

State University of New York College at Buffalo - Buffalo State University

## Digital Commons at Buffalo State

---

Buffalo Belles Newsletters

Madeline Davis Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,  
Transgender Archives of Western New York

---

8-1995

### August 1995

Buffalo Belles

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffalobelles>



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [History Commons](#), and the [Museum Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Buffalo Belles, "August 1995" (1995). *Buffalo Belles Newsletters*. 33.  
<https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffalobelles/33>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Madeline Davis Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Archives of Western New York at Digital Commons at Buffalo State. It has been accepted for inclusion in Buffalo Belles Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Buffalo State. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu).



# BUFFALO BELLS

7954 TRANSIT RD. S. 197  
WILLIAMSVILLE, NY 14221-4100

NU PHI CHI



President: Denise [redacted] Ters. / VP: Janice [redacted] Newsletter: Kathy [redacted] / Jean [redacted]

HOTLINE: (716)-643-2626

June 1995  
AUGUST

## Dear sisters,

The July meeting had a good turnout for a summer meeting. fortunately we had probably the coolest day of the month for the meeting! (As this is being written on the 15th, we hit 97 degrees today. Thankfully it wasn't the meeting night) It was a night cool enough for makeup and hose, wigs etc.. Linda's wife, Margaret was in attendance. It was especially nice to have Margaret with us, it was a shame that any other wives couldn't be there for Margaret to meet. Now I don't want to give anyone's age away or anything. But they have been married for about four decades now. I'd say from meeting Margaret in person that she was about ten when they tied the knot!!!

We had a pleasant evening.

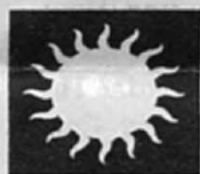
With Denise's return, we actually held a somewhat organized event. She has several ideas that are worth considering. A survey is enclosed for **YOU TO SEND BACK!!!** A bit of explanation to the questions to effect more of the conversation



that took place at the meeting. Merchant list- not just for clothing, but makeup, wigs tailoring, etc.. Question 2 and 4 are related. What has happened to us is typical of many groups such as ours. As one comes to the meetings, one's appearance and confidence improves to the point that going out in public is no longer the "impossible dream" it is a reality that wants to be explored. No longer is the safe environment enough satisfy our desires to experience our womanhood. Perhaps the so-

lution is to hold two meetings per month. Our primary must always remain the present one. This is our core. The place for the girl within to come out at least once a month in an environment of security, support and understanding. And make some of the truest friends you'll ever have! And some who will only come to visit our lives for a short while but make their impact. Our primary goal must always be the newcomer to our sisterhood. The place we all were a few short years ago.

But the idea of more nights out certainly is appealing to even me, one who sits on the fence of imagination and reality. Certainly more of Nite One, and even lewd comments by the yokel's didn't leave to much psyche damage! But that's my opinion and what do I know? I do think I look better than Janet Reno at least. I'll probably be whisked away to some island prison for that when this hits the streets!!!



Denise's third question is for a beach party. A good idea. The date is wrong, however. We will be moving the regular meeting (**OUR THIRD ANNIVERSARY!!**) to that date. So the beach party or perhaps another suggestion raised recently was for a Miss Buffalo Cruise. So are you interested? Fill out the Questionnaire and mail it back! But wait a minute, while your at it, why not flip it over and send on some other comments? Like what you like about our group, and even more important, what you don't like about our group. How can we improve? What can YOU do for us???

How about some meeting ideas? Ladies input!!! We need help. Please! We are tired, transitioning, or otherwise detracted!!! A few of you out there are going to be our future leaders.

To facilitate your participation in this survey, a pre addressed label is included!! What?? You expected a stamp and an envelope? Give me a break. Isn't this worth 32 cents?

I want to apologize for last months issue. Left out many things. Hopefully Jean's deft hand will come out to take this issue back to the standard we had before!

**Item:** Kelly had her surgery as scheduled at the end of June. All went well! Some of the girls, ( Janice, Patty, Holly & Collean ) got to go out to dinner with her on the 97 degree day (7/15) and have reported her well being. She should be back out West by now. I guess we can say our Cowgirl is sitting a little lower in the saddle now!! Best wishes Kelly on your new life and may it bring much happiness.

