

Renaissance News



Volume 5, No. 11

Vision - Integrity - Quality

November, 1991

New United Way Campaign rules permit gifts, payroll deductions for Renaissance

Renaissance has no plans to ask its members for contributions above their annual membership fees. But, if we did, the excuse "I gave at the office" won't work. Now, thanks to a new United Way procedure, people can give money to Renaissance *at the office* and still be discrete.

Starting this year, the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania allows donors to specify the single agency they want their gift to help, and the agency does not need to be one of those affiliated with the United Way. Using a special form, a donor can earmark his or her contribution to any non-profit agency. The United Way will determine if the agency is eligible to receive chari-

table donations. If it is, the gift will be forwarded to the agency along with the donors' names.

Designation of one agency to receive a gift is not new. What is new is that the agency need not be listed in the United Way's *Guide to Caring* booklet.

The benefit for donors are many. Their contribution to Renaissance is credited to their office's campaign, helping meet their office goal. If the process is available, the gift can be made through payroll deduction. And, of course, the gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. But, perhaps the biggest advantage for a transgendered person is that this new procedure allows them to

help their own kind through the only transsexual/transvestite support organization in southeastern Pennsylvania.

"While Renaissance continues to grow in terms of members, the expansion of outreach programs has not kept pace," said Paula Jordan Sinclair, national managing director. "Several ideas for expansion have been discussed, but have been rejected because of funding. These include purchasing books on transgendered issues for community libraries, advertising the organization's availability to speak to community groups and additional colleges, and preparing and pub-

(continued on page 15)

Great Valley Inne to become 'Holiday Inn' for Greater Philadelphia holiday party

by Dina Amberle

The annual Renaissance Holiday Party is always a social success, and this year's edition promises to be even more special.

The party will be held on Saturday, Dec. 7, at the Great Valley Inne, Malvern, Pa. The festivities begin at 8:00 p.m. This year tickets are only \$30 per person and must be ordered by mail not later than Dec. 2. No tickets will be sold at the door.

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter board is celebrating a banner year for membership by heightening the quality of the menu selections, while at the same time dropping the price of tickets for the event. Thanks to the cooperation of the

new catering management at the Inne, selections include such upscale dishes as Cho Cho Beef (lean flank steak strips marinated in ginger, sesame oil, and plum sauce); Pistachio Chicken (breast chunks tossed with prosciutto ham, pistachios, and sauteed with Sambuca); and Fusilli Pasta with Panna Romana Sauce and Herbed Parmesan Bread Squares. Even the hors d'oeuvres will be a little special — sea scallops wrapped in bacon and spanakopita (phyllo pastry filled with spinach and feta cheese), along with the old standbys like stuffed mushroom caps and large cheese and fruit trays.

The new management at the Inne is anxious to please us, and we have

the entire facility to ourselves — both upstairs and down. The reception and dinner will be served topside, with the dancing and remaining merriment moving to the intimate lounge downstairs. There will be cash bars on both levels throughout the evening.

A professional photographer will be on hand to make a record of the evening for your scrapbook. Dance music will be provided by a professional DJ.

Because our chapter has experienced a healthy growth in membership and financial support through the year, we are able to return some of these benefits to our members

(continued on page 18)

Announcements...

Background Papers...

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

Pen Pal Project

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

Prisoner Project

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

The Transsexual Phenomenon

A few copies of the deluxe edition of this book by Dr. Harry Benjamin are still available at \$39.95 postpaid.

Our chapters...

Greater Philadelphia

Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Fall/winter meetings start at 8:00 p.m. For information, call (215) 946-8887. Dina Amberle, chapter leader. Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020.

Lower Susquehanna Valley

Meets the first Saturday of the month. Presently, the chapter lacks a permanent meeting site, so call (717) 780-1578 for latest information and meeting location. Brenda Davidson, chapter leader. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

South Jersey

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

Our affiliates...

Groups wishing to become a Renaissance affiliate must pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlimited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

Our affiliated organizations are:

- **Monmouth/Ocean Group**, P.O. Box 1326, Brick, NJ 08723

Events to note...

November

2nd South Jersey Chapter meeting —
Halloween party and
election of officers

2nd Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter
meeting — election of officers

16th Greater Philadelphia Chapter
meeting — Dr. Frank Hajack on
sexual relations

December

7th Greater Philadelphia Holiday Party
at the Great Valley Inn. Order
tickets by Dec. 2. No Greater
Philadelphia Chapter meeting
this month.

Also, no Lower Susquehanna Valley
Chapter meeting this month.

7th South Jersey Chapter meeting —
professional makeup demo

January

4th South Jersey Chapter meeting

4th Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter
meeting

18th Greater Philadelphia Chapter
meeting

Renaissance News

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

'Fantasy play' led to a sex-change and now to thoughts of suicide

by Jeffrey Zaslow

☞ *Mr. Zaslow succeeded Ann Landers as the Chicago Sun-Times' personal advice columnist. His column is syndicated in about 50 newspapers around the nation.*

"Sharon" is the wife of a successful physician, the devoted mother of two adopted daughters, and an energetic volunteer for charities. She has many friends who live a similar lifestyle. "But unlike any of them," she writes in a letter to me, "I have arrived at this point by taking a most torturous route."

