29 Fall Harvest sponsored by MAGGIE, Mid-America Gender Group Information Exchange. Write: PO Box 9433, St. Louis, MO 63117.
- 31 Henri David's Hallowe'en Ball in Philadelphia. The largest Hallowe'en party on the East Coast, Call: 215-732-7711

November

- 15-19 Holiday En Femme, the Tri-Ess National Convention in Calgary, Canada. Contact Phi Sigma Chapter, Box 81115, 755 Lake Bonavista Dr SE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2J 7CP

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BOOK NOOK

Video Review: **GENDER**

101. Produced by the International Foundation for Gender Education, Box 367, Wayland, MA, 01778. ©1993, Color, Running time 40 minutes. Cost \$24.95+\$2.50 s/h. Review by Erica. Reprinted from NYP&G VISION & ATTITUDES.

Heading our support groups and providing educational programs which include discussion and membership sharing in dialogue, we've presented **GENDER 101** several times in 1994 and 1995. One would be hard pressed to present a better program that introduces transvestites and transsexuals, along with family members impacted in these phenomena. For, beyond the phenomenon itself, the viewer is slowly introduced to 14 people whose lives have become intertwined in most aspects of the transgender spectrum. So well done is **GENDER 101**, our group members are usually left in awe. By the end of the program most viewers feel so positive about the good, healthy, self fulfilling possibilities of transvestism, that we pause for a break before proceeding into discussion.

The overwhelming positive reactions seem due to several things. The 14 people interviewed in **GENDER 101** are the National leaders of IFGE, TRI-ESS, AEGIS, prominent re-

searchers, and authors. Each take their turns, several times, in 15 to 20 second segments, to make points, one by one, with the viewers. Starting with Merissa Sherrill Lynn, Founder and [former] Executive Director of IFGE, an overview and historical perspective begins the program. Current theories and thinking as to the explanations for these differing behaviors are brought forward by therapist Dr. William R. Stayton, as well as Virginia Prince, co-founder of Tri-Ess who has successfully lived as a woman for more than 25 years. Dr. Peggy Rudd discovered she was married to a crossdresser. Instead of being the end of the world, life turned out to be just the opposite.

The positive consequences which unfolded for Linda Buten, Chairperson of IFGE, and for Jane Ellen Fairfax, National Tri Ess Chairperson, are described, leaving any crossdresser and their family members with a new world of hope.

Transsexuals are not left on the sidelines. Dallas Denny and Holly Boswell, as well as prominent helping professionals, like Sheila Kirk, M.D., take time laying out the unique and different complexities involved with transsexualism, from TS tendencies through psychiatric care.

The Real Life Test, living in the opposite gender, sources of information, the length and scope of transsexual

choices, and hardships are discussed.

Can other transsexuals, transvestites and family members succeed as well, and to the extent that these community leaders have in their own lives? Seemingly happy, content, fulfilled, at peace, they describe how they've succeeded in their journeys. They do show how the best can be made of a situation. The positive advantages, in the long run, far outweighed, it seems, the negative, problematic aspects of transgendered practices and lifestyles.

That's the program, the message of the IFGE Coming Together Convention; slowly, with each of us participating, an informed and accepting society becomes all the better. I believe we agree, and, all in all, **GENDER 101** presents a very fine way to approach the subject.



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Dear Doctor

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Send questions to PO Box 530, Bensalem, Pa. 19020

Dear Doctor Stayton,

I am the spouse of a crossdresser and am supportive of my husband's need to crossdress. We have places where I will go with him in public where it's okay for him to be dressed, and there are other places and areas where I will not go while he is "en femme."

We have worked out these guidelines over the past five years and they have helped him to feel free to crossdress and allowed me to feel comfortable.

The problem I have with crossdressing is not a problem with my husband. One of our "safe" places to go is a support group meeting. At that meeting, there are guys who act like they are more of a woman than I am. I've actually had a few of them give me unsolicited makeup and fashion tips. I don't like to attend these meetings because of this superior attitude that some (I'll admit, not all) of the "girls" have, but I go for the sake of my husband. Maybe I should ask this question of Miss Manners, but is there anyway for me to get these crossdressers to understand that they are not acting in a ladylike or womanly manner?