**Item:** While speaking of successful transitions, we must give our congratulations to Janice. As incredible as it seems to her, she has entered the work world once more! How she ever got around her "problem" is amazing. How she got a full time, legitimate professional job with out a Green Card?? They are asleep in the alien department. Congratulations Janice!!

**Item:** In the April edition of this newsletter is an article about name badges. We are ready to order all at once and possibly get a better price. Choose your color and include it on the survey.

**Item:** The Jim [redacted] does Judy

Garland is still on for August 17. It was discussed at the meeting and the consensus was that it would be better not to go as a large group. We stuck out simply because of our elegance! All those legs and heels, dresses and jewels! While the genetic gals, at least 98%, wore jeans, sneakers and Tee shirts. It was fun. Again, let us know your desires.

**Item:** The next meeting is our 2nd annual picnic. Hopefully mother nature will smile on us with clear, cool day! We will have a grill ready for use. Our usual paper plates, napkins, Coke, Coffee. Also we will have corn on the cob here. Please bring your own meat to grill and an item to pass around. *And don't everyone bring a potato salad as last year.* Beans, deserts, Jell-O, fruit, condiments etc.

See you at the meeting,  
Kathy [redacted]



### CALANDAR:

- Aug 5 Buffalo Belles - picnic
- Aug 17 Jim Baily at Melody Fair
- Sept 9 Buffalo Belles 3rd Annversary meeting
- Sept 14-17 Paradise in Poconos - CDS
- Sept 16 Beach Party/River Cruise????
- Sept 28th - Oct 1 Southern Comfort (Atlanta)
- Oct 7 Buffalo Belles meeting
- Oct 15-22 Fan Fair 95 (Provicetown, Ma.)
- Oct 26-29 Fall Harvest (St. Louis)
- Nov 4 Buffalo Belles
- Nov 10-12 Riverside (Erie Pa.)
- Nov 15-19 Tri-Ess Holiday EnFemme (Calgary, Alberta)
- Dec 2 Buffalo Belles meeting

### ATTENDEES:

Denise [redacted] Jean [redacted] Janice [redacted] Kathy [redacted] Francess [redacted] Michelle [redacted]  
Sharon (Newest member)  
Linda [redacted] (brought her wife Margaret)

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT NEWS!

### Boyfriend with a little secret

Dear Ann Landers: I am a 38-year-old woman who has been going with "Jack" (age 43) for about a year. Ours is a loving and intimate relationship, and we have discussed marriage.

Several days ago, while lunching with a friend, I happened to notice a very attractive woman walk in. She seated herself at the bar next to another woman, and soon they were having a spirited conversation. I couldn't take my eyes off this woman because I had the feeling I knew her from somewhere.

I suddenly realized that this beautiful woman, expensively dressed, well-coiffed, with perfect makeup, was my boyfriend Jack.

I couldn't believe my eyes. When he got up and headed for the ladies' room, I followed him. I demanded to know what was going on.

Jack was extremely upset by the confrontation. He finally composed himself and explained that he has been a cross-dresser since childhood. He said it was a "quirk" he viewed as a hobby and enjoyed enormously. He claimed he had intended to tell me about it in time and made it clear that he was strictly heterosexual. He also said he hoped it wouldn't affect our relationship.

I am still seeing Jack, and my feelings for him haven't changed, but I can't help wondering if I



ANN LANDERS

should continue to date him — or "her." I don't know what the future holds for us. Please give me some advice.  
— Confused in N.J.

Dear Confused: Although it seems kinky to me, many cross-

dressers are straight.

Dr. John Money of Baltimore, a leading authority on this subject, says most cross-dressers get their kicks from donning women's apparel, something that starts in adolescence.

Many cross-dressers are married, and their wives consider it harmless "fun." Some wives even go lingerie shopping with their husbands. It's up to you to decide whether or not Jack's "quirk" is tolerable.



## SOME OF OUR PRETTY MEMBERS AT OUR LAST MEETING



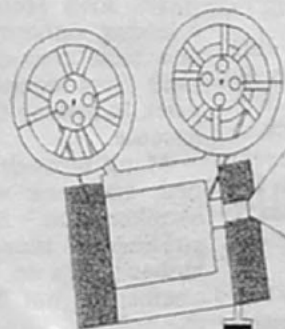
NEW MEMBER  
CINDY



BEAUTIFUL TAMMY



NEW LOOK ON  
PATTY



OUR  
FRANCIS



SWEET JEAN

# MAN FOR A DAY

She had it all down: the walk, the talk the entitlement factor.