Sharon began life as a man, and it was as a man that she met "Mark," her husband. They fell in love as college roommates.

Mark, however, was uncomfortable being gay. So he encouraged Sharon (who, of course, had a male name then) to assume the feminine role in their relationship. Sharon dropped out of college, cooked, and cleaned. Mark asked her to wear lingerie, perfume, and makeup around the apartment. Sharon thought it was harmless "fantasy play," and complied. She wore her hair long, too. (This was in the early 1970s, when men wore long hair.) Eventually, they'd venture off campus as a male/female couple. "Now I suspect I didn't fool too many people," Sharon says.

Eager to please Mark, Sharon shaved her body hair, pierced her ears, and polished her nails. Then Mark asked her to take female hormones, just to "soften" her skin. When she developed breasts, he complimented her on her new cleavage.

Sharon's transformation took seven years. At each step, Mark applied pressure, Sharon resisted, and then gave in. Finally, after he finished medical school, Mark asked Sharon to have a sex-change operation. "He argued that it would be better for his/our future if we'd just

be a male/female couple, get married, and live a 'normal' life," says Sharon.

Mark's request turned into an ultimatum. Sharon finally consented and also had breast implants and surgery to her nose, cheeks, and throat. A year later, in a new community, they got married.

At first, Sharon says, she liked being the doctor's wife. "We adopted two infants and seemed like the ideal family."

Now, however, Sharon has come to the painful realization that she still thinks of herself as a gay male. Her husband, meanwhile, "is convinced that we were always really a male/female couple, with me just needing a little correction," Sharon says. Now miserable as a woman, she also fears that she can't give her children the "mothering" they need.

Sharon has come to the painful realization that she still thinks of herself as a gay male.

Sharon is resentful of her husband's coercion yet unable to confront him. "The physical side of our relationship is great for him," she says. "He has a fantasy woman he helped create. But it is totally frustrating for me. I want to be loved as a man, by a man. Even with the problems faced by gays in our society, I envy them as I am forced to maintain the sham of being a heterosexual woman." Sharon says she is considering suicide.

In an effort to help her, I called several transsexual/transvestite support groups and talked to a half-dozen "women" with deep voices, all

of whom offered sympathy and the same prognosis: Yes, Sharon could have a mastectomy and take male hormones, but restoring the penis of a transsexual is virtually impossible.

It's a shame Sharon had her operation before the early 1980s, when standards were established for sex-change surgery. "Prior to then, it was virtually reassignment (surgery) on demand," says JoAnn Roberts, a founder of the Renaissance Education Association, a national support group.

Now, someone seeking a sex-change must complete six months of counseling before getting hormone therapy. After six more months, a psychiatrist might suggest "a real-life test" — living and working in the opposite role 24 hours a day for a year or two. Only then can reassignment surgery be recommended.

One gender identity clinic study shows that just 6 percent of people who present themselves as transsexuals actually go through with the surgery. "Some gay male crossdressers convince themselves that they'd be better off as women," says Karen Baumgardner of the Chicago Gender Society. "But using the standards, it's not the case at all."

For Sharon, of course, what's done is done. So is there a solution?

"She needs to find a therapist skilled in gender, marriage, and family therapy," says Marsha Botzer, a counselor for transsexuals.

Sharon may be happiest if she leaves Mark and finds a way to rediscover her masculinity. "She could dress as a man if that's the right thing for her," says Botzer. "We don't have genital police in this country, at least not yet."

Gretchen Fincke, director of the Milwaukee Transgender Program,

(continued on page 15)

THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

When we last met, you'll recall we were wondering if Baroness Maria Tyssen von Hexun would be able to clear herself of the charge that she defrauded an elderly Denver woman out of several thousand dollars. The baroness (a.k.a. James Gonzales) offered to buy the woman's home. Claiming to own a Mercedes-Benz dealership, he used the woman's phone to allegedly arrange for a \$500,000 loan from Germany. While waiting for the cash, the baroness got a "loan" from the woman.

After she was arrested, von Hexun claimed that she was married to a German nobleman, and she was innocent of any wrongdoing.

The baroness had her day in court recently and pleaded guilty to the felony theft charge. Yet, she still held fast to her claim to have had a sex-change operation, although authorities were unable to verify it.

♣ ♣ ♣

Claims of nobility, promises of a \$500,000 loan, and talk about Mercedes dealerships probably wouldn't cut much ice in Bethlehem, Pa., home of steel workers and blast furnaces. So perhaps that was why a crossdressed man took what he wanted in a simpler manner — he shoplifted the merchandise from a K-Mart.

Police said that Monica Orta, 30, of Allentown, (a.k.a. Jose Orta) stuffed a bunch of makeup in a large black bag and ran from the store. Police stopped Orta's getaway car and also arrested two other cross-dressers. All three were released on bond and no date was set for their trial.

♣ ♣ ♣

A judicial proceeding of a different sort has the folks in Hampden, Mass., buzzing — the divorce of Roy and Gloria Rosenthal after 13 years of marriage.

