

F-to-m transsexual sues Pa. for surgical procedures

Seldom is a male-to-female transsexual successful in forcing the government or an insurance company to pay for sexual reassignment surgery. But a Philadelphian hopes that it might be a different story for *female-to-male* transsexuals.

A suit filed in April in federal court in Philadelphia claims that state Department of Public Welfare officials violated the civil rights of "Erik V. S." by denying him surgery to make him physically male.

The issue in Erik's suit is that he is being treated differently than

other Medicare clients who need the same surgical procedures. Unlike m-to-f procedures, which are only used for transsexuals, the mastectomy and hysterectomy Erik seeks are routinely funded by Medicare when necessary for the health of female patients.

Eric's attorney, Stephen F. Gold, claims that state officials illegally discriminated against Erik because of Erik's transsexualism, and have violated the federal Medical Assistance Act by denying payments for necessary surgery.

Eric was diagnosed as a trans-

sexual in 1984, has been taking male hormones since 1987, and has been functioning and living as a male for several years. But because of earlier psychiatric and medical problems, he is unemployed and receives Social Security and disability payments.

Named in the suit as defendants are Welfare Secretary John F. White Jr. and Don Jose Stoval, administrator of the Philadelphia County Board of Assistance.

Attorneys for the Welfare Department had no comment on the suit.

Beat the heat in lingerie

by Dina Amberle

In our never-ending quest to educate our members on all facets of the transgendered lifestyle, we will devote an entire evening to... *lingerie*.

The event will be the Greater Philadelphia meeting on Saturday, July 20. To provide the necessary illumination on this complex topic, the chapter board has called upon the experts: Cameo Lingerie. They have done for silk and lace what Tupperware has done for molded plastic.

That's right; it's a home lingerie party — except it isn't at home, and you'll be with 75 of your closest girlfriends. But leering, I mean looking at lingerie isn't the half of it. We want everyone to *wear* lingerie to this party.

Working on a hunch, the chapter

board figured that our members may have more than a passing interest in women's undergarments. Some members may, in fact, own some lingerie themselves. If this assumption is true, then two other assumptions support the program for the July meeting: you can never have too much lingerie in your possession and you never get a chance to show it off as much as you would like. This special evening of lingerie display should address both those points.

We know the common perception among outsiders is that transvestites crossdress because we just like ladies' underwear. After years of banging our heads against the wall trying to change skeptical minds, let's take at least one night to cavort in our beloved frillies. We may set the transgendered community back

about five years but, hey, it's our party and they can cry if they want to.

The lingerie demonstration by Cameo should allow members the opportunity to inspect, question, and purchase items in a comfortable, friendly environment (See, there is a redeeming social value after all.) Naturally, all members are encouraged to attend, whether or not you are brave enough to wear lingerie only, or even if you cannot crossdress that night.

So mark those calendars. We're looking forward to seeing all of our members in their most scandalous scanties, notorious negligees, and brazen bustiers. It should be hot and humid on July 20, so give yourself a break and forget those outer garments, girls.

It's lingerie night!

CHAPTER INFORMATION...

New Jersey

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

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Dina Amberle, chapter leader. Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Summer hours: meeting starts at 9:00 p.m. For information, call (215) 946-8887.

Pennsylvania

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Brenda Davidson, chapter leader. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets the first Saturday of the month. Presently, the chapter lacks a permanent meeting site, so call (717) 780-1578 for latest information and meeting location. The June meeting will be at 8:00 p.m.

Pennsylvania

Reading: The National Board has revoked this chapter's charter. If your membership there has not expired, please contact National Secretary Susan Crane, P.O. Box 552, King of Prussia, PA 19046.

AFFILIATE INFORMATION...

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

- Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit institution in their home state (except Pa.) before asking for chapter status.

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

access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19046.

Current affiliated organizations are:

- Monmouth/Ocean Transgenderists, PO Box 1326, Brick, NJ 08723

For current information about national Renaissance events and activities, call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day.

AND, DON'T FORGET ABOUT...

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

- **The Pen Pal Project.** If you

are willing to write letters to pen pals, please inform Maryann Kirkland or write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

- A gift of only \$6 gives a transgendered inmate 12 issues of the Renaissance News. Please help provide this needed support to our sisters in prison.

- A few copies of the deluxe edition of Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* are still available at \$39.95 postpaid. Make checks payable to Renaissance.

Renaissance News

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Articles must be submitted for publication one month in advance.

For current information about Renaissance, call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day.

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

Calendar of Events

JUNE

1st So. Jersey Chapter

1st LSV Chapter

15th Gr. Phila. Chapter

JULY

6th So. Jersey Chapter

6th Ren. LSV Chapter

20th Gr. Phila. Chapter:
Lingerie Party

AUGUST

3rd So. Jersey Chapter

3rd Ren. LSV Chapter

17th Gr. Phila. Chapter

JoAnn Altman Stringer™
SURVIVAL

Do you think you are a good person? Intelligent? Pretty or handsome? What kind of an employee do you believe yourself to be? What value do you place on your skills and abilities?

I usually don't start off this column by asking a boatload of questions, but recently it dawned on me just how low people's self-image can sink. I'm not talking self-esteem low enough to induce substance abuse; that is the pits! I'm talking about how average folks see themselves. I find it amazing that few people in our society feel good about themselves.