But was she fooling anybody?

by Donna [REDACTED]

(This article was spotted by Patty. She pointed out that it is a story one of us might tell, but in reverse.)

I walk the teeming streets of Soho in Manhattan, unsure of my footing, shifting my hands awkwardly in and out of my pockets. My shoulders guide me through the night like the bow of a battleship. I keep my hips tight, letting my movement come from my shoulders, atop stiff legs. My shoulders hang, slightly rounded. My hands are semiclenched, as if ready to strike out. My newly acquired mustache-carefully applied only a few hours earlier by a makeup artists who specializes in making women appear to be men-tickles my nose. My expression, normally mussing and open, is blank, closed. Masculine. I am no longer Donna. I am James.

We are walking together, I and six other women who had gathered for an intensive five hour workshop on how to shirk our female identities and dress, carry, and conduct ourselves as men. Now we are testing out our

disguises, and, amazingly, people passing by don't glance twice at us.

As we head down the Soho streets, I keep my eyes steady, looking out with a sense of self-containment from my own reserved, private space. I don't allow myself my usual placating, glad to be here smile, which so often accompanies me into so many uncomfortable situations. That would be a dead giveaway.

"No smiling, no giggling," Diane Torr, director of the Drag king Workshop, had told us earlier when I'd laughed at the sight of myself in the men's clothing, my long hair slicked back with gel into a thin, cigarette like pony tail, my dark blond mustache now attached, a fake five o'clock shadow applied, the areas under my eyes shaded in and eyebrows darkened, my breasts bound with an Ace bandage-- and a fake penis attached to the inside of my underwear.

"Don't men smile?" I'd asked her. "No" she'd replied. "They don't have to." And she was right. Practicing in front of the mirror, I found that as soon as I smiled, James, my male persona, disappeared. I'd looked like a circus woman with freakish facial hair-ridiculous, a little mad.

I remember how, when I'd first walked into the building where the workshop was being held, construction workers on the street had called out to me, "Hey, smile babe!" as if my not doing so was a kind of cosmic insult, something I owed them but had witheringly withheld. No more.

I look at my cohorts in male garb. Paul, a.k.a. Claire, an otherwise tall, graceful woman with gentle gestures a performance artist experimenting with a masculine persona in order to help her develop stronger characters has adopted the same inscrutable expression as I have. On a woman, it would normally be read as "nasty bitch." But it seems fitting now.

I have to make an effort to keep up the Mickey Spillane glaze in my eyes, It only seems to work when I keep my mind on me, where I'm going, what I need and want. The minute I think about the people around me -- what their needs are or what their opinions of me might be -- I lose my self contained aura.



*Abandon any fear that you might not be approved of, Diane had coached us. As a man, if you have any fear, you must never show it.*

I must be getting the hang of it. My new male disguise makes being so self involved feel right. Guilt free.

I glance at Todd, a.k.a. Abby, walking alongside me -- a teacher of eighth grade girls who is exploring gender issues with her students and wants to deepen her understanding of how the sexes are socialized. For a split second, my mind registers her as a man.

*Let your feet move out from side to side. Men take up more room than women do when they walk. Imagine a three foot perimeter going around you, and don't let anyone enter that space. That space is yours.*

Abby has perfected it: the purposeful, wide stride, the art of owning her own space, owning the very cement blocks of the street she treads, I try to adjust my own walk, looking directly ahead. A few men look back, unblinking, without interest or expression. My fake penis rubs rawly in the crotch of my underwear.

Earlier on the workshop, I'd discovered that the gauze I'd bought to construct my penis was far narrower than the gauze the other women had brought along. After we'd all stuffed our gauze with cotton we set our penises on the table. Mine was only half as thick as the others. "But I don't want to have the smallest one." "It's fine, the others had reassured me. But I knew they were just placating me about my spindly member. Not an auspicious start for my life as a man.

*Pin your penis inside your underwear so it's against your skin. You have to feel the friction.*

And I do. It feels like a sanitary napkin gone madly, wildly awry.

