

CROSS-TALK

THE TRANSGENDERED COMMUNITY'S NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1991

(ISSUE #31)



TRI-ESS BOARD MEETS: SAYS ORGANIZATION'S HEALTH 'IMPROVED'

(Chicago, IL) -- The board of directors of the Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess), met during the organization's annual "Holiday En Femme" November 23, and announced that Tri-Ess' health has "considerably improved" in recent months.

Tri-Ess chairman of the board Jane Ellen Fairfax said that the organization's "Big Sister" program, in which more experienced members are assigned to new sorority sisters in order to ease their transition into the organization and show that Tri-Ess does care about them. Fairfax said that several of the former "little sisters" have now volunteered to become another new member's "big sister". This program, along with the increased frequency of Tri-Ess' national magazine "The Femme Mirror", has resulted in greater member satisfaction and a lessening of "dropouts" at re-

according to national membership director Donna [redacted]. The board also decided to issue a new Tri-Ess pin with membership renewals during 1992, in honor of the sorority's 30th anniversary, and announced that the new national membership directory would be issued soon.

Tri-Ess, which now has 30 active chapters with the recent chartering of five new chapters, will hold its 1992 "Holiday" in Atlanta, hosted by Sigma Epsilon chapter.

[Kymerleigh Richards]

TRANSSEXUAL RUNNER SAYS NO "UNFAIR ADVANTAGE"

(Erie, PA) -- A female runner who was a male before undergoing sex-change surgery 15 years ago is dismissing complaints about her "unfair advantage" in distance races, saying the controversy only makes her train harder.

The 40-year-old woman, identified only as "Jane Doe" at her request, finished the 6.2 mile Great race of Pittsburgh on September 29 in fifth place among 40- to 44-year-old women with a time of 38 minutes, 31 seconds. However, another Great Race runner, Robin Pancerev, filed a complaint about the transsexual with the race director and The Athletics Congress (TAC), which sanctioned the event. Other runners who competed against Doe have also registered complaints with race directors.

In her complaint, Pancerev, 36, said Doe was "unfairly being allowed to ... compete as a female." Both Pancerev and Doe will be invited to testify before a TAC panel, according to Bill Phelps, president of Three Rivers Athletics Congress, one of 56 TAC organizations. "The law says this person is a female, but it's not that cut and dried," Phelps said. "We're dealing with what's fair as far as competition. This could set worldwide standards."

The TAC panel likely will recommend the question to a higher authority such as the International Amateur Athletic Federation. Pancerev's complaint won't change the race

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

F.D.A. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS IMPLANTS STAY ON MARKET

(Washington, DC) -- A federal advisory committee has recommended that widely used silicone gel breast implants be allowed to remain on the market while researchers continue trying to resolve serious questions about their safety.

The General and Plastic Surgery Devices panel, a committee of outside experts that advises the Food and Drug Administration concluded November 14, after three days of hearings, that a pressing public health need exists for the implants -- particularly for breast reconstruction after cancer surgery.

The FDA has said that it will announce a decision on the future of the devices by January 6 of next year. The advisory committee's recommendations are not binding, but typically wield considerable influence on the final decision.

Some witnesses during the committee's hearings had suggested that the implants should not be used for purely cosmetic augmentation, but the panel decided not to make the distinction between reconstruction and augmentation.

While recommending that breast implants remain available, the panel concluded that the manufacturers of the devices had thus far failed to provide enough scientific data to prove their safety. The implants contain silicone, which may pose long-term health problems in the human body, according to experts.

Breast implants have been on the market for three decades, and so are not covered under the 1976 legislation that gave the FDA authority to regulate medical devices; manufacturers were thus not required to meet current standards for establishing safety. However, the 1976 law provided that manufacturers of products already on the market could be required at some future point to prove that they were safe. An estimated 2 million women currently have the implants.

[Los Angeles "Times"]

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DETAILS ON PAGE 17

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SAN FRANCISCO'S MOST BELOVED DRAG QUEEN DIES FROM AIDS

(San Francisco, CA) -- One of this city's most famous and beloved drag queen, Doris Fish, died June 22 at the age of 38 after a courageous four-year struggle with AIDS.

Born Philip Clargo Mills, Fish was already well-known as a notorious entertainment figure in her home town of Sydney, Australia for her drag guerrilla theatre troupe "Sylvia and the Synthetics" when she burst onto the underground theatre scene in 1976 when she won the talent contest at Bimbo's 365 Club. Since then, she has ruled as figurehead and goddess of "Sluts-A-Go-Go", San Francisco's premiere drag troupe of the 1980's.

Along with "Sluts" cohorts Miss X and Tippi, Fish created, wrote and appeared in many local club productions before moving to the stage in 1987's "Bad Seed". She went on to achieve critical acclaim in the role of Madame Irma in Jean Genet's "The Balcony" in 1989.

Fish's film credits include "Chuck Solomon: Coming Of Age" and the feature "Vegas In Space", which premiered at the Castro Theatre October 11. Fish also served as executive producer and art director for the latest film.

She also served as the top comedy model for the West Graphic line of greeting cards, for which she made hundreds of appearances, and wrote a weekly column for the San Francisco "Sentinel" throughout 1989 and 1990.

In the fall of 1990, a cast of local entertainers paid tribute to Fish in a gala event that featured performances by many of those with whom she had worked and highlights from her nearly fifteen years of film, theatre, and nightclub appearances. Mayor Art Agnos had proclaimed November 3, 1990 as Doris Fish Day in the city.

Fish is survived by her lover Marcel Delgado and her mother Mildred Mills, both of whom were at her side when she passed away, as well as by her brother Tony, brother-in-law Andrew and Michael, sisters Mary Ann and Elizabeth.

[IFGE "Update"]

AEGIS THROWS PARTY FOR INTERNATIONAL TS MODEL TULA

(Atlanta, GA) -- More than 60 people attended a private party held October 27 for internationally famous model Caroline Cossey (Tula) held under the auspices of the Atlanta Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS).

AEGIS executive director Dallas-Denny and deputy director Margaux Ayn Schaffer presented Tula with a framed certificate thanking her for her efforts on behalf of transgendered people. "We believe that Ms. Cossey will continue to be a magnet to draw together the different segments of our diverse community," Schaffer said, noting that Tula has also been named to the forming AEGIS Advisory Board.

The event, which drew attendees from both the gender and gay communities, was held at Atlanta nightclub Petrus, which donated the use of its V.I.P. room for the evening.

[AEGIS press release]

TS RUNNER: NO ADVANTAGE

results because it wasn't filed within 24 hours of the event.

Doe says that while she never wanted the attention, the controversy has caused her to train harder. "When they started yelling and complaining, I started running more miles," the transsexual woman said. "The harder somebody pushes me, the more determined I get."

In a similar 6.2 mile event held August 18, Doe won the female masters division, and was third among all women in a 9.3 mile race a week later. In response to another runner's formal complaint after the August 18 event, Doe said she had her hormone levels checked and that nothing was found "that (would) give me an advantage." [Erie "Morning News"]

POST-OP TS EXPELLED FROM "WOMYN ONLY" MUSIC FESTIVAL

(Wallhalla, MI) -- A post-operative male-to-female transsexual whose birth certificate and driver's license both show her to be a woman was expelled from the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival because the annual feminist/lesbian event is only for "women born women", according to the security personnel who asked the TS to leave the festival grounds.

Nancy Jean [redacted], of Weare, New Hampshire, was approached by security personnel on the first night of the week-long festival and asked if she was a man. Although she produced her driver's license and offered to strip to prove her gender, she was expelled from the festival and told she had entered in violation of a policy prohibiting transsexuals.

[redacted], who had attended the previous year's festival without incident, described herself as "ambiguous in gender", but said she was dressed no differently than many other festival attendees (nylon running shorts, flannel shirt, and festival "baseball" cap). Her request to speak with festival producers Lisa Vogel and Barbara Price about the policy was denied, as was her request for an apology and a payment on the policy. Vogel and Price did pay for [redacted]'s motel room for the night she was expelled, but refused to pay for her earlier-than-anticipated flight back to New Hampshire.

Producers of other regional women's music festivals say that while they have had isolated problems with transsexuals, they have no policy of excluding them, and handled the occasional conflicts without expelling the TS in question.

The Michigan festival annually draws thousands of women from throughout the nation and around the world.

["Renaissance News"]

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FIRED TS PILOT WINS RIGHT TO SUE BANKRUPT AIRLINE

(Dover, DE) -- A former Continental Airlines pilot who was fired just prior to sex reassignment surgery has the right to sue the airline, a U.S. Bankruptcy Court has ruled. The pilot, [redacted] of Princeton, New Jersey, who as John [redacted] joined Continental as a pilot after being decorated as a military pilot in Vietnam, notified the airline in 1989 of her transsexualism. One month prior to her August, 1990 surgery, [redacted] was fired from her \$49,000-a-year job. After [redacted] failed to obtain satisfaction by going through company channels, she filed a discrimination suit against the airline, but because Continental had obtained bankruptcy protection, it was shielded from lawsuits during its reorganization. U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Helen S. Balick approved [redacted]'s request to proceed with the suit, noting that [redacted]'s was "an unusual situation". [redacted] will pursue her employment discrimination suit in New Jersey, although the airline's bankruptcy proceedings remain in Delaware. [Renaissance News]

CROSSDRESSER IN DIVORCE COURT BEFUDDLES JUDGE

(Springfield, MA) -- A man who wore a gray skirt, green tank top and blue pumps to his pre-trial divorce hearing made court proceeding difficult for the judge sitting on the case. Roy [redacted], who prefers the name Terri, has been dressing as a woman for two years, leading his wife of 13 years, Gloria, to seek the divorce. Her attorney, William A. Frasco told the court it became "intolerable" when Roy began wearing women's clothing to functions and to Gloria's parents' use. [redacted] told the judge he does not want a divorce, maintaining that his choice of clothes doesn't mean he can't function as a husband. When [redacted] told the court he had [redacted] to contact "Mr. [redacted]" for a meeting, [redacted] asked that he not be called "Mr." and asked the judge to "call me wa'am". The judge, who responded to [redacted]'s statement that wearing women's clothing was his "constitutional right" by pointing out that he was a domestic relations judge, set a December 6 date for the divorce hearing. [Springfield Union-News]

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WOMAN MASQUERADING AS MAN FOUND GUILTY OF SEDUCING TEENAGED GIRLS

(Yorkshire, England, U.K.) -- A young woman who masqueraded as a man and tricked two 17-year-old girls into having sex was sentenced to six months in jail. The crossdressing woman, Jennifer [redacted], 18, had denied two charges of indecent assault involving the other females. At her trial, she wore her hair short and dressed in male clothes. Testimony was given that [redacted] carried on a five-month affair with Rebecca Andrews and seduced Helen Ed [redacted] was sent to an institution for young female offenders. [London Daily Telegraph]