A Spouse

Dear "Ladylike" Spouse,
Hopefully, just the printing of your

letter will be helpful. You make a good and very important point that crossdressers need to understand and appreciate. It is understandable where the crossdressers are coming from. It is so important for some of them, who have such a need to "pass," that they become supercritical of everyone, especially biological females. They do not understand that most biological females are not critical of other biological females (at least in face to face interactions).

It is OK to say to another woman, or to another en femme, "No, thank you. I'm happy with the way I dress." Bluntness can be useful.

Dear Doctor Bill,

I am a crossdresser with a question. What is the percentage of men in the general population who crossdress?

I have some freinds who don't know I dress and I sometimes wonder if they ever have an urge to try it. Are there any statistics on this at all, or are we completely in the dark?

Roberta

Dear Roberta,

There are only "guess-timates" on how many men are crossdressers. It is believed that it may be up to ten per-

cent of men may engage in some form of crossdressing activity. But, we do not really know.

It is not unusual for little boys to put on their mother's, or some other female's, clothes. Most of these boys give up the practice as they get older. However, some do not. We do not know how many may occasionally dress, how many fantasize crossdressing, and how many consistently crossdress but never let anyone else know.

There have been no national studies done on the male population regarding the extent of crossdressing practices. It would make for a great and helpful doctoral dissertation.

Ask the Professionals!

If you have any questions for Dr. Bill or Dermatologist, Dr. Jane Ellen Fairfax, fire up the word processor, typewriter, or crayon, and send them to us. We've set up the two columns, Dear Doctor and Ask The Dermatologist, to provide you with an accurate, safe and simple way to get answers to your questions.

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"Bi-gendered" in NYC

An Opinion Piece by
Lynda Frank, Tri-Ess

Tri-Ess, since its inception, has targeted itself to the heterosexual crossdresser. In an effort to move forward and retain its respected place in the CD community, the "Friends" of Tri-Ess category was established, thereby loosening, somewhat, Tri-Ess's restrictive membership policy.

But the question remains, has the time come to redefine the mission of Tri-Ess? If so, then a more in-depth evaluation should be made of the entire crossdressing community.

At the beginning of this year (1995), I undertook the start of a new Tri-Ess group in New York City. Having been offered space in the New York Gay & Lesbian Center in Manhattan, I agreed to have our meetings there.

The Center already has an ongoing Gender Identity Project for transsexual people. This is an extensive program headed by Dr. Barbara Warren that deals with all aspects of transsexualism and includes a peer counseling group that is excellent.

What was not available, was a true bi-gender group. People who are bi-gendered (Webster – prefix: having two) and want to stay there, as opposed to trans-gendered people (Webster – prefix: from one state to another), enjoy the aspects of both masculinity and femininity and move back and forth between them at will.

Those of us who are not trans-gendered, but bi-gendered, needed a group that would understand our special needs. It seemed to me topics geared to the needs of transsexual people, like name changes, surgery costs, hormones, and electrolysis, are generally of little or no interest to people who are bi-gendered. Bi-gendered people have an entirely different set of needs.

In advertising the Society For The Second Self, and a Bi-gendered rap group, I found that gay, as well as heterosexual, bi-gendered people showed up. When we hear the stories of the gay bi-gendered individuals, there is a remarkable similarity with the stories

of the heterosexual bi-gendered people. (Won't our future access on the Internet make this distinction even less relevant?)

One of the first important things I learned about our culture from Virginia Prince, was to separate sex from gender, and with that knowledge both the gay and heterosexual participants are quite compatible in the same rap group. It was a real eye-opener to discover this. The gay and straight people learned much from each other.

There was a time when I thought a gay crossdresser was different from a heterosexual crossdresser. Now I wonder. If a gay crossdresser seeks help in coming out he is generally directed to a drag* or transsexual group because that has been the only thing available to him. It now seems to me that many gay crossdressers would be more comfortable in a group like ours, if there was such a group available. I think it's a gross misconception to think that all gay crossdressers are drag queens. For some gays dressing up "campy" and doing "drag" makes oneself much less vulnerable because drag is being done in the gay community.

However, dressing in women's clothes in an effort to feel and act in a manner not regularly associated with men, to be able to have these feelings and blend into society as inconspicuously as possible has always been my goal – and seems to also be the goal of the gay crossdressers who have come to the new group.

