

Renaissance News



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June, 1988

Renaissance & Outreach Develop Joint Projects

Renaissance, in a cooperative effort with The Human Outreach & Achievement Institute, is working on two projects that will be of benefit to our community as a whole. The first is a limited edition reprint of Dr. Harry Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, and the second is a special workshop entitled *Masculinity In Flux*.

For the book project, Renaissance will fund the printing of copies, which will then be distributed and sold by the Outreach Institute in Boston. This book has been out of print for some time. Two editions will be available; the Deluxe Edition with glossy cover will cost \$39.95 and a Regular Edition on plain stock will sell for \$34.95. Full members of Renaissance will enjoy a special price of \$30 for the Deluxe and \$25 for the Regular. Add \$3.50 for postage and handling to all orders. Full Members should

order from Renaissance now. All other orders must go through the Outreach Institute. Send your cash, check or money order to: The Human Outreach & Achievement Institute, Kenmore Station, Suite 368, Boston, MA 02215-0368. For our foreign friends, please use an International Money Order.

The special workshop will deal with the changing definition of masculinity and explore the social dynamics associated with the changing man in our society. This course will be of interest to both TVs and spouses. The workshop will begin in the morning and carry through the afternoon.

The tentative date is Sept. 24th. The fees are \$30/person and \$45/couple. A minimum enrollment of 25 is needed to conduct the course. Please call or write the Renaissance office to reserve a space no later than August 13th.

Board Supports AIDS Food Bank

The Philadelphia Community Health Alternatives (PCHA) and The Philadelphia AIDS Task Force (PATF) is in the process of developing a food bank to serve our brothers and sisters with AIDS.

Renaissance has been invited by PCHA to become a part of this service program. We can develop either a food or clothing program to assist in their efforts.

The Board of Directors agree that this is a worthwhile program for us to be involved in and it gives us a chance to once again show that we are responsible members of the Philadelphia community.

Therefore, beginning in June, we will be collecting canned goods at the meetings to be donated to the food bank. We also need a volunteer to coordinate, collect and deliver the food. If you have the time and the inclination, please contact any member of the Board.

Outreach Efforts

For one of our newest members, finding Renaissance was something of a detective problem. She persevered, however, and in the process will help her sisters find us more easily in the future.

Angela Smith had seen the WWOR "People Are Talking" that featured Renaissance members, but she missed the address. She first tried calling her local phone counseling services, "But they were oblivious to the whole concept of crossdressing," she said. Next, Angela called the Union/Snyder

continued on page 2

TS Clinic Needs \$\$ To Stay Afloat

Special Report by Renata L.

Co-founder of
The Gathering.

Early last winter, a news series appeared in the Trinidad, Colorado's newspaper focusing on the bleak financial picture facing Mount San Rafael Hospital in Trinidad. Cuts in federal aid have forced Mt. S. Rafael to consider reductions in patient services and even closure. The cuts are based on the misguided assumption that rural hospitals have lower operating costs than their metropolitan counterparts. Historically, sex

reassignment surgery has been available primarily in smaller, relatively obscure hospitals such as Mt. S. Rafael.

To compound the problem, the board of directors of the hospital has not directed the recruitment of another SRS surgeon in the event of Dr. Stanley Biber's eventual retirement. The urgent need for a replacement became obvious this past winter, when Dr. Biber was incapacitated and unable to perform surgery. In a very real sense, Dr. Biber's work is a double-edged

continued on page 2

Highlights From The May Birthday Party

It was with great pleasure that Renaissance was able to host Mariette Pathy Allen as guest speaker for our first Anniversary Party. She gave us a special slide presentation of her photographic work with our community, despite her having a bad case of laryngitis, and provided photo coverage of the Cutting of the Cake ceremony. Thank you Mariette for your participation and support.

Drs. Bill Stayton and Carol Cobb-Nettleton, our gracious

hosts and patrons, were also able to join us. A very special Thanks to both of them for their support.

As usual, there were the side meetings, such as the TS Rap Group, and two nice boutiques. Gayle brought a great selection of perfumes, jewelry and hosiery. Janine, owner of Femme Fatale lingerie, brought half her store along. She is planning a special night just for us. In the meantime visit the shop at 520 Stokes Rd., Medford Lakes, NJ, 609-654-6414.

Outreach Efforts...make a personal contribution.

County Community Counseling Service. They referred her to a counselor, but he, too, hadn't heard of any TV/TS support groups.

Fortunately for Angela (and for Renaissance), the May issue of *Penthouse Forum* carried the Renaissance address, and that was how she finally contacted us.

But the story doesn't end here. Once she had the Renaissance address and phone number, Angela called back the community counselling service and gave it to them so they could help others.

Paula Sinclair, Director of Outreach and Public Affairs, says that while Renaissance has an aggressive

public information program, Angela's saga is probably not unique. "There are a lot of sisters who don't read TV/TS publications or who haven't seen our television shows," she said. "For them, the main hope of getting in touch with Renaissance is through these community counseling referral services. But we don't know which communities have them." She asks that members find out if these services exist in their communities, and if they do, tell them about Renaissance. Or, she adds, tell her about the services, and she will contact them.