Many people have low self-esteem

This thought permeates many people just below what I call baseline, which would be the perfect individual: not too egotistical nor too self-defeating; just right! Most people's opinions of themselves lies just below this ideal level. On a scale of 1 to 10, most would score 4.3 on self-image. These figures are nothing more than my "guestimation" based not on scientific studies but on watching people. So why do people score 4.3 and not 9?

We think we have so many problems; we're too tall, our nose is too big, we have large ears, we're not smart enough, or not pretty enough. This list could go on forever. Most of us know our faults and strong points better than anyone. After all, we live with ourselves 24-hours a day. The problem is that we often perceive our faults to be greater than they really are. They are major things to us while they often are minor to others. And when we find one fault in ourself, we quickly find others. Suddenly we believe we are a totally imperfect being.

This perception is especially true for those with gender problems. Not only do we worry about normal imperfections, but we also have

society's scorn. How can a thousand people be wrong about you? If they say you are weird, then it must be true.

These thoughts came back to me as I began a new job training with another manager, also named JoAnn. She is a dichotomous person. She's extremely concerned about her appearance, and so she works out every day. Plus, she is probably the most aggressive sales person I've ever seen. Yet her self-esteem is only superficial; she tends to be very insecure in her personal life.

While we were driving to a business meeting, I asked her what she felt her worth was to a new company. "About \$10 an hour," she said. She knows she is excellent in sales and personnel motivation, yet she talks of a measly \$10 an hour! I told her that my value would be \$150,000!

That doesn't mean I'm egotistical. It simply means that I feel I have much to give the right employer. Whether or not someone would give me that I don't know. I'm a female (post-op transsexual), and have gone through the usual transition garbage. I still deal with daily problems like tax audits, bills and discrimination from being "over qualified". Why don't I have low self-esteem?

Tips from NASA

I used to work with Dr. Dennis Waitly, a behavioral scientist who was a consultant to NASA for the Apollo and Challenger missions. He put together a program for improving self-image, self-motivation, and self-esteem. He felt that if you analyzed each aspect of what makes up "self," you could discover and repair any problem in the perception of self. After completing his program, people emerged with a whole new outlook.

While training for my present

management position, I noticed this process at work with other trainees. They started the program acting like they had been pushing Big Macs and finished looking like Wall Street executives. The major factor was the heightened awareness of self.

Convince yourself you're a good person

How can you go from feeling totally worthless to having some self-respect? Simple. As you look into the mirror each morning — and several times during the day — tell yourself, "I am a good person, and I like the way I am." Pretty soon you'll believe what you're saying. And if you believe it, others will notice your improved self-image as well. Such a simple thought could have such dramatic results!

Would you rather be worth \$10 or \$150,000? Whatever you believe about yourself is what you project to others. Now, what image do you want to project? That of a loser or of a winner?

A new book in the works

Continuing my work in the gender community, I'm preparing a manuscript for a second book. It will be the flip-side partner to my first missive — Survival Guide to Transition. The title of the new book will be The Transsexual's Survival Guide for Family, Friends, and Employers. It will also be published by Creative Design Services.

I would like some input from anyone out there in "gender land." Had any experiences in your transition that would help someone else's parent, family, or employer? I don't need your name, just your input. Send it to me at 2036 1st Avenue, Suite 211, Greeley, CO 80631. Any help you could lend would benefit a lot of other people for a long time. Thanks!

THE **NEWSQUEEN**™
Paula Jordan Sinclair

The celebrity section of this column is sparse this month. Could it be that the celebs are lying low, hoping to avoid Miss Sinclair's darts? Or could it be that they have other, more important things to worry about?

As a result, we have to turn to celebrities who are not content to have fame thrust upon them, but who go out and seek the limelight. (No, we are not starting off with a Madonna story—Pam Westin took all the good ones for her article on page 16).

Chicago politics, which had become dull and businesslike in the past few years, took a turn for the better during the recent primary campaigns. Joan Jett Blakk, a drag queen, was a write-in candidate for mayor.

Blakk may not have gotten a lot of votes, but she sure garnered media coverage. Not only was she written up in *The Chicago Tribune's* gossip column, she made the cover of *New City* magazine. Reportedly, her campaign appearances on Michigan Avenue were real traffic stoppers.



A movie now in production will contain a crossdressing character in an important and perhaps positive role.

Director Mark Frost is currently shooting scenes for *Storyville* in New Orleans. The transvestites character, named Brandy, holds a vital piece of information and is not unhelpful in aiding those trying to solve a mystery. Jason Robards and James Spader star.



As could be expected, there had to be a back-scenes drag story associated with the film *Switch* released last month in which Ellen Barkin plays a man brought back to life as a woman (a fate to die for!). Barkin spend a good portion of the film adjusting to her new gender, including learning feminine movements.

One of the bits that enlivens the

movie is Barkin learning to walk in high heels. How did she get the look of walking in heels, seemingly for the first time? She had her significant other, actor Gabriel Byrne, put on a pair of heels "and I watched him."



Byrne should be careful, for he may end up like Jim Bakker, the fallen televangelist now serving time in federal prison for fraud. According to a supermarket tabloid, Bakker has decided that he will only be happy after he has a sex change.

"Being in prison has given me a lot of time to think, and I've discovered what I've really wanted all my life," Baker is quoted as saying. "I want to be a beautiful woman."