When the pair were married, Roy wore women's clothes only in their house. But, according to Gloria's request for divorce, the crossdress-

ing has expanded during the last three years to the point that it became "intolerable" for her. Roy crossdresses for all sorts of functions, even for visits to his in-laws.

Roy, who prefers to be called Terri, is contesting the divorce, saying that crossdressing is his constitutional right. "Just because I wear women's clothes doesn't mean I can't do my duty as a husband," Roy, who was wearing a gray skirt, green tank top and blue pumps, also told the judge. Roy (oops) Terri insisted the judge address him as "ma'am."

♣ ♣ ♣

People with strange delusions also struck the entertainment world. Opening night of her new show at the Radio City Music Hall in New York, Diana Ross was plagued with an impersonator who kept wandering onto the stage despite several attempts to shoo him away.

Finally, Miss Ross let the look-alike dance the length of the huge stage before coaxing him off by saying, "Go down now. You're not getting paid tonight."

♣ ♣ ♣

We don't know who or what movie star Keanu Reeves was painted up to look like in a photo in last month's *Vanity Fair* magazine. Full face makeup gave the star of the Bill and Ted films and the new release *My Own Private Idaho* the look of a Japanese geisha girl. The photo's caption was vague, mentioning something about the popularity of Japanese style in Hollywood. Do you suppose Reeves is trying to tell his fans something?

♣ ♣ ♣

There's no mystery about Kathryn McGuire's message. In nearly two full newspaper pages and several photos (three in color), Houston's most famous transsexual has made her post-surgery debut.

Somehow, McGuire managed to reveal even more details about her personal (but not private) life. For instance, she sleeps with a sawed-

off shotgun next to her canopy bed.

Our correspondent in Houston hopes that Ms. McGuire will fade from the scene now that she is actually a woman. Evidently, our correspondent didn't read the clip before she sent it; Kathryn's next goal is to run for Congress.

♣ ♣ ♣

Publicity surrounding the release of her latest book continues to keep Tula in the news as well.

Last month, Mayor Maynard Jackson awarded honorary Atlanta citizenship to the transsexual model. But a week later, he took back the papers, noting that "such a certificate is not appropriate when the honoree's main claim to fame is having had a sex-change operation."

Evidently, Jackson doesn't read too well either. In her new book (reviewed on page 11 of this issue of *RN*), Tula comes across as a brave champion of human rights.

♣ ♣ ♣

Jackson and a lot of other people will have to get used to transgendered folks from Great Britain if a report in *TV Guide* is true. (That's *TV* as in *Television*.)

Barry Humphries, an Australian-born comedian who does drag in Britain as Dame Edna Everage, has been signed to do a special for NBC. "Dame Edna's Hollywood" will reportedly feature comedy monologues and interviews with Cher, Mel Gibson, Bea Arthur, Larry Hagman, and Jack Palance.

Meanwhile, there is no truth to the rumor that Nick at Night, the Nickelodeon cable channel, will revive the Milton Berle television show from the '50s.

♣ ♣ ♣

Although British theater has a long tradition of drag comedians, drag on the street is viewed differently. According to a report in the London *Daily Telegraph*, a young woman who masqueraded as a man and tricked two 17-year-old girls into having sex was sentenced to six

THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair*
NEWSQUEEN™

months in jail.

The crossdressing woman, Jennifer Saunders, 18, of Yorkshire, had denied two charges of indecent assault involving the other females. At her trial, she wore her hair short and dressed in men's clothes. (No word if she insisted on being called "sir.") Testimony was given that Saunders carried on a five-month affair with Rebecca Andrews and seduced Helen Edwards, both 17.

Saunders was sent to an institution for young female offenders.



Other news from overseas is much more serious. For at least six years in Columbia, transgendered people and gay men have been systematically killed by several groups of gunmen who patrol the country's city's and countryside. Human rights organizations claim to have documented hundreds of such hate killings.

As recently as May, the body of a man wearing makeup was found near Cali, Colombia's third largest city. In April, in two separate incidents, two drag queens were killed by shots fired from a moving vehicle in the same city. In 1985, 20 people were killed in Cali during a single night. The victims included transvestites, gay men, prostitutes, and panhandlers.

The death squads "portray themselves as 'moral authorities,' taking justice into their own hands by eliminating those they contemptuously refer to as the 'disposable people,'" said Colombian gay rights activist Ricardo Contreras. According to a report published by Amnesty International in 1989, "Many death squad killings were carried out by or with the acquiescence of the Colombian armed forces."

The murders of sexual minorities have been reported by Colombian news media. But international media is ignoring these murders and publishes only news about drug-related violence.



Violence against men who choose to wear dresses is not unique to South America. An Iowa gay rights activist who always crossdresses for political purposes has told police that his life has been threatened, his windows have been smashed, and the home he shares with his mother and two male roommates has been regularly pelted with eggs.

What Lawrence White calls incessant harassment began after the local paper did a story on his efforts to form a lesbian and gay rights group in the central Iowa town. The article was accompanied by a photo of White wearing a dress.

Despite the harassment, White said he and his friends "can't be intimidated; we won't be frightened into submission; we're here to stay."



