



News & views

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TRANSGENDER
COMMUNITY

Pennsylvania Civil Rights Initiative Moves Forward

by Kathleen Frederico, RTA, Inc.,
National Executive Secretary

On Monday May 4, 1998 (Representing the Renaissance Transgender Association, Inc.) I met with about half of the organization sponsors of the PA Civil Rights Initiative for a pre-meeting in Harrisburg, our state capital, to help plan for a breakfast meeting the next day with Senator Allan Kukovich the prime sponsor of the proposed civil rights legislation, and other state legislators. (Only one other legislator came to the breakfast meeting.)

A major strategy session with the initiative co-sponsors started at 7:30 AM with a hot breakfast and a 5 to 10 minute formal presentation outlining where we are at present in the effort to get this legislation introduced and passed. Each co-signer spoke briefly (3 to 4

minutes) to the senators on the importance of the twin civil rights bills. Kristine Holt (Juris Doctor Candidate-1998), Katie Evans (RTA, Inc., LSV Director), and I addressed the topic of transgender issues, with full support from the other cosigners representing the gay and lesbian community.

With Senator Allan Kukovich as our prime sponsor, we are planning to introduce the twin bill in June 1998. The Senator voiced his opinion on the matter of putting pressure on his colleagues saying that, with an election coming up, it might be more prudent to wait until 1999 or 2000 before applying the pressure. The feeling among the co-signers was, "Isn't there always an election?"

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Oregon Health Plan and Transsexual Treatment

[AOL TCF News Release]

Oregon health planners will organize a task force to determine if sex-change operations are effective in treating gender-identity disorders. A subcommittee of the Oregon Health Services Commission recently decided that it needed more scientific data before deciding whether to include the surgeries on the list of treatments covered by the Oregon Health Plan, the state's health insurance program for the poor.

Five Portland transsexuals who testified during the session said afterward that they were cautiously optimistic about the forming of a task force. During often emotional testimony, the five-member subcommittee heard the transsexuals argue in favor of taxpayer-financed sex-change operations which cost about \$10,000.

But members of the subcommittee said they didn't have enough information to make a recommendation to the full commission. The subcommittee members were unsure about the effect of surgery on the underlying psychological roots of gender-identity disorders. The task force has not yet been named. But subcommittee members recommended that it be composed of transsexual advocates as well as experts in gender-identity disorders.

Dr. Eric Walsh, one of the subcommittee members, said he found "a lot of uncertainty" among medical experts about the effectiveness of transsexual surgeries. He said he reviewed 145 medical journal articles about transsexualism and found widespread disagreement about

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Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

Wilmington, Delaware: meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808. Phone: 302-376-1990 or email to: <sadeCD@aol.com>.

Pennsylvania

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

Lehigh Valley/Pocono area: Renaissance Lehigh Valley, PO Box 3624, Allentown, PA 18106. Meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Allentown area. Call for directions and more information, 610-821-2955, or email to <RenLV@ren.org>.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, PO Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (780-1578) or send email to: <lsv@ezonline.com>.

Affiliates

California

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

Connecticut

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

Georgia

Atlanta: The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 770-939-0244, or email to <aegis@mindspring.com>. Information resources & referrals.

Atlanta: Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 770-939-2128.

Illinois

Chicago: The Chicago Gender Society, PO Box 578005, Chicago, IL 60657, 708-863-7714.

Louisiana

New Orleans: The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 56836, New Orleans, LA 70156-6836, 504-833-3046. Email: <GGANOLA@aol.com>.

New Jersey

N. Central Jersey: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Call 908-219-9094. Email: <vikkimmotg@aol.com>.

Western Central New Jersey: New Jersey Support, call Susan at 973-334-0416 or Dorothy at 215-744-4746 (weekends only). Write PO Box 0034, Montville, NJ 07045 for information. Email: Susanw@aol.com. Meetings are the first Saturday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing.

New York

Manhattan: Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), c/o Chelsea Goodwin, 214 16th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11235. Phone, 718-832-1080. Email, <uravampire@mindspring.com>.

Long Island: Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE), PO Box 1311, Water Mill, NY 11976-1311. Phone 516-283-1333. email to <brenvee2@aol.com>.

Oklahoma

Central Oklahoma: Sooner Diversity, part of the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance (COTA). Contact, Vanessa Kaye, Oklahoma City: COTA, 6957 N.W. Expressway, #121 Oklahoma City, OK 73132, email to <mkull@ibm.net>.

TRANSGENDER News & COMMUNITY Views

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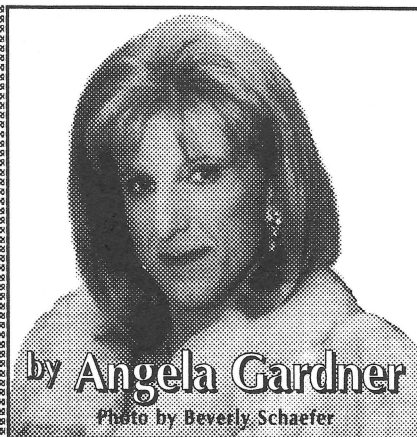
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News Beal & Reminder



Welcome to your first issue of *Transgender Community News & Views*. For many years we have attempted to make *Renaissance News & Views* a voice for the whole community. We've presented stories about the activities of many community groups, and diverse opinions about the activities of many groups. *News & Views* has, for some time, been more than the newsletter of Renaissance. So, as we mentioned in the last issue, to reflect our desire to serve the entire community, it seemed natural that we should change the name to include the entire community.

Transgender Community News & Views will not desert Renaissance chapters and affiliates. In fact, we're going to work, with chapter and affiliate cooperation, to improve coverage of chapter and affiliate events and news. If there's something the world should know, send it to us. The copy deadline for any particular month is the tenth of the previous month. In other words, if a chapter wants to promote a particular program, or the fact that they will have a booth at some event (or they're sponsoring an event) they need to get the information to us by the tenth day of the month *before* they want us to print the info.

Other groups around the country, feel free to use *News & Views* to spread the word about your upcoming events. The same copy deadline applies.

For sometime we've been called the best newsletter in the community. Now we've made a conscious effort to

cover the whole community. With the assistance of everyone in the TG community I know we can become the best transgender newsletter on the planet. And, if things go right, the best TG monthly magazine on the planet.

TransParents

If you're a transparent, and your kids are aware of your TG side, then this is their chance to help other children of the transgendered. Stefan Lynch, the former Director of Children of Lesbians & Gays Everywhere is writing a guidebook for daughters and sons of lesbian, gay, and transgendered parents. Any offspring of TG folk under the age of 35 can contact Stefan to be interviewed for inclusion in the book.

Confidentiality, as always, will be preserved and all of those who are interviewed will get to review their interview before publication.

As TG support groups we tend to put the emphasis on helping the transgendered person become comfortable with them self, but often their children are left without any help in dealing with the issues presented by having a crossdressing dad, or a transsexual mother... or father. This guidebook could be a great help to some kids who feel that no one knows what it's like.

Stefan Lynch can be reached by phone at 415-863-4347 or email to: <stefan@igc.org>.

Now— More Fantasy

We're living in a transgender won-

derland. Yes girls, all of the fantasies of our formative years are now reality. When you can tune in to a youth oriented show on a major television network and see, not just a drag queen, but a famous drag queen, do a makeover on the star's hair — you know we've taken over the world.

OK, maybe not, but it was still way cool to see **RuPaul** on *Sabrina The Teenage Witch* on May eleventh. (OK, now you know what I do on Friday nights.) Miss Charles appeared as an emergency hairdresser called in to fix Sabrina's coiffure after she made herself magically semi-bald trying to get her aunts back together. Too much plot detail? Perhaps.

The real twist of the show was Ru's initial appearance in a drab role. I had a feeling I'd seen that tall, bald, black man somewhere before, but I really had no clue. Her Ru-ness portrayed a judge in the Witch's Court. The height should have given her away, but they put thick, black rimmed glasses on her. You know how effective that was for Clark Kent. Is it any wonder I was taken in? She talked really butch, too. Who knew?

Sabrina (portrayed by Melissa Joan Hart) has toyed with TG themes before. In one episode Sabrina transforms herself into a boy so she can hang with the guys and find out what her special fella thinks about her. Ms. Hart's not a bad looking young woman, or boy. Just goes to show what you can do without a little make-up and hair.

Keep your eyeballs peeled for more of Ru as a fella, coming Wednesday, June 24th in *Unexpected Life* starring **Stockard Channing** and featuring Mister RuPaul Charles on USA Networks.

A billboard in NYC for the chi chi Saks Department store has RuPaul beside herself. The board features a typical glamorous RuPaul on the left and a handsome, well dressed fella, on the right. But, those brows are a bit thin, aren't they? Could it be? Yes, thin brows and all it's Ru, too. Maybe

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that's why the witch judge had to wear those thick framed glasses. They make a lovely couple... but then again, wouldn't we all?

It's Not All Positive Kids

Ru's appearance on *Sabrina* was a good example of how a talented performer who is known for drag can be featured in a comedic role without demeaning themselves, or the art of female impersonation. Unfortunately not all producers and directors are as nice to us.

Most of the time drag is used for shock value, and humor derived from the juxtaposition of a character — normally known for masculine values — with feminine attire, or behavior. The Bud Light beauties are perfect examples. Or **Robert Goulet** in drag for Mercedes. Or, perhaps he really is dreaming the impossible dream?

Even *Sabrina* has let me down from time to time. A recent show had a plot line that involved having Sabrina's Quizmaster (Alimi Ballard) magically forced to wear a skirt he finds "embarrassing." The same show had her boy friend exhibiting all the symptoms of pregnancy... including the craving for pickles.