This sounded reasonable to us until we read the next Bakker quote: "I now realize that I married Tammy Faye because I wanted to be as beautiful as she is."

The man is obviously nuts.



Rod Stewart was performing recently when one of the club's brash blond waitresses wandered on stage wearing an off-the-shoulder dress and high heels. (No, it wasn't Jim Bakker, or Tammy Faye for that matter.)

The waitress flirted with Stewart, and even sat on his knee before removing her blond wig to reveal that "she" was actually Elton John who dreamed up the skit as a gag for his close friend.

We can imagine how much courage it took for John to carry on like this in public. He is known to be awfully embarrassed by his baldness.



Polls and surveys are wonderful things. The results can always be worked into a column one way or another, and often provide a bridge from one subject to the next. Take a recent poll conducted by two executives at the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency for example.

Among the findings were that

both rock stars and televangelists are among the ten occupations considered the sleaziest. Columnist was not on the list.

But more to the point, 4 percent of those surveyed said they would have a sex change operation in exchange for \$10 million.

The results sound suspicious to us, for when we polled our friends, a much higher percentage said they would be willing to have the change for only \$9.99.



A transsexual in Australia has found a way to make money from her sex change. Government officials allowed her to collect a pension at age 60 (the retirement age for women) rather than wait until 65, the retirement age for men.

H.H. had the change 15 years ago. When she tried to retire as a sugar cane cutter and claim her pension, officials checked her birth records and said she would have to wait another five years. But after an appeal, a government tribunal ruled that she is legally a woman, and can legally retire at age 60.

For the record, about 50 Aussie men become women each year, and about two women become men.



In nearby New Zealand, a transsexual is having problem with the government 20 years after her records were erroneously changed to reflect her new gender.

Even though the law in New Zealand — as in many area of the British Commonwealth — does not recognize a change of gender, an anonymous public servant recorded just such a change for the transsexual identified only as Liz. She later married quite legally and was later divorced. Her problems arose when she attempted to marry again. A records check determined that she was still legally a he, despite the "error" two decades earlier. The day before her wedding, Department of

(continued on page 6)

THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

(continued from page 5)

Justice officials notified Liz that the marriage could not take place.

None too soon, the New Zealand Parliament is reportedly reviewing the Births, Death, and Marriages Act as well as the Human Rights Commission Act which may benefit transsexuals.



It seems the sun never sets on the problems faced by transsexuals. A British sister is facing a reduction in wages after her sex change; she has been fired from the job she had as man and has been offered the same position as a woman, but for less money.

Glen Richards had been a popular DJ on radio Devon-Air. Although having a sex change five years ago and throat surgery two years ago to make her voice more feminine, Carlyne Monroe retained her on-air persona as Glen, along with her masculine, Irish lilt.

However, a new program director said that "Glen's" services would no longer be required, but that she could stay on the air as Carlyne, but for less money.



Let's hope that transsexuals in Czechoslovakia fare better than those in the former British Empire, for there are soon to be a lot of them in that Eastern European nation.

According to a new Czech lesbian and gay organization, women who are attracted to other woman are not being diagnosed as lesbians, but as female-to-male transsexuals and are urged to have sex changes by the Sexological Institute in Prague. Lesbian and gay activists say that there is a link between the frequent sex change recommendations and the low status of women.

Reportedly, so many women have been diagnosed transsexual that the number of female-to-males is ten times higher than the number of male-to-females.



If Czech officials are serious about turning large numbers of females into males, they may want to investigate reports about a chemical that does the trick without expensive surgery. The only problem is that it seems to work only on a certain type of shellfish found on British beaches.

Tributyltin (TBT) is a chemical used to prevent barnacles from growing on ship's hulls. Scientists at Great Britain's Natural Environmental Research Council laboratory discovered that TBT had a strange effect on the dog welk. When exposed to the chemical, female dog welks grow penises and sperm ducts. The greater the amount of TBT they are exposed to (the dog welks, not the British scientists), the longer their penises grow.



One bright spot in the European transgendered scene happened recently in Berlin where a practical joker in drag upstaged visiting Dutch Queen Beatrix by sweeping past security guards and up to the German presidential palace in a shiny black Mercedes flying the Dutch flag from the front bumper.

Guards snapped to attention and waved the limousine through the security cordon and down the driveway to Schloss Bellevue. But instead of the queen emerging from the car, Hape Kerkeling stepped out, resplendent in a dark blue dress and pillbox hat. He waved regally to startled protocol officers and posed for photos before being told to get back into his limousine and leave the palace grounds.

The actual queen arrived a few minutes later.



Maybe it was Berlin's reputation for being a city where anything goes that kept Kerkeling out of trouble. But a man in New York State who tried to fool officials into thinking he was a woman is facing felony charges for forgery and making a false official statement and a mis-

demeanor charge of impersonation.

Using a stolen driver's license bearing the name Karen Bishop and wearing a stunning daytime ensemble, Todd Miller, 21, went into the Gloversville, N.Y., office of the Social Security Administration and applied for food stamps. Two days later he showed up at the office of Domestic Violence, a social services organization for battered women, claiming to be Ashley Cerrucci, a battered woman running from her abusive husband and seeking shelter for the night.

Miller, who is reportedly a pre-op transsexual, was arraigned on those charges, but skipped bail.