MUSLIMS OUTRAGED BY EGYPTIAN TRANSEXUAL

(Cairo, Egypt) -- A woman who was born male but underwent sex reassignment surgery three years ago is stirring emotions in this conservative Muslim country. Although Sally Abdalla (nee Sami), 27, looks, dresses and acts by a woman, the public outcry following the Egyptian press' revelation of her transsexual status has many worried that Egypt may have become polarized to the degree that transsexuals who feel compelled to have sex changes will fear having the operation. Already physicians and surgeons say they are reluctant to perform the operation for fear that they will be publicly criticized. The controversy erupted when Sami, then a medical student in the sex-segregated and religious Al-Azhar University, became Sally. The university expelled her and refused to accept her new identity as a woman when she applied to continue her studies in the women's section of the university. The university also sued the surgeon who performed the operation and attempted unsuccessfully to have his medical license revoked. Coverage of the court proceedings in newspapers and magazines created the public outcry. Although Sally was married about a year after her operation, public ostracism of her and her spouse continues. While there are no prohibitions against transsexuality in either Islam or Egypt's legal code, but Islamic law forbids homosexuality. Sally, who has since written a book in Arabic titled "I Was A Man", is suing the university alleging sex discrimination. The surgeon who performed the operation, Dr. Ezzat Ashamalla, says he will no longer operate on transsexuals, saying "it is too much headache". Many psychiatrists worry that the public reaction against sex changes may drive Egyptian transsexuals to break religious laws by making them more inclined to become practicing homosexuals instead. An estimated 400 to 500 Egyptians have undergone sex-reassignment surgery. [Atlanta Journal-Constitution]

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A practical joker in drag upstaged Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands when she visited Berlin recently. According to guards at the German presidential palace, a black limousine carrying a Dutch flag was waved through security cordon, but instead of the Queen emerging, prankster Hape Kerkeling stepped out of the limo, wearing a dark blue skirt and top and a pillbox hat. Kerkeling was asked to leave before the real Queen arrived. [Reuters]

Keanu Reeves, of the "Bill and Ted" movies, was making a statement of some sort to his fans ... but no one's sure what that statement is! Reeves donned full Japanese geisha girl makeup for a photo appearance in the October issue of "Vanity Fair" magazine. The photo's caption was vague, saying only that Japanese style is presently in vogue. ["Renaissance News"]

When the Cincinnati "Enquirer" asked readers to design a new image for tennis star Andre Agassi in conjunction with the 1991 Thriftway ATP Championship, one of the entries (which the paper reprinted in full color) showed Agassi in a purple corselet, garters, heels, and fishnet stockings, courtesy of an eleven-year-old "Rocky Horror Picture Show" fan. Turns out 41 out of the 831 entries the paper received showed Agassi in drag ... [IXE newsletter]

Last December, when famed SRS surgeon Dr. Stanley Biber was elected commissioner in Las Animas County, Colorado, his victory remark clearly showed his profession. Dr. Biber, when asked to comment by the Denver "Post", said: "Well, we pulled it off!" [Syndicated columnist Dave Barry]

Tired of not "passing" on the phone? Try the "Transition 2000 Voice Changer Telephone". For under \$100, this new technological miracle "realistically changes your voice to male, female, adult or child". While the company marketing the gadget, Spectra Productions of Johnson City NY, promote it for fun, screening calls, and dealing with obscene or annoying callers, it's likely there's another untapped market they never thought of ...? ["InnerView, Cross-Port"]

Although Morton Downey Jr.'s new syndicated talk show has apparently been cancelled before it even started production, he's been keeping busy auditioning for movie roles, and even turned up in a blue, sequined cocktail dress and auburn wig to promote one movie project he's involved in. (Maybe old Mort has had a change of heart since he attempted to rake three Renaissance members over the coals a few years ago?) ["Star"]

A recent off-Broadway production features three actors -- two of them males in drag -- in the main supporting role. "Sarrasine", the story of a Frenchman for a young castrato

'RAISED SKIRT' PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

(Edison, NJ) -- The results of the "Raised Skirt" photo contest, held November 11 at the Victorian Manor, have been announced by event sponsor Tom Hansen. The first prize of \$100 went to an entry by Miss Grace Knox of Metuchen, New Jersey, with the \$75 second prize going to Stephen L. Edens of Piscataway, New Jersey and \$50 third prize to David Clark of Cleveland, Ohio. All three received more than 10% of votes cast by the judges. The \$5.00 "complementary" prizes were won by David T. of Chester, New York and J.T. Hernandez of Pasadena, California. Knox, Edens and Clark also won \$5.00 prizes for other photographs they had entered. All five received between 3% and 8% of the judges' votes. Photos were required to show a subject wearing a dress or skirt, showing the entire length of one leg, and each photographer was restricted to three entries. [2-D & 3-D Photography press release]

singer, has the object of his affections, Zambinella, played by French dancer/singer/mime Francois Testory as an androgynous youth, actress Beverley Klein in middle-age, and English drag performer Bette Bourne as the ancient, broken-down diva. The play also connects the operatic world of the castrati with the music-hall world of the drag performer, revealing them as essentially the same. [New York "Times"]

A reporter who did a feature on the crossdressing group Virginia's S. Richmond VA went to all lengths for the story. Mark, who stands 6'9", wore size 15 heels, queen-size hose, a camisole, skirt, jacket, wig, and makeup. says that by dressing the part, the interviews he conducted with members "automatically became intensely personal and revealing". Reaction in the Richmond "spatch" newsroom was mixed; the women thought was "gutsy", the men thought it was a bad idea. ["USA Today"]

Amnesty International (AI) is turning its attention on Colombia, where transgendered people and gay men have been systematically killed by several groups of gunmen who patrol the country's cities and countryside. As recently as May, the body of a man wearing makeup was found near Cali, Colombia's largest city. The month before, two drag queens were killed by shots fired from a moving vehicle in the same city. AI's documentation goes back to an 1985 incident in which 20 people -- including transvestites -- were killed in Cali in a single night. AI says the international media is so preoccupied with drug-related violence that the "death squads" go unnoticed except in the local press. ["Renaissance News"]

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THE EDITORIAL PAGES

KYMBERLEIGH'S CLIPBOARD: IN-FIGHTING FOR OUR CIVIL RIGHTS

I have unfortunately found myself in the middle of a dispute between two of our community's leaders, both of whom are committed to our civil rights, but who differ in their opinion of how we should go about fighting for them.

One of the two leaders is Cynthia Roward, founder and director of the Gender Alternatives League (GAL), which drafted the "Gender Activist Declaration of Independence". I have signed this document, I am a founding member of GAL, and I sit on GAL's advisory board.

The other leader is JoAnn Roberts, one of the founders of Renaissance Education Organization, who drafted the "Gender Bill of Rights". The Tri-Ess national board of directors has ratified this document, as has the Alpha chapter of Tri-Ess, which I am currently president of. I am also the news editor for JoAnn's publication "International TransScript".

I love them both dearly, but you can see how I'm caught in the middle. Between March and November of this year, Cynthia and JoAnn have been corresponding with each other regarding their two documents and how they might join forces to achieve the common goal of improving the gender community's civil rights. I have copies of both sides' correspondence; it is my intent in this editorial to try to clarify the situation (if that's possible).

GAL was founded as a political activist umbrella organization for the gender community. Early on, in both correspondence and in an editorial which appeared in "enFemme" issue #24, JoAnn endorsed GAL and its purpose, and proposed that the Bill of Rights be added to the Declaration. However, although GAL initially welcomed JoAnn (who briefly held the office of GAL's 2nd Vice President), Cynthia somehow got the impression that JoAnn was trying to form a similar organization, after JoAnn offered to lend her name to GAL to increase its reach.

Shortly after the IFGE convention, Cynthia indicated that her support for the Bill of Rights was only tentative, because the Declaration was already written and the Bill was still being rewritten. Despite the fact that the Bill has been ratified by a number of organizations, WITHOUT REWRITE, Cynthia appears to be operating under this misconception through the present time. At the same time, JoAnn had rightly pointed out that GAL cannot survive merely on the strength of the Declaration, even as good a document as it is, and that GAL was not fully formed at that point. (To their credit, GAL has succeeded in getting its internal structure together and has published the first edition of "The Genderist" since that time.)

Even though the constructive criticism of GAL by JoAnn was warranted at the time, it only set the stage for a showdown, provoked when JoAnn wrote her editorial "APA: Friend or Foe?", which appeared in the "Renaissance News" and numerous other newsletters. You see, JoAnn and Cynthia disagree on whether or not transvestism and transsexualism should be removed from the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostics and Statistical Manual (DSM). Cynthia has committed GAL to campaigning for its removal, claiming it is a stigma and violates our human rights; JoAnn maintains this is not a critical issue to our community and that the misuse of the term in the DSM is the real problem. (Anne [redacted]'s editorial and Roger Peo's column this month also relate to this issue.)

I feel this whole matter has gotten out of hand, but I also am inclined to agree with JoAnn, for the simple reason that every statement she made in her editorial can be backed up by FACT. (You will be able to read it for yourself next month.) So far, I have found nothing but conjecture in the arguments GAL has been using in its campaign. And although I sit on GAL's advisory board, no statistical evidence has ever been presented me to back up the statements of the anti-APA campaign mounted by GAL.

In my opinion, this would be a non-issue, except that GAL

keeps insisting on making it one. Does anyone REALLY care about the DSM, except perhaps the transsexuals who may be relying upon it for the psychological and psychiatric profiles necessary during their transition? I think not.

The problem is, in order for a fight for civil rights to be successful, three conditions must occur: First, the rights being fought for must be actually wanted and needed by the people you are fighting on the behalf of; second, you must have an organized plan of attack (not just make it up as you go); and third, any actions taken or statements made must be based upon fact, not conjecture (while emotions are necessary, they do not take the place of statistics, only complement them). I find that GAL is without all three, while JoAnn has merely drafted a document, given it to the community as a starting point (not as the foundation for a political action coalition, as GAL has implied), then stepped back to see if all three conditions occur. Which course seems more logical?

Of course civil rights are necessary. And the DSM is probably not going to go away. But my perception is that the majority of the gender community are apathetic about this issue ... and all things considered, apathy is probably the proper reaction.

Because it really doesn't matter what the APA thinks. And GAL has gone from putting the cart before the horse to beating a dead horse that can't pull the cart once it's behind him. (Presuming the horse wasn't conjecture to start with.) [Kymberleigh Richards]

TAG, YOU'RE IT: MISPLACED PRIORITIES

There are those in our communities who will greet the news that the World Health Organization will continue to include transvestism and transsexualism in their "International Classifications of Disease", an international analog to the DSM-III-R, with boos and hisses. Perhaps they should, perhaps they shouldn't.

As with most issues there are pros and cons to any side. As with most issues proponents and opponents of any particular view enlist precedents to support their perspective. In the case for removing transvestism and transsexualism from the DSM or the ICD the precedent of homosexuality is frequently invoked. In so far as homosexuality is neither a disease nor a matter of choice but a fact of nature the analogy holds up in relationship to transvestism ... and transsexualism. But.

If one is homosexual one is not sick and therefore has no need of medical or psychiatric treatment. One might find therapy useful in coming to terms with one's nature, but this is not a true medical necessity. The same holds for transvestism. It does not hold for transsexualism ... not in our society. In transsexualism you have individuals whose body and mind are in total conflict. The polar nature of our language precludes having a place for those who would live the gender role opposite their sex. Our society can only answer the transsexual's cries for help with therapy and SRS.