Things were a little tamer to the north in Sioux Falls, S.D., after a picture of a man in drag appeared in the *Argus Leader*. All angry folks did was threaten to cancel their subscriptions.

The incident involved a story about "Todd Allen," recently named Miss Gay South Dakota. Allen was shown in a photo wearing a red dress, high heels, and a wig.

More than 100 angry readers wrote or called the paper to complain. One reader hoped the city editor would die from AIDS for running the story. Another said "homosexuality is an abomination and a sin against God. It has no place in your paper." The paper received no calls or letters in favor of the story.

Despite the brouhaha, Executive Editor Rich Somerville defended publication of the story.



Say what you will about California, but folks do seem to be more tolerant in the Golden State. Take the example of Los Angeles Fire Department Captain Michael Kaemmerer. After he announced his

decision to have a sex change operation, department officials have scheduled sensitivity training for the 22-year veteran's co-workers. When the transition is complete, Michele Kaemmerer will be the department's second female captain.

Other firefighters seem to have taken the news calmly. "If personnel says we have two women captains, we have two women captains," said Dean Cathey, chief of Kaemmerer's battalion.

"Firefighters live together, and it has been referred to as a second family," said Andrew P. Fox, president of the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City Local 112. "It's important that all our employees are sensitive to one another. The department is trying to be sensitive to something we have never dealt with before."

Kaemmerer is being similarly low-key. "The fire department is being very professional about it," she said. "I just don't want to talk about it. I'm a happy person."



Many were saddened by the death from AIDS of noted female impersonator Glenn Elliott.

Although performing primarily in the Washington, D.C. area, Elliott's combination of stand-up comedy and impressions of Bette Midler, Marlene Dietrich, and many other female personalities earned him roles on Broadway. He hosted several Miss Gay America pageants and opened for Sylvester on his last tour.

"I'm not just a bitchy drag queen wearing dresses," he told a writer a decade ago. "I have a message too. I tell the audience at the end of each show, 'If you can't be what you are, there's no point in being anything at all.'"

Thanks to the thoughtfulness of Billie, Karen, René, and Susan, the Newsqueen received a wealth of material this month. Won't you join the gang and send clippings regarding crossdressing to her in care of the Renaissance office? Please note the date and name of publication.

The **FORUM** For Ideas

'The things you worry about most will probably never happen' **Paula's surprise**

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

"The things you worry about most will probably never happen."

This bromide seemed dangerously false last month when my open identification as a transvestite appeared to backfire. A columnist for the *Northeast Times*, a weekly Philadelphia newspaper, attacked me for publicly identifying myself as a transvestite who works for The School District of Philadelphia. Specifically, he wrote:

"By taking his private life public, it's clear that Paul/Paula's transvestite lifestyle will send a confusing, disturbing message throughout the halls and classrooms of every school in the city...."

"Not only is Paul/Paula taking his controversial private lifestyle into the wide open public, he does it while a member of a profession we parents entrust to educate our children."

"As superintendent of schools, it is Constance Clayton who is ultimately responsible for the agenda, direction, and academic and moral atmosphere in our schools. If she really professes to be most concerned

about the best interests of 'the children,' why is such a powerful school leader so silent on such a disturbing issue?

"It now seems apparent that the school system's moral standards for children is (sic) heading in (a) damaging, downward direction...."

Time for me to revise my resume, right? Apparently not. Now, more than a month after that bombshell hit, things are calm at the school

district and my job is secure.

How could such a dark cloud have such a silver lining? Quite simply, the school district cares more about my work when I am in the office than the clothes I may wear when I am not. I had come to believe this was true over the past few years when I "exposed" myself on local and national television. Those appearances had generated little — if any — negative responses. I came to believe that people just didn't care that I am a transvestite. In fact,

(continued on page 14)

JoAnn's four trials

by JoAnn Roberts

I also have experienced times when I felt that the "worst" was about to happen. Yet, I learned that life goes on almost unchanged.

My first "worst" experience was the serious auto accident (while dressed) that I have written about before

My second "worst" experience came shortly after I appeared for the first time on *Donahue*. The day the segment aired in Philadelphia, we had 18 inches of snow, and no one went to work. I was sure that when I arrived at my office there would be a sign over my desk that

said "Transvestite Sits Here." Nope. No recognition from anyone. Well, *almost* no one. A woman who had become a good friend recognized my voice, but it took her two weeks to get up the courage to ask if it was me on the show. We've been best girlfriends ever since.

My third "worst" experience came with the airing of the *Evening Magazine* segment on Renaissance last November. I'd just left my employer of 16 years, and so I wasn't worried — until I had reason to call my former workplace. I was on screen for not more than 30 seconds for

(continued on page 14)

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8

The *For Ideas*
FORUM

Don't fool around with hormones

To the Editor:

Wendi D. Pierce (RN, Sept., '91) seems to be advocating experimentation with hormones. To those contemplating it, I offer these tips:

- One does not *decide* to be transsexual. The classical surgical candidate identifies as a female from earliest childhood. A person who identifies as a male, but for some reason decides that being a female would be kind of neat, is courting disaster.