If New York authorities find Miller and arrest him, his fate couldn't be any worse than that suffered by another pre-op transsexual jailed in Maine on federal charges of check forgery. Cheyenne Deneuve Lamson was put into a cell in the women's area of the Penobscot County Jail along with Juanita Crosby Williams, a woman.

Williams objected to her new cellmate, and sued county officials for violating her constitutional right to privacy. One wonders what she did to Lamson.

U.S. District Judge D. Brock Hornby effectively blocked the suit when he granted qualified immunity from prosecution to the jailers. Hornby said officials were "confronted with a situation that had no perfect answer." The judge concluded that there was no "clearly established" constitutional right about the housing of transsexuals. "Jail authorities, obviously, do not frequently address such a quandary," he said.

Earning Miss Sinclair's thanks this month are Joan Hoff and Joyce Lynn Connors. A postage stamp will get the same for you. Send clippings on crossdressing to Miss Sinclair at the Renaissance office. Please note the date and name of publication.

What makes a man?

Scientists show one gene 'triggers' male development

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Scientists in Great Britain have all but confirmed that a single gene is responsible for making an embryo develop male physical and behavioral characteristics. To some, this discovery sheds theoretical light on the biological source of transgendered behavior.

Working with mice, scientists of the Medical Research Council National Institute for Medical Research in London, changed female embryos into males by injecting the embryos with a gene called SRY. Several months ago, British scientists claimed the gene was the "trigger" which starts embryos along a male path. The research with mice announced last month seems to confirm that finding.

SRY was injected into a total of 158 fertilized mouse eggs, and almost all of the eggs developed into normal males or females. But two of the embryos, which otherwise would have become female, developed male sex organs, and a third developed normal male mating behavior when it matured. However, all three were sterile because they lacked the Y chromosome.

While the discovery may have great practical applications in agriculture, its application among humans is limited to providing a

better understanding of how sex is determined in the womb, the scientists said. But, other experts pointed out, the development of girls and boys is much more complex than the development of female and male mice.

Human chromosomes contain between 50,000 to 100,000 genes; working individually or in combination, they determine each physical characteristic such as the color of hair or the shape of the nose. However, it is popularly believed a person's sex is determined by the presence — or absence — of one of 46 human chromosomes. Therefore, because almost every person has either two X chromosomes (for females) or an X and a Y (for males), becoming female or male is thought

by many people to be an "either/or" situation. This popular theory leads to the belief that transgendered behavior is psychological, not biological.

But the discovery that a single gene — out of as many as 100,000 — triggers both the physical and behavioral differences between males and females (regardless of the embryo's chromosomes) means that there is a higher probability of an "error" in transferring the complete genetic code. This supports the theory — at least among some — that being transgendered is as natural a state as any other now attributed to genetics, such as having cleft pallet, a birth defect corrected through surgery.

This link to the "sex trigger" gene seems especially true for transsexuals, but the connection is not so clear with transvestites.

Some observers of transvestism have theorized that these individuals have a "natural predisposition" toward this behavior, and often an environmental influence causes the person to realize this element of their makeup. Case histories of many transvestites have identified the environmental influence, but never before has the biological cause of the predisposition been identified, even in theory.

We all began as female fetuses

Even though genetic gender is set when the sperm fertilizes the egg, and the chromosome of one merges with the chromosome of the other, every human embryo develops as a female until the third or fourth month when the physical differentiation between female and male genitals begins to be apparent.

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The *For Ideas*
FORUM

A husband, not a sister

⇒ In April, we reprinted a transvestite husband's advice for getting along with wives. The March issue of the newsletter from Australia's Flamingo Association contained similar advice, but from a wife's perspective. Some of the points are the same; but some are different and, we think, important.

-PAW & PJS

ONE. Don't tell me transvestism is normal whenever I'm having misgivings. No one in this world is normal, so let's leave the definitions to the psychiatrists.

TWO. Don't talk to me about hormones — either as an excuse for being a transvestite or talking wistfully of them as a way of making your anatomy more feminine. I like your anatomy the way it is. And besides, estrogens can greatly reduce your sex drive.

THREE. Don't call me sister. I'm your wife and you are my husband, however you may be dressed.

FOUR. Don't tell the children you're their aunty. They're not going to be fooled with that. They will accept you if the matter is explained properly. And we should do it to-

gether

FIVE. Don't abbreviate me or other women. We are not RGs (real girls) or GGs (genetic girls) We are your wives and friends and we are women. Do you want us to start calling you RBs or GBs?

SIX. Don't compete with me. When I'm out with you "en femme," I don't mind having a good time with the femininity you have achieved. But don't ever forget that I am the real thing and that I bitterly resent comparisons. And listen to my advice on your makeup, hair, and deportment. I'm only trying to help. I want you to look your best whenever you are a man or a woman.

SEVEN. Stick to the budget. Keep to the same rules you expect me to observe; and let's talk it over before you buy something really expensive. It may be your fantasy you are dressing, but it's our money that pays for it. And if you can't resist something, try bringing me home one as well. The gesture will go a long way toward soothing my nerves.

EIGHT. Don't wear my clothes without my permission. When I'm planning on wearing something, nothing annoys me more than to

find it all stretched and creased.


NINE. Pay as much attention to your male clothes. I weary of picking up your trousers from the heap you dump them in. Why do you treat your feminine things so much better? And try lounging around the house in male clothes occasionally. That negligee gets boring.