I have considered myself a transvestite, but this is not to say that I haven't at times considered myself a woman in a male body. In other words, I have wondered which was the real me, TV or TS. How do I deal with this dilemma? At the moment I roll with it, which is to say that I don't deal with it. A friend of mine, a clinical psychologist, has told me repeatedly to get into therapy, and she is right. The only way I'll ever finally resolve the questions I have is to get into therapy. But, who can afford it?

Consider the transsexual. The cost of the transformation from a disturbed male to a (hopefully) reasonably balanced female -- therapy, hormones, documentation fees, surgery of various sorts including SRS -- runs into the tens of thousands. Who can afford it? At one time some people were

lucky enough to have insurance that covered much of the cost. Not many. TSs are often forced into illicit activities to pay for their therapies, both psychological and physiological. Prostitution, robbery, drug dealing/running are all common avenues to meet the ends.

While insurance may not cover SRS it often will cover psychotherapy. No small cost to sneeze at. My own insurance, through work, does not cover psychotherapy on an ongoing basis, it only covers 20 sessions per year and is essentially intended for stress management. If I had a better health plan ongoing therapy would be covered.

So what has all this rambling have to do with whether or not transvestism and transsexualism are listed in the DSM or ICD? It is this; insurance companies use the ICD and DSM to determine what they will and what they won't pay for. If it's not in the DSM or ICD the good hands won't be shelling out any green backs to pay for that therapy.

Does homosexuality belong in the DSM or ICD? No, of course not. Does transvestism? Well, no, not really. ... Except ... am I a transvestite or am I a transsexual? If there were a line in the dirt and this side was transvestism and that side transsexualism, well then transvestism wouldn't belong in either documents. As for transsexualism, yes it does belong in such documents.

I hear a voice from the northland screaming for SRS on demand. So let's suppose that you've come to the self diagnosis of transsexualism. You jump through the hoops for the shrink, you know what to tell her, you've read the literature, so you get your hormones. You jump through more hoops, you get SRS approval. You jump through even more hoops you get your SRS. There you are, a new miss. Only now, you decide that you weren't really a TS after all, that you were just a really f-----d up man.

Anne Bolin wrote an interesting book called "In Search of Eve". I read it a few years back. Very interesting. One point of interest was how the TSs, which the book followed, basically studied for their sessions with their psychologists, told them what they wanted/needed to hear, and got the SRS. The fact that their behavior reinforced the unsubstantial and stereotyped view that TSs tend to be hyperfeminine was not lost on these individuals. Seems like a waste of two years of therapy to me. And if you think about it, anyone could study up and go through those hoops and get SRS if they really wanted to or were truly deluded enough.

"Get serious, Anne, who would want to go through all that expense and pain and hassle?"

Recently Sally Jesse Raphael had a show on transsexualism (it must have been sweeps week) and one of the panelists had gone through therapy, his parents mortgaged their house to pay for SRS, and two months after that he decides that he isn't a TS after all and wants to go back to being a male. Well, it seems pretty clear to me that this individual spent two years lying to his therapist and as a consequence she was unable to help him with his real problems.

I'm not saying that the true transsexual doesn't know in her heart of hearts what she is. On the contrary. But, the medical field tends toward conservatism and erring on the side of safety. No qualified, competent surgeon would perform SRS on demand, DSM classification or no DSM classification. Purely from an economic standpoint it would take just one person like the one I mentioned in the preceding paragraph to wipe them out. But the real reason is that a good doctor wants to be certain that the therapy they are giving is the best, most appropriate therapy for that particular patient. You could go to a surgeon and tell them that you are transsexual and demand SRS, but a qualified one would not take your word for it, they would insist on extensive tests to verify your claim. Those tests include an extensive psychological work-up.

If I were having a certain set of symptoms, I might think I was having a heart attack. I could go to a cardiac surgeon and demand a triple bypass operation. A bad one might do it. A good one will run tests. And maybe the good doctor will come back and say, "I've scheduled the operation for tomorrow afternoon." or maybe, "Have a Roloids, you just have heartburn."

But back to the question of who pays for TS therapies, the TS. If you take transsexualism out of the DSM you remove the

possibility that an insurance carrier will lay out any money. If you take transvestism out ... well, like I said, the difference isn't as clear as a line in the dirt.

That northern voice is shouting, "Being in there is a stigma." Really now, I seriously doubt that being listed in the DSM or ICD is the source of our problems, nor is removing our conditions from them a panacea. The fact is that most people have never read the DSM or ICD. I dare say, most people have never even heard of those manuals.

One final observation regarding the listing of transsexualism in these diagnostic manuals. So long as transsexualism is listed legal grounds can be found to force an insurance carrier to pay for treatments pertaining to that condition. Once transsexualism is removed those legal grounds vanish and the economic burden absolutely must be shouldered by the individual seeking relief. That, my friends, is the real bottom line.

I've also been thinking about the Americans With Disabilities Act again. Since it doesn't include our communities I guess we can say that we are mentally fit by an act of Congress. And we know how refined a gentleman by act of Congress is.

Mentally ill. Physically disabled. No, these are things that we are not. If we have psychological problems it should come as no surprise. Show me an abused child who doesn't have emotional problems. When an entire society abuses, neglects or ignores a part of itself you're going to see people with problems.

Socially handicapped. That is what we are. Our problems stem from our perception that society frowns upon our activities. Now, if that perception was unfounded we could be said to be paranoid, but if that perception is valid we still have problems not including paranoia. Certainly we must have a neurological predisposition to crossdressing, but that is not illness anymore than ESP is illness.

The question is: Is the root of the problem within the person or is it without? If the problem is internal then that person must change in order to become well. If the root of the problem is external then that person's society must change in order to become well. If society doesn't know it is ill, how can it know it must change and therefore initiate change?

T.A.G.'s primary purpose is to wake the sleeping giant. We are here to say, "Look you, here we are. This is what we are, not that. In your mental lethargy you accepted what that person told you about us without looking for yourself, but that person does not see us objectively. This is what we are. Now tell me honestly, are we sick? What's that you say, what we do is unnatural? How can that be, nature created us. What we are is a people without a pigeon hole. People without a societal role. Your discomfort stems from a lack of definition for us. Indians (ours) called us Shaman or Berdache, and there we lived out our lives in harmony with society."

As I've said before, there will always be those who cannot accept us nor understand us. We cannot concern ourselves with them. Our energies must be focused on those who can be changed, and another word for change is education. Our handicap isn't so much that society -- which is not a monolithic object -- condemns us as unclear; rather it is that society doesn't understand us because frankly it hasn't thought much about us, and for our part, we haven't said anything.

This is the first time in many months that I have mentioned Transvestite Action Group (T.A.G.). To be honest, I have had little feedback about it. I decided to do some consciousness raising before mentioning it again. There are two paths that TAG can take. The first is a one person show which lasts only as long as the one person cares enough to do anything, the second is a group effort supported and staffed by the community which lives on past the founder's involvement. Which is it to be? I cannot believe that I am the only person who cares about the issues I write about. I cannot believe it if for no other reason that Kimberleigh sees fit to publish this column (and thank you Eileen for your support).

It is not enough for you to just sit back and read Eileen and my and others' columns each month. If you want change you must work for it. One person can make a difference, but

if you want to build the pyramids, you'd better have a lot of help. George Washington didn't start the American Revolution, Thomas Jefferson didn't conceive the Declaration of Independence, no one person is responsible for creating the American Republic. It was an idea whose time had come. It is also true that most colonials remained neutral in regards to the revolution, yet most benefited from it. They benefited from the passion and sacrifice of others. What will you do? Will you sit quietly and let the status remain quo, or will you speak up for change or support th do? The choice is yours. [Anne [redacted]]

UP ON MY SOAPBOX: CLOUDING THE ISSUE

It is common in some parts of the gender community, at times, to point out -- somewhat emphatically -- a distinction between sex and gender. One is usually viewed as genetic, genital and physical, while the other is usually viewed as belonging to the behavioral, intellectual, emotional and spiritual realms. And while it is good to remember the distinction, we cannot make the mistake of viewing that distinction as the end of the question, because there are some interesting complications that arise once we move from consideration of a single individual personality to the notion of community, and begin to consider the dynamics of sexual preference(s) within the community. Because it is a complex concept, a full and adequate discussion of sexual preference and sexuality is beyond the scope of a short piece like this. But, among other things, it seems like it is based more on gender (behavior, demeanor, clothing, social role) than strictly on sex (genitalia and chromosomes). Now certainly, these issues do not affect everyone in our community, but they affect enough of us to make the subject an apt one for rumination.

Considerable "grey areas" and dilemmas begin to emerge when people begin to explore their motivations and inner feelings. Three examples might concern Sandy, Sally and Suzie, who are males who express feminine gender attributes (masculine to feminine TS/TV/TG or what have you). Sandy discovers that while en femme she is sexually attracted to Lucy who is a genetic female. Sandy has emotions which might be characterized as heterosexual, while Lucy is keenly aware of some lesbian overtones in their developing relationship. Sally discovers that while en femme she experiences a new sort of pleasure when Larry (a genetic male) displays his interest and attraction to her, whom he sees as a lovely woman. Larry's emotions are largely heterosexual, while Sally senses the potential for gay love. Suzie, while en femme, discovers and strong emotional and sexual attraction to Laurie, who is another masculine to feminine TG/TV/TS. Both Suzie and Laurie sense the ambiguity of their attraction. In each of these examples, and in many other possible examples, once one of us moves outsider herself toward others, away from asexuality and isolation, and begins to explore herself, the interrelatedness of sex, gender, intimacy, trust and sexual preference emerges and her personal self-identification can easily become very cloudy; and she may begin to discover within herself a wide spectrum of sexualities and emotions, and a great many newly awakened personality characteristics, once she strengthens and deepens her identification with her (heretofore repressed, ignored, silenced, shackled) feminine aspect.

Because they are limited in scope, labels do not by themselves always help us to extend very far our understanding of ourselves and others. To assign or adopt a label or category -- to identify oneself as gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, TV, TS, TG or what have you -- is to limit oneself to a particular moment in time, and may discourage growth and further change. While they can be useful, the limits of labels and categories cannot be forgotten. They are not fingerprints; the people they purport to describe can and often do change -- sometimes frequently and profoundly.

What is essential is for us to build relationships of trust and to continue to interact honestly, openly and cooperatively with each other in dynamic, nonaggressive ways. These conversations can never -- should never -- really end,

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... and of course, the individual readers who sent in news articles from their local papers!

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as all of us continue daily to change and redefine ourselves and our place in society and in the gender community. This personal and emotional self-discovery and growth is positive and healthy and essential, and needs to be expected and nurtured. It permits us to transform our lifestyle into a great adventure, a never-ending story. The issues of sex and gender may not concern each one of us right now, this minute, but the building of relationships and friendships within the community, and the issues of personal growth self-discovery are perennial. (Lynn E. [redacted])

(Reprinted from "Out and About", Girls' Night Out)

VOX POPULI: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: "Tag, You're It", October '91:

For the past four years, Tiffany Club of New England has had a "Christmas Charity". We take up a collection at our meeting and give to a different charity each year. Anne's idea is obviously a good one. [Holly [redacted], Wayland MA]

Re: "Kymberleigh's Clipboard", November '91:

I agree that we of the transgender community should rise in support of the lesbian movement. And I did go back and read that paragraph again. In doing so, I found an error in your judgement. As a gay TG, I find that the male gay community doesn't enjoy any rights or acceptance. We get more public notice because we're out there being vocal, but we have not gained any acceptance from the "straight society" and never will. Gay men are discriminated against, just as much as any minority (including lesbians and feminists) are.

