

News & views

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RENAISSANCE

WSF Responds to Judy Osborne

*Chair of Winslow Street Fund Responds:
Loan Was Proper*

This letter is in response to certain allegations published by Judy Osborne in November on Transgender Forum and in Renaissance News & Views.

Fact #1:

The Winslow Street Fund was established and supported by IFGE. To this day Winslow Street uses IFGE personnel, equipment, money and offices to perform it's day to day functions and, until the last appeal, Winslow Street used IFGE funds to support it's mailings, stationary and other things. IFGE gave Winslow Street access to it's mailing lists and publicity in it's publications. All of this was done at considerable direct expense to IFGE. This does not count the indirect costs of competing with IFGE for donations.

Fact #2:

As far back as 1992 when the new lease for the office in Waltham was signed, Winslow Street guaranteed a ten thousand dollar security deposit. This arrangement was made when Winslow Street was chaired by Laura Smiley, so the precedent of Winslow Street making a guarantee for IFGE was in place a long time before the current guarantee.

Fact#3:

Winslow Street is a part of IFGE and is an asset shown on IFGE'S balance Sheet. This fiscal arrangement has always been so. It was only recently that there has been any discussion of turning Winslow Street into a separate 501(c)3 organization. However, this change was not considered feasible because of the costs associated with this action. It is still not feasible. Winslow continues to grow and prosper unfettered by the normal day to day cost of running an organization, and IFGE continues it's support of Winslow Street. If IFGE had not been willing to pick up the costs associated building Winslow Street, you can be sure that our endowment and our ability to provide funding for projects in the community would be substantially diminished by much more than the \$15,000 we guaranteed on IFGE'S behalf.

Fact#4:

The trustees of Winslow Street need only a majority for it's decisions on what to fund or what not to fund. In the case of the guarantee which has raised so much controversy, the trustees were unanimous. That unanimity included Kerri Reeder. It was only later that Kerri requested that some type of agreement be drawn. Even though we didn't need Kerri's vote to extend the guarantee, the trustees agreed, and an instrument was drawn. There was no time limit set for the signing of the agreement, only what the trustees felt was prudent. The first communication I received from Kerri on the issue was by letter which I received on November 24.

You would think that Kerri would at least have contacted me as the chair of Winslow Street to express his concerns before going public and accusing the trustees of raping Winslow Street.

Kerri Reeder is accusing the trustees and chair of rape and pillage. What Kerri has done is to attempt to destroy the reputation of Winslow Street, IFGE, Laura Caldwell and myself. If you get past the accusations and inferences, outright lies, and character assassination, what we are talking about is a guarantee of \$15,000.

Mind you, not one penny has gone to IFGE. Is this rape and pillage? All of Kerri Reeder's statements should be viewed in this context. And Judy Osborne should be sure to confirm her facts before she publishes them under her byline. She says that she attempted to contact me.

I received a message from Judy and promptly returned the call, leaving a message on her machine. You would think that before someone published something this incendiary, they would make at least one other call. Judy never had any trouble contacting me before. She and I met in October at Fantasia Fair. At that time I told her of the Winslow Street plan, and she told me how much harm she thought IFGE was doing to the community. What is this all

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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.

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.

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), write 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, NY 10014, or call 201-794-1665, Ext. 332.

Long Island: Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE), PO Box 1311, Water Mill, NY 11976-1311. Phone 516-283-1333. email to joed2viola@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 <mhk@ionet.net>.

Renaissance News & Views

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Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the transgender community and the general public. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, make your check or M.O., payable to Renaissance and send it to our National office. Your contributions will help us continue our efforts to provide education about transgender issues. Donations can also be made through your local United Way agency.

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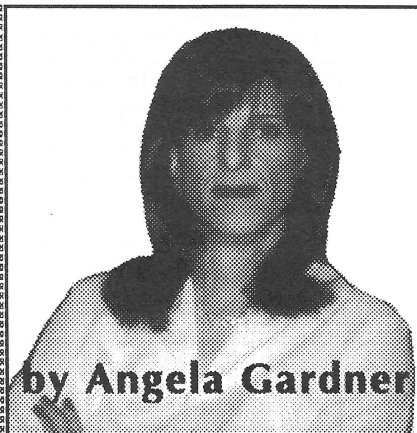
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Local Calendar

February

- 7 Ren. LSV - Harrisburg
- 7 NJ Support - Trenton
- 14 Ren. Lehigh Valley
- 14 Ren. Delaware - Wilmington
- 21 Ren. GPC - Wayne, Pa.
- 28 MOTG - Red Bank, NJ

News Beat & Reminder



by Angela Gardner

It's Party Time!

Actually it's not party time, yet. We did it before, a long ago, and now it's coming back. April 4th, Renaissance National presents the once-every-five-or-six-years gala **Spring Ball**. It's a chance to get dolled up and entertained in the suburban Philadelphia area. Given the outstanding success of the **10th Anniversary Party** at the **Park Ridge Hotel**, and since the folks at the Park Ridge love us, we're holding the Spring Ball at... The Park Ridge Hotel at Valley Forge.

Ticket prices are not yet finalized but will be in the neighborhood of \$45. That's for dinner and entertainment. Hors d'oeuvres and everything. What's the entertainment? That's still not finalized, but it will be good. We're thinking of bringing back the band that performed for the downtown GPC Holiday Party at the **Doubletree Hotel** several years ago. Other treats are also contemplated, and all should be finalized in time for the next issue.

We're going to make April 4 **Renaissance Day**, with seminars on issues of interest during the day at the GPC meeting site. If you buy a ticket for both the daytime seminar and the Spring Ball that night, your Ball ticket will be cheaper. The daytime seminars will include presentations by JoAnn Roberts, Lee Etscovitz, and others. (Maybe that Angela Gardner will come up with a good topic.) So start a special Spring Ball Event account at your bank, put a new dress on layaway, and watch for the flyer with all the details in the next issue.

Stand Up and Be Counted

As everyone renews their membership for 1998 (you have renewed by now, haven't you?) we are sending out two things along with the membership card. First is another form to fill out. Yeah, I know, just what you need. You don't have to fill it out. It's just an optional way for us to assess the skills and expertise of our members. If you are uncomfortable telling us what you do for a living, or what your hobbies are, don't send it in. If you're comfortable letting us know, then by all means send it back. If we can check the files and find out that we have six people who are skilled in a certain area that we happen to need assistance with, then we are more likely to find one person who can help out.

The second item is a wallet/purse card with information on how to contact Renaissance. If you are out in public and you meet other crossdressers, just whip out your Renaissance wallet card that asks the question, "Have you met Mona?" That way more folks can find out about us, and Renaissance will grow. If you have renewed through your chapter and not gotten the cards, contact your Chapter Leader and ask for them. If they're fresh out, call the National Office and leave your name and address. We'll send them to you.

One more reminder about the Renaissance name change. While the name is now **The Renaissance Transgender Association, Inc.**, our mailing labels /envelopes, etc. will never feature the word "transgender" at any time. After we use up the sev-

eral boxes of Renaissance Education Association, Inc. envelopes taking up space in the office, we'll go to a simple "Renaissance" in the return address. So, don't worry, be happy.

Baby, It's Cold Outside

Winter stinks! Which means one thing—staying inside and watching television. Over the past couple of months it's been that way. I've noticed that we seem to be very popular again with the folks who make television shows. Everywhere you look it's another guy in a dress. **Lady Chablis** was on **Entertainment Tonight**, Drew Carey's TV brother was a TV, Allie McBeal advocated for a TG hooker, it was a **RuPaul Christmas** on **VH1** November 29th, drag queens from across the land had their own special on HBO in December, and New Year's Day was **RuYear's Day**, with twenty four hours of the RuPaul Show. It's all too much. I can't take another sequin.

Twenty years ago all we had on television was Geraldine (who's back on cable, I might add) and an occasional foray into fashion from Uncle Miltie. Now, every time you change the channel there's a fella in a frock. So, if you haven't yet ventured outside your home in a dress, take a look at the world and notice how much more we are accepted. All people need is a place to classify you and they won't be amazed when you show up in a restaurant or at the mall. Your appearance in their midst becomes a non-event. Let's get out there and show them we got class. Then we can begin to turn acceptance into respect.

Carey Cares

I reamed the Drewmeister for his remarks on the **Late, Late Show**, and the boys come around. As a direct result of *News & Views'* intervention, Mr.Carey tried to do the right thing for crossdressers. Yeah, sure. Actually it was probably in the can many moons before Drew mis-spoke on Snyder.

We all know by now that his show from November 19th featured a crossdressing brother who needed a

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job. Drew, in his Personnel Director capacity, hires him to work in the store's Cosmetics Department. Of course Drew doesn't know about his brother's proclivities, and of course the brother shows up for his first day on the job in a lovely frock from Lane Bryant. Without these elements we would have no conflict...and no plot.

The show attempted to be open-minded and positive. Drew is at first upset but comes to the defense of his brother when the boss (a man who was seen in a previous episode in Priscilla...drag) orders him fired due to the conservative nature of the clientele.

Now gay activists are up in arms about the mistake the show made. When Drew asked his brother if he's gay and the brother says he's not, Drew says it's too bad, 'cause if he was gay, he'd be protected by Federal law. Wrong, Drew-o-matic. **The Employment Non Discrimination Act** did not pass Congress last year, so gay people do not have protection under the law. And, oh yeah, the "straight" gays who supported ENDA did not want transgendered people included in the legislation. Now there's something for us to get up in arms about. No ENDA without TG inclusion.

I got mail from the TG community complaining that the crossdresser character trivialized crossdressing. One of Drew's friends asked the brother why he likes to dress, and he told him that basically everything is better in panties. The complainer felt that telling it that way made it too erotic. Well, newsflash, crossdressing is erotic. It's this country's attitude toward any kind of sex that needs to change. It may be erotic, but it ain't dirty.

So, thanks to Drew for doing the right thing and featuring a crossdresser in a positive light, but tell 'em to get the facts right. Get on the horn to ABC. Let them know that not only are gays not covered by a Federal law, we're not either.