TEN. Play fair about our social life. If I don't object to your TV friends and their parties, then I expect you to mix with my straight friends too.

AND FINALLY (with a deep breath) we ask that you stop making excuses for being a transvestite. If I can manage to live with it, then you should be able to bear up. You might be surprised to know that, from a wife's point of view, a lot worse monsters live in this world than transvestites.

You see, as men, you're really not a bad bunch.

⇒ Reprinted with permission from the book *Drag Show; The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin*, by Hilary Beaumont, published by Currency Press, New South Wales, Australia.



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The For Ideas FORUM

A dose of reality to be taken daily

by Angela Gardner

When the article on Renaissance appeared in The Philadelphia Inquirer "Daily Magazine" several months ago, one disgusted member complained to me, "How could they refer to you as 'a man known as Angela Gardner'?" I know she was upset, and it took me some time to compose myself after reading that awful (but true) sentence, but the last time I checked I really was a man: body hair, beard, Adam's apple. And what's what's down there? Gosh! I'm a regular guy. I'm also a transvestite. As a TV, I understand that member's problem;

she has only met me in the persona of Angela Gardner. Angela is a female person.

Transvestites spend a lot of time working on the female fantasy. They (continued on page 11)

From the land down under...

To the Editor:

"G'day," as we say here in Australia.

This is a long overdue message to you people in Renaissance.

I found the newsletter was very helpful. I did learn a lot from it and got some ideas on how to put a magazine together. You helped us without you knowing. Plus, we have used some of your articles to help our members to get a better under-

standing. There is nothing like fresh news from overseas to keep our members in touch with the latest happenings in the States.

—Janice West Doonside, New South Wales Australia

☞ This is the introduction to two fascinating audio tapes Janice sent us which tell about the Flamingo Association and activities in Australia. —PJS

Mariette confuses the general public

To the Editor:

Can you stand little bit more on Mariette Pathy Allen? I saw her book, sat through her slide show, and talked to her personally. I believe that she is sincere in her efforts to advance some knowledge to the general public. She has certainly collected a goodly amount of photos of transvestites and crossdressers.

Yet, I find her work presented in such a way as to leave one confused—sitting on the fence, so to speak. A TV can certainly flow through her photographs with little or no emotion. But not the general public. For instance, the slide that shows a male

person dressed in infant clothing (complete with nipple in mouth and bottle and rattle in hand) tends to subtract from the minimal knowledge the public has now. Also the slide that shows a TV who has to have everything red—living quarters all accented in red, all clothing with some red in it, and rugs and bedroom in red. These photos only tend to enforce the idea that all transgendered people are living in one sick fetish that can only be corrected by psychoanalysis.

Indeed, the word crossdressing has not even made it to the dictionary. Yet, if I am to become sylph-

like in my behavior, I certainly do not want any further roadblocks.

—Roz Lynn North Jersey

☞ As Allen writes in her introduction to Transformations, "These are people who question gender roles not merely with their minds, but with their lives. I see them as heroic because they confront what most of us keep hidden in our innermost fantasies—if we allow ourselves even that much freedom."

Should we criticize Allen for revealing those among us who are unique and possibly more heroic?

—PJS

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The **FORUM** For Ideas

On becoming political

by JoAnn Roberts

Politics - Many people shudder at the sound of the word. Office politics, local politics, government politics, we can't ever seem to get away from politics. No one like politics, but almost all agree that politics is a fact of life.

Whenever two people have two different ideas about a particular problem or issue, politics is born. Politics operates when the two agree to, (1) not kill each other, and (2) work out a compromise solution.

So, whether we like it or not, we have politics within our community. And, within the last two years, the different factions have agreed to, (1) not kill each other, and (2) work out compromise solutions to common issues and problems.

We are becoming politically

aware and politically savvy. We are forming coalitions. We are observing other political minorities and learning from their experience. We are readying ourselves for the struggle we know will come by building support from within.

For every new political movement, there are those who kibitz from the sidelines with smug, humorless snipes. They don't want to change the status quo. They don't want attention focused on the community. They'd much rather continue their secretive existence. They hold no hope for positive gains.

This attitude is born out of an unconscious collusion with the "powers-that-be." The nay-sayers of the new politic "buy-in" to the social censure of transgendered people. They unknowingly admit to guilt,

shame and disgrace for their being. They unwittingly identify with those who would have us believe that transgendered behavior is immoral.

To these non-political, impedimenta, I say, "Develop a political consciousness or be left behind."

The new politic of the gender community does not have to take the shape of the old, smoke-filled, back-room model. Indeed, it must *not* use that model. The politics of gender is the antithesis of the politics of power. No one individual nor group should gain an advantage from this new awareness of political capability. Beware the pedagogue who speaks the new language for personal gain. Beware the leader who spouts techno-speak and psycho-babble for effect. The words are

(continued on page 11)

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(continued from page 9)

create an entire separate world where men are "girls," breasts are rubber, and a size 12 foot will easily slip into a 9 1/2 pump. The writer of the *Inquirer* article was not a part of that world. Furthermore, she had to anchor her story in reality. If she had called us "girls," "ladies," or "women," some of her readers would have been confused just as some transvestites seem confused about what or who they are.

Earlier, I said that Angela is a "persona." She is a character that I created. I used something within myself that is feminine, and by imitating female behavior, I've built her personality over the past 10 years. Here is an example...