TS Appeal for Hospital Support, from Front Page

sword. Without the income from SRS, it is possible that the hospital would have to close altogether. If the surgeries continue, it could exclude Mt. S. Rafael from additional federal aid due to the controversial nature of the surgery.

I wrote to the hospital's administrator, proposing that a living memorial from our community might be a way of financially assisting the hospital. With his help, and that of the hospital's patient representative, a Transsexuals' Living Memorial Fund was conceived. It was indicated to me that Mt. S. Rafael's only hope for the future may lie entirely upon our efforts for its survival as a primary

care hospital. We who are the "alumni" of Mt. S. Rafael will always remember the very special care we received there...for it was there we were given new life!

Won't you please sit down right now and make a commitment to our cause? What a wonderful way to say, "Thank you" for all it has done to support US for so long!

Make your tax-deductible gift payable to the MOUNT SAN RAFAEL HOSPITAL MEMORIAL FUND, and mail it to: Memorial Fund, 503 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830

Renata L. [REDACTED],
Memorial Fund Director

Renaissance News

Staff

Senior Editor: **JoAnn Roberts**
National Editor: **Paula Sinclair**
Overseas Editor: **Trudi Henry**
Correspondent: **Angela Gardner**
Admin. Assistants: **Susan P., Beth and Rachael M.**
Copy & Layout: **Creative Design Services, King of Prussia, PA.**

For the latest information about events call: (215) 640-9449, 24 hrs. a day.

Business Report Thru May 31st

May Attendance: 75
Paid Members: 165

Starting Balance: \$1898.18

Income:

Donations	\$193.00
Publications	\$12.00
Member Dues	\$400.00
Subtotal	\$605.00

Expenses:

Meeting	\$180.48
Newsletter	\$75.00
Office Expenses	\$327.29
Subtotal	\$582.77

Ending Balance \$1920.41

Coming Events:

June

- 17th Phila. G/L Arts Festival
Drag Show @ Allegro II
- 18th Renaissance Meeting
Tomi Aviccoli, PGN
Used Clothing Sale
- 27th Phila. G/L Arts Festival
Drag Show @ Video Box

July

- 17th Renaissance Meeting

August

- No Meeting for August

September

- 15-18, "Paradise in the Poconos" weekend
- 24th Renaissance Meeting
Ariadne Kane workshop and lecture.

The Opinion Page

Commitment, Do It Now...commentary by JoAnn Roberts

Well, we've passed the one year mark and we continue to grow steadily each month. Our growth is occurring in two areas, membership and outreach activities.

Every month we add about 40 new names to the mailing list. Unfortunately, we also have to drop about half that many from the mailing list. We'd rather not do that but the economics of producing, printing and mailing the newsletter force us to it.

Our Outreach activities are booming in comparison. Our speakers are now regular guests at both the University of Pennsylvania and the Jefferson Medical College. We have developed professional ties with the *Society for the Scientific Study of Sex* and we've been asked to support an advisor of *Penthouse Forum* magazine. One of our members will be profiled in *Philadelphia Magazine*, and there are the television and radio interviews. We are sponsoring a reprint of Dr. Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, and working on a special seminar, both with Ari Kane of the Human Outreach & Achievement Institute, in Boston.

For such a young organization that is a lot of activity and effort. Other groups seem awed by what

we've accomplished in such a short time. Why has this all been possible? What is so special about Renaissance and its members? Commitment, that's what!

The Board knew from the start that it would have to carry the ball for awhile to get this group off the ground. The people on the Board committed their time, and some their money, to make Renaissance work. As we grew, new people made monetary commitments by joining as Full or Associate members. About six months into our existence we had a small population explosion and doubled our membership in just two months. Volunteers stepped forward to take the load off the Board in college outreach and meeting support functions. This is what we had hoped for and expected. There are others now who share the responsibility and the commitment of the Board for the future of the group.

Is it enough? No, I don't believe it is for our long term existence. Yes, we will be around for 1989 and even 1990, but what about beyond that? Can we last through the coming decade? Only if we continue to make a commitment to keep what we have alive and dynamic can we last that long.

What kind of commitment is

required, you might ask? First, any organization that hopes to make any kind of impact on society needs money to operate. When we receive our tax exempt status from the IRS, we will be able to solicit grants and funding from state and federal agencies. That will help, but the main support has to be at the grass-roots level; you, the members. Our public efforts; college outreach, advertising, television, radio, newsletter, Background Papers, etc, all depend on the private contributions of individuals. Next, we need arms and legs to extend the effectiveness of the group. There are many projects in the planning stage and member support will determine whether they succeed or not.

The future of Renaissance is in your hands. The Board's job is to plan, guide and direct the activities of the group. The successful implementation of these activities depends directly on the commitment of the members both in time and money. If you have not yet made a commitment to Renaissance, now is the time to do it. There is no reason to wait. We are here. We are working. We are successful in our present activities. Why not make an investment that will insure the future, now!