Another Attempt At Compassion

David E. Kelley Productions

has brought us TG characters in the past. Back in 1996 Kelley was responsible for **Picket Fences**. Remember the plot involving the crossdresser that Max met on the Internet? Now Kelley's producing **Allie McBeal**, an attorney show with a gimmick. Allie used to have brief attacks of imagination that would be seen on screen, so the viewer could tell how she really felt about what had just happened to her, i.e., a man she is very attracted to casually mentions that he's married, and while Allie keeps a straight face and says "That's nice," we see a quick shot of a giant arrow flying into her chest. The gimmicky stuff must not have worked too well. After several letters from viewers without a clue (How's come you shot that nice girl with an arrow, and then she was alive again, anyhow?) they've shifted to a more normal presentation. (Remember how well Steven Bochco's singing courtroom drama worked?)

In the December first episode, Allie defends a pretty young prostitute named Stephanie (played by gay actor Wilson Cruz). The gimmick in this show was the prostitute's TG nature. One of the show's regulars informs Allie that, "Stephanie's a he."

Allie goes for an insanity defense. Stephanie doesn't want to go along with it, but Allie keeps telling her if she wants to avoid jail it's the only way. Then, when they get to court, the judge decides to suspend the case for a year, and if the hooker keeps her nose clean she'll dismiss it.. It depends on the TG girl getting a regular job.

Allie to the rescue. She gets her hired at the law firm. Stephanie gets to come to work crossdressed, everyone calls her Stephanie, and she designs a dress for Allie out of gratitude. Everyone goes out to a nightclub, and the girls all dance together. It's all great fun. Till Allie gets a call and rushes out one night to find Stephanie dead on the street after a john kills her.

Allie cradles the dead girl in her arms and soils her designer jacket

hugging her body. The show ends with a scene in which Allie puts makeup on Stephanie's corpse at the morgue.

All the compassion and empathy is really swell, but... some of the things that are said and implied are not so nice. Allie says that Stephanie is very confused. She didn't seem confused to me. We are told that Stephanie has moved to the big city from Ohio, and she is all alone. Where are the transgender support groups? The gay/bi/lesbian/TG community centers? It seems Stephanie exists in a vacuum where she hooks, then hangs out in her apartment and designs dresses. If you had to hook for a living, and were offered a chance to avoid jail, and given a job, wouldn't you stay off the street? We're not given any compelling reason why she would go back. We're just presented with her going back and being killed.

All in all the episode was a little too much bleeding heart liberal, and too little real attempt at understanding. Viewers could too easily say, "Well, she went back out there 'cause she was confused, perverted, and had to have sex with men." Nah David, it don't play well out here where we live.

If you saw the episode or just read about it here and want to comment, direct correspondence to Brett King, Program Director, Fox Broadcasting Company, P.O. Box 900, Beverly Hills, CA 90213, fax 310-369-1433. If you're really hot about it, copy your response to the show's producers (Ren Mar Studios) and Fox's parent company (News America). Contact: "Ally McBeal," Ren Mar Studios, 846 N. Cahuenga Blvd., Bldg. A, 2nd Floor, Hollywood, CA 90038; Rupert Murdoch, Chair, News America Pub., Inc., 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10030, tel. 212-852-7000.

A Bird By Any Other...

A couple of years ago I mentioned TS singer **Dana International** in this column. She's the Israeli lady whose music has been approved for consumption by Orthodox Jews

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because she is, in the eyes of the rabbi, still a man. The irony is that Orthodox Jews are not allowed to listen to women sing, but since Dana is not a woman to them, they can buy all of her CDs that they crave. What a planet!

Now new controversy swirls around Ms. International since she was chosen to represent Israel in the **1998 Eurovision Song Contest**. Selection Committee Chair Gil Samsonov said that Dana's song, titled *Diva*, was "far and away the best" of the entries from Israel.

Of course, there are conservative elements, like Deputy Health Minister Rabbi Shlomo Ben-Izri, who think that Dana is an "abomination" in the eyes of the Lord, and that SRS is "worse than an act of sodomy." Hey Shlomo, after you have SRS you don't need to engage in sodomy. Lighten up, baby.

Dana has been in show biz for seven years, and she's a knockout. She was born Yaron Cohen in Tel Aviv and underwent gender reassignment in 1993. She sings in Arabic as well as in Hebrew, French and English. Her management claims she's sold a half-million albums in Cairo alone. Of course, when her male fans can say, "But Rabbi, it's not a woman, it's Dana," no wonder she's selling like hot cakes. Ms. International told the *Jerusalem Post*, "People in Israel don't know what drag is, they don't know how to appreciate it — it is a very primitive country sometimes."

Good luck Dana. After she wins the contest we'll tell you about it here.

Stuff At The End Of The Column

Look out jetsetters! Just when you thought it was safe to head back to Merry Olde London town, **Dame Edna** returns. April sees the return of comedian **Barry Humphries** to hose and heels as Dame Edna Everage in a new show in the West End, called **Edna: The Spectacle**. Barry has probably been itching to get back into drag. He just did a year as Fagin in the UK production of *Oliver*. Can ya blame him if he needs a little glamma? Of course not, kit-tens.


Edna: The Spectacle no doubt makes good use of the fact that Dame Edna is known for her spectacular specs. I have visions of production numbers featuring giant glasses. Elton John will have to attend, and I'm sure a good time will be had by all. If I can get a good fare over the Internet, maybe I'll fly in for the show. It occurs to me that Dame Edna has been known to sing her heart out from time to time. If she has any original numbers lying around, perhaps she should enter the Eurovision contest and go up against Dana International? That way, no matter who wins, we're happy.

Is it true? Yes, **Shaquille O'Neal** and **Dolly Parton** have one thing in common— they've both had breast reduction surgery. I guess it's tough to slam dunk when your boobs get in the way. That's what Dolly said. I don't know why Shaq had his

reduced. I did hear that **Dennis Rodman** wanted to know if he could use the leftovers. But seriously folks, ya don't want to have to wear a sports bra to work do you? OK, I forgot my audience. Maybe you do.

What's the dish on **Mick Jagger** admitting a fondness for feminine attire? It seems this Rolling Stone took some time off the tour to do some film work in drag. Mick portrays a crossdressing homosexual in Nazi Germany. When asked how he liked the part, he said his character wasn't the kind of girl you'd like to meet in a dark alley, but he said, "I always like dressing up like a girl." No word yet on the title or release date, but keep your eye on this space for further details.

With that, this column winds down to a close. Don't forget, next month is the Swimsuit Issue. Get your last minute pictures in as soon as possible. Oops! I gotta get my swimsuit shot taken. Fire up the hot tub and clear the snow off the deck. See ya next month, my little space monkeys.

This column is dedicated to the memory of my best friend, Jayne Marklin. Jayne passed away on November 22nd after a long struggle with cancer. She was the woman who made me the woman I am today, through her fashion advice, makeup help, and feet-firmly-planted-on-the-floor attitude. ("Sure, Angela is sooo beautiful.") I'll always miss her. God bless you Jayne. Please support the American Cancer Society or any other cancer-related organization. 

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WSF Response...

about? A \$15,000 loan guarantee!

IFGE is going to be hurt by all this. Of this I have no doubt. Winslow Street will also be hurt.

Will the harm be irreparable? I do not know. But I do know that the resources of the organizations in this community are paper thin, and we as a community cannot afford this type of name-calling and accusation. And anyone who does it should be held up to the light of day and have their motivation questioned.

Right now IFGE and Winslow need your support as never before. So please support us with a kind word and possibly a check. Our address is P.O. Box 229 Waltham Ma.02154-0229.

Respectfully Submitted,
Abby Saypen, Chair
Winslow Street Fund

Judy Osborne Responds:

Whew! Lots of "facts!"

Whether IFGE took a loan or a "loan guarantee," the single fact remained that money was taken out of the Winslow Street stock account. That money must be paid back to the account or the account will be diminished. No loan papers or repayment schedule have been circulated to the community despite repeated requests. The curious logic, that says IFGE set a precedent by getting away undetected with borrowing from Winslow once earlier, offers no justification.

Abby disputes one and only one item in my article, namely, that she tried to call me back and left a message. I didn't get one. I continue to stand by everything I wrote, including that.

IFGE has a tradition of operating in secrecy and shooting the messenger whenever something that's not

spun properly gets out into the community. Kerri Reeder, a Winslow Street trustee, was one of my sources for the article, though by no means my only source. Kerri disputes many of Abby's "facts." IFGE's new Executive Director, Nancy Nangeroni, already has informed Kerri that "you cannot hope to continue as a WSF trustee after this." Abby's roasting of Kerri is still another example of that same IFGE tradition, and it needs to stop immediately. IFGE should be, and in fact must become, openly accountable to the community which provides its support and its reason for being.

It all boils down to one fact. IFGE promised not to use that money, and it broke its promise. Dallas Denny, a student of history, said it best: "...if IFGE doesn't like the WWI that's currently raging, it should never have shot the Archduke Ferdinand."



Patient Suit Over Sex Change

By Raphael Lewi,
Philadelphia Inquirer
Correspondent

Joseph Luther, now Rebecca Luther, said two therapists should have known it was too soon for surgery.

Joseph Luther, a Collingdale man, walked into a Wisconsin clinic at 10 a.m. on Nov. 3, 1992. Six days later, Rebecca Luther walked out. As "sexual-reassignment" surgery goes, the results were nearly flawless. Luther's male genitalia were gone, replaced with those of the opposite sex.

There was, however, one problem: Luther said he still felt like a man. And he sued his psychologist and his psychiatrist, contending they should have realized he wasn't ready for the surgery. They denied his allegation.

Last night, in what experts say is one of only a few cases of its kind in four decades of sex-change operations, a Delaware County jury decided Luther was partially right — but

awarded him just \$4,612 in damages.

The jury, which heard five days of testimony in front of Common Pleas Court Judge Clement J. McGovern Jr., decided that some culpability for Luther's predicament lies with Luther's former psychologist, Suzanne L. Bralow of Philadelphia.