When Robin Williams did Popeye, he had to observe and imitate Popeye's body language and voice. He used makeup and rubber prosthetics to look like Popeye. When seen all together on the silver screen, he ceases to be the actor Robin Williams and becomes the character Popeye. Of course, under it all, the actor is still there. Wil-

liams can take off the character and put it away, and when he needs to, he can adopt it again.

That is exactly what I do with Angela Gardner. When I need to express the feminine side of my nature, she is there to help me do that.

It is the thing that makes trans-

vestites special. It is the thing that makes us demigods and shamans in some cultures, or strange deviates or wierdos in our culture. The ability to gender shift is what makes us strong. When we use both aspects of our being to garner a variety of life experiences, we can say we are truly Renaissance men.

On becoming political

(continued from page 10)

nothing more than a sound and a fury, "... a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing." (*Macbeth*, The Porter's Soliloquy)

The politics of gender is one of equality, sharing, and freedom to express your true being. We must spread that message. We must encourage our sisters to shed their insulating armor of shame and guilt to take part in life as it should be. We have as much right to fulfill our potential as whole human beings as any African-American man, Asian woman, or disabled Hispanic does.

The new politic will claim that

right out loud and in public. It is the only way we will make any progress. But, we need grass-roots support. There are many more of us than most realize.

Dr. Joyce Brothers, writing in *Good Housekeeping* magazine in April of this year, noted that "40 percent [of average males] said that at some time they wanted to wear women's clothing." Even if only half that percentage is accurate, it means we can have an enormous effect on mainstream politics if we are willing to speak up for ourselves.

Speak up and speak out or lose your *first chance for real freedom*.

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A wonderous change...

The story of a butterfly

by Markley

This story tells how I feel about the change and what we all go through at some time or another. Maybe it can help someone explain or break the news about what we all have to go through sooner or later.

Thanks for forming Renaissance. It has given me a major source of support, information, and friends.

On a cold, blustery day in mid-December, a small caterpillar was born. This small caterpillar knew someday a beautiful change would take place. Everyone around him called him a worm. Because he was different from everyone else, they made fun of him. One day, he decided it was time for him to make the change for the better, to become what he really was deep down inside. The caterpillar crawled away

from the worms he knew to begin his long-awaited adventure.

At first he was nervous. Could he really go through this change? He'd always known he was a butterfly, but all of his friends and family said he was just another worm like them. As he slowly spun his cocoon, he thought, "I can still back out." However, a force greater than he was in charge, and he had no reason or desire to resist. Soon, the cocoon was finished.

After a time shorter than expected, the cocoon burst open. Out flew a beautiful butterfly. Slowly, at first, she tried her new-found wings. This was wonderful! What a relief! It was a feeling of complete inner peace she had never felt before! She was free, flying joyously higher every day.

One day she returned to her old homestead. The worms were overwhelmed by the large, colorful wings and graceful actions of this butterfly. Unaware of who she really was, many of her old friends asked her, "Where did you come from?"

She told a few at first, but then decided to let the others guess. She was no longer an ugly worm, but a thing of beauty for all to see. Many could not or would not accept the new butterfly. They said, "How could this happen? You cannot change like this. It makes us nervous to have you around. Please leave."

"This is what I have been all along," she replied as she spread her strong, silky wings and flew away to live her life as she always knew she should.



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Funny, positive stories about crossdressing sought for book

by Renee O'Malley

I am compiling book about male crossdressing. The book will be simply a collection of amusing moments and events that have significance for the particular transvestite. The book will be sold through direct mail in local and national newspapers. I intend to sell the book in Europe as well.

I am looking for contributions from anyone who has gone through the torture of learning what he is; how he has found and developed the girl within; and ultimately, how he has learned to enjoy having and being her. I am looking for stories about childhood, school, shopping, being discovered, confessions to friends, religion, meeting other crossdressers, and the formation of clubs; in short, any aspect of life that sticks out in your mind as something you would like to share. I do not want stories of a sexual nature, but I do want funny, upbeat stories that emphasize the positive aspects of crossdressing.

The aim of the book is to promote these positive aspects of being a

crossdresser to those people who are searching for understanding and for support in a society that has difficulty understanding this behavior and accepting that we are very normal people.

My qualifications for executing this task come from living for the majority of my 30 years on this planet with the desire to dress as a woman and from the hundreds of hours spent in libraries wading through books by Dr. Harry Benjamin and Dr. John Money, biogra-

phies by Renee Richards and Jan Morris, and books by Virginia Prince as well as countless others.

I will naturally respect privacy, but if you would like to include a name and a city or state, this will add credibility to each story. I will gladly send a free copy of the finished book to everyone whose story is published, and I will offer all those who contribute a copy at cost.

Please send your story to me at P.O. Box 06204, Columbus, OH 43206-0204.

Renaissance in the Poconos?

Sue is looking for a few good women who would like to help start a Renaissance group in the Pocono Mountains area of Pennsylvania.

To start the ball rolling, Sue is inviting interested transgendered persons to a kick-off meeting at her home in near Gouldsboro. If enough people eventually participate, the resulting group may become a Renaissance affiliate or chapter. That will be up to the

members. Sue is also hoping that the group will become large enough to require a larger meeting site.

If you are interested in getting in on the ground floor of the new group or if you have any ideas for a larger meeting site, contact Sue (D. Collier) R.D. #1, Box 276 B, Gouldsboro, PA 18424.