As transgendered people we have to make a decision when we see drag or TG plot elements used in a way we find offensive. We can either let it go, or we can write the producer a letter. If the bad portrayal is major, such as the tragic TV prostitute on *Ally McBeal*, then the letter to the producer is a great idea. It let's them know they're presenting a stereotype that doesn't represent us all. If it's something more minor then I recommend we think twice about heating up the word processor. The small stuff, like the Quizmaster getting embarrassed by having to appear in a skirt, is a function of the way our society looks at the whole subject of crossdressing, and that's a really tough problem that will take a lot more than a letter or

two (or a scathing column by a cross-dressing writer) to solve.

In the mind of most folks cross-dressing is looked at as an outgrowth of homosexuality, and homosexuality is, of course, the work of the devil. How's the guy in a dress supposed to get any respect from people who believe crap like that?

Of course, those folks are the ones that most of the world would classify as extremists. You can find extremists in every segment of society. (Even in the TG community, kittens.) Just a few weeks ago Jewish extremists blasted the lovely, talented, and transsexual **Dana International** (featured before in this column) since she won the Eurovision Song Contest. Devout rabbis have used words like "decadent" and "degenerate" to describe Ms. International. If the words "compassion," and "understanding" are part of those rabbi's vocabularies, they aren't using those words on the subject of transsexuality.

So upset are the Israelis that Ms. International had the chutzpah, and talent to win the contest, officials in Jerusalem have sworn that no way will the next Eurovision Song Contest be held in their fair city. (Others have said that it definitely will. Stay tuned for the blow by blow description of the ensuing fight.) They made some comments about decadent gentiles, too, but that would just be religious intolerance and not genderism... no need to go into that here.

Congratulations Dana! From what I hear she was the hottest woman in the contest in a Gaultier design featuring feathers. Let's hope the religious leaders of her country wake up, smell the gender revolution, and decide to support beauty and talent.. whatever its origin.

If You Want The Correct Info... Ask A Woman

Aside from telling **Donald Trump** he could "kiss my ass" on national television, the most interesting part of *Late Night With David Letterman* on April 20th was the spot in the mono-

logue where Dave talked about O.J. Simpson flying to London to appear on the *Ruby Wax Show*. On that show O.J. demonstrated his slashing and stabbing prowess with a banana, and the world was shocked. Dave was telling the audience about this stunt and said something about the host, Ruby Wax, when Paul said, "Oh, the transvestite." (Ruby's not a TV... as far as I know. But then who can tell these days.) That lead to a debate between Dave and Paul that ended with the horn section (on Paul's side, of course) swearing she was a TV. This lead to speculation about how the horn section would know. Believe me kids, if any members of a band would know, it would be the horns.

It took first guest **Gwenyth Paltrow** to set Dave straight. She firmly assured him that Ruby Wax was not a TV. She went on to let him know that the host Dave was thinking of is **Dame Edna**. Here we have another example of a discussion on national television that I don't think we'd have ever seen just a few years ago, and even if Dave didn't know what he was talking about, we heard the word "transvestite" several times during the discussion. That can't be bad because it makes the viewing public more and more used to hearing that word. It makes us more of an everyday thing. If we keep working at it maybe someday soon we'll hear people using the term "transgender" when referring to the gender variant in our world. Hey, there's another term it wouldn't hurt to hear from the media more often.

Things We Could Do Without Hearing

Fortunately the news media haven't made too much of the report that Ted Kazinski once sought counseling about his TG desires. They say there's no such thing as bad press, but press like that the TG community can do without. Yes kids, the Unabomber, that wacky, bomb making, anti-technology (if he's that anti-technology how come he didn't just kill his vic-

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tims with large rocks?) American murderer, may have started down his twisted road because he may be a frustrated TS. It seems Teddy once sought counseling at his college but left the office because he was embarrassed to talk about it. Seems he had a lot in common with Sabrina's Quizmaster.

Billie from the Lehigh Valley chapter of Renaissance sent in a clipping from the April 29th issue of *The Irish Voice*, a paper for those who like to keep up with the Irish. On their People Page there was another of those stories we could do without. It seems that a hidden camera recorded what appeared to be two blonde women stealing computers from a Donegal meat packing plant. Then the police took a closer look at the ladies' jaws and started to figure it out. (It's always the jaw, darn it.) The story said it was "A Donegal transsexual and male friend desperate for the same operation..." Sounds to me as if it was two transsexuals, one post-op, one pre-op. In any event, as hard as it may be to come up with SRS money, don't turn to a life of crime. It just gets you arrested and puts more negative stories about transgendered people in the news.

Ford trucks have got the guy who played the DJ on *Northern Exposure* doing his folksy/hip delivery in television spots for them. One of the spots

features him telling us a folksy story about a couple of guys named Ray and Charlie who love to make bets. In this scenario Ray bets that he can pull a full size ship with his Ford pickup. Charlie bets he can't. At the end of the spot Charlie is seen walking into their favorite diner in a hideous floral print dress and a bad wig. Well, at least he acted like he wasn't embarrassed. In that outfit he had every right to be. What's next? The beer lizards in body stockings?

Did ya catch transsexual actress (former TS showgirl, but now she's acting too) **Jahna Steel** on *Entertainment Tonight*? Girlfriend was fabulous! Very lovely, and talented. Condemned by rabbis everywhere. Just kidding. The rabbis don't care... she's a shicksa. Not a nice Jewish girl like Dana. Anyhow, seeing her is both a good thing and a bad thing. Good because she told about how she had to change her life to be true to her inner need, and she's very beautiful, and natural. It's bad because not everyone who has SRS is going to come out as good. She had her SRS at 19. That's really not a lot of time to develop manly characteristics that need to be corrected and camouflaged. Don't send me hate mail. I know that the inner voice needs to speak out, and those who look like linebackers have the same need as the petite, small boned beauty. I just caution against using Ms. Steel as the fantasy role model for how you might look after SRS.

The Last Little Bit

It has been announced in these pages that Gloria Vogel had taken the position of Outreach Coordinator. Well, when you're on the cutting edge things change at light speed. Hardly was the ink dry on the newsletter than we did a quick rethink and decided that Ms. Vogel would be better able to serve the needs of Renaissance in a different capacity. Please unwelcome Gloria as Outreach Coordinator, and say hello to her in her new capacity as Renaissance Business Manager. The Business Manager will be responsible for dealing with advertisers, distributors, the Renaissance bookstore and the business side of special projects such as the Transgender Resource Guide. Gloria will work closely with me to maintain the business segment of our operations like a smoothly running engine. Or she'll at least be there to hand me the STP. Thanks for taking the job, Gloria.

That's it for this month my lovelies. It's time for my evening beauty regimen. I'm sure there's something I've forgotten to tell you all about, but with all the creams and potions I have to rub on my skin to maintain the (fading) blush of youth, I won't be asleep till about 3:30 a.m. Ta ta sweet readers.



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Civil Rights...

After the meeting with the senators, we regrouped in the cafeteria for a briefing on our next stop a few blocks south of the capitol, at the Executive Offices of the Pennsylvania Human Relation Commission, where we were to talk with the Executive Board of Directors of PHRC.

We started off with a brief presentation, then proceeded into the Transgender issues. Katie Evans, Kristine Holt and Kathleen Frederico began the presentation, which concluded with Elise DeLong, Esq. (legal activist from Pittsburgh, PA). All of us spoke for the transgender community. The main problem here is that the PHRC knows very little about the gay and lesbian community and their issues, and even less about transgender concerns. The gay and lesbian representatives presented their concerns and finished by holding trans-

gender issues as highly important to this civil rights initiative.

I will be supplying the PHRC with a few Renaissance Background Papers, and anything else I can find, to help educate them. If anyone has personal stories, or other papers on any transgender issues that you feel may help, please forward them to me c/o the Renaissance National Office so I may forward them to the right people.

As far as the State Senate and the House, I can't stress enough how vital it is that we all petition the legislators in our Districts to get them to support this legislation for our full rights as citizens of Pennsylvania.

Anyone requesting more information on how to support this petition, including lists of your local representatives and how to contact them, contact: Rita Addressa, the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force at (215) 772-2001. Fax them at 215-772-2004, or send email to: <plgtf@op.net>.

The proposed legislation is based on the following Core Principles:

We are committed to organizing, educating, and negotiating with integrity for a Pennsylvania wide civil rights bill, inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. We will be grounded in and guided by the principles that we deserve our FULL RIGHTS.

We will support the achievement of civil rights protections, minimally in employment, housing, public accommodations, and education. We will not suffer any restrictions of our rights (e.g. parental rights, domestic partnership rights, and the recognition of marriage) nor homophobic insults (e.g. the presumption of criminality or immorality) in a Pennsylvania civil rights law. We will assure the strengthening of civil rights law on behalf of all women and all minorities.



TS Treatment...

the usefulness of the surgeries.

Dr. Andrew Glass, chairman of the subcommittee, told the group that "it isn't clear that everyone is agreed on the outcomes (of the surgeries). What we're trying to do is develop a scientific way to address these issues." Glass predicted that it would take six to nine months for the task force to complete its study.

The discussion about sex-change surgery is part of the commission's mandate to review periodically the prioritized list of medical conditions and treatments that form the heart of the Oregon Health Plan, which covers 270,000 low-income Oregonians.

The list of 745 ailments and treatments, ranked in order of importance, is used as a way for legislators to decide how much money to spend on health care for the poor. The more money there is to spend on health care, the more items on the list can be covered. The covered items now include the first 574 treatments, with sex-

change operations listed at number 688.

The discussion of sex-change surgery came as a result of demands by Olivia Jaquay to have her operations covered by the health plan. Jaquay, who was born a man, has had surgery to turn her into a woman. She has paid for the surgery herself but needs one more minor operation to complete the process.