I pass by dozens of women, looking for eye contact, any connection at all. No one acknowledges my presence. I am invisible. Clearly, I am not an attractive man. Oddly, the thought bothers me I ignore the urge to rub my belly protectively: I've carefully disguised the fact that I'm six months pregnant with a large vest that makes me look like I have a premature paunch for a thirtysomething man. Used to all the stares a

pregnant woman gets, the knowing smiles and sympathetic nods from other women, I feel doubly cast off.

A few kids stare, though. They sense something. They know. One 3 year old looks up at my bulging pot belly and then looks up at my face, confused. Two more women walk toward me, avoiding my eyes, as if they fear I might invade their space with my gaze. I start to move aside for them on the narrow sidewalk immediately. I smile and then wipe off the smile, not wanting to betray myself. Betray him.

Maybe this anonymity isn't so bad. Maybe there are two kinds of power. The power we carry as women--the kind that comes from being seen and (on good hair days!) coveted--power we use (more often than most of us might like to admit) to sway and influence others. And then there is the power that comes from not being coveted and thus being able to do whatever we damn well please because no one is watching or judging. I'm starting to enjoy this feeling of being set free.

*Fingers should be carried semiclenched, as if ready to strike back. Remember that as boys men were always available to be hit on by other kids, and that's reflected in how they carry themselves as adults.*

My fingers usually rest at my sides, fully extended, as if ready to reach out and smooth someone's cheek. Now I hold them tight and hard, as if to graze a chin. Maybe this is why men burn up more calories than women--their muscles are so tense all the time, as if they were constantly doing isometric exercises.

A group of rough looking punks heads our way. An ingrained instinct shouts at me to cross the street. But the fear is no longer there. No one is staring at my skirt, no eyes course over my breasts and hips. No one cares. I can go anywhere. Keep my course at will.

I'd first read about the Drag King Workshop (for women only) in my local newspaper. Its flyer had further piqued my interest: "How do men use space? How do they pick up an object? How so they assume the importance that they feel is their birthright...? All this is conveyed in gesture and physical behavior. When this guise is perfected, this alter ego can be of untold value."

I wanted to try it out for myself. As a girl I had grown up with three older brothers in a household brimming with testosterone. Back then I had known--as I watched them debate the issues of the day at dinner and wrestle each other afterward, call and date and dump girlfriends with seeming ease, disagree openly with our parents, race the car's engine a little too fast, challenge one another's opinions--that I didn't feel the same entitlement they did to chart my own course freely, without fear.

Now, married and with my first child on the way, a boy (of course,) again, I feel the maleness multiplying around me everywhere, like ivy. Between our linebacker son kicking against my bladder, my husband's own testosterone engine nature, and our hyper 80 pound male golden retriever, I sometimes feel my voice fading in the pumped up environment.

My cohorts and I head to a nearby restaurant for a drink. After a while, I get up to call my husband about our dinner plans. I retrieve my money from my jacket breast pocket without touching my body, as Diane has instructed, and go up to one of the waitresses standing nearby.

*If you have to talk to someone--a waitress or a clerk or a taxi driver--speak in short statements. Make demands. Give the order. Don't act as if you're making a new acquaintance. Don't placate.*

"You have change?" I stifle the urge to say, "If you have a minute, do you think I could get a quarter for the phone?"

She returns a minute later with four quarters. "thanks," I grunt. The baby kicks. I pick up my glass of ginger ale and swig it back, swallowing from the front of my mouth. It's a satisfying feeling. Rough. Unpretentious.

*There is an economy of gesture as a man. No movement is wasted, even when picking up everyday objects. You're always doing something significant, no matter how unimportant it is.*

*Men don't look to see where a glass is when they want to take a drink. They use their whole hand to grab it, as if the thing weighs a ton. And they set it down without looking to see where it goes. Why? Because a man owns the whole table He can set that glass anywhere. And men don't sip carefully, either. They swallow the liquid when it hits the front of their mouths. Men*

*don't delay gratification for the sake of a neater appearance.*

During the workshop, I'd thought that Diane's stereotyping of what it took to be male was overly negative. She seemed to underline the ugliness of what being "manly" means: striving for power over others, maintaining distance at all costs, feeling overly entitled in life. But now, here I am, entering that flow. Enjoying the power, the distance.