Also, the feminist and lesbian movements are really separate entities. The majority of feminists are heterosexuals. And although there are bars mainly for gay men and others for lesbians, they basically meet and hold meetings at the same place and time. (At least that's how we work up here in the San Francisco bay area.) You might also be interested to know that, like a transvestite would rather now be called a "crossdresser", a new trend is starting to

CHOOSING THE RIGHT EYESHADOW

by Valerie [REDACTED]

Last month, in answering Melissa's question about the right makeup colors, we did not elaborate on eyeshadow colors because there is more to it than just your skin tone. Skin tone determines whether you should wear cool or warm colors, of course, but you need to consider other factors as well when choosing eyeshadow colors.

The main thing you need to consider is your eye color. Eyes can be any shade of blue, brown, green and hazel, but what you don't want to do is match the shadow to the exact color of your eyes. If your eyes are blue or green try gold, purple or brown eyeshadow. Brown eyes sizzle with deep blue, autumn green and turquoise.

In order for these colors to look right on you, you need to apply and blend them properly. Remember when Susan asked (August '91) if she was using too many colors? Well, you can use a lot of colors, properly chosen and blended, to create noticeable eyes.

The brightest and most intense color should be applied near the eyelash base, both upper and lower. A highlight color, such as iridescent pink, opens up eyes if applied in the center of the lid. Use the darkest color in the eyelid crease, extending and blending upward to make the eyes look larger. (Earth tones such as burgundy and brown work best here.) A bright iridescent color just under the eyebrow at the outer edges will give the brows a lift.

If you want to experiment with wild, more intense colors, try using them on the outer edges of the eyelids. Just remember to blend all the outside edges with the earth tone colors to give a finished look.

Next month, we'll finish answering Melissa's letter from last month by discussing the factors that go into choosing blush color, and also how to apply blush differently for daytime or nighttime wear. Then in February, we'll go back to the mailbox and answer more of your questions.

[Valerie [REDACTED], a California licensed cosmetology instructor, welcomes your questions on makeup. You may write her directly at 1716 Andreo Ave., Torrance CA 90501. Questions of general interest will be answered in this column each month.]

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WHAT TO PACK FOR A "NIGHT OUT"

by Lola [REDACTED]

Have you finally gotten up enough courage to go out on the town? Nervous? Don't worry. My first suggestion to the novice TV is to carefully consider what you must bring out with you. When you know that you are prepared for every situation, there is no need to worry! Face, outfit and hair are your three main concerns, but don't forget those general necessities and don't bring anything that is not necessary.

For your face, you will need a small compact. Bring a compact that has loose powder, because compressed powder will turn into a sweat cake by your second night out. An eyeshadow trio is great for freshening up your eyes. Naturally, you will also need to bring a lipstick and blush.

In terms of your hair, you will definitely need a wig brush or pick. It would be a good idea to bring wig pins just in case. A purse-sized hair spray is optional; if it would make you feel more comfortable, bring it!

For your outfit, you will need several things. Just in case your dress should rip, bring a few safety pins. Clear nail polish is a necessity for fixing runs in your stockings. Along the same lines, super glue is good to have in case the heel of your shoe breaks; earrings can also be mended with it.

Before you leave your house, confident that you are prepared for every possible mishap, don't forget your general necessities! Your driver's license and some form of money are extremely important. Most likely, you should not bring your wallet into the bar, because a tipsy TV sometimes forgets that she has a purse, and loses everything. If it makes you feel more secure, also bring a spare set of male clothing in the car.

Last but not least, don't forget to have a good time!

THE EDITORIAL PAGES, CONTINUED

evolve in which some lesbians prefer "gay women".

I know that you are a heterosexual TG, so I can understand your affinity with the gay women's concerns. But you can't really be a "gay woman" and neither can I. I believe that you might be too influenced by those who are both gay women and feminist, for they try to separate the gay and lesbian movements, which I feel is a tragedy.

[Wendi [REDACTED], San Jose CA]

(Editor's Reply: While it is true that I am influenced by gay feminist women, I find no dramatic shift from my feminist leanings when I was still living as Kevin. But I have found that there are a lot more gay women who are supporters of the feminist movement than I had originally expected. And while in many ways the gay and lesbian movements do work together, for a lot of issues they have separate agendas, and I have found a great deal of dissatisfaction within the lesbian community regarding the small gains that gay men have made since Christopher Street versus the apparently non-existent gains gay women have made. I did deliberately over-simplify the situation in my editorial, but I also had some of my gay women friends correct the major errors in my thought process. But at least I managed to get the message across that the TG community must support women's rights so that both camps can achieve major gains.)

YOUR VIEWS ON SUBJECTS CONCERNING THE GENDER COMMUNITY ARE WELCOME IN THIS SECTION'S "VOX POPULI" COLUMN. PLEASE WRITE, FAX, OR E-MAIL YOUR COMMENTS FOR INCLUSION.

HAVE YOU ASKED A FRIEND TO SUBSCRIBE TO "CROSS-TALK"?

TRANSSEXUALISM AND THE CHURCH: UNJUSTIFIED MUTILATION?

PART 5: IS THERE ROOM ENOUGH FOR LOVE?

by Sr. Mary Elizabeth, SSE
(Courtesy J2CP Information Services)

The AIDS epidemic has brought much attention to the homosexual community and debate rages over the question of homosexuals and their place in the Church. In recent months TV evangelists have discovered the gender-conflicted, targeting them for ridicule by the "Christian" community and spreading inaccurate information about sex reassignment, professing that it is "a sin against God and man" ... "one cannot change what God ordained" ...

A 1987 Los Angeles Diocese questionnaire asked a number of questions concerning future involvement of the Diocese in Gay and Lesbian outreach ministries. The Diocese's Commission on Human Sexuality focused on homosexuality. Forgotten, on both the questionnaire and in Commission discussions, were the gender-conflicted (or transsexual) community ... a community comprising an estimated 60- to 200,000 Americans ... Americans generally cut-off from the Church, their friends, and families; often more despised and hated than the Gay and Lesbian community.

What is transsexualism? Is it a sin? What can we ... as Christians ... do to help these individuals?

Transsexualism is a disturbance of gender identity, where individuals experience a sense of incongruity between their psychological and their anatomical sex. Often confused with transvestism and homosexuality, it is actually very distinct from the latter. Homosexuals, who are sexually attracted to members of their own sex, and transvestites, who occasionally dress in clothes of the opposite sex, do not desire to alter their anatomy. The transsexual, in sharp contrast, feels trapped in a body of the wrong sex and seeks release; either through skilled surgical intervention, or through whatever means -- including suicide -- available to effectively escape.

Christians have always had difficulty comprehending how a loving, good, and merciful God could permit conditions that are contrary to our concept of good, so transsexualism presents a dilemma for us. The cause is unknown. Multiple theories exist focusing on whether the cause is psychogenic

or organic. In every theory, however, a piece of the puzzle is missing, and the theory fails. So, it is easy to call it a "sin".

Experience demonstrates a consistent trend towards rejection by both family and friends, harassment and/or discrimination in varying degrees by most of society, and more often than not, a refusal by many professionals to render aid; either by reason of questioning the validity of such a diagnosis, or perhaps fear of potential peer and/or community sanctions.

What can we ... as Christians ... do to help these individuals?

Rejection is not the answer. The rejected individual quickly rejects those he or she loves the most ... including God. "I don't need you ... I don't need God ..." And, in the end they reject even the professional help that could keep them from making a tragic mistake ... undergoing unnecessary surgery.

96% of the patients applying for sex reassignment at one major gender dysphoria treatment center were not significantly gender-conflicted. They were in great distress, suffering tremendous psychological pain ... confused, and they had been rejected by those they trusted and loved the most. What they needed the most was LOVE. What they received was REJECTION.

With all of the Bible's emphasis on LOVE -- i.e., the "greatest commandment," "greatest virtue" -- it would seem that those of us who are intolerant of others, who do not show love and understanding for those that exhibit a somewhat different life-style than our own, are violating this basic principle of Christianity -- LOVE.

As Christians we must not withhold our love from individuals within or outside the Body of Christ, simply because we do not understand their particular circumstance in life. It is our duty to get involved ... to offer our love when needed.

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WITCH HUNT OR CRUSADE?

by Roger E. Peo, Ph.D.

There are some members of the gender community who are simultaneously on a witch hunt and looking for a magic wand. I am referring to the current push to persuade the American Psychiatric Association to remove all mention of gender concerns from their "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (DSM-III-R). Their rationale is that if these categories are removed from clinical definitions everything will suddenly be all right. Then persons who wish to express non-traditional gender roles will be accepted by society because they will no longer be labelled "sick". So the "bad guys" are the clinicians who have formalized definitions about such behaviors and the "good girls" are those who oppose such definitions.

First, some information about DSM-III-R and the soon-to-be released DSM-IV. Simply finding definitions for any emotional or behavioral concern listed here does not automatically classify a person with such behaviors as "mentally ill". In fact it is a gross misuse of the manual to make such interpretation. To support this statement, I will quote at length from the Introduction to DSM-III-R. On page xvii it states: "... each of the mental disorders is conceptualized as a clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in a person and that is associated with present distress (a painful symptom) or disability (impairment in one or more important areas of functioning) ... Neither deviant behavior, e.g. political, religious or sexual nor conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict is a symptom of a dysfunction in the person." (Emphasis is mine.)

Thus, simply expressing transgender behaviors is not mental illness. Only if such expression causes the person significant distress would such behavior be classified as a problem that would benefit from clinical help.

Even if descriptions of transgender behaviors were removed from DSM-IV, the problems facing the gender community will not go away. In fact, I suggest that there will be no noticeable change in public perception and reaction. My reasoning is based on many years of observation. We live in a society that is highly conflicted about human sexuality. There is the sex-negative faction that takes the position that if one forbids all discussion of sexuality and confines sexual behavior to marriage, then the world will be pure. Contrast that position with media and advertising that use sexuality to sell products and entice people to various movies and publications. Add to this the treatment of women as second-class citizens sexually, politically, and economically. If you think about it, you can come up with more divisions in our culture.

There are many ways that members of the transgender community can change society and, as a result, gain more acceptance of transgender feelings and behaviors. The strategy is to change society's attitudes about human sexuality through education. I mean the basic "stuff" that helps people to understand and value their own sexuality and the sexuality of others. Such education has to start with children in school, church and home situations. So, get involved there -- work to get comprehensive sex education in the various institutions in our society. Support people who are working in this field. At the adult level, get involved in women's issues. Speak out against sexual discrimination and harassment. Work to make men and women equal partners in our society. Using these tactics one need not even admit to transgender feelings or behaviors.