Jaquay said after the meeting that she's cautiously optimistic. "I don't trust them," she said of the subcommittee. "But I hope something good comes out of it."

Vincent Irelan, who was born a woman but whose sexual identity is that of a man, said he would take advantage of state-financed sex-change operations "in an instant" if they were available. Irelan who was born blind, was accompanied by Oslo, his black Labrador guide dog. Irelan, who wears men's clothing, said he wants surgical removal of his breasts, which he binds close to his chest, aggravating a medical condition.

During testimony, the witnesses said sex-change procedures are far

more than elective cosmetic surgery.

Margaret O'Hartigan, acting director of the Filisa Vistima Foundation, a transsexual advocacy organization, said that for her, surgery was a life-saving medical procedure. O'Hartigan, who was born a man, underwent surgery more than 20 years ago in Wisconsin, which provides the treatment for low-income people at taxpayer expense.

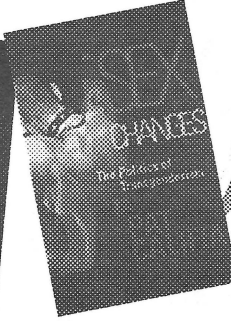
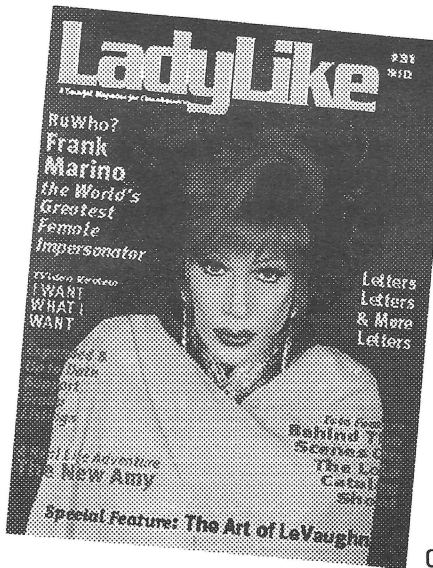
"Before surgery, I was surviving through prostitution and welfare and made repeated suicide attempts," she said. "Since obtaining surgery, I've supported myself as a typist and secretary and have never attempted suicide again."

Rachel Koteles, who was born a man and who has undergone surgery, said her gender-identity disorder led to a string of suicide attempts, beginning at age 5. Koteles, a supervisor at a software company, said health commission staff members have exaggerated the possibility that Oregon would be flooded by transsexuals seeking surgery if the procedures were approved.



Only The Best

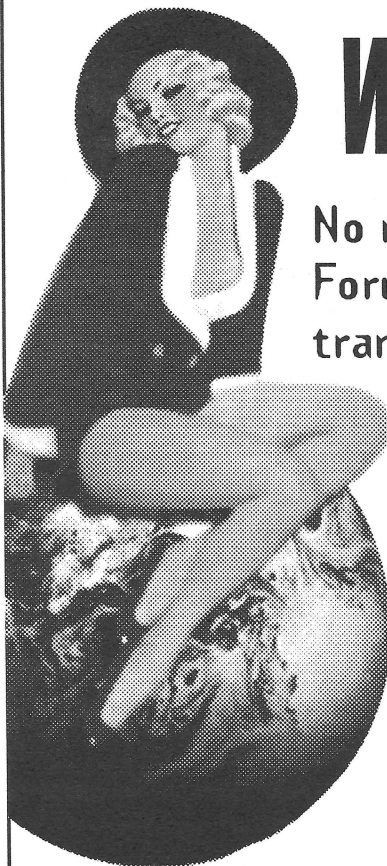
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One of the hallmarks of getting older is that the months fly by so quickly. It seems that it was only a short time ago that we were choosing our "Renni" Awards for the films of 1997. And now we are at the advent of the summer blockbuster season. As crossdressers and members of the transgendered community in general, it is nice to see that some of those summer spectaculars have crossdressing themes.

One eagerly awaited summer film is *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, which tells the behind-the-scenes story of the competing casts of the Vegas female impersonator revues *BoyLesque* and *LaCage*. When they say that the feathers fly in this saga, they ain't just whistlin' Dixie. The climactic last scene pits the competing Barbra Streisand impersonators on-stage as each tries to kvetch the other to submission.

Godzilla is not a remake of the 1950's era giant lizard from Tokyo flick we all knew and loved. In this updated version, a very large Japanese female impersonator visits America causing a great deal of confusion, if not the destruction for which her namesake became famous. The confusion results from her inability to lip-synch properly. In the great tradition of all Japanese film imports, her mouth still moves even after each line of her song finishes.

Tom Hanks and Matt Damon are set to star in the Steven Spielberg epic *Saving Private Ryan*, which was originally supposed to be a World War II story. But last minute focus group previews convinced Spielberg to jump in on the transgender theme boomlet

and the film is now titled *Saving Ryan's Privates* in which Matt Damon opts for sex reassignment surgery while Hanks tries vainly to reach the O.R. before Matt goes under the knife.

Pass the popcorn and goobers, girls. It's gonna be a great summer at the movies.

HOW SCARY WAS IT?

The Tennessee Vals' eponymous newsletter reprinted an article that appeared in the publication of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) in March.

The GLAAD people were protesting a Fox network show called, *The World's Scariest Police Chases* in which the criminals on the lam were broken down into segments by "Dangerous", "Reckless", and "Weird".

The segment on "Weird" people leading cops on high speed chases included a few transgendered folk behind the wheels of the pursued vehicles. The tone of the narration and the identification of trans-people as "weird" ran afoul of the GLAAD watchdogs.

The article gave a brief synopsis of the chases - and not having seen the show myself - we'll have to rely on their telling of the story. One story was of a local football coach who led cops on a chase rather than be pulled over in the dress and wig he was sporting at the time. Another crossdresser, while in the middle of the pursuit, calls 911 to explain that he will not pull over until he can somehow get the makeup and women's clothing off, even adding that he hopes it "doesn't make the news." In

another clip, a crossdressed person is removed from his/her vehicle at gunpoint after the chase concluded.

The people from GLAAD took offense that the show characterized and included the transgendered violators in the "Weird" segment, and that the narration and filming of the pieces made the cases seem even more sensational because of the crossdressing element.

The GLAAD article made the point that transgendered people are familiar with tales of police insensitivity towards gay or transgendered people, hence their reluctance to obey the initial police order to pull over.

Although I didn't see this Fox installment, I have seen other "real video" of actual police chases and they are the most harrowing bits of video to watch. They usually end up in wreckage, injury or fatality. Maybe I'm old fashioned, or maybe I just have common sense, but one does not engage police on a high speed or even a low speed chase for the purpose of avoiding embarrassment. And if you are really worried about angry police officers, I can't think of a better way to spur their anger than leading them around in an extended chase from which you have almost no chance to escape.

No, transgendered people are not "weird." But anyone who takes their lives, the lives of the officers, or the lives of other innocent drivers into one's hands for the most selfish of reasons is by definition "weird", whether crossdressed or not. If these people had simply obeyed the officers in the first place, they would not have appeared on the *World's Most Scariest (or Weirdest) Police Chases*. They brought this on themselves.

Let's not get too worked up trying to defend the indefensible.

HOW TO PICK UP CHICKS

The Emerald City group in Seattle Washington puts out a nice newsletter called the "Emerald City News." The April issue carried an article titled "Clubbing in Seattle" by member Mardi Clark. This installment was subtitled, "Guys - Part Two."

I missed Mardi's Part One about Guys but found her second installment a comprehensive treatise indeed. Mardi herself is a sort of sultry looking dame and one can only imagine that she spends a considerable amount of time trolling and being herself trolled for that illusive good time.

She's got men categorized into types, such as "The Oh-So-Married Man", "The You're So Lucky Man" and the "How Much? Man." Along the way, we also meet "The Porn Star Guy" and "The Ripped (i.e. Drunk) Man." Mardi has a paragraph or two on each of these types and tries to delineate them as best as possible. However, I found most of the types run together with the single common characteristic being that they are all creeps.

If you've been out much in bars or nightclubs, particularly in straight establishments, you have probably run into these guys and their patter does break down into a few stereotypes. The married man who wants a fling with a crossdresser; the single guy who forsakes his search for a real woman in favor of a crossdresser because it stirs some latent fantasy he's been harboring; and either of these types who tries to impress you with his "open-mindedness", wealth, or some other carrot that he thinks will turn the tide in his favor.

Mardi - as well as some others of us - have seen these types many times. In Mardi's case, she's not averse to playing along with them. For example, she says that "The Porn Star Guy" (the sexual braggart) "can be an absolute riot in the sack." She also makes the point that any of these guys on the make "can be your best friend when you are out and I have often seen them escort a gal to her car...and defend you to the absolute end" if you run into trouble from some other creep.

I don't know what to say about Mardi's rundown on finding guys while crossdressed. I've never seen an article so up front about the subject before in one of our support group

newsletters. Is it a breakthrough for the community - or a breakdown? I never thought I had a prudish streak about this type of thing until I read the sentence about a class of guys who "can be an absolute riot in the sack." Somehow it didn't seem to be the appropriate topic for one of our more respected newsletters. Then again, the truth of the matter is that there are a lot of "girls" like Mardi in our community who are actively looking for male companionship. And why shouldn't they have a forum amidst all the dreary fashion tips and socio-political discussion that fills our pages? A riot in the sack indeed! Hell, let's hear more, Mardi. You go girl!

THE NATIONAL PASTIME

Renaissance member Alexa, who travels up from Baltimore to attend our meetings, gave me an item that appeared in the "Baltimore Sun"'s sports section on Sunday May 13. The item was tagged "Operation Drag" and they weren't referring to a well-executed drag bunt down the third base line.