Luther's lawyer argued to the jury that Bralow should have warned Luther's prospective surgeon that Luther was sometimes suicidal and had not done what specialists urge for any male sex-change candidate: live at least a year "full-time" as a woman before going through with surgery.

Lawyer John Luchsinger also argued that Bralow should never have counseled Luther in the first place because she was not trained to deal with gender-identity disorders. "The most common-sensical conclusion in May of 1992 was for Dr. Bralow to say, 'Wait a minute, I'm in over my head here,'" Luchsinger said in his closing arguments yesterday. "But she

never did that."

Bralow and her attorney, Frederic Rolling, argued that Bralow had referred Luther to a sexual-reassignment program at Pennsylvania Hospital but that Luther had decided not to enroll. In addition, Bralow said, she had only treated Luther's depression and never for a moment suggested that she was an expert in gender-identity disorders.

The award was tens of thousands of dollars less than what Luchsinger was seeking, the lawyer said.

"I think it's a moral verdict," he said afterward. "I don't think it's appropriate monetarily. Clearly, the jury wasn't understanding the damages involved here."

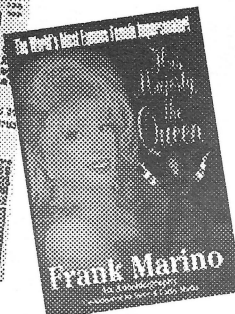
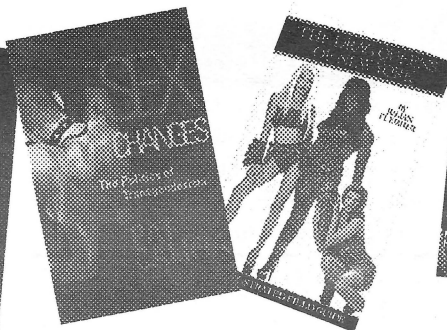
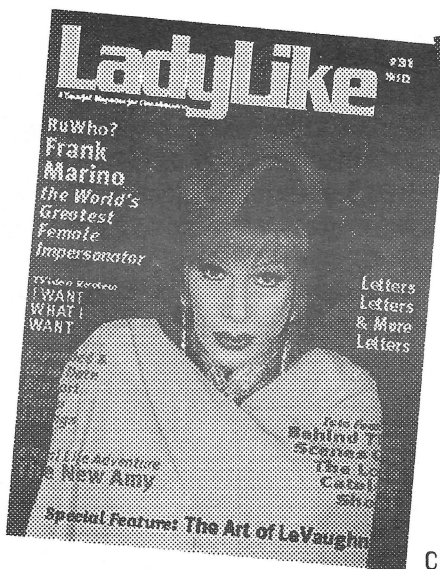
Luther, 40, who now lives in San Jose, Calif., showed little reaction to the verdict and left the courtroom without comment.

The jury completely exonerated

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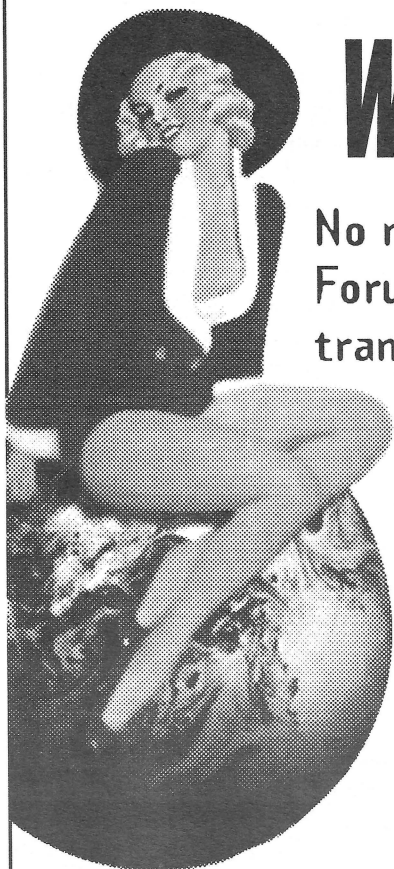
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by *Dina Amberle*

Here we are entering 1998 - two or three years (depending on who you believe) from the millenium - and forward thinkers like myself recognize that newsletters printed on hard copy are an anachronism. So I thought it would be fitting to begin this year's Vis a Vis as if written from an online chat room:

SweetTart: Wearing lace panties and a slip here.

TV4U: Do you do guys?

Wannabe: Anybody know where I can find size 13 sling backs?

SweetTart: Wearing 6" heels from Fredericks here.

TVChaser: Anyone got pix to send?

TV4U: I like to do guys.

Wannabe: Can anyone help a novice?

TV4U: Wannabe, do you do guys?

TVChaser: Got any pix, SweetTart?

RegularJoe: Bunch of faggots.

SweetTart: I might do a guy.

RegularJoe: Let's go private, SweetTart.

Wannabe: I just bought a pair of Silk Reflections pantyhose at WalMart.

TV4U: I like lace top thigh highs from Victoria's Secret.

NewGirl69: I look like Pamela Lee Anderson.

SweetTart: Got any pix, NewGirl?

Wannabe: Send pix.

TV4U: Do you do guys, NewGirl? Send pix.

TVChaser: List me for pix.

Okay, maybe this brave new world of online chat isn't the be-all and end-all after all. If you've been in a chat

room, you recognize the above sample of time-wasting nonsense. But if on the off-chance you do look like Pamela Lee Anderson while sitting in front of your monitor...send pix.

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

In the November issue of our own News & Views, Joann Roberts had an item in her "Hot Buzz" column about an emerging study to "determine the feasibility of combining the resources of several of the major [TG] organizations into one national umbrella organization."

The study team was to consist of members from IFGE, AEGIS, and Renaissance, with other organizations being consulted as the study progressed. Joann also stated that this effort would not likely evolve into a "merger." In last month's December issue of News & Views, JoAnn announced that the study was "dead," after what was seen as foot-dragging on the part of the IFGE board.

Elsewhere in our December issue was printed a letter, authored by Lee Etscovitz, informing the other parties to the discussion that we would not be participating in the planned teleconference call to discuss the "merger possibility." Lee signed the letter as "Renaissance Merger Committee Representative."

Three things came to mind as I read this development: 1) that Joann had said in November that the project was not a merger of the groups but simply a "study" to consider a separate umbrella organization; 2) the committee formed by our own board apparently was referring to the project as a "merger," hence Lee's ad hoc

title; and 3) the unsurprisingly rapid self-destruction of a transgender community master plan.

I wouldn't have had any strong opposition to the concept of a merger of our group with other strong groups to create a larger, more powerful national presence. Although the blame for demise of this idea seemed to be laid at the feet of IFGE, it also seems that Renaissance did not really have a clear idea what we were participating in, since Joann had said it wasn't a merger, but our study group was called a "Merger Committee."

And finally, this is another inexplicable community controversy involving IFGE. When I think back on the several instances where IFGE has alienated local groups and its own management members through mismanagement of communications and funds, I wonder if it isn't time for IFGE to "lead, follow, or get out of the way."

COMING OUT...MAYBE

There were two articles related to coming out" to co-workers in recent newsletters. Melanie Yarborough had a short piece, titled, "The Great Halloween Debate," which appeared in the October issue of the elections Newsletter of the Neutral Corner group in San Diego, California.

Melanie dealt with the great temptation we have all felt to use the cover of the Halloween holiday to reveal ourselves to co-workers by wearing our "costumes" to the workplace. Melanie pointed out a few pitfalls of doing so, particularly if you don't really wish to "come out" as a true cross-dresser.

While it may seem like a harmless yet exciting way to finally show your colors to co-workers, there are a few things to bear in mind before baring one's inner self, however much you might wish to make it appear to be simply a Halloween disguise. She cautions anyone considering such a lark to remember that observant co-workers may put "two and two together."

If one looks a little too good in drag, or if one has naturally long hair,

or pierced ears, or has supported gay rights in lunch table conversations, sharp-eyed friends may be able to discern that Halloween may not be the only time of year you don the girlish mufti.

If one wishes to come part way out by planting the seed that you may be a crossdresser, then Halloween dress-up may be a good idea. If however, you simply wish to take the opportunity to strut your stuff without necessarily revealing your true feelings about drag, then it should be considered carefully before doing something brash that you may never live down.

Juana Smith, the spouse of a crossdressing partner in San Francisco's ETVC group, wrote an article, titled "Pronouns, or a Story About Coming Out," that appeared in their Channel newsletter's November-December issue. Juana told her readers that she is beginning to feel stifled by not being able to tell any of her co-workers how she spends much of her free time in activities with ETVC (she's an active member and officer of the group along with her spouse, Veronica).

This is a sentiment with which many of us can relate. We are proud of our participation in our groups, yet it is not something that can be freely spoken of because of the secret nature of our crossdressing. Juana found an interesting compromise position by letting it be known-when asked-that she volunteers her time in a transgender support group.

This is a strategy that can work for a spouse, although it effectively "outs" the crossdressing partner. But Juana has now found a way to share her experiences with co-workers, giving her an outlet to relate her volunteer activities with ETVC in the same way that others might relate their extracurricular work in other organizations.

With ETVC being the socially active group it is, I'll wager that her lunch table conversations are a tad more exciting than her co-workers' stories of their kids' soccer matches.

IT ONLY TAKES A MINUTE, GIRL

The Seahorse Magazine, published by the Seahorse group down under in New South Wales, Australia, printed an article by Wendi Pierce titled, "The Mechanics of Gender Perception." The original article carried a 1990 copyright and one can only suppose that the distance of 20,000 miles prevented it from being published earlier by our Aussie sisters. The article is long and very exhaustive in its treatment of how gender signals are perceived by others.

The author mentions that the ability to discern gender differences has been identified even in infants. Although it isn't actually stated, the implication is that perception of gender difference is a human instinctual trait. Wendi refers to a "gender template" that includes all the stereotypical physical characteristics of masculine and feminine behavior.

An individual perceiving another individual measures the other party against this imprinted template to determine whether the person is male or female. The scary thing about this template theory is that the measurement is almost instantaneous upon sight of the other person.