- One must take female hormones for generally six to nine months before the body reaches the "castrate" level where true feminization occurs. Things get pretty noticeable after about a year, but it takes *years* of hormones to obtain an appreciable feminine body.

- If you are a 40-year-old balding male before hormones, after hormones you will end up as a 40-

year-old balding man with tits. Hormones will *not* turn you into an 18-year-old blond nymph.

- If you live as a male, you will not be able to go swimming, get in an accident or other emergency situation without a pretty good excuse. What do you tell your wife, boss, doctor, etc.? Living as a "gynomast" can be very complicated.

- Stopping hormones after your body has gotten used to them is a great way to throw up in trash cans. I experienced *incredible* nausea.

- Taking hormones is not a two-way street. If you stop after a year or so, your body will never go back to where it was. You have permanently changed your sexuality. You may need a mastectomy, and that fat on your behind does not go away.

- Hormones are a great way to be at high risk for blood clots, stroke,

and breast cancer. Taking high doses of estrogen for years can damage your liver. Hormones are dangerous, powerful drugs.

- Do you enjoy using your penis? Taking female hormones is the last thing on earth you want to do!

- Being a woman is a lot more than having a pair of tits. Ask any natural woman or post-op transsexual. They *live* it.

- Don't put the cart before the horse. Get properly diagnosed by an experienced doctor before using hormones.

—Jackie K.

Norristown, Pa.

☞ For additional information on the effects and problems associated with hormones, see *Hormones* by Sheila Kirk, M.D., published this year by IFGE, P.O. Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778.

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The **FORUM** For Ideas

*I walked into your room
into your room and out of
my trepidation...*

*I walked so hesitantly,
gratefully out of my anxiety
and into your acceptance;
that out of a sixth sense
I knew of your acceptance*

*For a few brief moments
I could be the self
that I have longed to be:
myself
and in the greatest satisfaction
being able to share that
openness and honesty of character
I am eternally grateful...*

*You hold a special place in my heart,
sharing the knowledge of who I am:
I have never felt that peace
and satisfaction before
like the rose that finally shed its
thorns*

*Yes,
Without its thorns,
A rose
is the perfect imagery
that I would love to share with you*

*So for this I wait from day to day
to share a rose with you.*

—Susanne [REDACTED]

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The **FORUM** For Ideas

Book review

Tula: showgirl, model, actress, activist

by Pamela Ashley Westin

Look at Tula/Caroline Crossey's boyhood photos in her new book, *My Story*, and there is no doubt that this is a female. If the photo layout in the September *Playboy* wasn't enough, her life confirms the fact of her womanhood.

At 17, she was living full-time. Less than a year after that, she was working as a showgirl at the Latin Quarter in London. The king of an Arab nation was so smitten by her beauty that he paid for her breast implants. Later, another royal Arab established her as his mistress in Kuwait. Bored of the life in that gilded cage, she becomes a stripper in Rome where she earns enough money for her surgery. Before she turns 21, she is physically a woman. But not legally, and that seems to be

the purpose behind this book, her second autobiography.

Although Great Britain allows sexual reassignment surgery, the government does not recognize that a post-op transsexual is anything other than the gender they were born. The first 13 chapters of *My Story* are only a prologue to the real drama of Crossey's life — her battle

Where are you?

☞ We have recently received contributions to RN which we could not publish for a variety of reasons. We also could not acknowledge these contributions because the writers did not provide a return address. Rather than sending in a poem or article blindly, won't you kindly tell us your address so we may contact you regarding your contribution?

— PAW & PJS

to really live as a woman, to be married and "live happily ever after."

She faced two opponents, the British tabloid press that was intent on revealing her transsexuality and the British courts. The tabloids first exposed her after she played a Bond Girl in the film *For Your Eyes Only*, bringing to an end her career as an international, high-fashion model.

After several years of lying low, she fell in love with a millionaire London businessman, Elias Fattal. Following a four-year relationship, the two married, but not before Crossey divulged her past. Fattal was surprised by the revelation and shocked by the details of the surgery ("You've certainly got balls, Pet," he told her), but married her anyway

(continued on page 18)

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The *For Ideas*
FORUM

Harleys, high heels, and heroes

by Laura [REDACTED]

On a Saturday morning not too long ago, I had something special to look forward to. A day like this was possible only once a month, for it was a day when my three biggest interests would come together. Yet, it is only recently that the true meaning of these experiences have become clearer to me.

I own a 1972 BMW motorcycle. It is a heavy touring model, painted black with some white pinstripes, outfitted with a full windshield, carrying saddlebags on either side of the rear fender, and a case mounted on the back above the tail light. I love my bike. We have taken some nifty trips together, my bike and I. One of them was a 2,000 mile jaunt from Philadelphia to northern Maine and eastern Canada. But after 19 years with the same bike, I have a yearning for the other big fella, a Harley. So, early on this particular Saturday, with the sun shining, the air crisp, and having that hard-to-describe urge for an exhilarating surge on two wheels, I headed along a winding back road to the Harley-Davidson dealer.