On the phone with my husband, my words are direct. "What time is dinner?" There is no preface, no "Hi honey. How was your day?" No soothing, cementing, or cajoling now. Just the facts sir.

"Are you ok?" he asked, his tone cautious.

"Fine." Realizing the role reversal, I try not to laugh and blow my cover in front of the customers seated nearby.

At the sound of his stunned silence, I soften. "I can't talk right now." I say He gives me the time we're meeting and the address for the restaurant.

I want to beat him to the restaurant, see if he and our friends will recognize me when they walk in. I say good-bye to Diane and dash out for a cab.

A taxi pulls up. Inside the cab, I drop my voice to the lowest possible register: "Second Avenue and Sixth Street."

Like all women, I'm used to cabbies giving me the once-over through the rearview mirror but this time the driver doesn't even look back at me. I cough. Suddenly, he glances back, surprised. "What?" I say. "Nothing" he replies. But he stares again, lifting himself up a bit on his seat to get a better look. Then I realize I coughed like a girl. "What, do you think I'm a woman or something?" I demanded.

He throws his hands up in the air. "No man, hey, no, buddy, not at all."

"Good, I say. But I am."

He rubbernecks back at me. "You are?"

"Tell me honestly. You didn't suspect?"

"No, hey, man-I mean lady-no. I mean I picked you up a guy on that corner. Definitely.

That's weird, man."

I'm delighted and give the driver a big, girlish smile.

But now, for the most difficult customer of all. I wait outside the restaurant, pacing nonchalantly, reading the menu, surveying the crowd. Then I spot my husband and our friends getting out of their cab. I look over my eyes, and shove my hands in my pockets like any guy. Hips stiff, feet planted firmly apart, shoulders slouched forward. And then it happens. My husband and one of my best friends and her date walk right by me. Just as my husband has his hand on the entrance door I stepped up to him.

"Hey, buddy,!" you walked right past me."

He steps back. "Omigod," he says. "Omigod."

My friend cries out, "Donna?"

"No, I say. "James" and hold out my hand to greet them.

No one touches it. I turn around and barrel down street for a few yards, demonstrating my new walk. My husband says "Omigod" a few more times. He won't come near me. When I go up to kiss him, he steps away. "I just can't," he says.

Inside, my husband and our friends watch me as I spread out in the booth, crossing my ankle over my knee without worrying whether I'm crowding anyone. My husband sits down next to me in the small space left over.

*When you sit on a chair, take up the whole space. Rock back on the legs. If you're sitting on a sofa, stretch your arms over the back: claim it. Don't act as if you're restricted to one tiny area. When you stand up again, do it with the sense that you have a great purpose and direction-as if there is a string connecting you directly to your destination and you simply walk along it. Even if you don't have any idea where you're going.*

When our drinks arrive, the waitress stares at me again. I laugh and shake out my legs. My husband relaxes a bit and gives me a hug. "You have a big, thick hair poking out of your chin," he says, fingering it. "It's so realistic."

I swipe his hand away. "That's mine."

Two days later I'm standing in the living room of our new house with a long list of items that need to be fixed by the builder. The contractor, an ex-football player, is abrasive at best. My husband, a lawyer, and my brother, an executive at a large contracting company, are going over each item with the contractor. Two experts in

negotiation. But as I listen to them, I feel myself disappearing. I look across the room at the fireplace where a section of the molding doesn't join and an unseemly gap is visible. Part of me starts to utter, "Excuse me, but do you think this should really be this way?"

Then something happens. I veer my shoulders forward. I tighten my hips. I cross the room with purpose, my body moving along a tight string connected to my destination. My acquiescent smile is gone. With a half clenched hand I gesture to the gap. I feel all three men's eyes on me. Their conversation stops. "This gap," I say "is completely unacceptable." Then I lift the Perrier I've been drinking as if it were a barbell and swig it back without looking at the bottle. I stare at them as I set the bottle down hard on the mantel. They are quiet. Three big, quiet men.

"Okay," the contractor says. "I can get the handyman to fix that." He peers at me curiously.

"Good," I say, gliding up the stairs.

## THANK-YOU PATTY



## AWARD WINNING STORY