Physical characteristics, such as size and general outward appearance play a major part, but just as important are more subtle physical behaviors, such as "how one occupies space" and "overcompensation." In other words, body language also plays a role in the measurement against the natural template of gender.

If one does not match the template of obvious and subtle gender factors, "the war will be lost in milliseconds," according to Wendi. This points up the great fallacy about "passing" as the other gender. In the first few seconds of observation, most of us are dead giveaways.

At best, you can confuse the other person's immediate perception through careful artifice, but the ruse will only succeed until the other party has time enough to weigh the dozens of factors that separate the girls from

the boys. Therefore, instances of "passing" are not so much a total success of "illusion" as they are of "confusion."

TV'S MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENTS

The November issue of the FEM newsletter of the Phi Epsilon Mu chapter of Tri-Ess in Winter Park, Florida carried a few contributions by members concerning their most embarrassing moments in drag.

Among the stories were member Gina's account of a shopping expedition with her wife. Although not crossdressed while they were shopping, inside the store her spouse kept referring to Gina by her femme name. Another member, Betsy, told her story of being caught in her sister's clothing when the family came home unexpectedly.

That's one that most of us have lived through, one way or another, in pursuit of our feminine muse. In another instance, Kelly relates a story that took place right here in Philadelphia when Renaissance hosted the IFGE convention in 1993. While crossdressed she locked her room key behind her and had to rely on the front desk and security personnel to let her back in.

I'm sure we all have our own embarrassing moments. I certainly have mine. But there is something about these moments that remain with us as triumphs long after the red has left our faces. Oftentimes, such moments are among our most prized memories of being crossdressed. Perhaps it is because we reveal ourselves to the world in those moments.

We suddenly find ourselves part of the fabric of society, no matter if it is frightfully silly at the time. And that is something we all secretly wish for when we venture forth into the public arena.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

Despite the seeming increase in acceptance of crossdressing in society, many of our community support groups are experiencing trying times

continued on page 15



Gender Reflections

by *Barbara F. Anderson*
M.S.W., Ph.D.

Guilt, Shame and Secretiveness

In talking with many transgender individuals—TSs, TVs, drag queens, etc.—in my role as therapist, I have wondered what common factors might exist in the backgrounds of these individuals. Of course, I found no similarity in social class, education, religious orthodoxy, or ethnicity. Nor have I found any in patterns of child rearing, birth order or the marital relationship of parents.

I did note that cross-gendered male children who demonstrated effeminate behavior had poorer relationships with their fathers, were rejected by their peers and were generally unhappier. However, boys who did not behave effeminately reported being accepted in family and social situations. Interestingly, girls who demonstrated masculine interests did not describe being discriminated against as were their effeminate male counterparts. So, was there to be no

common experience that young cross-genders shared that set them apart from their peers?

The one commonality reported in the early development of a majority of TG adults are feelings of guilt and shame and the concomitant behavior of secretiveness. This is understandable in the effeminate boy who endures ridicule and rejection. But it occurs also in the cross-gendered child whose behavior either attracts no special attention or the FTM girl who is valued for her male-identified qualities.

Even these children, when seeking treatment as adults, report having felt guilt and shame. At various ages, whenever they become aware of their gender differences, their response is consistent. Not one client has reported feeling good about wishing to be the other sex or desiring to dress in clothes or play with toys associated

with the opposite gender. Even those who do not engage in behaviors that elicit negative response from others seem to have an internal sense that they should be happy being the boy or girl they were born to be.

This ambiguity must indeed be difficult for youngsters. That drive to be themselves, which brings them comfort and satisfaction, also causes them terrible distress in the form of shame and guilt. Shame is the result of feelings of inadequacy; guilt arises from believing one is bad. Both behaviors cause children and adults to become secretive in an effort to prevent others from learning what they know of themselves.

Because gender is so pervasive in one's development, the TG person becomes increasingly secretive about more and more aspects of his/her life—from one's favorite color, to hobbies, career choices, dreams for the future, etc. By the time the TG adult seeks therapy voluntarily, he/she often describes a life marked by social isolation and low self-esteem.

Next month I will write about approaches in working with gender-questioning youth. Are cross-gender behaviors a mental disorder?

Can/should they be treated in therapy? What outcomes should be sought?



Sex Change...

Luther's former psychiatrist, Steven Secunda of Springfield, Delaware County. James P. Kilcoyne, Secunda's attorney, argued that his client "had nothing to do with this case and should never have been sued."

Secunda, like Bralow, had written to Luther's surgeon before the operation but only saw Luther five times in the span of a year. Luther had stopped going to Secunda for therapy seven months before the surgery.

While experts say sex-change candidates need to try living as the other sex for at least a year and get approval

from a specially trained gender-disorder psychologist as well as a psychiatrist, no laws require such steps.

"This is a very sad case," said Carol Cobb-Nettleton, a gender-identity-disorder specialist who testified that she had attempted to dissuade Luther from undergoing the procedure. "It's a tragedy."



Take Note:

As already announced, our organizational name is now **Renaissance Transgender Association, Inc.** However, all mailings will only use the name "Renaissance" in the return address.

The word "transgender" will not appear. For the time being, we will continue to use up our current supply of envelopes showing "Renaissance Education Association."

Save this date: On Friday evening, January 23, 1998, at The Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center at 208 West 13th Street, New

York City, the Gender Identity Project will present *They Lived It OUT*. This presentation will be a night to remember and honor all people of transgender experience who have died from AIDS, illness, suicide, violence, addictions and old age.

For further information, call 212-620-7310.



Resolution Or Revolution

by *Vanessa Kaye*

Life is found through living. There are no secrets that anyone can give you to help you along the way, and there are few, if any, absolute truths that will apply to all situations. What works for some people may not work for you.

When I was living and working in Japan, a very close friend of mine used to say to me, "The world is not simply black and white. It is an infinite number of shades of gray." At the time, I was younger, a bit more idealistic, and much less experienced. I didn't agree with him then, but I do now. Without his knowing it, he described the transgender experience quite well.

Linda and I are constantly receiving letters and calls for help from crossdressers, transsexuals and partners. All of them are asking us to "give them the answer" that will make the pain, hurt, frustration, anger and guilt go away. Of course, that is impossible. Each of us, no matter what our demons may be, must face them on our own.

My son, who is five years old, is extremely precious to me. I constantly worry about his safety and wish that I could protect him from all of the physical and emotional dangers that exist in the world. No matter how clearly I tell him that something is dangerous or might hurt him, he has an inner need to experience the consequences on his own.

If, for example, I tell him that he shouldn't touch something because it is hot, he is unconvinced. As soon as I turn my back, he touches the object in question and learns the facts. While I cannot prevent him from exploring his universe, which is his "job," I am there to kiss the burn and make it better. That is what dads do. And it is also what friends do.

Even though it sometimes pains me to witness my son experiencing his world, I am, at the same time, proud of his determination to explore and learn. This childlike outlook, which is natural for young people, is what many of us lack as adults. It is a sad loss and something that we should all try to regain.

At New Year's, it is traditional, albeit meaningless, for many people to make resolutions concerning their lives. A great number of these resolutions have a limited life, and then people return to their former ways. Rather than making resolutions about modest changes in behavior, what if one decided upon a "revolution" in his or her life?

Can a person "change?" Is it possible to become the individual that you wish to be? Would you be surprised if I were to say, "No, you cannot change." It is very much like the humorous remark we have all heard before, "No matter where you go, there you are." That's exactly my point. No matter how hard you try to be someone other than yourself, you

will always be you. You cannot become someone or something you are not. However, you can become the person that is inside of you.

Despite the great number of persons living in the world, all are individuals. Each has his or her own special talents, interests, hopes, desires and dreams. Trying to fit into a black and white world, or conforming to one of a few accepted types, is a violation of our inner nature. Living a life of denying your inner-self is the real deviant behavior. Attempting to be the person who others will accept, rather than the person you are, is what is unnatural.

It is clear that many gender-gifted persons and their spouses/partners are unhappy. It is well understood that they want change. What is the right "change?" Only the persons concerned can answer that question. As I stated in the beginning, "Truth is found through living." There isn't a right answer, there isn't a wrong answer.

There is, however, "an" answer. If you want transformation in your life, or in a relationship, you need to make it happen. Those who fail to accept the need for a peaceful change make a violent revolution inevitable, whether this change be in your own life or in a relationship.

Living, true living, is dynamic; it is ever-changing and ever-flowing, much

continued on page 14

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Hot Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



"All the problems of the world could be settled if people were only willing to think. The trouble is that people very often resort to all sorts of devices in order not to think, because thinking is such hard work."

— Thomas J. Watson

It would seem that Watson hit the nail on the head in regard to the **Winslow Street Fund (WSF)** "loan" of \$15,000 to the **International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE)**. One has to wonder, "What were the WSF trustees thinking?" People are most upset over the violation of trust the community invested in the WSF. They promised never to use the principle for IFGE operations. And, amazingly, except for the trustee, **Kerri Reeder**, who blew the whistle, the WSF doesn't seem to understand how it broke that trust. Most folks are saying they'll not give the WSF any more money. The post-loan recriminations are hysterical. Reading the email flying back and forth is like reading *The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight*. The most surprising revelation was that the WSF is **not a separate trust** fund as everyone assumed. That means the WSF is an **asset** of IFGE. If IFGE goes down the tubes, the WSF goes with it. That's how both IFGE and WSF justified the loan. Like most things IFGE has done in the

past, it did what was expedient rather than set up the WSF correctly.

One thing I think should happen immediately is for **Abby Saypen** and **Laura Caldwell** to resign from both the WSF and IFGE boards. This mess is their doing. Saypen is the **chair** of the WSF trustees and a member of the IFGE Executive Committee. Caldwell is the **treasurer** for both IFGE and WSF. Their participation on the WSF board is a conflict of interest for IFGE. Had any other organization asked for a \$15,000 loan, it would have been turned down. My own opinion survey says IFGE has seriously damaged its ability to raise future money. The one bright spot in this mess is IFGE's Executive Director, **Nancy Nangeroni**. For once, I don't mind eating a little crow. I had wondered if she was up to the managerial requirements of her job. Nangeroni has kept a cool head throughout this crisis. According to insiders, Nangeroni is the first Executive Director in years willing to make the really tough decisions about the future of IFGE. Maybe she can pull them out of their 4-year tail spin.