The item began, "The 10 youngest members of the Arizona Diamondbacks roster were forced to wear dresses on the club's charter flight back from Florida last week as part of an initiation ritual instituted by veterans Matt Williams, Jay Bell and Andy Benes."

Matt Williams explained the ritual thusly: "It's not hazing. It's tradition. Win or lose, it's part of a tradition of a lot of players who have been here before us. It's an experience we all will never forget."

Dressing in drag is a common initiation measure practiced in all-male organizations. The Navy has a drag rite for seamen crossing the equator aboard ship for the first time; professional football teams have also used crossdressing as a way to initiate rookies onto the team; and college fraternities have long used drag as a hazing ritual for new brothers.

One supposes it has to do with the embarrassment and emasculation caused by forcing young men to dress in women's clothes. Still, there are so

many ways under the sun to embarrass new members of an organization that the popularity of dressing in drag begs the question of what other dynamic may be at work in these otherwise macho organizations.

But in the instant case of the Arizona Diamondbacks, the excuse of "tradition" doesn't seem to hold water. You see, the Diamondbacks are a new expansion team making their first entrance to the majors this year. In this sense, even the veterans are new members of the team.

Matt Williams went on to say that he had been through the same initiation rite while a young member of the San Francisco Giants. But the sportswriter covering this bit of hijinks may have hit it closer to the truth. He wrote, "In the Bay Area, it's possible he just fell in with the wrong crowd."

SINATRA

A lot of the people who know me know that I am a big Frank Sinatra fan. His recent passing did not come as a shock, given his failing health these last few years. In fact, I thought for some time that I'd be writing my own farewell to Frank before too long. Now that it's here, I don't have anything terribly profound to say about the man or his music.

Yet, my experience with Sinatra's music will always be tied in with my own crossdressing. I had become a fan of his a long time before I began actively crossdressing and, like many of his fans, became familiar with the songs to the point of singing along in the privacy of my own home or automobile.

As I progressed as a crossdresser, I discovered the piano bars where I was emboldened enough by the masquerade of "Dina" to take a microphone and sing in public. And my song of choice was always a Sinatra tune. At one time, the thought of singing solo in public was unthinkable but the powerful combination of women's clothing and the ease of riding Frank's coattails on any of his great standards made it all seem possible. The great

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Gender Reflections

by *Barbara F. Anderson*
M.S.W., PhD.

The Impact of Gender Transition

Last month's article dealt with the dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity. While theoretically, I stand by my belief that these aspects of human beings are independent of one another, this article will examine examples in which the process of transition does impinge upon and affect the expression of sexual orientation. Perhaps this illustrates the old saw that "it's the exception that proves the rule."

Ronald is a biological male who sought supportive counseling as he began his transition toward a female identity. He had been married several times and was currently divorced. I raised with him the subject of whom he would engage in a relationship with after his/her transition was complete. As Rose, she seemed surprised at the question and said she would of course, be attracted to women and therefore, live as a lesbian.

I suggested that this expectation might present difficulties with some lesbians but she was very unwilling to entertain such a possibility. Her transition proceeded uneventfully through SRS and she continued to meet with

me for a brief period of post-op. counseling. One year later Rose returned to see me telling me of the disdain she encountered in the lesbian community she attempted to enter. She felt rejected by women who had a political agenda that welcomed "born womyn" only.

She began to question whether she was in fact, a lesbian as she had no such belief at all. She had tried to engage with men, both gay and straight, but was unable to muster any interest in them. She remained in treatment for several months and was willing to explore the variety of communities that identify as lesbian, ultimately finding a partner who appreciated her feminine identity without rejecting her male past.

Mark, a female-to-male, was a 50 year old who had lived as a heterosexual woman until she began hormones a year ago. She was planning a double mastectomy in the near future and had ceased any romantic relationships until after surgery. She had always been drawn to masculine, straight men who reciprocated her interest. As Mark masculinized, although still

interested in men, he was fantasizing more about gay men.

He was now wondering if his past interest was more identification than attraction. We both agreed this might have been so. Additionally I suggested that his unconscious had become "aware" that as a man attracted to men he would be living a gay lifestyle and would be much more successful with homosexual than straight men. This interpretation had great appeal to Mark and freed him to begin exploring relationships with gay men.

Jacob was a male-to-female who had lived as a straight man, attracted to very conventional women. He came to me for help in "learning to love men" in preparation for his transition to a feminine lifestyle. I questioned why he felt he needed to do this and he explained very patiently that he was heterosexual. Therefore, to remain straight he would need to give up his interest in women and "learn" to be attracted to men.

After several months of therapy dealing with Jacob's deep seated homophobia, he was able to accept that he was in fact a woman attracted to women. I did encourage him to explore any interest he had in men as well, as many people have bi-sexual interests that go unexpressed and even unperceived until encouraged.

Dr. Anderson is located at 1537 Franklin St, Suite 104, San Francisco, CA 94109, 415-776-0139.



Renaissance Library Report

by **Lee Etscovitz, Renaissance National Librarian**

The Library Discussion Group met on Wednesday, May 6 with the mother and father of a female to male (FtM) transsexual daughter whom the parents now refer to as their "newly minted son." The discussion was extremely informative, especially since the guest parents conveyed by their very presence as well as by their

words the experience of dealing with their daughter's gender change.

This session marked the end of the mid-week meetings of the Library Discussion Group, at least until someone else is found to lead them on a monthly mid-week basis. From now on, Dr. Etscovitz, as a continuation of the Library's effort to provide a discussion group, will, as a rule, conduct a monthly session on Transgender Issues at the time of the regular meet-

ing of the Philadelphia Chapter of Renaissance (the third Saturday of each month). Any variation in the evening program will be announced at the time of the chapter meeting.

In other Library news, Michele Lynn will be helping once again to update the bibliography of the Library and to organize the books themselves into useful categories.



Trans Care Center Opens in Pittsburgh

Friday, May 1, 1998 (PITTSBURGH, PA, USA) A new era in transgender care has begun in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, A city that is known for so many medical "firsts." For the first time in Trans History, a trans physician and surgeon, Dr. Sheila Kirk, has developed and is directing a facility specializing in complete transgender surgical and medical care.

In addition, Dr. Kirk is performing MTF GRS, FTM top surgeries, hysterectomies, and related surgical procedures for MTFs and FTMs. The facility is named the Transgender Surgical & Medical Center or TSMC, and the offices are located at 2100 Jane Street, Medical Professional Building, 2nd Floor, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Trans Care by Transprofessionals

"This is a first step for our community," states Dr. Kirk, "a small step...when compared to the other steps that should and will follow in this relatively new discipline I like to refer to as Trans Care. However, it is

an important step and signifies a positive shift that paves the way to fully utilize the immense medical and surgical talent that exists within our own community to help us treat our Sisters and Brothers. Transprofessionals caring for Trans people through all facets of their gender journey should be the norm and not the exception. As TSMC grows, it is our goal to recruit Transprofessionals whose professional caliber and dedication matches TSMC's philosophy of providing the highest standards of excellence."

TSMC Team

Sheila Kirk, MD, F.A.O.G., Board certified OB/GYN, Transgender Medicine Specialist/Surgeon, author of our community's best-selling medical books, is the first Transgender physician elected to the HBGDA board. In addition to performing MTF GRS, Dr. Kirk specializes in FTM top surgeries, hysterectomies and related surgical procedures for MTFs and FTMs.

J. William Futrell, MD, F.A.C.S., is Chief and Professor of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Plastic

Reconstructive Surgery Department. One of the nation's most respected plastic surgeons, Dr. Futrell has vast experience in MTF/FTM GRS, feminization and masculinization of the face and related MTF/FTM surgeries.

Ernest K. Manders, MD, F.A.C.S., Board-certified in micro and plastic reconstructive surgery, is Professor of Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School. He is also Specialist in Rib Removal & Male Pattern Baldness Surgery. In addition to MTF/FTM GRS, Dr. Manders' is known for his pioneering method for minimally invasive rib removal for MTFs and his pioneering techniques for correcting male pattern baldness.

TSMC Provides the Highest Standards of Care & Excellence

"It gives me great pleasure to be an associate of these highly skilled and compassionate surgeons," Dr. Kirk said. "Our combined experience in transgender surgical and medical care and our mutual dedication will provide to our community the highest

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The Triumph of the Divine Ms. Dana

by Dafna Levi-Yanovitz, Ha'aretz

The morning after Dana International's stunning victory in the Eurovision song contest, the British newspapers were jam-packed with details of her life history, including the sex-change operation, the controversy she arouses in Israeli society, even the story of the court injunction that almost prevented her from participating in the contest.

Even before her triumph, Dana expressed the hope that her exposure in this international (primarily European) competition would land her recording contracts in the U.K. Dana International's popularity in the United Kingdom was strongly felt at the betting shops, where she was the odds-on favorite, far outdistancing her

competitors from France, the Netherlands, Malta, Switzerland, even the U.K. itself. Dana won first place for Israel in a tough, nail-biting near-photo-finish that she fought out with the representatives of Malta and the U.K.

Malta, an island-state with only a quarter of million inhabitants, saw the Eurovision contest as a wonderful opportunity for international exposure, and its representative, Kiara, who sang "The One I Love," claimed that 98 percent of Malta's citizens were glued to their television screens during the Eurovision broadcast. Kiara, whose musical career is based on her appearances in TV commercials, is not an experienced or even a well-known singer.

By contrast, veteran professional

Imani, who led the United Kingdom to third place, has already appeared with artists such as James Brown and Michael Bolton and with groups such as Incognito and the Pretenders.