Generally speaking, the straight crossdresser has two separate sets of acquaintances, one – family, neighbors, old friends and work environment people who know nothing of his crossdressing feelings and actions, the other – friends from the CD community. He then can move back and forth without having to explain himself, socializing while crossdressed in the generally accepting gay community.

However, the gay crossdresser does not have this option. If he lives regularly in the gay community, then where

can he go crossdressed and not have to continuously explain himself to everyone he knows? While dressing "campy" and saying it's just for fun, the gay community makes it difficult for the serious crossdresser. (Dressing for me is serious business – it may be fun and enjoyable, but nonetheless I consider it a very serious activity).

Examining the crossdressing community, I find my estrangement is with the "trans" element, not the gay crossdresser. I do not feel ambiguous about my sex role, but constantly fight the desire to dress more than is practical.

I feel Tri-Ess exists to support the bi-gendered person in dealing with his feelings and behavior in both roles – living and keeping both roles active. A committed partner, respectable neighbor, who is financially responsible and lives within the norms of acceptable social behavior, on one hand, and on the other, livie out his feminine feelings, truly needs a unique support system comprised of people with similar problems. "Trans" people in his group of associates tend to tip the scales in only one direction and that is contrary to his needs. The serious gay crossdresser more likely supports his bi-gendered feelings.

Our new group has not been around long enough to have any track record, but in just a short time definite patterns are showing up, and we can certainly use more education in helping everyone to better understand the crossdressing phenomenon.

**DRAG: used in many ways by many people, is specifically used in this article to describe a male dressing in women's clothing, usually elaborate and behaving in a manner so as not to be taken for a woman.*

The editors comment:

Opinions are those of the author. However, we're glad to see that she finally discovered what we've been preaching for the past 8 years: the labels "gay" and "straight" refer to sexual orientation and have little or nothing to do with a persons crossdressing needs.

Job Discrimination Based on Transgender Identification

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip (Postal) Code _____ Country: _____

Phone (day) _____ Phone (evening) _____

Fax: _____ Email: _____

Gender: Female _____ Male _____ TG _____ Race: _____ Age: _____

Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual _____ Lesbian _____ Gay _____ Bi _____ Asexual _____

TG identification (mark all that apply): TV _____ CD _____ Drag _____ Bi-gendered _____ Intersexed _____ Hermaphrodite _____

Klinefelter _____ MTF _____ FTM _____ Pre-surgical TS _____ Non-surgical TS _____

Post-surgical TS, _____ Other (please explain) _____

Please note here if you must remain anonymous in any documentation of your case. _____

Please tell us about your case:

Name of business or organization: _____

What type of work do they do? _____

What is, was, or would have been your job there? _____

In what country/city/state was /is this business? _____

Name and title of person(s) that discriminated: _____

If employed, when were you hired? _____

What types of discrimination did you experience? (check all that apply)

Did not get job: _____ Did not get promotion: _____ Fired or forced out: _____ Physical violence: _____

Hostile atmosphere (anti-gay, anti-trans jokes): _____ Sexual harassment: _____ Other (please explain): _____

Use the back of this form if you need additional space.

If employed, what types of praise, promotions, or raises have you received prior to the discrimination?

When did you notice the situation getting worse? _____

What, if any financial hardships did the discrimination cause you? _____

Can any of the following back-up your account? Co-worker _____ A manager _____ Attorney _____ Police _____ Doctor _____ Clergy _____ Therapist _____ Local or state employment commission _____ Other _____

Are there any newspaper, newsletter or other media items related to your case? _____

Are you involved in a lawsuit over this? _____

If you know of other incidents of discrimination or people we should contact, please identify here. Include names, addresses and phone numbers if possible:

Individual stories may be key to efforts to pass civil rights laws covering job discrimination. Are you willing to lobby, to testify, or speak to the media regarding your case? _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Upon completion, please send the form (a small donation to offset costs is optional) to: Linda Gail Walters

ICTLEP Job Discrimination Documentation Project

P.O. Box 711643

San Diego, CA 92171-1643 e-mail: <lindaw@aol.com>

FAX: (619)296-7418 (You **must** call by VOICE first to ensure the security of the host computer system.)