As far as clinical definitions are concerned, the problem is in their use or misuse. Here the approach is to work with clinicians to help them understand gender issues. With this new insight they will be able to intervene appropriately with those individuals who fit the descriptions of DSM-III-R; that is, those whose lives are disrupted by gender conflicts. By speaking at professional conferences and talking to the future clinicians, this information will

WHEN PEOPLE FIND OUT

by Cynthia Phillips

Dear Cynthia: I am married to a male who crossdresses. I knew about his crossdressing before we were married; this is the second marriage for both of us. I really don't have a problem with the crossdressing, as I love my husband regardless of what he wears. I suppose that's because of all the so-called "macho" males I have known, and the one I was married to, it is a treat to find a person that is kind and sensitive, and one I can relate to.

We do have a problem that we have puzzled over for a long time. Who can you tell about this lifestyle we live? I am so tired to making excuses to my friends and family about why they can't "come over" without plenty of notice, or having to make sure the neighbors aren't around when we leave the house with my husband "dressed". My husband says he is used to it and this is the way it is when you have an unusual lifestyle. But I really don't like living a "secret" life like this. Do you have any suggestions? What do other crossdressers and their families do about this? —P.F.

Dear P.F.: Unfortunately, people do find out, and you really never know how they will react to this. I can give you a few generalities. Women accept it better than men. (Unless, of course, it's your mother, who probably never thought anyone was good enough for you anyway, and who will probably think he is a monster!)

Friends and relatives can be roughly divided into two groups -- ones who handle it badly, get very upset and (hopefully) never have anything further to do with you; and friends and relatives who will be (initially) very curious, and ask a lot of questions, some of which you'll wish they hadn't! But out of this second group can come some of your best friends and supporters.

It is probably a good idea to keep any employer from finding out.

Neighbors? Well, if you live in a typical neighborhood as most of us do, it is going to be difficult to keep it a secret. Some neighbors are just curious and really think they need to know everything about your life. Some really could care less. The best tack to take is to be careful, and try not to rub people's noses in it. But remember: In the long run, you have to run your life as YOU see fit.

Children present a special problem. Some people tell the

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

slowly be disseminated.

One last thing about changing or eliminating the definitions in DSM-IV. Without changing how society deals with human sexuality, the clinicians will be no different, except that they now have no way to understand the clients who are struggling with transgender behaviors that society still does not understand nor accept.

The hard thing about these methods is that they take commitment in your everyday life. Further, it will take time to make a change. They are not as glamorous as trying to change some definitions in a book.

So, there are no bad guys nor good girls and there is no magic wand. If you want society to treat you with respect, then you have to go about the very difficult job of helping them understand human sexuality. It is not easy, for the situation we are in today has taken a long time to develop. There are many people who will fight you every step of the way because they are frightened by sexuality. In the end, if you succeed, our society can be a better and healthier place.

[If you have something you would like Dr. Peo to write about or have a rebuttal send _____, P.O. Box 4887, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602 or call (914) _____. All communications are confidential. This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter so long as Dr. Peo's name and address appear in the reprinted version. All others must obtain written approval.]

THE SATIRICAL SKEPTIC

by Ricky

Help! I'm overdosed on TV newsletters, magazines, books and handouts. Life has been busy of late, and just about everything I found in the P.O. Box has gotten tossed into a pile at the back of the closet, awaiting time to read it. So the holiday weekend came and I had time to dress up, lay back and read. I read it all at first, then found myself skipping around a bit, then jumping over whole articles on the title alone. After the 5th report of how the convention went, the 14th discussion on how to tell the wife/kids/parents/mailman, the 28th personal history and umpteenth argument about what word we should use to identify which gradation of a man in woman's clothes, something snapped and I ran screaming from the room with skirt flying.

Anxious to restore my grip on reality, however tenuous, I made lunch and sat down with the latest issue of "The Skeptical Inquirer" for a good dose of common sense. Perhaps you are not familiar with the Skeptical movement; I fear most people aren't. SI is the journal of The Committee for Scientific Investigation for Claims of the Paranormal, a name begging for an acronym if I ever heard one. As I began to think of it, a crossdresser has to be skeptical to survive. There are so many pathways to fantasy in our world it's hard to keep things straight.

So what is a Skeptic with a capital "S"? Simply stated, a Skeptic is one who demands that any claim to anything be backed up with proof, and that any extraordinary claim (UFGs, miracle healings, ESP, etc.) be backed with rigorous proofs before being accepted. Simple to state, sure, like "a crossdresser wears the clothes of the opposite sex", but as complex in reality as the ins and outs of TV/TS behavior. This need of extraordinary proof of extraordinary claims applies to crossdressing in the minds of most people. Like it or not our society is irrational on the subject of sex, and crossdressing is automatically lumped in the "perverted sex" category without thought. Education has helped, but we still need to present that extraordinary proof to the outside world.

This skeptic has had trouble swallowing some of the ads I've found in TV/TS publications. Then I read an article about your personal colors, or the way to make yourself up, and find the opposite advice in an article from another source. And pardon me if I say that you needn't be a Skeptic to gag at most of the TV fiction available.

You had better be a skeptic about your appearance before going out in public. One of the first rules of skepticism is your personal involvement will bias your judgment. If you don't have an unbiased outside opinion before you leave, there is someone out there that will be glad to inform you about all your mistakes, believe me. Then there's all the psychological advice available. Tell the kids, don't tell the kids, how to break the news, CDs are special, this survey says one thing, the next says something else. How the devil do you sort it out?

I can't tell you that in a sentence, but what I can tell you is that after reading SI for a few years, I have painlessly gained the tools to sort the sense from the nonsense. The interplay of claim, response, counterclaim, on such diverse subjects and animal intelligence, medical quackery, the effects of heavy metal rock, crystals and other new age trappings begins to teach you what questions to ask, then in the next issue the letters column challenges what was in the last issue. One of the things I find most interesting is the accounts of "classic" frauds of the past. By knowing what has happened before, you are less likely to be fooled in the future.

For those of our sisters involved in educating the public, the same techniques used to counter false claims of the paranormal apply to countering false information about crossdressing. I know this column has strayed from crossdressing, but we can't stay dressed all our life. You might pay a visit to your local library and check out a copy or two of SI, and while you're there, plant a card for Tri-Ess in the card file to help a sister looking for

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kids and some would rather die than tell them (and a lot DO die without ever having done so). If a child feels he is part of the family and the family "secrets" are his to keep to himself, there is no problem. On the other hand, some children can't be told anything. They will immediately run to the nearest person and tell everything they know. This, of course, is a separate problem which needs to be taken care of -- because, sooner or later the kids will probably find out, one way or the other. Better to make it your way.

One thing I have discovered is that if YOU (the wife or S.O.) don't seemingly have a problem with this, friends, relatives, etc. won't. You will find that you set the mood for someone accepting or not. If you take a lighthearted, "no big deal" attitude, you will find others accepting your lead. You certainly do NOT want to appear as the "put upon" part of the relationship. Making excuses and acting apologetic towards a part of your life with your mate is not the way to make understanding easier. My approach has always been, "Yes, my husband is a crossdresser ... wouldn't it be interesting to know what unusual lifestyles other people lead?"

The final answer to all this is: In the long run it really isn't anybody else's business how you lead your life, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else.

[Cynthia Phillips is married to a crossdresser and is involved with two gender support groups in Texas, as well as being the current wives and partners liaison to the Tri-Ess board of directors. You may write her with comments or suggestions for future columns at P.O. Box 17, Bulverde TX 78163.]

information. If you want to go whole hog, send \$25 to "The Skeptical Inquirer", 3159 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215 for a subscription. After all, it's something to read until the next issue of "Cross-Talk" gets there!

TRANSSEXUAL PREGNANT AFTER OPERATION: A 23-year-old woman who was born male is now an expectant mother, after a French clinic transplanted reproductive organs as part of her sex reassignment.

Josephine [redacted] says she has been "floating on cloud nine" since she learned that the transplanted organs had resulted in her pregnancy. Her husband, Andre, had fallen in love with the pretty brunette when she was still only dressing as a woman. He presented her with a two-carat engagement ring the day they received notice that doctors had approved the sex-change surgery.

Dr. Gustave Cotellet, the surgeon who performed the transplant, says Josephine will have to undergo a Cesarean section to give birth, since she still has a male pelvis, too [redacted] a child to squeeze through. But he adds that the [redacted] should be able to have as many children as they want. ["Sun"]

TEACHER MAKES BOY DRESS LIKE A GIRL: The parents of a first-grade boy who was forced to march around the schoolyard wearing a dress and bonnet are demanding the dismissal of the teacher who devised the dress-up discipline.

Six-year-old Tommy [redacted] was given the punishment after his teacher caught him in the girls' bathroom. His parents say the punishment had a traumatic effect on their son, who doesn't want to go back to school anymore because of contin[redacted] teasing from classmates. His dad, taxi driver Simon [redacted] says his son "wonders if he's a boy or a girl".

Officials at the school in Southampton, England say the teacher has been reprimanded and the incident is now a closed matter. ["Sun"]

WISCONSIN BOY TURNS INTO GIRL AFTER BEING HIT BY BASEBALL: A 9-year-old Wisconsin boy emerged from a three-day coma caused by the blow to his head from a baseball ... as a little girl.

Buster [redacted] who now insists on being called Wanda, has given up rough-and-tumble play in favor of playing dress-up in girls' clothes, hair bows and his mother's jewelry. His parents say he now talks with a high voice and

gets upset when called by his male name.

At first, doctors thought Buster/Wanda's behavior was a passing delusion, but after 13 months of therapy failed to convince Buster that he's a boy, the experts now recommend sex-change surgery for the gender-confused child.

["Weekly World News"]

BEST LOOKIN' GAL IN TOWN ... IS A GUY: A 22-year-old man who managed to fool all the judges in a local beauty pageant was called "a dream woman" by the pageant director, who says it wouldn't be right to take the prize money back, even after the winner [redacted] sed "her" true sex.

Michael [redacted] who was described by one of the judges as having "long blonde hair, mesmerizing eyes, and long, well-shaped legs" told pageant officials shortly after winning that she was still technically a man, even though she had begun sex-change procedures.

Michelle, as she prefers to be called, is treated as a woman by everyone in the German town of Bayreuth, even by the male populace, who make passes at her at the local pub. She says she never set out to fool anyone, which is why she confessed the truth shortly after winning the Miss Bayreuth pageant. ["News Extra"]

THE BEAUTY PAGEANT WHERE ALL THE GIRLS ARE MALE: A Thailand beauty pageant that features stunning beauties in swimsuits and formal evening gowns has as its goal ... determining which contestant is the most beautiful man!

One 36-24-36 brunette bombshell says that all the contestants in the annual transvestite pageant dress like women, yet "are proud of our masculinity". One female British travel agent in the audience said the contestants "look better than me or any of my girlfriends in bathing suits". Pageant officials conduct rigid physical examinations, including drug testing, to ensure that all the contestants are actually males. Any contestant caught taking female hormones is automatically disqualified.

The pageant is a major event for the seaside resort of Pattaya, which is well-known for its infamous red light district. ["Sun"]

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A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear Subscribers, Advertisers, and Friends:

No doubt you have noticed that our publication schedules for last month and this month were again delayed. While my policy of refusing to "apologize" for these delays is still in effect, I feel that an explanation is required nonetheless.

Although there was a temporary break in my employment, it did not affect cash flow to the point where publication and mailing could not take place. However, my car was totalled in a traffic accident November 8, leaving me to use the RTD bus for most of my transportation for the foreseeable future. This has made picking up "Cross-Talk" from the printers and taking it to the post office very erratic, subject to the availability of other transportation.