Dana, who appeared in a tight-fitting dress (for her victory reprise, she switched to a feather creation designed by Jean-Paul Gaultier), was a natural in this year's song contest, which was dominated by raven-haired women with beautiful figures and skin-tight gowns. As has been the case every year, Eurovision 1998 featured white pianos, electric guitars and, of course, conductors with mustaches and pony-tails.

Dana was unquestionably the undeclared star of the evening and,

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Hot•Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



"If we are not striving for equality, in heaven's name for what are we living?"
— John Hope

Equality. Now there's a term that seems so simple, so clear, and yet, legalistically, seems unobtainable. Why can't we have laws that require everyone be treated equally? Obviously, to the politicians, this is a naive notion. I had a recent conversation with one **J. Cloud**, a writer for *Time* magazine doing a piece on transgender politics. When I opined that our community was displeased with the **Human Rights Campaign** (HRC) and their position on transgender inclusion in the **Employment Non-Discrimination Act** (ENDA), he challenged me with the following: (a) ENDA has not yet passed. Including transgender people in ENDA would likely kill any prospect of ENDA passing in the near future; (b) the gay and lesbian community has worked for 20 years to get to this point with ENDA poised to pass in the very near future; (c) transgendered people would have to work and wait for 20 years to get their protections. Of course, I disagree, strongly. Politics be damned; no one should have to wait for equality. What's right is right. I don't believe that transgender inclusion in ENDA has been properly discussed and debated. And if HRC continues to stonewall our efforts, we'll just have to go around them. I personally do not believe

that we should rely on the gay and lesbian community for political support. We need to build our own support and our own coalitions.

.....

Last month's commentary on the HRC fund-raising **boycott** by the **Gulf Gender Alliance** (GGA) in Louisiana generated a lot of feedback, all of it positive in support of GGA. And for those who think a boycott doesn't work, according to *Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is* by **Danica Nuccitelli** published at Mousy <www.mousy.com>; "A nationwide survey done in 1991 found that boycotts [are] more effective than letter writing campaigns, lobbying..." Letter writing, lobbying and other activities don't attack donations, a major source of income for non-profits. According to the article, boycotts used to take between five and ten years to get results, but now take only about two because they're better organized and get more media attention. The thing I find so ironic is the criticism from within our own community; it's coming from people who advocated boycotting HRC fund-raisers just two short years ago.

.....

Here's another example of a good idea gone wrong. **GenderPAC**, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the HRC co-sponsored a **Roundtable on Gender & the Law**. The GPAC press release says: "Representatives from gay, women's, and gender groups gathered today..." Notice anything missing? There was no **transgender** representation at the meeting. You would have thought that perhaps the **International Conference on Transgender Law & Employment Policy** (ICTLEP) might have been invited. Nope. Nada. No. GPAC was *specifically* created to represent transgender issues. I know, I wrote the By Laws. But GPAC Executive Director, Riki Wilchins, has spread GPAC all over the gender spectrum. Our community really does not have effective representation at the feder-

al level at all. What do you think about how GPAC is representing us? Send me feedback because this is extremely important.

.....

I really don't know why we should tie our wagon to the **gay and lesbian community**. In some cases they really don't want us as part of their community and it is causing serious problems. Here's an example from Vancouver, Wash. A flier was inserted into copies of the gay/lesbian newspaper *Xtra! West*. It said: "Like all males, **transsexuals** are: dangerous, abusive, intimidating, lazy and manipulative. Males masquerading as females (transsexuals) are polluting our communities worldwide with their lesbian-hating/womyn-hating poison. A male on hormones and/or in a dress is not a womyn." The flier was in response to an earlier *Xtra! West* editorial by a female staffer that stated: "[Lesbians who want to exclude the transgendered are] living a small and disempowered life filled with fear and a self-definition that puts the emphasis on victimization. It's about picking at festering sores and setting up hierarchies of oppression. 'I'm more oppressed than you are,' the reasoning goes. 'You don't pass the purity test.' The **Nazis** had their purity test, too. Wrong genes, wrong religion on your mother's side, wrong sexual orientation or born in a travelling caravan — and it was off to the gas chambers. The opposition to the inclusion of the transgendered is certainly more subtle, but just as vicious in its underlying philosophy. In an era when we know that gender is complex and traditional gender definitions are false, there is no excuse for excluding the transgendered from full equality and protection everywhere, including in women's and lesbian groups and organizations."

.....

Nancy Nangeroni, Executive Director of the **International Foundation for Gender Education** (IFGE), came up to me last month at **Cal Dreamin'** and said

that I had set myself up as speaking for the community as I was criticizing IFGE and GPAC for doing the same. I thought about that and I think Ms. Nangeroni is mistaken. I clearly state that these are my opinions. However, I also get an extraordinary amount of feedback since this column is the most widely distributed in the community and the longest running. (I started this thread on the **JSS BBS** in 1985.) I don't claim to speak for the community but I think, more than anyone else, I have the pulse of the community. Of course, that's just my opinion. I could be wrong! On the other hand, maybe Nancy's not thinking too clearly these days. In late April she posted this on IFGE's web site: "The last few weeks have been pretty hectic for me, pushing me to the brink of **burnout** as I tried to hold up my end of keeping TG mag issue 83 on schedule..." If, after only four and a half months, Nancy is feeling burned out, perhaps IFGE needs an Executive Director with a more robust constitution.

Here's another example that puts a knot in my pantyhose. I received news about *The Journal of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Identity* which is described as a... "progressive, international, interdisciplinary forum dedicated to the exchange of new knowledge and ideas about every major aspect of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender life." Well, if it's supposed to be a journal that includes transgender people why aren't we part of the journal title? Because we're not really a part of the journal at all and it's not really a journal but a book masquerading as a journal. A quick look at the Table of Contents reveals not one article on transgender issues. I see this a lot from businesses aimed primarily at gays and lesbians. They throw in the

"B" and "T" words just to see if they can scoop up some additional business.

Last month I also made some remarks about the uselessness of the transgender **Usenet** newsgroups. I must admit that I had not been monitoring all the groups of late because of the low signal to noise ratio. However, reader **Sallyann Offner** made the following comments that I want to share with everyone. "A few weeks ago, I would have heartily agreed with your assessment of the Usenet newsgroups. However, over the past month or so, this has begun changing, at least in alt.support.srs, the group aimed at the srs-bound transperson. Laura [Blake] may or may not choose to disrupt things there again, but we have had discourse there about: Early Post Op Care; Financial Sources for SRS; Oregon's dilemma with Medicaid Early transition; Several hormone threads; T.O.P.S. new website; Trans word usages; Texas' Bar issue; Reasons for later transition; Sources for clothing items; A proposal on suicide & depression; F/M surgery; Reasons for choosing surgeons; and Parental influence on GID and much more. Salted within all this were some trolls for Ms [Blake] and some spam. Six weeks ago, this was certainly not the case, but its level has risen in this newsgroup. Others may not be as high minded, or this could be a momentary period of light. But nonetheless, there is a determination among some of those there to see that this newsgroup reaches its intended goal of providing "a supportive and informative environment for people who are undergoing or who have undergone sex reassignment surgery (SRS) and for their relatives and significant others." Please do not take this in any way as a criticism of your column. But I did wish to make you aware of an attempt by its members to

become a bit more adult in their behavior." Hey, Sallyann, it's okay to criticize my column. In fact, I want to thank you for reminding me that a few newsgroups do not represent the whole pie.

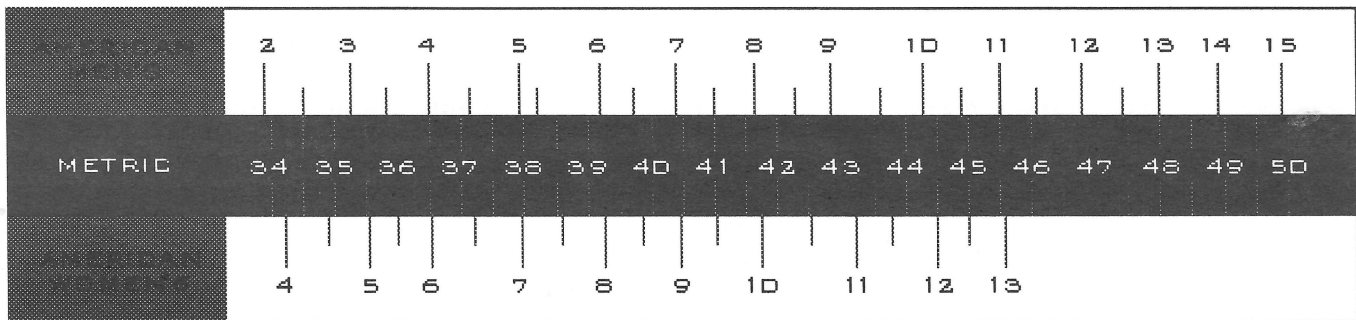
Okay, okay! We'll get to some fashion news, but first, take a look below. It's a **shoe size converter**. Mens show sizes are on the top scale and the corresponding women's size is on the bottom scale.

The Hot Buzz about **eyeshadow** color for the rest of Spring and into Summer is **green**. The trick is to pick the right shade to match your complexion otherwise you'll look sick. Pick **mint** for pale skin... **olive** for medium skin tones, and **green-gold** for dark skin. Some great colors are Fern, Kiwi, Pistachio, and Cool Mint. Check 'em out.

One of the problems I noticed with the super-fast dry nail polishes was the lack of a red-red. Well, it looks like the wait is over. **Maybelline Express Finish** has at least two true reds, **Red Caviar** and **Red Glamour**, along with a new **Fuschia**. I'm going to give it them a try and I'll let you know how they perform.

The June issue of *Glamour* has a photo of female rapper **Lil' Kim** in what amounts to underwear with sequins. A photog caught her at the Grammys. The comment under the photo says, "Get this woman a skirt! Even **transvestite hookers** show up in public wearing more than this. Well! I never..."