I worry about the **spill-over** effect IFGE's financial woes will have on the rest of our community's organizations. For example, last year when **Renaissance** asked for donations, some people asked if the organization was going to become "...like IFGE, always asking for money..." Renaissance, **Tri-Ess**, **AEGIS**, **FtM International**, **American Boyz**, and **ICTLEP** all depend, to varying degrees, on donations. Please remember all the good works these organizations do and try to send them a little something. From \$5 to \$5000 will be greatly appreciated.

My eye was caught by the headline, "**Transsexual Sues Therapist**," in the Sunday paper local news section. The news item was written very matter of

factly. A post-op **MtF transsexual** sued her former therapist and psychiatrist because she had reassignment surgery, in her words, "too soon." When I read stuff like that it makes me ill. This person refused to take **responsibility** for her own actions and now wants others to pay, literally, for her mistake. Interestingly, neither the psychologist nor the psychiatrist actually approved her for surgery. Nor did the person complete a "real life test." It was pretty clear from the article that she had circumvented the **Benjamin Standards** in one way or another. But the jury must have felt sorry for her because it awarded her a little over \$4,000. She had sued for tens of thousands of dollars. If I had been on the jury, I'd have argued instead for her to pay the two counselors.

We focus pretty intently on **MtF** issues because, until recently, MtF TVs and TSs made up the "known" TG universe. Well, we know differently now. Our **FtM** brothers are out there doing, working and struggling just as we did, maybe even harder. One thing is for sure. Once we added FtM to the mix, people started to take the transgender community seriously. **Phyllis Frye (ICTLEP)** says they blow away all the old stereotypes about transgendered people. So how do you find out more about FtM people? You couldn't make a better start than by attending **The True Spirit Conference** on FtM Issues, February 20 - 22, 1998, in Laurel, Md. Contact Gary Bowen, coordinator for the American Boyz, PO Box 1118, Elkton, MD, 21922-1118, or send email to: <transman@netgsi.com>.

I'm pleased to announce the **1998 Fall Paradise In The Poconos**, Sept. 24 - 27, will go on as scheduled. It was touch and go there for a while. **Bill**, the owner of the Pines Resort where we hold our event, was thinking of selling the place, and we were looking for a

Hot Buzz

new venue. But he called me just recently to tell me that the Pines will stay open and that he's looking forward to our group. In fact, he's going to focus on alternative lifestyle group weekends like mine. If you're looking for a great place to hold a small to medium sized event (50 to 100 people), get in touch with Bill at 717-595-7172. The food is fabulous!



Sometimes it's hard to see the forest for the trees. Many organizations don't seem to know they can get free web space to promote their organization on the Internet. The TG Forum's **Community Center** is home to many of the community's organizations, including Renaissance, IFGE, **Tennessee Vals**, **ETVC**, **GenderPAC** and many more. If your organization would like to host its own web page for free, just drop me a line and we'll get you set up. We're open to hosting **GLBT community centers** as well.



It will be most interesting to see how the **Supreme Court** handles a same-sex harassment case that will come before it this Spring. A male worker on an oil rig claims he was **sexually harassed** by his supervisor, also a male. A local district court said the harassment didn't violate federal law if it was between two males. That just doesn't seem to make any sense to me and it didn't to the victim and his lawyer, so they took it to the Supremes. Apparently, the object of the harassment wasn't masculine enough for the supervisor who grabbed the man's crotch and made lewd remarks to him. When the victim complained about the harassment, he was fired. What will be interesting will be how the Court defines sexual harassment in same-sex situations. It may come down to recognizing that gender presentation and gender role needs to be protected in the workplace.



This comes under the "we-already-knew-that" category. According to a blurb published in a recent Playboy magazine, 25% of 5000 men in a

British survey said they crossdressed at sometime in their lives, and 8% said they do it at least once a week. This is news?



The X-Files have a gillian fans, and if you'd seen the x-tremely erotic **Gillian Anderson** in the December issue of **Allure** magazine, you'd know why. LA Photog **David LaChapelle** snapped our x-girl in a **black leather** tube dress and in a **red hot polyester** tube dress, both of which show off an x-shaped figure and boobs we rarely get to see on the boob-tube. LaChapelle says Anderson is much sexier than she is on the show.



I've been hearing a bit of a buzz about my recent purchase of a **1967 Corvette**. Some people are scandalized that I can afford such an "extravagant" vehicle. I think they're just jealous. Besides, it's called creative finance. Anyone with a good credit rating can do it. It's also my fifth Corvette. I sold my '65 convertible in 1985, and I've regretted it ever since. My goal is to own both a '57 and a '67. Meanwhile, I'm planning a special photo layout in a future issue of **LadyLike** called **Hot Rods**. I want pictures of transgendered people and their cars, preferably sports cars. Send the pix to me care of LadyLike Magazine, PO Box 61263, King of Prussia, Pa., 19406.



The December issue of **Glamour** magazine handed out hosiery awards. They had real women test 177 pairs (55 different kinds) of hose and here are the results...Longest Lasting Sheer: **Hanes Resilience** Strong & Sheer, \$6.50... Most Natural Nude: **Donna Karan** The Nudes, \$13.50...Sexiest: **Victoria's Secret** Couture Collection Fishnets, \$12...Best Supermarket Brand: **L'eggs** Sheer Comfort, \$4.99...Best Mail Order Buy: **Victoria's Secret** Glamour Sheers, \$7.50...Best Technical Development (& most expensive): **Wolford** Fatal Opaque (totally seamless), \$45.



So I went to see **Midnight In The Garden of Good and Evil**. I have to say the **Lady Chablis** handled herself very well for an semiprofessional. (It wouldn't be quite right calling a female impersonator an "amateur.") What was

interesting, though, was how much of Chablis they put into the movie. **John Berendt's** best selling book is about Savannah and the people living there, and it eventually leads up to **Jim William's** murder trial. Naturally, Chablis is a part of the "color" of the city. However, the movie focuses on the murder trial, and Chablis could have been excluded with no loss to the story. Actually, the **A&E** network did a special, called **Midnight In Savannah**, that tells the story almost as well as the movie and gives much more insight into the various characters involved. Nevertheless, Chablis is another transgendered character in a film we can add to our list of positive models. Oh, and Chablis says she's sold the movie rights to her own autobiography, **Hiding My Candy**, and expects to be playing herself again. Chablis, honey, you ain't no spring chicken. By the time they get around to actually doin' this film, you better want some fresh queen to play you, girl!



Looking for a little something to pump up your glam look for the winter season? Try these tricks... **Individual** eye lashes for the most natural looking lashes (takes a bit of time). Look for Il-Makiage Individual Lashes... For that just-spent-a week-on-the-beach look, try a **bronzer**... Change the color of your eyes with Wesley Jessen FreshLook **disposable contacts**... **Dragon Lady** nails are "in" again. Look for salon-style tips... **Fake lashes** in goofy colors... And last but not least, a **beauty mark**.



The **stiletto** is still the "in" shoe for the fashion conscious. Wearing 4-inch spikes can cause a serious inflammation called **plantar fasciitis**, characterized by a dull ache in the heels, balls of the feet, and arches. The cure is a silicone heel cup, some ibuprofen, and foot baths. But one can wear these tottering towers without a problem if the fit is good and you limit the amount of time you wear them.



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

Resolution...

like a river. If you have spent the past building a dam to stop or alter your life's flow, this is the time to make a change. This year, unlike those of the past, there will be no "resolutions." Rather, there will be a "revolution." No longer will the dam be maintained or built ever higher. This year it will be demolished. Unlike the years of the past, there will be no more denial of your inner-self. This applies not only to the transgendered but to the partner as well.

The beauty of the rose is that it is what it is without trying to be something else. You cannot be someone you are not, but you can strive to realize the wonderful person that lives within you. This year, discover your own shade of gray.



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The Story of John/Joan

From AEGIS Internet News, December 8, 1997

The December 11 *Rolling Stone* features the most extensive article yet in mainstream media regarding intersex issues and, specifically, the story of "John/Joan," the male infant who doctors turned surgically into a girl 25 years ago. The case set a precedent for sex reassignment as the standard treatment for thousands of newborns with similarly injured, or irregular, genitals. It also became a touchstone for the feminist movement in the 1970's, when it was cited as proof that the gender gap is purely a result of social conditioning, not biology.

For Dr. John Money, the medical psychologist who was the architect of the experiment, the case was to be the most publicly celebrated triumph of a 40-year career that recently earned him the accolade, "one of the greatest sex researchers of the century." "But the experiment was a failure," author John Colapinto writes. The article goes into the family of "John/Joan," and also the history of the ego, ambition and ideology of Dr. Money. It recounts the hostility Money had to Joan when she, as a child, resisted attempts to make her a "normal" girl. Colapinto also reveals how Money glossed over profound

contradictions in his published reports on the case, including Joan's repeated insistence that she did not see herself as a girl, and her total hostility towards Dr. Money as the years wore on.

As soon as Joan was told what had happened to her, "her decision to undergo a sex change was immediate," Colapinto says, "and eventually Joan became John." The author explains that John agreed to work with Dr. Milton Diamond on a recent report which would call into question the value of intersex infant surgeries and how gender and sexual orientations are developed: "[When] John learned about his fame in the medical literature and how his reportedly successful switch from girl to boy stood as the precedent upon which thousands of sex reassignments had since been performed, that was good enough for John."

Finally, the author gives an excellent assessment of the work of the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) and the push of intersex people for dignity, freedom from enforced sex reassignment, and for the "end of the idea that it's monstrous to be different," according to ISNA Director Cheryl Chase.



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Vis A Vis...

in both membership counts and financial support. Oddly enough, there is a parallel to our community's travails in the world of professional athletics.