I would like to thank Ka [redacted], Fra [redacted], Andie [redacted], Christine [redacted], Julia [redacted], Teri Lynn [redacted], and Sabrena Ann [redacted] for providing transportation on various occasions in the past month, allowing me to get business done (both for "Cross-Talk" and Tri-Ess).

The January 1992 issue will also be delayed, but the transportation problem will not be the entire reason. We have within the past several weeks installed a desktop publisher on the main "Cross-Talk" computer, which will not only improve our quality (including changing to a larger, more readable typeface), but streamline the process of assembling each month's issue. However, at this writing we have not installed the new printer and I anticipate some delays while we get that critical component operating properly with the new software.

On the bright side, this delay will keep us from getting caught in the holiday mail crush ...

Next month will also see the first installment of the new comic that we have been advertising since July. While I don't want to give away the entire plot in advance, the main character will be a truly transgendered superhero. I am fortunate to have a talented artist working with me on this project, and we hope you enjoy following the tale as it unfolds in future issues.

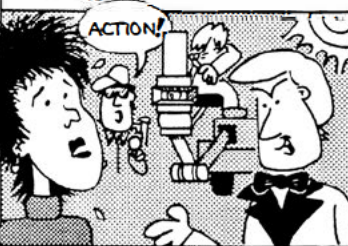
I appreciate your continued support and your understanding of these unavoidable delays. My continued promise to you is that I will produce the highest-quality newsletter possible, and that every subscriber will receive every issue she paid for.

♡,


Kymberleigh Meghann Richards

(P.S. Please accept my wishes for a happy holiday season. Merry Christmas to my Christian friends, Happy Chanukah to my Jewish friends, and Happy New Year 1992 to all!)

DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND HER CONTROL, KAREN HAS TO DO A KISSING SCENE WITH LANCE MANION, THE SVAVEST MALE EXTRA IN HOLLYWOOD...



THE SEX-CHANGERS BY LYN T. ©

PULLING NO PUNCHLINES

TIPS FOR APPEARING IN PUBLIC

by Linda [redacted]
(from "InnerView", Cross-Port)

This article is written especially for those who have never come out, yet plan to in the near future.

How should you dress? Well, first we ask that you do choose one sex or the other. If you choose female, then you must decide if you want to be a girl, woman, or slut.

Most transvestites dress either as a woman or a slut. If it is the woman look you desire, just get something from your mother's or wife's closet. It must, however, be a dress. Don't worry if it doesn't fit; we're mostly part-time girls, and I doubt if anyone would notice. You may want to shave your legs. If you don't, just say you do. Nobody can tell in the dark anyway. But if you do, please wipe off any blood that is dripping from your legs before coming. One time we had a girl walking around with bloody legs all night, and everyone laughed behind her back.

Don't forget your face. We don't like the half-n-half look, so shave off any big blobs of hair. Makeup is very important, so put lots and lots on. No matter how thick it may look, someone will still outdo you. Please, no heavy blue eyeshadow. We don't want you to look like a tramp. Top this off with some cheap perfume and plenty of scarlet red lipstick. If you're not the prettiest girl there, you'll at least be in contention for the Tammy Bakker look-alike contest.

Pick a long hair wig, and make sure your own hair is all tucked away. If you have time, brush it. If not, don't worry about those small details. If you have a thirteen-year-old daughter, you may want to borrow one of those fancy bows to plop in your hair.

More importantly, all transvestites must wear sexy underwear. You never know when you may be in a car wreck, and you don't want to get embarrassed if they see that you are wearing Fruit of the Looms under that fancy dress. An example would be stockings held up with garters. If you don't own a bone-crunching corset, then an extra tight bra, girdle, and waist pincher may be used. After all, we don't want to just look like girls, we want to feel like them too.

Also, make sure your fingertips are covered with some bright red Lee press-on nails. This is very important, because if they're not, you may be called a TS, or even worse, a Significant Other.

If you like jewelry, here's your big chance to show off your cubic zirconia collection. That's one thing about today's fashion; the more you wear, the better. Hell, you might as well wear everything you own, you might not get out for a long time.

If you want to go the slut route, just think blonde, short, high, and leather. For your entrance, you may want to get one of those fluffy white coats. Make sure to leave it unbuttoned so everyone will get a glimpse of those fabulous

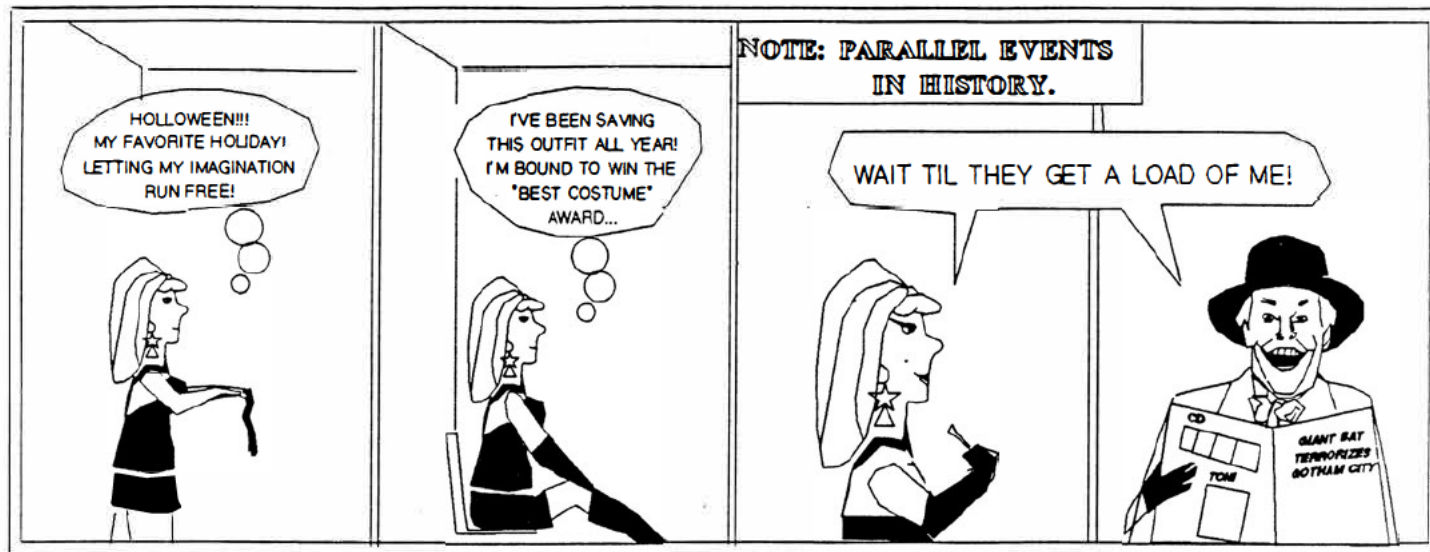
(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)



"Oh! that's a TS"

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legs and shiny six-inch pumps. For a little added effect, you may want to fool everyone by taking tape and pulling your skin together to form a love valley on your chest. Of course, no one will believe this old trick, and everyone will know you're in pain since we all tried it ourselves at least once.

If you're TS, you may want to come as a real girl. That look would be blue jeans and a sweat shirt. Beware though, you may be picked up by the pool cue-toting lesbians or some big macho dyke. On the other hand, if you are caught in a dress, you may be called a transvestite, heaven forbid.

If you are trying to pass, you must first approach the bar and perch your little rump (or large rump if you have one of those Frederick's of Hollywood fake butts) on the stool. Make sure you cross your legs and show a little knee (another TV necessity, and also a good way to practice so that when you drive home you can play with the horny truck drivers). Now order some sissy drink from the bar. If you do drink beer, please no straws.

However you dress is not important. We only want you to enjoy yourself and make a few friends. But while there, watch out for the sticky spots on the floor and possible Lounge Lizards.

IF YOU SEE AN ARTICLE IN A NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE ABOUT TRANSGENDERED BEHAVIOR OR FEATURING A MEMBER OF THE GENDER COMMUNITY, PLEASE SEND IT IN!
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WHO ARE THEY?



THE SAGA BEGINS
NEXT MONTH, IN

CROSS-TALK

by Wendi

I know you may be thinking "what is Wendi up to now?" or "what is she going to unload on us this time?" Relax! I simply thought it would be interesting to probe the depths of where "girls" like us may have sprung from. That seems to be the two million dollar question: WHY ARE WE?

Of course, as you've learned by now, the answer isn't the same for each one of us. Whatever reason you have for why your femme self endures, I'm delighted you're pacified with that knowledge and realization. However, don't forsake me yet. You just may be fascinated by this article.

Before I begin, I must clarify a few essential points. First, I wish all of you to understand that I use the term "transgender" to include everyone in our coherent community, from the part-time closet queen and casual crossdressers, through the "drag queens" to the various stages of the transgenderist and the full-blown transsexual. We could also include some professional FIs and some others who've taken on special labels. So what I want you to know -- even though it may be confusing -- is that my interpretation of "transgenderism" enfolds us all.

Now that you understand this, some of you are probably wondering what a "gnostic" is. To save you the time and effort of thumbing through a dictionary or encyclopedia, I'll give you the definition: "Gnosticism" is derived from the Greek word gnostikos (one who has gnosis or knowledge), and is a term used by modern day scholars to designate a religious movement with which the Christian church came in contact in late antiquity. For an example, the Freemasons, Hunas, and Essenes were Gnostic in practice. They possessed a higher "divine" comprehension of life on this planet, our inner selves, and the cosmos.

While I'm not claiming to have a divine knowledge on the subject of transgenderism, I simply want you to look at your lifestyle from that same ethereal perspective, to learn why your femme self abides in both the spiritual and material worlds. The idea is to learn from unconventional sources.

Not long ago, I watched an afternoon talk show panel debate the morality of homosexuality. One participant claimed that homosexuals were abnormal, and used the Bible and other religious script as the basis for his thesis. I wondered: If homosexuality is abnormal, why has it been around since the dawn of man? It WAS condemned by some of the authors of the Bible, but does this make it atypical, outlandish and bizarre? NO! It only reaffirms how ordinary and normal homosexuality really is. It was only because homosexuals are different that they have been branded and freaks and persecuted.

How does this relate to transgenderism? Well, if gays and lesbians have been around for thousands of years, then it can be assumed that transgenderism was, also.

In many ways, our lifestyle parallels the homosexuals'. The heterosexual crossdresser knows this already ... but exactly how has this come to be? Why is it that, in the words of Ray Davies, "girls will be boys and boys will be girls"? I've answered part of the mystery in my previous two articles "A Reason of Being" (August '90) and "Evidence of a Feminine Pastlife" (June '91), but in this article we will

journey back in time and discover the origins of transgenderism.

To explain my hypothesis, I must first give you an understanding of the "hermaphroditic gene" that might be present in many of us. This hereditary gene obviously had to be passed on from a hermaphrodite -- a living organism possessing both male and female reproductive organs. (We'll get back to that later.)