So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? Comments? Write me care of this publication or send email to the <CyberQueen@cdspub.com>. © 1998 by Creative Design Services.



Trans Care...

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For more complete information on the services offered and general information, please contact Sheila Kirk, M.D. by phone (412) 781-1092, fax (412) 781-1096, e-mail TSMC@aol.com or snail mail: c/o TSMC, P.O. Box 38366, Blawnox, PA 15238. TSMC is a registered trademark.



Divine Ms. Dana...

even before her win, had already become a cult figure among the patrons of the U.K.’s gay bars and nightclubs. German singer, Guildo Horen, also had a troop of fans who very much wanted to see him and his group, the Orthopedic Elastic Stockings, in first place. The fans included Guildo’s look-alikes, who, on the week of the contest, had won a Guildo look-alike contest held in Germany and who came to the U.K. to meet their idol.

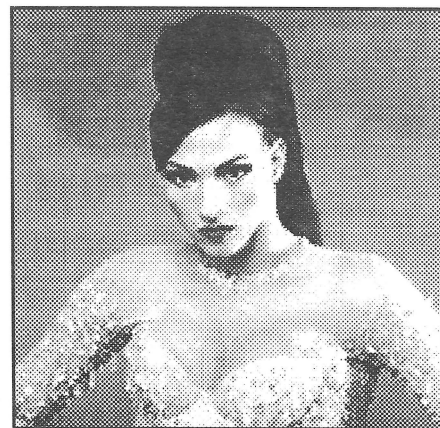
The British Broadcasting Corporation, which produced this year’s Eurovision show in the city of Birmingham, commissioned the services of renowned set-designer Nick Trainer, who built the stage, and composer Gustav Holst, who wrote “Jupiter”, the grandiose entertainment show, which featured African and Indian dance troupes, a Welsh male choir, wind instruments and a Scottish

bagpipe company, and which was intended to showcase the many facets of British culture. Other participants in the show included celebrated violinist Vanessa May, opera singer Lesley Garret, and Swedish-born moderator Ulrike Jonsson. The BBC paid the trio approximately 5 million pounds.

This was Israel’s third win in the Eurovision, comparing quite favorably with France and the U.K. (each with five wins) and with Ireland (with seven). “Dana International’s achievement was very moving. In recent years we have not suffered from an abundance of events in which we could take pride as a nation,” notes Uri Porath, executive director of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, who feels that “much of the credit for the victory goes to Dana and to the other artists.”

The IBA might have difficulty producing the show in Jerusalem next year (the additional prize that Dana has netted for Israel), because a pro-

duction of that scale could cost somewhere in the area of \$10 million. According to Porath, in addition to high technical costs involving telephone voting and satellites, much needs to be invested in human resources and creative work: “Failure in this type of production must never be allowed to occur, because we would end up disgracing ourselves before hundreds of millions of viewers and making Israel look very bad internationally.”



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BOOK NOOK

A Personal Book Review
by Phyllis Randolph Frye

The book I want to talk about is: **Mom, I Need To Be A Girl** by Just Evelyn. I wish I'd had this book to give to my parents and siblings and other relatives in 1976, the year that I transitioned. Or maybe even before. I don't know if it would have made a difference with some, but I think it would have helped with most, and it

would have made my life a lot easier for sure.

Mom, I Need To Be a Girl is written by the parent of a teenaged son who soon became a teenaged daughter. The author, Just Evelyn, is a friend whom I met at the Second International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy in 1993. Evelyn had called me several months prior, seeking legal advice for dealing with her transgendered teenage son. As I told her then, she was welcome at the conference, but at that time we were timid about dealing with anyone under eighteen. You just never knew what the fanatic, religious right conservatives would do, so we mostly told them to call us back when they became eighteen years old. That was 1993.

Evelyn's book, recently released, will certainly be a good guide for parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and cousins who love and recognize that a family member, at age eight, ten, twelve or fourteen, is transgendered and has been socially

trapped in the wrong gender role. There is a lot of love in this book. And there is a lot of soul-searching as well. I do not understand why family members feel guilty when they learn of a loved one being transgendered, but they often do, and this book will certainly help in that area.

One of the things that I admire about Evelyn is that she is not afraid to sound off at those in the so-called "helping profession" who do not really help but who charge a fee to transgendered clients who in turn end up having to educate those professionals or serve as research data and are themselves provided little actual help. She also takes the reader step by step through all of the challenges, including school, restrooms and gym class. She also has a good list of references in the back.

The last time I visited with Evelyn was while I was in San Diego for a conference. Although her daughter has grown up and gone on into the

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Ms. Lynda

Book Review...

world of adulthood does not mean that Evelyn has forgotten how to care. She still reaches out to assist community members who are deeply closeted and need someone to talk to who is safe (from police and the toughs who might assault them). She shares an extensive video library of talk shows where the TG issue has been expressed. She even has my appearance on the "Phil Donahue Show" in 1991.

I want to say now that I would not really change anything about my past

life. Every cause had its effect, and if I changed anything, I'd not be legally same-sex married to my wonderful Trish (silver anniversary is only two months from tomorrow), and I'd not have my wonderful son and his wife and our grandchild. But I do know that if this book had come out in the mid-1960's, and if my parents had read and understood it, maybe I would not have been so fearful when they discovered my crossdressing back in 1965. It was my high school senior year when my stash of women's underclothes was discovered. You could cut my parents' homophobia with a dull knife. I had to tell them it

was just an experiment, for I feared that the truth would have caused me to become a homeless youth and on the street at age 17.

I hope you will purchase and use Evelyn's book. Send it to any parent who is having trouble. Send it to PFLAG Chapters so that they will see TG work belongs in their mission statement as well. Send \$10 (inclusive of tax and s/h) to Just Evelyn, 3707 Fifth Ave #413, San Diego, CA 92103, 1-800-666-8158, www.justevelyn.com.

I hope that the mother of an FTM (female to male) child writes a similar good book soon.



Movie Review: Ma Vie en Rose (My Life in Pink)

by Lee Etscovitz, Renaissance National Librarian

Ma Vie en Rose is a French film with English subtitles. To quote from the Ritz filmbill: "The star of the film is Ludovic, played by newcomer George du Fresne, a boy who knows he is a girl and puts his trust in God that this error in his given gender will be righted. Full of hope and raised on fairy tales, he believes that a supernatural force will make his dearest wish come true: to be back in the body of the girl that he is meant to be. But when the community finds out that Ludovic tried to 'marry' his male schoolmate, the situation turns into a real-life drama of intense reactions from neighbors, friends and teachers."

I myself did see the movie and was impressed along several lines. It

was refreshing to see the transgender issue handled in a genuine and refreshing manner. There was tenderness and humor combined with human dignity in the portrayal of the boy's struggles. His deep sense of self-acceptance and self-belief shined through everything he did, even when he tried to please his parents and his therapist.

But not even the severe social pressures by parents and peers daunted him. In fact, he seemed so centered and wise beyond his years that he became the strength that others needed to find in themselves. In the midst of very real problems he endears himself to everyone around him, including the audience. If there is a central message to the film, it is that love really makes a difference

when there is a human difference.

I wholeheartedly recommend this film, both to the transgendered themselves and to their significant others. It is only 88 minutes long, but it is not short on meaning and impact.



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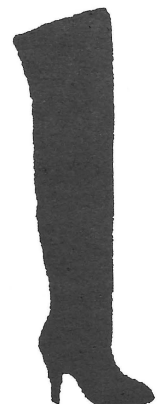
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Making Sense of It All

by Lee Etscovitz, Ed.D.

Let The Dandelions Grow

As winter gives way to spring and warmer weather, the grass starts growing—and so do the dandelions. In the name of an unbroken expanse of green grass, I, like most homeowners, strive to get rid of the weeds which spoil that expanse, which, of course, means getting rid of the dandelions.

At the same time there is something to be said for dandelions. With their bright yellow blossoms like many little suns, they greet the day. And they are persistent in their struggle for survival, rooting themselves deeply and usually sprouting several blossoms from the same plant. When they grow old, the breeze carries many parachute-like seeds all over the lawn, thereby multiplying each plant into many more little suns. If unchecked, dandelions can soon dominate a whole lawn.

And so we check them, with weed killers of one kind or another. As I stated initially, I, too, try to get rid of them, even though I admire them for their brightness and persistence. So why, then, do I suggest in the title to this piece that we let the dandelions grow? Am I being hypocritical?

When I talk about letting the dandelions grow, I am really thinking of human beings, human beings somehow different from the majority of people who make up the human landscape. The dandelions symbolize for me all those people who are different, in this case transgendered people. Getting rid of dandelions on the lawn is one thing, but getting rid of human dandelions by treating them as human weeds is something else.

It was with these thoughts about dandelions that I wrote the following poem, called “Let the Dandelions Grow.” In fact, I have even set the words to music, so that this poem may even sound more like musical verse than strictly poetry. Perhaps you, dear reader, can create your own melody. In any case, the words can stand by themselves.

Let the dandelions grow,
let the clover have its way,
let the flowers fill the fields,
let my spirit sing the day.

If the world would love the flowers,
if the world would only know,
then the world would sing together,
“Let the dandelions grow.”

When my love is overflowing,
when my heart is reaching out,
then at last I know the happiness
that makes me want to shout:

“Let the dandelions grow,
let the clover have its way,
let the flowers fill the fields,
let my spirit sing the day.

If the world would love the flowers,
if the world would only know,
then the world would sing together,
“Let the dandelions grow.”