As I pulled up in front of the dealership and parked my bike between two Harleys, I felt I was in the presence of two waiting warriors. I was flanked on both sides by sinewy iron, gleaming paint and chrome, massive engines, and hefty fenders and tires. The owner of one bike mounted his machine and called it to action. The big bike awoke with a shudder. It seemed to be clearing its throat and barking its presence, as if to say, "Here I am; I'm ready to move." And with a definite air of authority, the bike moved, pulling away from me with a sense of power and decisiveness.

I entered the showroom and stepped into a world of potency on parade. Harleys in shiny black, in brilliant red, in sensuous sapphire,

all glittering with chrome, were all exuding strength and assertiveness. Strength and the ability to use it — to be assertive — is something I value. The Harleys represented that, and I wanted to be a part of it. I wandered around the showroom, sat on different bikes (trying the power on for size), talked to some Harley owners, and finally left.

I parked my BMW in the garage put away my helmet, hung up my leather jacket, and removed my hefty riding boots. Then, I began preparations for the second part of the day, the Renaissance meeting that evening. My helmet would be replaced by a wig, my leather jacket by a soft blouse, and my boots by a pair of lovely high heels. I would move from the world of power, strength, and assertiveness into a world of gentleness, grace, and sensitivity.

I love my feminine preparations as much as I love riding my motorcycle. I love selecting my outfit, pampering my body, putting on makeup, then dressing, and finally stepping out. Through this process, I emerge to a gentle world, a garden of acceptance, where I am a unique flower. Being feminine, I feel relaxed, comfortable, together, safe. I feel as natural and as excited walking in high heels as I do leaning my bike into a turn. I want my face and figure to be fully feminine just as much as I want to merge with the power and sound of a Harley. Both experiences, both sensations, are somehow exciting, stimulating, beckoning, and erotic.

With those feelings, and with the pleasant anticipation of meeting with friends, I arrived at the monthly Renaissance meeting carrying my usual tray of pastry. I enjoy doing something nice for a group in which I feel so at home. The evening passed as usual; at first, I moved around a bit, saying hello to one person and

then another, sometimes settling into a longer conversation. I listened to the organizational meeting led by Dina and attended the session conducted by the evening's invited speaker. Later, I joined some members at our usual late-night get-together at a nearby lounge. This session-after-the-session has always been an extra treat, an extension of the evening that adds to our sense of community and comradeship as we face the world "out there."

There are many things about the meetings that I treasure: the organization itself and the individuals who comprise it, my involvement and acceptance, the food and conversation, and the benefits I receive from the special presentations. But there is one thing above all that I admire and respect, something deeper than all else put together. I am most moved — deeply moved — by the quiet heroism of each person I meet and talk to. It goes without saying that every person in the world is a walking novel in which he or she is the central character, for each person has his or her own story to tell, his or her own journey through life. But I am especially struck by the bravery which Renaissance members display as they struggle to fulfill their feminine wishes in a world in which they have become identified and established as masculine. Thus, I am beginning to see Renaissance as one large support group for heroes.

That Saturday was quite a meaningful day for me, going from Harleys, to high heels, to heroes. A Harley, of course, does not in itself make one a hero. Neither does a pair of high heels. But having the courage to deal with seemingly conflicted wants and wishes — plus putting up with many outside pressures — is, in my book, an act of heroism, even if you don't ride a Harley, and even if you wear flats.

The **For Ideas**
FORUM

A simple test for crossdressers

by Angela [REDACTED]

Recently, I went to see a doctor for my first routine physical in almost ten years. As he examined me, he asked me the routine questions about diet, lifestyle, and occupation. Finally, he questioned, "Is there anything else I should know about you?"

I paused for a moment, and feeling confident, I replied, "I crossdress." Without hesitation he looked at me and asked, "Is it causing any problems in your life at the present time?"

I honestly replied "no."

"Very well," he responded, "if it does cause problems, contact me and I'll see to it you get help."

As I drove away from his office I thought about how nice it would be to have a simple test to determine if crossdressing was a problem. Previously, I'd read about something called the CAGE Test for determining if a problem was seriously affecting a person's life. I've taken the liberty of modifying it for crossdress-

sers. Here it is:

C — Can you **CONTROL** your need to crossdress as circumstances dictate? Are you able to give those you are in a personal relationship with the quality time they require from you as a male? Or do you often feel the need to withdraw to your feminine self and abandon them?

A — Do you **ACCEPT** yourself and your situation for what it is and are you satisfied with it, or do you feel something is missing or incomplete?

G — Do you feel **GUILTY** when you crossdress because of the time you take from others or because of the money you spend on clothes or other things?

E — Is your crossdressing an **ESCAPE** from reality? Is it a way for you to shut out the unpleasant world and isolate yourself from what is really going on in your life?

I suppose there is one more thing I would add to this test. It is this question — Is your crossdressing a primary issue in your personal rela-

tionships? Does it cause conflict? Do you have arguments over even seemingly small things?

My personal experience has led me to believe that crossdressing becomes the most visible problem in a relationship when, indeed, many other things may be causing problems. Unfortunately, because crossdressing is so easy to identify, it is often the problem named when a relationship breaks down. A good counselor will look beyond the crossdressing to see what other issues are at play in the relationship.