The Gnostics and Theosophists have written of the hermaphrodite. In their literature it all began several million years ago, when The "Elder Race of Titans", in their fourth-dimensional light forms, began to experiment with the five elements (fire, water, air, ether and earth). Most of the myths and legends written in all cultures happened during this "first era" of mankind. This was the period of trial and error by the fourth-dimensional beings (angels) with third-dimensional substances and forms. The very first third-dimensional man/woman, who was created eons before "Taung Child" (A. africanus) was really a hermaphrodite who bore children from within itself. These asexual human beings actually preceded "Adam and Lilith", who was the model gonochorist (producing offspring through male and female fertilization).

After thousands of years the gonochorist multiplied, and then slaughtered and "bred-out" almost to oblivion every hermaphrodite. Only through ancient east and west mythology can we find traces of this first human. One which is worth mentioning is Hermaphroditus (from which the actual word was derived), a being borne of Hermes.

Today hermaphrodites still exist in many forms. Most of the flowering plants and invertebrate animals such as earthworms, snails and slugs can reproduce through self-fertilization. There are also a few fish that produce eggs as well as sperm. However, the overwhelming number of vertebrate species, like reptiles, birds and mammals are gonochorist. So in the evolutionary sense, hermaphroditism is the primitive form of sex distribution, out of which gonochorism arose (hence the allegory of Adam's rib).

Now that you know the origin of the hermaphroditic gene, I would like you to learn how it was oddly distributed among the human race. Some of this is still a mystery, but I would like to scientifically (or metaphysically) explain.

What is known is that the mortal hermaphrodite of today is sterile and can be classified according to the prevailing combinations of sexual differentiation criteria (pseudo-male, pseudo-female, male pseudo-hermaphrodite, female pseudo-hermaphrodite, and virgin true hermaphrodite).

It is my belief that some of us are pseudo-males and females possessing the hermaphroditic gene. Being endowed with this gene amongst our chromosomes causes the male to be pseudo-male, hence effeminate. Thus some of us (but not all) aren't really men at all, because we are so identified with the feminine essence. We possess the cytogenic sex of a female, but the primary and secondary sex characteristics of a male. Our hormonal type may be male or mixed male/female. This exists within the human population in the ratio of one

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

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in every 2000, or calculated out, at least 130,000 pseudo-males in the United States alone. If we take into consideration that there are other factors that produce a transgenderist, that number could double.

"What does this mean to me?" you may ask. Well, it means that despite society's rejection of us, history, science, mathematics and our Gnostic attitude proves otherwise. We are a segment of the human race that has not yet been identified, and more abundant than you might think. Add to the calculation above the one in every 2000 males that is a pseudo-hermaphrodite (cytogenic sex male, gonads male, secondary sex characteristics female, hormonal type female or mixed). Interesting?

How can you use this knowledge? First, if you believe you possess this gene, it should be something you can be proud of, for within you lives the legacy of a forgotten race. You can appear androgynous, male or female, free to live the gender of your choice, without having to explain your actions in terms of society's conception of sex (gender) orientation. Simply put, you have an excuse for why you are like you are, if you believe you need one.

Second, understanding this "third gender" of the human race gives you the power to intelligently proceed with your

personal transformation. Within you is the gene that can change you physically, if you allow it to. Within your pituitary gland is the hormonal substances that affect your mind and body. (I'll expand on this train of thought in my next article.)

The revelation of the Gnostic view of transgenderism can open the gates to a beautiful and magnificent mode of living by liberating you to experience femininity.

A few months ago, we announced the availability of a new paper on transgendered behavior through Texas' Boulton and Park Society. Now comes word that B & P are sponsoring a full-blown research paper on the subject, with preliminary results due in late 1992 or early 1993. "Cross-Talk" has agreed to cover the cost of making copies of a ten-page questionnaire available for those of our readers who would like to participate in the study. To receive it, please send a self-addressed, stamped (29¢) #10 envelope to the "Cross-Talk" P.O. Box. Please DO NOT send requests for the questionnaire to Boulton & Park, as their funds are understandably limited.

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by Chrystine [REDACTED]

As a crossdresser, have you ever been stared at, felt conspicuous and out of place? As much as we would like society to understand us, there are some individuals that never will. As we strive to find our acceptance within ourselves and our community, we also struggle to find our place in the world. At times we lose our perspective of the "world at large's" view of our experience. Our own analysis, definitions, social or emotional issues can block the vision of how it appears to an onlooker. We expect the world to understand and accept us. But, do we ever try to understand them?

Imagine sitting in a restaurant with your family, when in walks a man dressed in a full set of armor. Wouldn't you think him to be more than a little strange? Would you jab the person next to you and say "hey look!?" Would you make some snide remark to your spouse, or to him?

I would like to relate a story about an imaginary friend of mine. While at first his story may seem strange to you, the analogy should quickly become clear.

His name is Mister Henry Wilkinson. However, he treats the title of "Mister" with distaste and prefers to be called "Sir" Henry Wilkinson. Since a very young age Henry recognized that he was different from the other boys in the neighborhood. While they were concerned with trading cards and driveway basketball, Henry had a secret wish. Henry wanted to be a knight. But afraid of rejection and ridicule, he shared his wish with no one. His parents had bought a suit of armor at an auction and stored it in the attic. Almost daily Henry would find an excuse to get away and sneak to the attic to try on the armor. At first it was too large for Henry to actually wear but he would try on the different pieces and admire himself in a small mirror propped on a chair. These adventures were always shrouded in the fear of discovery and followed by tremendous guilt. Part of Henry wanted to be normal, yet his longing to be a knight was even stronger.

Every Halloween Henry would deck himself out in his chivalrous finery. He was glad for even a brief opportunity to show Sir Henry to the world. As the years went by Henry grew and so did his compulsion. By the time Henry was in college the armor fit quite well. It felt so good to wear, that it was nearly impossible to take it off. He would wear the chain mail under his normal street clothes. Soon he had

acquired several suits of armor as well as collecting magazine articles and books about people that had become knights. Henry tried to live a normal life. He was well on his way to a good career when he married.

Marriage was a struggle. The tension of Henry's secret was kept barely beneath the surface. Then in a matter of moments he saw his entire life explode and fall to pieces around him. His wife came home early from a shopping trip. Henry stood there in the middle of the bedroom decked in sheet metal from head to toe. There was nowhere to hide and no way to deny it, Henry's fantasies were exposed. His wife, already dismayed by the lack of closeness in the relationship, left him. She refused to deal with such abnormal behavior.

Shortly thereafter after Henry threw caution to the wind, and began living full-time as Sir Henry. Some people were rude when Henry would visit the theater or market. Most people, though, were simply distant. A few were curious. Amazingly there were a handful that actually seemed to understand. He discovered some restaurants and clubs that featured medieval atmosphere and entertainment and made friends in the community.

His employer was not receptive to Henry coming to work in full dress, and terminated him. After numerous interviews he found an employer that did accept him for who he was. Henry has also found a lady that accepts the chivalry as an important part of his personality. Her loving and caring along with the support of the community has given Henry the stability to rebuild his life. Henry knows who he is, and believes he is the best person he can be.

The people that take the time to get acquainted with Henry know what a wonderful person he is. But he may never get away from strange looks when he goes grocery shopping. There will always be someone to point at him and whisper. But even an occasional child saying "Mommy, look! There's a man in a suit of armor..." no longer shakes Henry's self-image. Sir Henry Wilkinson lives and loves.

We also wear armor of one type or another. Substitute satin or silk for the steel and the story hits close to home.

Remember, to the outside world we may be strange, but that does not prevent us from being happy.



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THE MATHEMATICS OF HIGH HEELS

by Debra [REDACTED]
(from "Entertainment Weekly News")

I have often been asked how I can stand to walk in the stilt heels I so love. My answer has always been that they are really not so high relative to the size of the shoe. Many questioned that one night, and got me to thinking. It rang only, because here comes a math lesson.

The principal issue here is the angle the foot winds up making with the leg. I decided to calculate this angle and to compare from size to size. I measured the height of the heel, the distance from the heel to the ball of the foot (the point where the foot touches the ground) and the length of the portion of the foot which is at an angle to the ground. These form a triangle with the foot as the hypotenuse.

To obtain a standard, I measured several pairs of shoes, size 8½, which is a common women's size. As suspected, as the heel height increased in a given size range, the angle also increased. Also, the angle showed some variance based on shoe style.

When the owner was asked if one shoe was more comfortable than another of the same heel height, the answer was invariably the pair with the smaller angle. The highest angle was on a pair worn only "because they are sexy". The results were:

Size 8		Size 13	
Heel	Angle	Heel	Angle
3"	125-130	3"	118
4"	126-133		
4½"	133	4½"	135
		5"	135
		6"	147

It appears that most women accept a range of 125 to 133. Anecdotal evidence indicates that anything over 130 is for evening wear when not too much walking is expected. Also, at

133 an open toe is preferable to a pump.

In the larger size, the angle for the 3-inch heel shoes seems to be much lower than typical and is in fact quite comfortable for continuous wear. This compares to the lower heels women wear for work.

The higher heels create an angle slightly larger than typical, but only slightly. Thus I still maintain that a 5-inch heel for me is about the same as a 4-inch heel in a normal woman's size for evening wear. The 6-inch heel is nearly impossible for me, and I could not wear it walking or dancing. I have seen people who can, but they must be much more limber and/or dedicated than I.

I have worn the 5-inch heels dancing, but only in the sling version. The pump, which actually creates a slightly

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

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SHOPPING

by Eryca
(from Northwest Gender Alliance newsletter)

One of our sisters called to check out the remains from our garage sale. It turned out that she couldn't find anything she was interested in or that would fit. I suggested she try visiting some of the second-hand stores in the area; her reply was a series of excuses which, upon examination proved to have easy and simple solutions.

First of all, that famous excuse: "They'll know I am shopping for myself, and I'd be embarrassed." Let's look at that excuse for a solution. By "they", I presume she meant EVERYONE IN THE STORE (!).

False. Probably one of our biggest fears is simply not true. Each one of us tends to fall under the autocratic fallacy that says that what we are doing is of prime interest to everybody. Sure, what you are doing is important to you, but to assume that everyone else in the store is equally interested in your doings is not only super-egotistical but also quite foolish. Remember, you are in the store to find: 1) a bargain; 2) something that fits; and 3) that special item. With luck you'll find two out of three, and with extremely good luck you'll hit the jackpot and find all three. But you must -- repeat, YOU MUST -- remember, everyone else in the store is doing the SAME thing.

That is to say, they are just as equally engrossed in finding their own interpretation of the above three "rules". The only way you are going to attract their attention is if you catch it in the first place. Looking around furtively, quickly putting down merchandise and acting as if you aren't really interested are good attention-getters. As a retail store employee and assistant manager, what I see in those actions is not a crossdresser, but instead a SHOPLIFTER.

They (store employees like myself) would see a potential theft in progress. Once you realize that they have noticed your actions, you think they've read your mind and know you're a crossdresser, and are out to publicly humiliate you.

You assign a label to what they see, and in your paranoia act even more suspicious, guaranteeing that they not will not only pay attention to you, but also that they will approach you. Now the panic really sets in, and your actions show it, further convincing them that what you are doing is illegal and you should be stopped.

TIME OUT Let's look at the above scenario. In order to avoid being looked at in a suspicious manner, it is obvious that you must NOT act suspicious. Solution: Act as if you had every right to look at and buy the items you are looking at. Because in fact you do.