One could obviously say I am dreaming when I talk about the world letting the human dandelions grow and simply being free to be. Then again, such a dream is the basis for the writing I do here and elsewhere, for the lectures I give and the workshops I run, for the counseling I do, for my work with the Renaissance Transgender Association, for whatever political action I and many others undertake, and on a personal level, for my own survival.

Such efforts are in response to the subtle and not so subtle human weed killers we continually face. What defense is there against the weed killers? Persistence helps, persistence in being true to ourselves. Patience, mixed with the proper amount of

impatience, may be the basic transgender virtue in all of this. Another name for such a mixture is “courage,” the courage to go on with our lives in the midst of medical, legal, economic, and relational difficulties, as well as our own inner struggles.

I mentioned in passing that each of us could sing the words of my poem to a melody, a melody of one’s own creation. Perhaps that is the point of all this: to create our own melodies, to sing our own songs, to let our spirits sing the day. Isn’t that what our gender struggle, and our life struggle, is all about? Isn’t that why we join transgender organizations and continue, one way or another, to fight for our rights as transgendered persons, regardless of our gender variation?

If my poetic words fit your individual feelings, if they help you to make sense of it all, then sing the words to the melody of your own life. Such a melody is not something you have to try to remember. If it is genuine, if it is an inner melody, then it will simply present itself. It will simply be. It will be you and your own human melody.

Presenting ourselves to the world as we really are, while usually difficult in the short run, is beautiful in the long run. Call us weeds if you will, but we can be persistent bright spots on the human lawn of life. There may be attempts to mow us down, to uproot us, and essentially to deny our very existence on this planet, but there is no denying that we are definitely part of this planet. We are as much a part of life as the earth beneath our feet and the stars above our heads. Somewhere between heaven and earth lies our struggle.

So let the dandelions grow. Let the melodies flow. And perhaps in the orchestration of our individual voices we and the rest of the world will hear a chorus that no weed killer can destroy.



Where Were You When Ellen Went Out?

by Jessica Brandon

Once again, I've decided to delve into the ever mysterious workings of prime-time television to explore the final chapter of a TV show that debuted with next to no fanfare four years ago and, from all indications, ended the same way. Of course, I'm referring to *Ellen*. The show finally came to the end of its run this season following last year's blockbuster revelation that Ellen's character is gay, followed immediately by the star's real life outing.

Now, if you remember the article I did in this publication about the coming out episode on *Ellen* last year, you already know two things: (A) I do not watch anything on the networks during prime-time and purposely missed that episode as I was at a Phillies game that night. And (B) from day one, I never believed Ellen was gay and I thought that the whole ball of wax was nothing more than a crass and transparent ploy to boost ratings for a show that was badly sagging in the Neilsens.

One year later nothing much has changed. I still avoid the networks' programming during prime time, and I still don't believe Ellen is gay, despite her nauseatingly public relationship with Anne Heche (whose career hasn't exactly taken off since she and Ellen became an item). I mean, playing second fiddle to fake lava in *Volcano* is not exactly a stepping stone to an Oscar. However, it's

the stuff that has gone down since last May that's really been intriguing.

While I haven't watched so much as one second of *Ellen* since the great revelation, I have idly followed the soap opera that developed regarding it. As you know, the news about a sitcom character outing herself as gay raised an almighty stink with the Bible thumpers who made the asinine claim that this was the beginning of the end of civilization as we know it. While the world is still in one piece today, it was Ellen's show that went to hell in a hand basket instead.

ABC (a.k.a. The Disney Network), needlessly worried about the bleating of the Holy Rollers, issued a disclaimer prior to the start of the outing episode. They said, in so many words, that the opinions expressed on this show do not reflect those of ABC, or something like that. That got Ellen pissed, which was dumb because she should have seen that coming and led to an ongoing feud between Ellen and her bosses at ABC. At one point, Ellen threatened to pull the plug at the end of last season.

Therein lies the irony because, by not walking out on the show, the series would go on another year and, from what I've read, was pretty much a colossal waste of time. Ellen made her supposed homosexuality the sole focus of the show. In effect, she rammed the whole farce down our throats (or rather, the throats of anyone who actually bothered watching

it) virtually week after week. In time, viewers grew tired of the charade, tuned it out, and ratings sank like the proverbial rock.

But, did Ellen see the writing on the teleprompter and change things around? NO! From what I could deduce, she kept on keeping on and blamed ABC for the poor ratings. Eventually, *Ellen* was put on hiatus a couple of months ago for a new sitcom with THE most ridiculous title I've ever heard, *Two Guys, A Girl and A Pizza Place*. But the really ridiculous part of the whole thing was that this show got better numbers than *Ellen* did. From that moment, her show was doomed.

Want some more irony? The swan song for *Ellen* was an hour-long episode loaded with guest stars to help send her sitcom out with a bang. Just one problem: Ellen's timing stunk all to hell. Her farewell was overshadowed like Godzilla overshadows a groundhog by the series finale of *Seinfeld* one night later. *Seinfeld* in turn was overshadowed by the tragic passing of Frank Sinatra that same evening. As a result the celebrated end to Ellen's show wound up just a blip on the radar that week.

At the risk of sounding cruel, it could not have happened to a nicer person. In my previous article about Ellen I wondered aloud if, after her outing, she would do all she could to

continued on page 20

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Vis A Vis...

thing about those Sinatra songs is that everyone knows them, they play great in a piano bar, and even if the talent isn't there to match Ol' Blue Eyes, everybody loves hearing those songs.

In the aftermath of his death, commentators, biographers, and friends of the man, all were trying to describe the indescribable something that made him great. I didn't hear one comment that came close to capsulating his appeal. It's there on the records, for sure.

But perhaps a better place to consider his talent is to see him in the concert videos or television shows where you can see him in action. There's a lot of stuff going on there: the music and songs by themselves, Frank's voice, the inflections, the personalized touches he brought to them, and the sheer power of his personality, the way he owned his audience, and the way they gave themselves to him. You can almost feel it as a palpable substance in the air.

As for myself, I will continue to document my lack of all those things that made him great in any piano lounge that will let me sing it My Way. The soundtrack of my life as Dina is and always will be Frank Sinatra's music.

RETHINKING THE INTERNET

Several months ago, I wrote a humorously critical piece about cross-dressing chat rooms. I was fairly new to the online world of crossdressers and found the experience to be something less than grand. I still hold that evaluation of chat rooms but the sheer number of crossdressers on America Online and the web in general has made me rethink my estimation of their value.

It's no great secret that membership in our own Renaissance and some other support groups around the country is falling. I can't help but think that the advent of the internet is having some downward pressure on people's need to enroll in organized groups. With the exception of the transvestite contact magazines, the support groups were the only real game in town for crossdressers hoping to meet others and experience dressing with some form of human contact. Now, crossdressers - both experienced and novice - can dress at home, go online, and feel like they are a part of some amorphous community. It's not quite the same thrill as dressing in public with real human contact, but neither does it pose the risks, perils or nervousness attendant with leaving the house in drag. That's a not inconsiderable advantage, particularly for insecure crossdressers, or those not

within easy striking distance of an organized group.

My first impression of the online crossdressing universe was that it was filled with phonies and wanna-be's. That is still a great frustration of dealing with chat rooms, but the personal web pages of hundreds of crossdressers, and the exchange of photos with others online has proven that there are many accomplished girls out there who have never belonged to a support group, venture out only on their own in their local areas, or have never even left their house.

In an age where support group leaders are looking for some way to boost membership, finding a way to tap into this pool of talent could be the key to survival. At some point, most crossdressers do want to get out, spread their wings, show their stuff to others, if not the world at large. Outreach as we have come to think of it in the dark ages before the web may be outmoded. I don't know what the answer is but it is must be somewhere in this maze of modems and monitors. Finding that answer could be the cure for the common support group; missing it could find us all tapping out our sad stories on a keyboard.



Ellen...

help mainstream society understand the necessity of gay and lesbian rights. I'm probably wrong here, but I think the answer to that question is a resounding NO. The only times I ever heard from Ellen was when she was either making a public spectacle of herself with Anne Heche or fighting with the brass at ABC.

Naturally, I could be mistaken since my career does not include following Ellen's career since the coming out episode. I just went by what I read in the papers. And so, another chapter in "Alternative Lifestyles on

Television" comes to an end not with a bang, but with a whimper, or rather, in Ellen's case, probably a whine. And what will happen to Ellen after this? No doubt she'll return to the relative obscurity of the dingy, smoke filled little comedy clubs that spawned her in the first place.

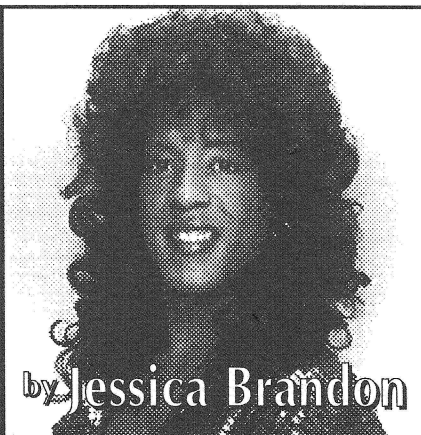
But Jessica, you complain! Now that Ellen's show has been canceled, surely she'll devote her free time to promoting gay and lesbian issues, won't she? Pardon me while I laugh. Don't hold your breath, folks. As far as I know, I hadn't heard anything from Ellen on the subject since she "came out." She was probably too busy making sure she was seen with

Anne at fancy galas to bother with mundane stuff like that. Her next public words on promoting the lifestyle she allegedly adopted will be her first.

While the entire subject of Ellen has nothing to do with transgender issues, it does have everything to do with the importance of recognizing alternative lifestyles, and I don't think Ellen did too good a job in that department. Oh, and to answer the burning question which was the title of this article: I was on phone watch at the Renaissance National office on that fateful night. All things considered equal, that was a far better way to spend the evening.