And if you have transgendered friends in the Poconos, urge them to contact Sue.



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THE **ICONOCLAST**™
JoAnn Roberts

MIAMI, FLA. - I received word of a new support group here called **Animas** (it means "spirit" in Latin.)

The new group, which has open membership, meets on the first Saturday of every month at 8:30 p.m. No location was given.

Contact: Animas, P.O. Box 420309, Miami, FL 33242.



RICHMOND, VA. - There is yet another new group announced recently. (Is there something in the national water supply do you think?)

Virginia's Secret is another open group (I'm glad to see this concept spreading) that's underway. They've held a few meetings and are up to about 14 people in attendance. They meet on the third Saturday of the month in a local restaurant that's sympathetic.

Interested parties should contact T. K. at P.O. Box 34361, Richmond, VA 23234.



PHILADELPHIA, PA. - Caveat transvestite...

I also received news of a group called **Hierarchy** that describes itself as a TV/TS organization that is part of the **Alternatives Lifestyles Association**.

Funny thing is, no one here knows anything about the group. I've called and written them several times, identifying myself, and they have not replied. My advice is to stay away. It doesn't sound "legit."



SPRINGFIELD, MASS. - You know, if they cleaned up their act, I wouldn't have much to write about...

The April (Fools) issue of *Twenty Minutes* (**The Twenty Club**) carried a cartoon by **Lila**, who I assume is a transsexual. (You'll soon learn why I made that assumption.)

The cartoon is titled "Anatomy of a Crossdresser" and shows a badly drawn female figure (Lila is no artist) with a number of "call outs" in engineering parlance.

Here are a few choice examples:

#1 - Short, black hair showing through blonde wig.

#4 - Beard shadow/stubble.

#5 - Linebacker shoulders.

#6 - Arms shaved (but only halfway).

#16 - Makeup smudged on collar.

#18 - Enough nose hair to braid.

It goes on and on like that. Cheap shots. Definitely unfunny stuff with lots of repressed anger.



INDIANAPOLIS, IND. - Speaking of fools and April...

It seems that *IXE News* (**Indiana Crossdresser's Society**) contributor and former editor, **Elaine Edwards**, has taken great delight in making fools of a lot of us lately.

Edwards admits to faking two "news" stories, one about face transplants and one about mandatory sex changes for sex offenders, in order to prove the point that our community never questions the "news" reported in our news-letters. Edwards was assisted by Editor **Shannon Michaels** in the charade.

Kym Richards (*Cross-Talk*) and I wrote letters to Edwards concerning the breach of trust we felt she'd committed. Edwards' reply basically stated that she was not responsible for what other people think and if we believed her stories, then that's our problem, not her's.

Well, we tend to trust our editors and their newsletters to provide us with reliable information. If they give us phony stories without warning us first, they violate that trust. Edwards may not feel responsible for what other people believe, but she is responsible for her own actions, whether she accepts the culpability or not.



SEATTLE, WASH. - Sacred cows make the best hamburger...

My remarks about **Emerald City** founder **Janice Van Cleve** in the March column were not taken lightly by a member of her fan club.

Debra Darling, member of the

EC board, wrote me demanding a follow up article and an apology to Van Cleve. I did the follow up last month, but perhaps Darling's remarks will shed a little more light on the subject.

"In the interests of fairness to Janice, and in response to your remarks, she did not try to 'make an end run around the Emerald City board.' All of her actions were reported to the board, and she acted entirely within the charter of *Esprit '91*. Further, although the membership meeting in January was private, you should know that the two resignations (as reported last month) were accepted without comment or conditions. Neither the remaining officers nor the members offered any criticism of Janice or her actions.

"As also reported, four members stepped forward to join with the three remaining officers to form a new, temporary board to lead Emerald City until our April elections. These ladies are working very hard to make certain that the reputation of Emerald City is not tarnished by this incident."

That should take care of the follow-up. As for an apology, unless I have made a factual error in reporting a story, no apologies will be forthcoming for any opinions expressed in this column.



HACKENSACK, N.J. - Is this "attack the TVs" month?...

I reported that **Jana Thompson** was back in the leadership position for **The Gathering**. The group was originally founded by Thompson for transsexuals and was opened to transvestites last year by **David Tolbin**, who led the group during Thompson's two-year hiatus.

Well, it looks as though the "open" policy was short-lived. The latest edition of *Passages*, the group's newsletter, announced a return to the original philosophy of strictly support for transsexuals.

THE **ICONOCLAST** TM
JoAnn Roberts

Thompson took a sidebar for commentary about the current usage of "gender community" and "transgenderist." She wants to see these terms used solely in connection with transsexuals, an exercise in how to waste useful energy.

But, Thompson engaged in a little TV-bashing as well, "As a transsexual, I am saddened by the efforts of fun- and status-seeking TVs to try to establish greater respectability through pseudo-identification with those of us who are extremely serious in our pursuits."

Does this mean I won't be invited for dinner? Come on, Jana! You've been out of circulation for two years. It would be best if you found out what this "gender community" has been up to in that time before you "open mouth, insert foot" again.

▼▲▼

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. - I'm starting a new club: the Clyde Crashcup Crossdresser's Consortium...

Many of you have heard my story about the car accident in Manhattan (See "Balls," RN 3/91). I've found another sister with a similar harrowing experience.