Even though professional sports franchises have been and continue to be one of the most surefire investments, owners of these same franchises are crying poor mouth to anyone who will listen. The strategy of choice is to threaten to move the franchise to a greener pasture where the municipality will build them a

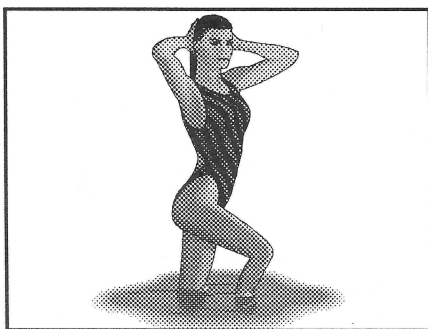
new stadium with a sweetheart lease giving them greater superbox and concession revenue.

The next favorite strategy is to redesign the team uniform to increase their marketing revenues by making everyone go out and buy new team shirts, caps, and beer coolers. I don't see any reason why we can't make this same strategy work for the transgender community.

In the 90's-and certainly in the new century-no self-respecting metropolitan area wants to be without a crossdressers' support group. If a group needs a new meeting place, play the old trump card and threaten

to move unless we get a "state of the art facility" (that's an important buzzword to use in these types of negotiations).

If the home city seems to be dragging its feet, put on a dog and pony show and shop the group around to other municipalities aching to break into the major leagues of compulsive behavioral disorders. It worked for the Oakland Raiders. Twice. No reason why it wouldn't work for us. As for brand marketing tie-ins: is there any activity more custom-made for a big bucks "shoe deal" than crossdressing?



It may be far from summer, but the time is near for News & Views annual Swimsuit Issue! Send us your best photos by January 10th for our fabulous pictorial next month!

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Ms. Lynda

Ginny Knuth (1934-1997)

by **Jamie Fenton**

The gender community mourns the passing of Ginny Knuth, a dedicated volunteer active in ETVC, IFGE, and the Significant-Other Support groups.

Ginny died of natural causes on November 23 at home in San Francisco after a lengthy illness. Ginny gave so much of herself to us that we named ETVC's highest service award after her. She earned international recognition as well; in 1994 IFGE honored her with a Trinity Award.

Ginny was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1934. Her first 40 years included a marriage and a business career in the Midwest. After a divorce she spent time in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, where a succession of friends introduced her to the gay community. Always heavy, Ginny had a poor self-image that these gentlemen encouraged her to improve. Like many women with close gay friends, she despaired of finding a straight lover with the same endearing qualities.

Ginny then met Don, a straight man who seemed special. After dating for a year filled with dread and trepidation, Don disclosed his transvestism and introduced Ginny to his alter-ego, Nancy Ann Martine. To Nancy Ann's relief, Ginny gave her a scarf to help cover her beard when she goes out. Nancy Ann then went to the Dream convention in 1983 and discovered ETVC.

Next month, Nancy Ann and Ginny visited the 1983 ETVC

Halloween Social. Drawn into the group, Nancy Ann and Ginny were elected to the Social Committee, and then later Nancy Ann was elected Treasurer. Ginny served for many years as our office administrator.

Ginny's struggles to understand and accept Nancy Ann lead her to involvement with the Significant-Others Support Group and a long-running column in the ETVC Newsletter: "Ginny's Tales from the Other Side." Over the years, Ginny helped organize the ETVC Library and archives, the production and publication of the newsletter, the monthly Poker Social, and numerous social events and meetings.

After winning the Member of the Year Award several times in a row, it was decided to name it in her honor (partly to give others a chance to win it, too). Ginny served for countless hours on the ETVC hot line and was the first friendly soul that thousands of us encountered in our journeys out of the closet. She was always available for wives and girlfriends who were puzzled, upset, or curious about their gender-variant husbands and answered calls and correspondence from around the world.

Ginny's ties with the gay community in San Francisco has lead to years of cooperation with the Imperial Court system, involvement in GLBT events, and the remarkably harmonious relationship that the San Francisco gender community enjoys with the local gay and lesbian groups. Sadly, many of Ginny's gay friends

were lost to AIDS, and she gave much of herself in the battle against HIV.

A diabetic, Ginny's health began to fail in 1992. Despite this, she maintained a busy schedule with ETVC until the summer of 1997. While foreseen, her passing has brought much sadness to the Bay Area and to the larger transgender community. Ginny's life shows us how someone with a kind heart and a willingness to get involved can do so much to make the world better.

Ginny's contributions are summarized well in the 1994 Trinity Awards Ceremony program: "Ginny Knuth: A long-standing advisor to, and advocate of, the transgender community, Ginny has contributed notably in her association with the Educational TV Channel of San Francisco. Through the years she has contributed a huge amount to that organization's growth. She initiated and strengthened the bonds between the transgendered community and the gay/lesbian community in San Francisco. In all her efforts and involvements through the years, we appreciate that her prime motive has been her great love for us all."

We particularly wish to extend our sympathy and condolences to Nancy Ann Martine, who was faithfully devoted to Ginny until the end. Anyone who wishes to express their condolences may do so by sending a card to Nancy Ann Martine, 2478 28th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94116.



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Planning For Lobby Days 1998

by Dana Priesing

In an effort to plan ahead & improve the event (Lobby Days 1998), we've been doing some preliminary thinking & outreach work. Here's a brief report on the upcoming event & how one can help if interested.

THEMES AND ISSUES:

We would like to begin laying the foundation for an annual event that addresses issues of gender, racial & affectional equality, and addresses areas of oppression functionally rather than by emphasizing individual identities and rights claims. Moreover, we want to touch the next generation of stakeholders & leaders in activism around these issues, starting with students from the more than half-dozen major universities in the local Washington D.C. metropolitan area. With that goal in mind, we have met with, and will continue to meet with, student activists, to discuss issues & mechanics.

At this point the selected issues are tentative, but we'd like to concentrate on perhaps three to five of the following:

1) Hate Crimes/Tolerance: We suspect that the companion hate crimes bills will still be pending when next Spring rolls around, providing a vehicle for discussion and the opportunity to show support for the work of the D.C. hate crimes coalition. If the bills remain pending, the issue will be one that will attract some interest on Capitol Hill. On the downside, the

D.C. area universities are fairly tolerant environments. Bashings are rare, therefore this issue may not have great pull for potential student participants.

2) Job Discrimination/ENDA: This issue has a lot of pull among folk who identify as, or are perceived to be, TG, TS or gender-different—including students who have encountered difficulty finding work because of their gender expression (dress, manner, style, or the like). On the downside, unemployment is at a 25-year low, & interest in ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act) on the Hill is marginal at best. Therefore, this issue may not attract the sympathetic ear that we would prefer.

3) Freedom to Marry: This issue is hot hot hot with DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act), having been passed last year by Congress, and further moves are likely in Hawaii and other states. It strongly pulls folk from across the queer spectrum, including students. There's no current vehicle to use as an entre to discussion, but expression of disapproval for DOMA provides an entre to discussion of the disbenefits associated with inability to make legal unions. Downside: it could be like poking a stick in a bees' nest.

4) Solomon Amendment: A little background about this: the military bars Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgender folk from serving. In response, many universities barred on-campus military recruiting. In retaliation, Congress passed the Solomon

Amendment denying certain types of federal financial support to universities barring on-campus military recruiting. This issue seems to pull law students pretty well. Downside: Perhaps a bit complex.

5) Other Issues: Hopefully the ISNA (Intersex Society of North America) team will be back to talk about IGM (Intersex Genital Mutilation). In addition, we're investigating and chatting with students about appropriate issues involving race, Title IX, and HIV. And who knows what will come over the transom between now and next Spring. Got any good issue ideas? Let Dana Priesing know at 202-347-3024 or <danapriesing@earthlink.net>.

For those who are nervous about the broader political scene, take note: Lobby Days 1998 will deal with issues of gender-difference. So even if your main thing is job discrimination & you could care less about hate crimes or anything else, you oughta be there, & GenderPAC will not silence your voice. We like multiple voices, standing together.

WHEN: Easter is 4/12/98. We can expect Congressional and college recesses. Exam periods begin in late April. So, tentatively, let's say Lobby Days 1998 will be 4/20 & 4/21. Good chance for a warm couple of days. Perky students & staff just returning from recess. The possibilities look good.



To all Chapters and Affiliates:

If you have any special events or programs you wish to publicize, please inform the Editor at least one month prior to the event so it can be mentioned in
News & Views.

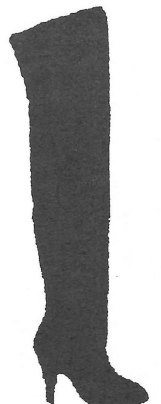
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Lee Etscovitz, Ed.D.

Making Sense of It All

Mirror Mirror

“Mirror Mirror on the wall, / who’s the fairest one of all?” So goes the famous question which has as much, if not more, meaning for the transgendered as it did for the wicked witch. Only we are not implying here any wickedness or evil intentions. On the contrary, for the transgendered this question refers to gender identity and overall lifestyle. Perhaps the question should read: “Mirror Mirror, please tell me: / What am I really meant to be?”

The question of one’s being, one’s total existence as a living human being, is at stake here. For the transvestite the question involves the issue of not only recognizing and accepting oneself as a crossdresser but also integrating occasional crossdressing into an existing lifestyle. For the transsexual, on the other hand, following the usually difficult task of self-recognition and self-acceptance, the issue is that of making a complete change of gender without destroying all chances for a satisfying lifestyle of some kind. In either case, the challenge is significant and oftentimes very difficult, if not life-threatening, for we are speaking in terms of such basic matters as faith, family, friends, finances, and thus one’s overall life.

A number of years ago this same concern for one’s total existence was the underlying theme in my college class poem, called “Ode to Freedom,” which I wrote and delivered at my graduation exercises. Two lines from that poem come to mind: “We all must stand before the looking glass / and face the naked image of our lives.” At the time I wrote those words I did not have a gender issue in mind, but I did have my life and my vocational concerns in front of me, plus my very private and personally

disturbing sexual fantasies, all of which combined to weigh heavily on my twenty-two year old soul. I was searching for answers, trying to make sense of it all, trying to make what I hoped would be good life choices. But I was not yet able to see fully what I really wanted to see: the so-called “naked” truth. I had feelings I could not or would not bring to the light of day, even though I yearned for a greater sense of inner peace. Those feelings, in this case gender-related, remained buried and at the same time disruptive for a major portion of my life.