Shopping With Jessica



Greetings, girlfriends! It is with a heavy heart that I must inform you, my loyal readers of a terrible disease I've contracted. It is an insidious ailment that strikes me every year around this time and leaves me powerless. The medical term for my affliction is "Outdoorus Forward Porticallis", but the layman's term for it is "Front Porch Disease". This dreadful ailment forces me to sit on my front porch on warm, sunny days and do absolutely nothing for hours on end.

Of course, you could say that this is the perfect time of the year for this sort of thing, unless you happen to be self-employed and have to set your own hours in order to get your work done in a timely manner. Fortunately I'm an early riser (usually around four or five AM) so I can be productive in the morning, then goof off the rest of the day. In the meantime, allow me to share with you, the fruits of my labors, that being the third installment in my series on Shopping for Beginners.

In the previous two segments, I discussed how and where to buy your basic wardrobe, what it should contain, and how to expand it, as well as a breakdown on shoes, my favorite item to shop for. Now we come to what to wear beneath your basic wardrobe. That's right, kids, underwear. I'm sure many of you began your trek into the wilds of transgenderland through the wearing of women's underthings, so what I'm about to discuss should be of considerable interest to you.

What you wear beneath your

clothes is just as important as the clothes themselves. You should have six bras and at least twice that number of panties. First, about bras, the styles and varieties are numerous and can be confusing to the novice. I've always been partial to the underwire, mainly because this style is best for use with whatever you choose to use for breastforms since underwires with boning on the bottom of the cups hold breastforms firmly in place.

What about colors? Well, when it comes to bras, my advice is to go with black. I know you've probably skimmed through catalogs or been in stores and seen bras in virtually every color of the rainbow, not to mention dozens more patterns and the like. Believe me when I tell you, trying to decide what colors to choose can short-circuit your brain. I know it did mine when I first started, so I referred to the K.I.S.S. stratagem (Keep It Simple, Sister) and bought just one color, black.

In addition, at least one of your bras should be strapless in the event you want to wear a strapless dress or gown to a party or other social function. NEVER wear a white bra as it shows through everything. With panties, the styles and colors and choices are equally as numerous, if not more so. Depending on the frequency of your crossdressing (as in the number of times you go out), a dozen pairs is a good starting point. (Unless you're like me and all you wear are panties. And I own FOUR dozen pairs.)

Yes, Ladies, you heard me correctly. I haven't worn a stitch of men's underwear since 1995 and I love it! My personal rule of thumb is to wear cotton panties, usually paired with a sport bra, for my regular day to day male activities (my brand of choice, if you're curious, is Jockey For Her) and either satin or silk for when I'm cross-dressed. I don't know about you, but wearing all black underwear when I'm dressed makes me feel VERY sexy!

Now we come to accessories to add to your wardrobe, beginning with ... the handbag. Unlike men, a proper lady can't go around carrying stuff in her pockets like she doesn't care. If you're going to look like a woman, you have to carry a handbag like a woman. As with shoes, leather handbags are always a best bet. They are durable, easy to care for, and just look better than the man made junk from the five and dime stores which might fall apart on you after awhile.

Just like shoes, handbags come in all shapes, sizes and colors for all manner of functions, but once again I'm going to adhere to the K.I.S.S. principle. For the rookie crossdresser, make your first handbag a simple black one. Most women sport black bags and they're probably the most popular. I would say that 8 out of every 10 women on the streets at any given time can be seen with one. Take note of that the next time you're out and you'll see I'm right.

On the subject of size, your handbag should be just large enough to carry everything you need for a regular everyday outing (such as your wallet, car keys, tissues, a compact and lipstick) but not overly large. It should not, however, be so small that you cannot carry everything you need. For a formal function a small purse or clutch, in fabrics like silk or satin, is best. You should have at least three to four handbags in varying sizes so you'll have options available for whatever function you need.

continued on page 22

Shopping...

Well, kids, that's all for now. In Part Four, I'll wrap up the accessory talk with jewelry and hosiery, then move on to the wonderful world of cosmetics. As always, my mailbox is open for your comments, tips and opinions at <treetop@voicenet.com>, or by snail mail to the Renaissance National Office.

Oh, before I close up shop, here's a toast to the Chairman of the Board, the immortal Frank Sinatra whom the world lost to the summer wind on the evening of May 14th. To his legions of fans, young and old, male and female, rich and poor, famous and faceless, Ol' Blue Eyes wasn't just a stranger in the night, he was an American icon. Rest easy, Francis Albert, you will be missed.

Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping, sisters!



Dr. Biber and the Trinidad Transsexuals

A fascinating May 13 Washington Post article examines a small town in Colorado that has been dubbed "the sex-change capital of the world," and the doctor responsible for the reputation. "Stanley Biber, 75, is one of the world's leading gender-reassignment surgeons, and his renown over the past 30 years has given this former mining town of 8,500 residents [Trinidad, Colorado] the unlikely of nicknames," it says.

"A visit to Trinidad, to Biber's office and to his operating room provides a look at a subject that many people probably will never understand. It raises questions about what constitutes a man, what constitutes a woman, whether it is possible to be something in-between or encompassing both. In a society that has already weathered a sexual revolution or two, this remains a taboo," Post writer Sue

Anne Pressley continues.

"At first, Biber was cautious. While not denying what he was doing, he did not advertise it either. Soon, he met with area ministers and other residents and explained his new specialty. After that, the questions, if not the raised eyebrows, ceased." Pressley quotes Biber discussing his empathy for transpeople, and his pride in the important work he does. In town, "residents regard strangers politely. Trinidad's claim to fame, however, is pointedly not advertised by officials or merchants." The article also follows one person through the transition, discussing her road to identifying as a woman and having the surgery.



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TG Community Calendar

LOCAL RENAISSANCE

CHAPTERS- JUNE

- 6: Lower Susquehanna Valley, New Jersey Support
- 13: Lehigh Valley, Delaware
- 20: Greater Philadelphia
- 27: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender

JUNE 1998

- 6: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)
- 10-14: 16th Annual Be All You Want to Be Weekend, Pittsburgh, PA. Hosted by Transpitt, P.O. Box 15408, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, (412) 242-5902.
- 19-21: Gender, Sexuality, and Law Conference, Keele University Staffordshire, United Kingdom. Contact GSL98 Conference, Department of Law, Keele University, Staffordshire ST5 5BG, England, UK. Phone: 01782-593218, Fax: 01782-593228, email: <GSL98@kelle.ac.uk>.

JULY 1998

- 15-19: S.P.I.C.E.: Spouse/Partners International Conference for Education in Atlanta, GA. For info, call (510) 235-7450 Pacific time; (918) 343-1953 Central time; (215) 860-

9271 Eastern time or email to: <melp@phoenix.net>.

AUGUST 1998

- 1: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)

SEPTEMBER 1998

- 5: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)
- 18-20: The Third International Congress on Sex and Gender, Exeter College, Oxford University. Jan Cobb, PFC BM network, London, WC1N 3XX Tel: +44 (0) 1473 421385, fax: +44 (0) 1473 421386, or email to: <Cong.bool@pfc.org.uk>.
- 30-10/4: Southern Comfort Conference, Holiday Inn Atlanta Central, Atlanta, GA. Call (404) 633-6470, or write to SCC, P.O. Box 77591, Atlanta, GA 30357-1591, or email to <scat@aol.com>.

OCTOBER 1998

- 3: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)
- 15-17: Lavender Law Conference, Park Plaza Hotel, Boston, MA. Contact <LAVLAW98@aol.com>.
- 18-25: Fantasia Fair, Provincetown, MA. Contact Alison Laing, P.O. Box 473, Portsmouth, RI 02871-0473,

phone: (401) 624-4317.

NOVEMBER 1998

- 5-8: Paradise in the Poconos. Fantasy getaway weekend. CONTACT CDS, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406, call (610) 640-9449, or email to <poco@cdspub.com>.
- 5-8: Fall Harvest 1998. Sponsored by City of Lakes Crossgendered Community in Minneapolis, MN at the Sheraton Metro Dome. For info, contact CLCC, P.O. Box 14844, Minneapolis, MN 55414. Call (612) 229-3613 or email to <CLCC@topcity.net>.
- 7: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)
- 8-13: Dignity Cruise X and Holiday at Sea II. Miami to Key West and the Bahamas. Contact Cruises Inc.: Barbara Arendt at (800) 621-6699 or Mike Sinn at (800)818-7830.

If you know of any upcoming events of interest to the transgendered community, please contact the Editor with the pertinent information at the address on page two.



Resources

Background Papers

Background Papers are \$1.25 each:

1. Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing
2. Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing
3. PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others
4. The Matter of Children
5. Annotated Bibliography
6. Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View
7. Understanding Transsexualism

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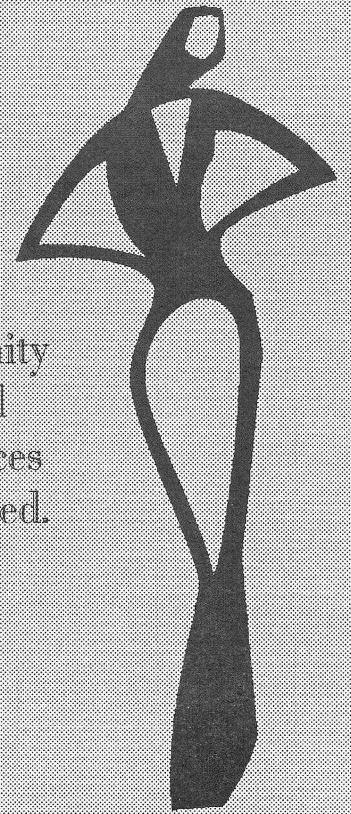
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