So there it is, a quick test to determine if crossdressing is seriously affecting your life and your relationships. If you feel that your crossdressing is seriously affecting your life, then counseling is probably recommended. By all means, seek out a qualified helping professional to help yourself live a more satisfying life.

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Paula's surprise

(continued from page 8)

several senior administrators would talk and joke with me about it in a most casual manner.

Then came the September article in *The Philadelphia Daily News*. Editor Zack Stalberg should be pleased that the paper gets more attention than Morton Downey and *Evening Magazine* combined. I measure this by the number of other media people who contacted me. One of these was the *Northeast Times* columnist who also hosts an over-night talk show on WWDB.

I appeared on his show and thought I had adequately explained that my personal life had no connection with my work. I do not interact with students; most likely none of the 190,000 enrolled in the system even know who I am. While I was on the air, only one caller took issue with my argument. Perhaps this lack of concern prompted the host/columnist to beat the drum a bit louder in hopes of generating a public outcry. Hence, his column accusing me of contributing to the moral decline of civilization.

As soon as I saw the column, I showed it to my boss. Being a public relations person, he is hypersensitive to things that may promote a "negative image," especially, as he told me, with this being an election year. Needless to say, he was disturbed that my public identity may have brought embarrassment to the school district. His response was more severe than I had expected, so I anticipated problems in the office

as well as an even more serious response from the superintendent herself. Once again, I was wrong.

My responsibilities in the office were enhanced, not decreased. At my first meeting with the superintendent after publication of the column, she was as cordial as ever. In fact, at one point she quietly and offhandedly referred to me as "ma'am." Whether she misspoke herself or was making a private joke, I'll never know. One Board of Education member (from Northeast

Philadelphia) seemed unfriendly; none of the others were aloof.

There will always be people who will try to deny us our right to freedom of expression. And there will always be people willing to equate our gender switching with moral turpitude. But, fortunately, there also always will be people, like my boss, the superintendent of schools, and some Board of Education members, who believe that the right to individual freedom of expression, in its proper perspective, is a most important lesson to teach adults as well as children.

JoAnn's four trials

(continued from page 8)

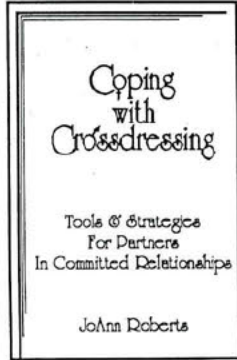
that show, but it seemed as if everyone who knew me was watching the show that night. Now I was "out" for certain. Did it change anyone's real opinion of me? No. In fact, my old group invited me back for a Christmas luncheon, and they wanted to meet JoAnn. So I went. A month later, I was invited to a baby shower given for one of the women who had worked for me. This time I went as Joe. No one said anything to me about crossdressing.

My most recent "worst" experience was mild compared to any of the others. As Joe, I had lunch the other day with three female friends; we'd all worked together at one time or another. Two of the women know I am a transvestite (one was the friend mentioned in my second "worst" experience), but I had not shared this with the third woman. At one point I said that I had some-

thing "special" to tell her. She looked directly into my eyes and said, "I already know and I'm disappointed JoAnn didn't come to lunch today." Well, you could have knocked me over with a feather. I had been concerned that this woman would not understand, but my two friends had warned her in case I showed up in drag. We've made a luncheon date for next month and she will get to meet JoAnn at last.

The point of all this is acceptance. My "worst" fears about being revealed as a transvestite to my friends and co-workers were unfounded. Those who liked me before they knew, still like me now; those who didn't like me before, still don't. Nothing has really changed. The knowledge that I crossdress does not change the fundamental nature of who I am or who they are.

My "worst" fears have come to naught, and life is better than ever.



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by JoAnn Roberts

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THE **ICONOCLAST**™

JoAnn Roberts

Veronica Brown of Wildside, when local television station **WGRZ**, Channel 2, declined to air a **Donahue** show that featured a visit to Wildside and our friends there.

According to a report in the September *CDC News*, Brown and Aldridge were quite upset at the snub. A station spokesperson told them that the station gets "non-stop" phone calls from irate mothers whenever *Donahue* airs segments about crossdressing.

Another caller, a member of the **Toronto Crossdressers Club** and a resident of Buffalo, was told that it was station policy never to carry shows about crossdressing, ever.

Hmmm! Methinks the station doth protest too much.

Brown and Aldridge suggest that local residents write to the Federal Communications Commission and/or the American Civil Liberties Union to complain about the censorship. The station is an NBC affiliate.

▼▲▼

SEATTLE, WASH. - Just when you thought it was safe to use the bathroom... Oh, no! Not again.

Yes, the "Toilet Tempest" is aroused once again. It appears that a group of ladies from **Emerald City** go to a club after their meeting much as we do here. But, after the August meeting, there were some patrons in the club who took an extreme exception to the presence of crossdressers. When one of the girls used the ladies room, the Neanderthals called the police.

To their credit, the police recognized a tempest in a toilet and no charges were filed, but the toilet-user was quite upset as was the lounge management.