Only recently have those feelings become real facts of my life. In the meantime I wrote another poem, again not directly gender-related and still predating my gender awareness and transition, but at least addressing the fact that feelings themselves are as real as everything else in life. Through life experience in general I was beginning to understand the implications of my original injunction about facing “the naked image of our lives.” The result of that awareness was a poem called, “Feelings:”

Feelings are real,
like the weather and time,
seemingly ridiculous
but always sublime,
invisible like air
yet always there,
parading as fun
or pressing as fear,
yet never done
and always near.

We take them to bed,
we take them to work,
we take them on trips,
we hide them as quirks.
Though feelings are real,
they are not really bad;

they may make you happy,
they make you sad.

Perhaps the child in each adult,
like seed beneath the ground,
can burst the shell of dormant
growth

to let the heart be found.

We have such little time to see
that all our hopes and fears
are part of all our laughter
and part of all our tears.

To speak of “the child in each adult” may very well be at the heart of what it means to face the naked image of our lives. As adults we often talk ourselves out of feelings and out of doing things which we think are childish. But childishness, while not always appearing rational, may very well be soulful and heartfelt and ultimately and fundamentally very rational. This is not to say that we should proceed to forget all or even some of our adult responsibilities. What I am suggesting is that, as adults, we find a way to build into our lives the freshness and genuineness which we ourselves knew as, and still see in, children, so that we might begin to experience what I like to call “sophisticated innocence.”

I am suggesting that we somehow step back, if only in special moments, from the so-called “adult” way of seeing things and begin to see our lives more simply, more innocently, that we may somehow remember, even in the midst of adult responsibilities, to be true to ourselves, true like a child but with the control and dignity of an adult. In fact, the child-like truth may itself be the fundamental dignity we all seek or seek to recapture.

All of this especially applies to

continued on page 22

Controversy In Greece

**AEGIS Internet News Digest
December 15, 1997**

ATHENS, Greece (AP) - In a country where few raise their eyebrows over extramarital affairs, many are raising a fuss over a man fired for having a fling with a transsexual.

Greece's high court last week disbarred deputy district attorney Giorgos Sakellaropoulos after his superiors discovered his former mistress was a transsexual and a former transvestite prostitute. The court questioned Sakellaropoulos' "social character," but many Greeks have rallied to his defense. Supporters claim he was sacrificed for crossing an ill-defined moral line.

They wonder, for example, if there would have been any problems if his mistress was born a woman, or if he was gay and sleeping with another

man. The groundswell against Sakellaropoulos' punishment pushed aside the nation's generally conservative facade and exposed the tolerant, live-and-let-live sentiments that are widely felt but rarely expressed openly.

"We are a sexist and racist society," raged columnist and television producer Nikos Mastorakis in an open letter to Sakellaropoulos, published in the Athens daily *Vradini* on Monday. "The system destroyed you because you fell in love with a woman who wasn't always a woman." Sakellaropoulos, 44, whose wife is currently expecting their second child, has threatened to take the issue to the European Court of Human Rights.

"I'm guilty, but I disagree with my punishment," he said. "My personal life concerns only me and nobody else."

A phone-in poll conducted by a television station found 82 percent of the 20,000 respondents believed it was wrong for Sakellaropoulos to be fired because of his affair. "It is as if he sacrificed his career on the altar of love," said the former mistress, Jenny Hiloudaki.

Formerly named Yannis Hiloudakis, Hiloudaki had a sex change operation in 1990 and has appeared regularly in the Greek media as a kind of erotic ambassador speaking about transsexuality, prostitution and other sexual matters.

Ms. Hiloudaki, who declined to give her age, said her affair with Sakellaropoulos is not over and proposed marriage on national television.

"I will be hurt if he stays with his wife now," she told viewers.



Victory In Name Change Case

PITTSBURGH (AP) - A man who has lived as a woman for 22 years but can't afford a sex-change operation won the right to legally change his name to Lisa.

Brian Harris was denied the name change by a county judge, but a three-judge panel of the Superior Court said other steps he has taken to change his appearance are enough. "As Tammy Wynette so aptly observed, "Sometimes it's hard to be a woman." This is especially true in this case, Judge Peter Paul Olszewski wrote Thursday for the majority in the 2-1 ruling.

Harris, 39, filed for the name

change last year, and his counselor said Harris frequently runs into problems because his driver's license identifies him as a man. Harris took estrogen and underwent surgery for breast implants and to feminize his face, but he couldn't afford genital sex-change surgery, said his counselor, Dr. Constance Saunders.

Harris told Judge Gerard Long he has used the name Lisa socially for 22 years. He said taking the name legally would avoid confusing others and embarrassment when asked to produce identification. Long denied Harris' request, basing his ruling on a state Supreme Court decision that

denied name changes for two other transsexuals who had received hormone therapy but not surgery to feminize their faces, torsos or genitalia.

Harris' facial and breast operations make his case different, the Superior Court panel said. "We believe that the better-reasoned approach is to require such a petitioner to demonstrate that he or she is permanently committed to living as a member of the opposite sex," Olszewski wrote.

The dissenting judge, Thomas Saylor, said allowing the name change "would be to perpetuate a fiction, since the fact remains that petitioner is anatomically a male."



Killer of Transperson Sentenced

[Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey, November 1997]

Brian Halter, 25, a former life-guard, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for aggravated manslaughter in the 1992 death of René Ouellet, 31, who worked as a female impersonator.

The AP reports that Halter, who will be eligible for parole in less than

2 years, beat and strangled Ouellet when he awoke on the beach from an alcohol-induced sleep and found Ouellet performing oral sex on him.

According to prosecutor Barbara Marino, Halter bludgeoned Ouellet with a board and left him for dead. Returning later to check on the body, Halter found that Ouellet had moved

to a different spot. He then choked Ouellet and buried him under the boardwalk.

Two weeks later, someone saw an arm sticking out of the sand and called police. Said prosecutor Marino, "We believe Mr. Halter is not likely to reoffend, but he needs to be punished for taking a life."



Renaissance Library Report

The Renaissance Library Discussion Group, in keeping with its new schedule of meeting on the first Wednesday of every month, met on December 3 at the Woods (Renaissance National headquarters and the Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting site). Attendance was the best yet, and the discussion was lively.

Just a reminder: everyone and anyone is invited to attend. The discussion, running from 8:00 PM to 9:30

PM, is facilitated by Dr. Lee Etscovitz, the Renaissance National Librarian. Various topics are covered, depending upon the interests of those present. No preparation is necessary, participants can attend in whatever mode of dress they prefer, and there is no fee. The Renaissance Library Discussion Group affords participants the opportunity to be heard but in a confidential setting. This is a service of Renaissance.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 7, 1998 from 8 to 9:30 PM. A possible topic will be the idea of a Big Sister Program, at least to help new Renaissance members in all the chapters, perhaps with some training being made available for Big Sister Volunteers. If you have thoughts on this matter, or if you have other issues you would like to discuss, your participation is more than welcome.



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If unable to keep appointment, kindly give 24 hours notice.

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Shopping With Jessica

by Jessica Brandon



Greetings, girlfriends! Welcome to 1998! I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday, and that Santa gave you everything you wanted! I rarely New Year's resolutions, mainly because I can never keep them, but this time it'll be different. I'm gonna try and find the company that'll invent the software to solve that little problem with computer clocks threatening to turn back to 1900 at the start of the millennium and invest in it, even though I know more about the supermarket than the stock market. Whoever pulls that off will make Bill Gates look like a pauper!

In the meantime, allow me to give you, my loyal fans, more advice to make you wiser and better shoppers. In my column from May 1996, I mentioned how department stores like Sears, Penney's, Macy's, Nordstrom's, et al, have hidden video cameras that monitor activity on the floor. In the store's Loss Prevention Department, highly trained men and women watch literally everything that goes on and are ready to pounce on any sort of suspicious people who might be ready to steal.

Unfortunately, men in dresses may sometimes be considered suspicious.

The key, as I mentioned in that past article, is to maintain your composure, to be calm, cool and collected at all times, especially when you're in a store and "dressed." Of course, this isn't at all easy to pull off, most of all not for newcomers out of the closet or for girls who haven't had much experience shopping as a woman.

With that in mind, here's some useful tips for you, what I call my "Three A's" for shopping en femme: Appearance, Attitude and Assertiveness.

Appearance: This is absolutely vital to your shopping excursions. Dress appropriately for your outing. That means no short skirts, clingy tops, spike heels or extravagant make-up. Avoid bright colors, and for God's sake, don't even THINK about wearing your big hair! Settle for more conservative attire, shirts, big sweaters, pants, loose fitting jeans, flat shoes and minimal use of cosmetics. A good idea would be to go to a mall, observe what women are wearing and emulate them. Blend in with your surroundings as best as possible.

Attitude: I can't say enough here about attitude, for attitude goes a long way when it comes to your expeditions. It's important to develop a mindset that you're a shopper and you want—no, DEMAND—to be treated just as fairly as the next person when you walk into that store. The key here is to think, breathe and exude confidence. As long as you believe with all your heart that you belong in that store, you won't be hassled, even if you don't pass with flying colors. After all, crossdressing isn't a crime, unless of course you do it badly

Assertiveness: As with anything else in life, it's always best to have a firm plan of attack instead of just flying by the seat of your panties. Prior to your trip, decide beforehand what

you're going to buy. This way, you avoid wasting time and attracting the notice of a store's Loss Prevention staff. As I mentioned earlier, their job is to look for anything out of the ordinary, and if you're aimlessly wandering from one area to another, hopelessly unsure as to what you want, that's sure to get you noticed in ways that you'd just as soon not want.

Okay, you've taken "The Three A's" to heart and picked out something nice for yourself. Where do you go next? That's easy: home. On the subject of dressing rooms, this is my opinion, and my opinion alone, but I'm of the belief that dressing rooms should be avoided like the plague. I know there have been lots of stories of our girls going into dressing rooms without any incident, and that's great. More power to those lucky people. But let's face facts, that's more the exception than the rule.