Believe me, 90% of the people will not assume that you are buying for yourself. (However, if you insist on holding a dress up to your chest while in front of a mirror ...) In fact, most people will think you are buying something for a girlfriend, wife or daughter. Then for the 10% that might say something, be prepared with a good line and be ready to top it off with a bit of aggressiveness. To the person that approaches you and asks "Find anything you like today?", tell them in flat, almost bored way, "Yes, but I'm not sure my (fill in the blank) will like it." In my experience 99% of those clerks that do approach you will automatically shift gears and either back off or offer their help. Getting rid of them then is easy; just tell them you haven't got a firm idea or price in mind and would just like to continue looking.

For the daring 1% that want to pursue it further with a statement like "the men's department is over there" or "we don't get many men looking through the lingerie", you need to evaluate them at this point. Are they openly antagonizing you, or are they sincerely trying to be helpful? If the latter is true, thank them, but tell them that you are fine and you know what you are looking for. On the other hand, for the fools that are openly accusing you of shopping for yourself, hit them full force at once! "Excuse me? Are you implying something you would like to apologize for?"

Believe me, there are few people that can stand up to such an affront. They'll probably apologize and disappear. If

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THE MATH OF HIGH HEELS

larger angle than the sling style, is also slightly less comfortable.

After writing the above, I asked Karen to read it. She began to question whether the pressure exerted on the ball of the foot would be significantly different between the man and the woman. Fortunately, we were able to obtain two pairs of heels of the same style which had been worn. One was a size 12 and the other a much smaller woman's shoe. The heel heights were 5" and 4", and the angle was 135 in each case.

The area of the shoe in contact with the ground could be measured and calculated (more geometry and trig!). The size 12 had an area of 5.5 square inches, and the smaller shoe 4.75. For the woman, that meant a pressure of 26.9 pounds per square inch. For Karen, it went up to 27.3; for me, 33.6. I think I may lose some weight so my feet will feel better!

Someone then asked about the pressure at the tip of the heel. We found the heel tip to be the same size, so as weight increases so does the pressure. It increases by about 50% from the lightest to the not so lightest among the three of us.

Mary, who was watching all this, then wondered if anyone could think of another measurement so that Karen and I could continue to play with the shoes a little longer ...

they are able to survive the blast, then do not hesitate; go to the manager and tell them that this idiot just insulted you and demand an apology. NOTE OF CAUTION: Do not volunteer the term crossdresser or transvestite, just let the manager know that you do not appreciate the quality of help they hired nor the manner in which they treat their customers.

If this seems too forceful, try reversing the situation. This is sometimes the easiest thing to do. For the buffoon that suggested that you might be looking at the wrong rack of clothes, hit them with a sarcastic "I might find it difficult to find my (fill in the blank) a blouse/skirt/dress/lingerie in the MEN'S department, don't you agree?", or "Why is it that a woman can buy a husband/boyfriend underwear or clothing and no one says anything, but let a man try to do the same and you get all these stupid comments?"

I've used all of the above techniques, and they do work. I can recall only one person that came straight out and accused me of being a crossdresser; I don't know if she got fired, but she was gone 20 minutes later. Remember, stores have the right to refuse service to anyone, but they can't discriminate. If you must approach the manager, do so politely, explain the situation, and indicate that you would like to clear things up with them. Believe me, you'll get some satisfaction.

However, this is probably one of the most important points. You must remember to act in a dignified and polite manner ... not only while going through the racks, but also when approached. Remember, if you act suspiciously, they have the right to check you out, and even refuse to serve you. If, on the other hand, you behave yourself with dignity and respect, they won't even bother you.

by Phaedra Kelly

(Editor's Note: While the following article might be considered by some to be an editorial commentary, we are printing it because of the analogy it draws between our community and the so-called mainstream regarding the ability of humankind to concern itself more with procedure than with results.)

The majority of youthfully ambitious rock bands that begin in garages follow the same pattern: Half an hour's embarrassed attempt at rehearsal turns into an earnest discussion on what the band should be called, which in turn becomes a hot debate on who's into what music, why and how serious they ought to be, and it all ends in noisily slammed doors, with several different dreams in tatters, departing in different directions.

So it goes with supposedly adult transgender groups that attempt to unify to establish an activist program. Everyone agrees to meet, full of enthusiasm, to confer and concur on the agenda. With minds full of the image of bewigged notables of the period that their history teachers described, signing world-changing documents, they get excited to a rhetoric about the moment. Waves of false confidence are circulated to some very tired, lonely, understaffed, unfunded solo workers on the fringes, and the major community basks in glory.

Then suddenly, overnight, the weighty questions of whose logo ought to take precedence on the letterhead becomes the center of debate. God help anyone who suggests that all of them ought to be combined within a circle, ala Arthur's Round Table, let alone that the problem of letterhead or logo hardly matters at all when the "organization" has not organized yet (let alone done anything).

So what they will call themselves and how it will be displayed in print must go to a committee, because nothing is truly impossible until it is in the hands of a committee. Much paper shuffling later, a subcommittee is appointed to

investigate the committee ... and to be certain nothing gets done by either, a time and motion study is established to investigate that.

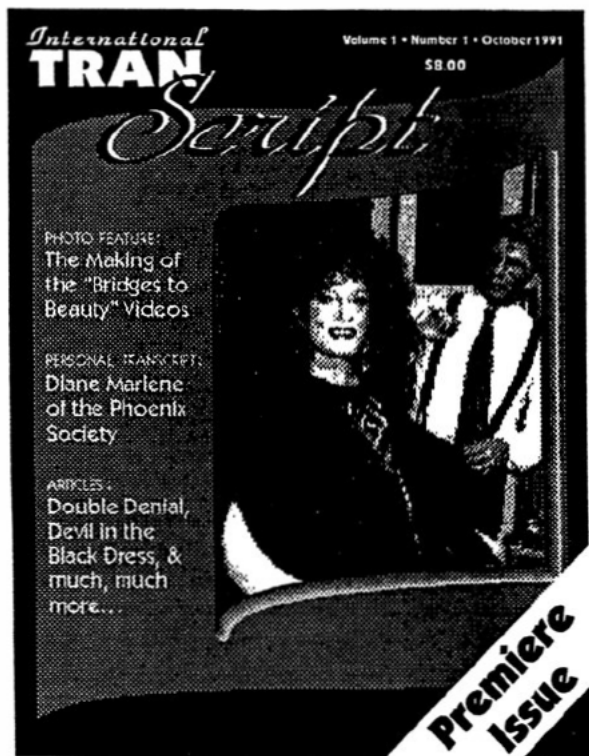
They might all, one day, discuss calling themselves a "human rights" organization, if only to defend their inalienable rights to sit and sit upon committees. But ask them for funding for anything like a human rights job and the vital resource of committee funding will be quoted as the reason why there are no such funds.

At the close of its first (and probably last) twelve months, the good intentions -- which, surveyed from the reverse angle, would show a stamp reading "Hades' Highway Pavingstone Corporation" -- submit a report comprising who said what about who in which committee, plus ten pages of the approved rhetoric, homily, and self-congratulatory nepotism with which it began. Guess what? Not even that reaches a conclusion.

That same week, someone faces the knuckles of a Turkish religious policeman's fist, feels the bite of their lashes as rattans flay their skin, suffers the indignity of brutal rape, then spends Christmas rotting in a cold stone cell with the vague knowledge that Amnesty International might agree, one day, to do something ... and the certain comfort that her American sisters' bottoms are warm and cozy in the silkiest undies, as they sit not on a committee for one, but on a dinner table chair waiting for a pretty award. Oh, how happy they must be to know that!

And then someone from another day surfaces, shoveling the dirt of other people at a peppercorn wage, feeding her family, and saving what she can to afford plain paper -- let alone a letterhead -- and maybe, one day, if the local travel agents can find and hold a dirt cheap flight, save enough to get out to the country where the problem lies, to find out first hand what it's about. If there's a war, no one but this loon will travel; so while the price is low,

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)



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[This list of telephone numbers of local groups is provided by "Cross-Talk" as a service to the gender community.]

NEW ENGLAND REGION:

CD Network, Rochester:	(716) 251-2312
Chi Delta Mu Chapter Tri-Ess, NYC suburbs:	(201) 663-0772
Expressing Our Nature, Rochester:	(716) 251-2316
Harriet Lane's TV Set, CT:	(203) 237-1968
Hierarchy, Philadelphia:	(215) 425-5240
Long Island Femme Expression:	(718) 446-6753
My Choice, Baltimore:	(301) 732-4546
Renaissance, Philadelphia:	(215) 630-1437
Renaissance LSV Chapter, Harrisburg:	(717) 780-1578
Rhode Island Society, Newport:	(401) 847-1035
Tiffany Club, Boston:	(508) 358-2305
Transgenderists Independence Club, Albany:	(518) 436-4513
Transpitt, Pittsburgh:	(412) 781-0257
Transsupport, Portland:	(207) 676-5870

THE SOUTH:

Atlanta Educational Gender Info. Service:	(404) 939-0244
Beta Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Mississippi:	(601) 982-7678
Serenity, Hollywood:	(305) 921-8738

MIDWEST & VICINITY:

Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Chicago:	(708) 364-9514
Chicago Gender Society:	(312) 434-5445
City of Lakes Crossgender Comm., Minneapolis:	(612) 933-5288
Cross-Port, Cincinnati:	(513) 299-1353
Crossdressers & Friends, Kansas City:	(913) 381-8887
Crystal Club, Columbus:	(614) 237-4321
Crossroads, Flint:	(313) 446-0782
Iowa Artistry, Cedar Rapids:	(319) 842-2654
St. Louis Gender Foundation:	(314) 567-8615

SOUTHWEST / MOUNTAIN REGION:

Boulton & Park Society, San Antonio:	(512) 657-2540
Delta Omega Chapter Tri-Ess, Dallas:	(817) 261-3253
Gender Identity Center, Denver:	(303) 458-5378
Heart of Texas Gender Alliance, Austin:	(512) 892-6454
Heart of Texas Gender Alliance, San Angelo:	(915) 944-1381
Tau Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Houston:	(713) 988-8064

PACIFIC NORTHWEST:

Emerald City, Seattle:	(206) 822-6953
Northwest Gender Alliance, Portland:	(503) 774-8463
Rose City Gender Center, Portland:	(503) 230-1036

THE WEST COAST (CA & HI):

Alpha Chapter Tri-Ess, Los Angeles:	(213) 876-6141
American Transsexual Education Center:	(213) 469-4709
Educational TV Channel, San Francisco:	(510) 549-2665
Hawaii Transgendered Outreach, Honolulu:	(808) 529-5634
Neutral Corner, San Diego:	(619) 685-3696
Powder Puffs of Orange County, Anaheim:	(714) 779-9013
Rainbow Gender Association, San Jose:	(408) 984-4044
Sacramento Gender Association:	(916) 441-8379
Swan's Inner Sorority, San Jose:	(408) 297-1423

CANADA:

Gender Mosaic, Ottawa:	(613) 749-5203
Toronto Crossdressers Club:	(416) 864-0420

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groups she has found or helped form in these countries. Not
her place to moan; because if she dies one day in a cell in
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IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER ON PAGE 13 OF THIS MONTH'S ISSUE OF "CROSS-TALK". PLEASE READ IT ... THANKS!

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