While the bar likes having the girls from Emerald City visit, they can no longer use the ladies room. And, since there is no spare bathroom, they will be forced to use the men's room. The EC girls, realizing

that discretion is the better part of valor, have decided to find a new after-meeting venue.

▼▲▼

HOUSTON, TEX. - Start saving your pennies now...

Forget about tea parties. The place to be this spring will be Houston in April for the sixth annual **International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) Coming Together** convention. It is shaping up to be one of the best ever.

Current plans call for a series of "How-To" sessions aimed at improving the operation, management, and outreach activities of support groups. **Nancy Cole**, from **Crossdressers And Friends** (Kansas City), is setting up the sessions now.

I've been asked to moderate a panel on outreach activities. **Phyllis Frye**, whom I mentioned last month, will also be there working on her legal conference.

I've been in touch with **IFGE Congress of Reps** chairperson, **Linda Buten**, about bringing the Bill of Gender Rights to the congress for a full endorsement at the convention. It is on the agenda.

Now is the time to get involved. Let's have one of the largest gatherings of transgendered people ever in this country. Make your voice be heard. See you in Houston.

▼▲▼

KINGSTON, PA. - Expansion I...

I was talking with **Gayle** at the **Renaissance LSV Chapter Luau** in August. She tells me that she's made contact through personal ads with three or four other girls in her area and now she'd like to formally get a group going.

Anyone in her area may write to Gayle at P.O. Box 1931, Kingston, PA 18704, or call her in the evening after 7:00 p.m. at (717) [redacted]. Please ask for Ed.

▼▲▼

DENVER, COLO. - Expansion II...

The **Gender Identity Center, Inc.** is on the move and expanding too. The September newsletter tells of two new GIC chapters.

The first new group, led by **Jacquelyn** [redacted], will serve the Colorado Springs and Pueblo areas of Southern Colorado. [redacted] is a newcomer to the community, having only come out at the '91 IFGE convention in Denver.

The second group will serve the Northern Colorado/Wyoming areas and will be led by **LaDonna S.** LaDonna is also a new graduate of the '91 convention (see why it's important to go to the IFGE convention in '92).

But wait, that's not all. GIC is planning chapters in Western Colorado and Utah in the near future.

My congratulations go out to **Laura Smiley**, GIC president, and the board of GIC for "bearing the standard" out West. It would seem that hosting the IFGE convention mobilized a lot of GIC people.

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SYRACUSE, N.Y. - Another bridge...

I was fortunate to participate in a panel discussion on community outreach at the **Autumn Accord**, sponsored by the **New York State Gender Coalition** last month. Also on that panel was **Marcy Allyn Waldauer, Ph.D.**, executive director of the **New York Civil Liberties Union**. Dr. Waldauer and I had a chance to chat after the panel, and she expressed an interest in the Bill of Gender Rights.

I sent her a copy and asked for her comments and criticism. I also asked her opinion if the ACLU might be favorably inclined to endorse the bill. Stay tuned to this channel for further developments.

▼▲▼

NOTA BENE - The opinions expressed here are mine and mine alone. If you have a comment, positive or negative, write me at P.O. Box 61263, KofP, PA 19406-1263.

Tula: showgirl, model, actress, activist

(continued from page 11)

in a religious ceremony. Then the tabloids struck again.

Upon their return from their honeymoon, the pair was greeted with headlines proclaiming that "sex change" Tula had wed. The publicity was too much for Fattal and his family. After a week in seclusion without his bride, he sent word to Crossey that she "had bewitched him, but now the spell was broken." He wanted an annulment and if she resisted, he would "destory" her; if she tried to "screw him for money" he would kill her. And, to twist the knife one more time, he added that he "hated queers and didn't want people thinking that he was some kind of freak" for marrying a transsexual.

While her marriage was ending, her battle with the law was also coming to a close. The European Court heard her case against the British government for refusing to

recognize her as legally female and ruled against her. Come to find out, her religious marriage had never been legal in the first place.

Several times in *My Story*, Crossey expressed shocked amazement that she was the target of newspaper articles proclaiming her transsexuality. She may have been willing to expose her breasts on stage or

in front of a camera, but she was offended when the public saw her private life. However, the one-time showgirl became an activist for transsexuals when she learned the sad lesson that the status quo lives on the silence of the oppressed.

⇒ *My Story* by Caroline Crossey, published in London by Faber and Faber. \$27.95. ISBN 0-571-16251-7

Great Valley Inne

(continued from page 1)

and offer this year's grander party at \$30 per person. This is less than last year's price. Also, the event is on a Saturday night, which should make it easier for everyone to attend and enjoy a late-night out.

The chapter's holiday parties have been held at the Great Valley Inne for the past three years. The restaurant is only a few miles from our meeting site and offers maximum privacy in a secure setting.

Ticket information and directions can be found on the insert to this issue of *RN*. If you have further questions, call the Greater Philadelphia chapter at (215) 946-TVTS.

The Holiday Party has always been our chapter's premier social function. The holidays are a great time of year to get together with sisters and friends and enjoy the holiday spirit in a relaxing and ladylike fashion. We hope to see all of you on Saturday, Dec. 7!



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