For every positive story about crossdressers in changing rooms, there are probably just as many negative ones with customers screaming bloody murder to security about a crossdressed man getting his kicks from watching women in various states of undress, often resulting in unpleasant encounters with the authorities. It's just not worth it. When you've chosen an outfit, buy it, take it home and try it on there, if it fits and it looks good on you, great; if not, hold on to your receipt (Commandment of Shopping Number Five) and return it to the store.

If, however, you feel you must try an item on before buying it, ask the salesperson (whether she knows you're a man in a dress or not) if it's alright to use the changing room. If she says yes, then you're free and clear, if not, then the game's over. Depending on the store's policy and the attitudes of it's management, some places may have no problem, others might. The goal of your shopping trips, other than outfitting your

continued on page 22

Shopping...

feminine alter ego, is to have fun, which is what shopping is all about, not to be a one woman show for the entertainment of a store's LP staff.

On my favorite topic, shoes, Betty Daniels of Frederick, Maryland was kind enough to provide me with some mail order resources for large size shoes to pass on to you: Comfort Corner (1-800-735-4994), 12WW to 13W, \$50-90; Coward (1-800-362-

8410), sizes to 14WW, \$46-120; Lane Bryant (1-800-477-7030), sizes to 14WW, \$20-100; Maryland Square (1-800-727-3895), sizes to 12WW, \$35-120; Massey's (1-800-462-7739), sizes to 13WW, \$30-85; Old Pueblo Traders (1-800-362-8400), sizes to 13WW, \$30-85. Thanks, Betty, you're a sweetheart!

Speaking of shoes, you might take note of one of the new ads in this newsletter. I'm referring to Flashdance (215) 725-8552, which offers sexy shoes and boots in large

sizes ranging in price from \$59 to \$185. I'll have more to say about Flashdance as I learn more about its product lines.

Well, kids, that's all for now. As always, feel free to send your comments, tips and opinions to treetop@voicenet.com. Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping, sisters!



Making Sense...

those of us who are, one way or another, transgendered and who want to be true to ourselves. The search for that truth, which involves recognizing it, accepting it, and integrating it into our ongoing lives, is usually very difficult, as I have already pointed out. For those of us who are having difficulty with that search, guid-

ance, usually in the form of a caring and wise counselor, can be extremely helpful, if not indispensable. None of us wants or even needs to be judged or lectured. Instead, we each need to be heard, understood, and helped to see the truth and its implications. When we each find the courage and the strength, or are simply desperate enough, to peer into our inner mirror, we then have a chance of finding the truth about ourselves, perhaps the

truth which we buried along with our own childhood. The quality of our adult lives really depends upon recovering, or perhaps discovering for the first time, that truth and then doing something constructive about it. It is the process of recovering or discovering one's personal truth that is the first step on the road to a life of fulfillment. "Mirror Mirror, please tell me: / What am I really meant to be?"



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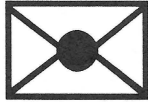
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Letters to the Editor

The December 1997 column of JoAnn Roberts contained some rather pointed remarks regarding the recent proposal to merge AEGIS, IFGE, and Renaissance. Unfortunately, there are a number of misleading statements in her observations.

JoAnn's reference to Linda Buten's initial objections were based on, a letter Linda sent to me on September 10. In her opening sentence, Linda admitted that since much of the information she had at that moment was based on hearsay, she wanted to clarify matters. She did request a personal meeting with me since we were both planning to attend Southern Comfort, and I felt it would be a good idea to bring her up to speed on the proposal and where it stood and responded positively and enthusiastically to her

request. I was shocked, therefore, when I received an e-mail from JoAnn a few days later in which she requested that I not meet with Linda based on what she had heard Linda had said to me in her letter. To my knowledge, JoAnn had not yet seen the full letter. In the past, JoAnn has consistently advocated improved cooperation and communication between individuals and groups, so it made no sense to me to turn my back on Linda regardless of whatever personal views she may have held on the merger proposal. My willingness to meet with Linda should not have been construed as an attempt at collusion between AEGIS and IFGE for the purpose of isolating Renaissance, but it appears that JoAnn jumped to that conclusion. When I met with Linda, we did disagree on various points, but all in all, I felt our discussion was a very friendly and positive one. And I would do it again because I feel such meetings are beneficial to the entire community.

As JoAnn knows full well, the board of IFGE did not meet to discuss the proposal until early October at Southern Comfort. Their previous meeting was held during Be All, two weeks before the Congress on Sex and Gender when the proposal was first discussed by leaders of the

three groups. When they did discuss it, there was debate, and individuals expressed concerns and objections, but the board of IFGE approved their participation in the Feasibility Study at Southern Comfort.

When JoAnn, Allison, Dallas and I met this summer in Pennsylvania to recommend a merger to our respective boards, one thing we did not do, but should have done, was designate a lead organization to set up the Feasibility Study. That was not done until Southern Comfort when I recommended that AEGIS take on that responsibility since our board meetings are already held by telephone conference call. Since only three of the six representatives were present in Atlanta that weekend, however, it took a few more weeks to coordinate the diverse and busy schedules of six people scattered from coast to coast. Although others have suggested a formal meeting of the committee was planned at that time, I never expected any such thing due to the absence of half the committee. The earth has been a good home to mankind, but it took millions of years of tectonic drift, volcanic resculpturing, and wind and water erosion to get it where it is today. It sometimes seems as if the gender community, which I also consider a good home, moves with the same speed, but things do get done eventually.

A meeting was finally planned for November 16. By that time, reports of another Linda Buten document had begun to circulate, and from my understanding, triggered JoAnn's anger even though, as with Linda's September 10 letter, she was responding to hearsay and had not yet seen the actual text. I, personally, did not see Linda's column in the IFGE newsletter expressing her objections until the day after I read JoAnn's remarks. While I disagreed with what Linda said, I do not believe that IFGE is at fault for scuttling the Feasibility Study. It is not IFGE who withdrew from the study before it even began.

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

All of the Background Papers and Community Outreach Bulletins are available for free at the Renaissance web site <www.ren.org>

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I am not attempting to excuse IFGE for any past or future mistakes. I have criticized it previously for numerous errors and reserve the right to continue doing so in the future.

I am saddened by JoAnn's attitude and her willingness to misinform others. While Renaissance may well have withdrawn from the study because it saw an independent role for itself, it is inaccurate to imply the fault lies with IFGE or Linda Buten. Furthermore, reacting emotionally to hearsay is irresponsible. On this particular issue, JoAnn is way off the mark.

Marisa Richmond,
Board Chair, AEGIS

JoAnn Roberts' reply:

Ms. Richmond is confused about why I asked her not to meet with Ms. Buten. I had no knowledge of any letter sent to her by Ms. Buten. Rather I was informed by Dallas Denny, the Executive Director of AEGIS, that Ms. Richmond, the Chair of the AEGIS board, was meeting with Ms. Buten, the Chair of the IFGE board, at Southern Comfort to talk about the study proposal.

I had repeatedly asked for a response from Ms. Buten regarding the study and was ignored. It was quite a shock to find out that AEGIS and IFGE had scheduled a meeting about the study without including Renaissance. I asked Ms. Richmond to not meet with Ms. Buten unless a representative of Renaissance was also invited to the meeting. At the time, I had in hand Ms. Buten's email message saying that IFGE was not interested in anything Renaissance had to offer and I felt the meeting was an attempt to sabotage the study. I was told by Ms. Richmond that she would do whatever was in the best interest of AEGIS.

As for the rest, Ms. Richmond is free to believe whatever she likes and I will bear her no ill will. However, it is fact, not hearsay, that the unprofessional attitude of IFGE and Ms. Buten's statement that IFGE saw no reason to talk with Renaissance that led to the Renaissance board's unanimous decision to withdraw from the study. The board acted in the best interest of Renaissance. What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

Dear Renaissance,

I have been reading your newsletter (xerox copies) off and on for awhile now. I have wanted to subscribe for some time so I could read the actual paper and support what you are doing for the TG community. The reason I haven't subscribed is due to one of your writers, Angela Gardner.

Her column is always so self-serving and is always about her or how cute she is. I take it she enjoys being with herself a lot (example, vol. 10, issue number 8):

"...My naughty Y.E.S. babydoll mini had a see through skirt and I was displaying a bad girl attitude and a lot of flesh."

"....Not that conservative, since I chose a white silk broomstick skirt that, uh, oh, showed my panties."

"....and I said something really feminine like, 'wa?'"

You get the point. It makes me ill to always see someone blowing their own horn and so convinced they're just so cute.

No one's perfect and not all your staff writers can be as awesome as JoAnn Roberts. While it's probably silly to bypass an excellent publication like yours, just because your editor likes to promote herself, I'm hoping things will get better.

Sincerely,
Bobby Boyce

From the Managing Editor:

Dear Bobby,

Your letter is much appreciated. It really is, because you show a real interest in *News and Views*.

Your quotations do prove that Angela said all those things, and yes, you could interpret them as self-serving. But then again, I suppose the way I go on in my own monthly column, "Making Sense of It All," talking about my hopes and dreams and frustrations and struggles could also be interpreted as self-serving, for I am always writing in terms of my own experience.

Then again, I usually sound so serious that Angela's writings could be seen as a welcome relief as she speaks with apparent tongue-in-cheek. She and I both write about ourselves but on different issues and topics. Angela's column could be seen as being more entertaining than my psychological and spiritual probings.

So maybe our newsletter offers some of this and some of that, some entertainingly presented information and some psychological food for thought. I do hope you can, in your mind and heart, see a place for Angela's column. Of course, you do not have to read it. There is, hopefully, other material to enjoy.

And if you do not want to subscribe to *News and Views*, then I guess you will have to blame me for wanting to retain Angela and her "self-serving" ways. But I do hope you continue to read our newsletter, whether by subscription or copy.

Oh, and thanks again for your letter, because you have given me my very first chance as an editor to write something in response to a reader. I just hope I haven't been too self-serving.

Sincerely,
Lee Etscovitz



**Happy New Year from the Staff of
News & Views**