The April issue of *CLCC News*, (**City of Lakes Crossdressers Club**) carried a story by **Linda**, wherein she recounts her automobile was struck by a drunk driver while she was returning to her motel from a CLCC meeting. Her car was propelled across a median strip and two lanes of oncoming traffic before coming to a halt on the shoulder of the highway. It was a miracle she wasn't injured.

Needless to say, the police arrived and, to their credit, were more concerned with Linda's state of health than the fact that she was crossdressed. The police even drove her to her motel after her car was towed off the highway.

On return to her room, our heroine experienced the same feelings as I did after my accident:

just damn glad to be alive.

Linda fears the accident report will mention her crossdressing. I doubt it very much. Mine didn't, but more importantly, if the local cops treated her well at the accident site, I'd bet dollars to doughnuts there's not word one about crossdressing in the police report. It's irrelevant.

Welcome to the club, kid.

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SAN ANTONIO, TEX. - The following is a political announcement...

I received a letter from **Cynthia Phillips**, co-chair for the **Texas "T" Party**. She didn't like my remarks in the April column and I'll bet she disliked my May remarks even more.

Although she concluded her letter, "You are always welcome to the T Party," I will not be accepting their hospitality next year.

I find it extremely difficult to justify attending an event with rules that violate my First Amendment right to freedom of expression. I choose the manner in which I express my desire to crossdress. I will not have it forced upon me by an outside agency.

The **Boulton & Park Society**, who sponsors the event, could lose their hard-won federal tax exemption because of the "T" Party rules.

I also noted a lack of support for this year's event from the original sponsors. I was told by one of them that she was informed by the "T" Party Committee her help was, "neither needed nor wanted."

The result was a disorganized event with several goof-ups (serving a meat entree on a Friday in Lent and a nonexistent cocktail party come to mind). I was not the only one to notice this; virtually everyone I've spoken to about this year's "T" mentioned it.

If the board of B&P is looking for some advice on how to "save" the "T" from extinction; it's simple. Bring back the folks who ran it the first two times and put the "fun" back in.

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ATLANTA, GA. - And now for something completely different...

Good news! The ladies of **Sigma Epsilon Tri-Ess** will host the "South's First Major Gender Event" **Southern Comfort** here on October 3-6, 1991.

My "spies" tell me the group is very nice and the hotel selected for the event could not be more accommodating to our sisters. Well, they don't call it "Hot-lanta" for nothing.

For information write: Linda Peacock, Sigma Epsilon, PO Box 7241, Tallahassee, FL 32314-7241.

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HOUSTON, TEX. - Dinner and a concert for a good cause...

The Southwest Gender Communities are sponsoring a benefit for the 1992 **International Foundation for Gender Education** convention. Readers will recall the '92 convention has been moved from San Antonio to Houston.

The dinner/concert will be held on August 3, 1991 at the Hilton - Southwest hotel. **Da'nelle Martin** is the featured performer. Martin, who hails from the Houston area, has been making the rounds of several gender events. She's also been getting rave reviews for her performance at the '91 IFGE convention.

Tickets are \$39 and include a taco-nacho buffet on Friday evening August 2nd. A "Patron's Ticket" is available at \$60. The additional money goes to benefit IFGE.

Those interested in attending should contact **Jackie Thorne** at PO Box 441 754, Houston, TX 77244.

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NOTA BENE - The opinions expressed here are mine alone. If you'd like to comment, positively or negatively, write me at Post Office Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA 19406. I'd like to hear your opinion of things.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was Madonna

by Pamela Westin

Make a person a celebrity and they instantly become an expert on everything. Madonna is a good example of this. People all over are hanging on her every word, whether she talks about hair coloring or the First Amendment.

Here are some recent pronouncements that may have meaning for crossdressers...

An interviewer for *The Advocate*, a lesbian and gay magazine, asked her about what "teenage kids from Middle America think when they see men (in the Blond Ambition Tour) wearing bras? Are they digesting these sophisticated images?"

Said Madonna: "They digest it on a lot of different levels. Some people will see it and be disgusted by it, but maybe they'll be unconsciously aroused by it, maybe they'll be unconsciously challenged by the idea

of men in women's lingerie. Then there are people who see it and are amused by it, see the irony of it, see things that maybe frightened them before, and know that it's not something to be so frightened of.

"If people keep seeing it (men in lingerie), and seeing it, and seeing it, eventually it's not going to be such a strange thing."

The same interviewer asked about Madonna's manipulation of female images, specifically the image of Marilyn Monroe.

"... I don't see myself as Marilyn Monroe" she said. "I'm almost playing with her image and turning it around. It's the idea of using imagery people understand but having a different message. What I'm saying is not what she was saying.

The interviewer asks if she is playing with the role as if it were a powerful mask.

"Yes, there is power," Madonna replied. "I take it one step further and say, 'Now what if it was done this way? And then what if I put the mask down?'"

In another interview, Madonna revealed her desire to cross (or at least blur) the gender line.

"I always wanted to be a boy because they have more freedom," she said. "Now it would be great to be both sexes. Effeminate men intrigue me. I see them as my alter egos. I think like a guy, but I'm feminine."

In a third interview, she advocated "gender-free sex," which she said, "permits a man to dress feminine, a woman to dress masculine."

"Whether you're a man or a woman, it gives you freedom to dominate or be submissive. It's important to express different sides of yourself," she said.



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