Doormats...Janice Van Cleve, reprinted from Emerald City News

The lady rambled on and on about how her relatives took advantage of her, mooched off her, never showed any gratitude or even courtesy. Ann Landers had the perfect reply: "You can't be used for a doormat unless you take it lying down."

Her comment applies to us as transvestites, too. How many times have we heard cat calls or worse shouted from cars and we just tucked our head down and walked a little faster? How many times have we remained silent while ignorant boors maligned our minority? How many times have

we seen the media put us down and reacted only in silent frustration?

It is difficult enough to find truth, even without all this negative feedback. Worse, however, is that these incidents tend to erode our confidence and self-esteem and exaggerate our fears. If allowed to continue without resistance, our natural protective instincts will build a wall to insulate us from these attacks and - presto - we have a closet.

I've heard many TVs complain among themselves about some article or show. My answer is: so what did you do about it? Did you

write the producer? Did you call the editor?

Remember: you're not here by accident, nor are you a transvestite by accident. The world would be less without you. So bear your dignity with pride and be quick to recognize the dignity in others. Demand respect, give it in return, and do it with class.

If you don't use a muscle, it grows weak. If you don't use an idea, you forget it. If you do not assert your dignity - constantly, forcefully, uncompromisingly - you will soon see others using it for a doormat.

News & Notes

Edited by Paula Sinclair

Dragin the Arts will be a feature of the Philadelphia Gay/Lesbian Arts festival this month. A special Female Impersonation show is being co-sponsored by Renaissance and Poets & Prophets on the evening of June 17th, beginning at 11:00 PM. Local area performers, Lisa Chambers, Dwayne Graham, Tina Thomas and Les Harrison, will be showcased.

The site for the show will be the new location of the Allegro II, 211 S. Quince, formerly the Monster Inn. Tickets are \$5 at the door.

Later in the month, June 27th, Drag Performance Artist, Vadra, will be featured at the Video Box, 126 Chestnut St, second floor of the Middle East Club. Admission is \$5 at the door.

Here is an excellent opportunity to support the Arts, the gay/lesbian community and have a pleasant evening on the town.

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A portrait of former Chicago Mayor Harold Washington caused a near-riot at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago earlier this month [May]. The popular black mayor, who died at his desk several months ago, was pictured naked except for white lacy bra, panties, garter belt and stockings.

When officials of the school refused to remove the painting from a display of student works, several city alderman stormed into the gallery and, accompanied by police, took the painting off the wall and out of the building. Police defended their actions by saying the painting was a hazard to the public welfare because it could incite a riot. But students accused the city officials of censorship. The American Civil Liberties Union said it would file a free speech suit against the city on behalf of the artist, David K. Nelson.

Through a school official, Nelson said that he meant no disre-

spect to Washington. His theme, he said, was iconoclasm. The Washington portrait, entitled "Mirth and Girth," was one of a series of similar paintings. Another showed the president of the art school as a suckling infant.

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A dwarf from Pittsburgh faces a possible sentence of 27 years in prison for entertaining at sex parties in drag along with a retarded 10-year-old boy who was also dressed as a girl.

According to Allegheny County Prosecutor John Zottola, the boy's mother arranged for her son and Ronald "Denny" Smith, 33, to perform sex acts at the parties. The boy testified that he was dressed in girl's clothes for the appearances and Smith wore a dress and blonde wig. Smith was convicted of involuntary sexual intercourse, corruption of a minor and indecent assault for his activities with the boy.

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The Tennessee attorney general has issued a non-binding legal opinion that says two people of the same gender probably cannot legally marry in the Volunteer State even if one of them has had a sex change, according to a report in the *Philadelphia Gay News*.

Michael Cody issued the opinion at the request of several state legislators who said county clerks in their districts had received marriage license applications from several gay and lesbian couples. Lawmakers said that the requests for marriage licenses came because the state law does not specifically prohibit the marriage of two men or two women. Cody said that while it is true that same-sex marriages are neither authorized nor prohibited, the law's use of the phrase "the male and female applicant" implies that lawmakers had only envisioned marriages between men and woman.

Cody also said that "under current Tennessee law, the courts of Tennessee could hold that sex reassignment surgery would not alter the sex of a person for the purpose of marriage."

Cody's opinion is not binding on the state's courts.

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Last month we reported that Rachel Harlow, Philadelphia's most famous transsexual, was planning on opening a swanky supper club in the former Rusty Scupper in NewMarket. Since then plans have changed slightly. The new location will be the Bourse where the 14,000 square-foot club will occupy part of two floors and open in the late summer.

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For the second year in a row, the Night of a Thousand Gowns gathering nobility from the nation's Imperial Courts and beautiful people from all over to the Starlight Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on New York's Park Avenue in late April.

Empress Sybil and Emperor George of the New York City Imperial Court hosted the grand affair. It was also their last public appearance as reigning royalty, for the grand affair was climaxed by the crowning of a new court.

As was the case with last year's ball, the money raised from the \$200 and \$150 per person admission charge went to several gay and lesbian charities. In addition, as befitting the theme of "Casino Royale," money was raised through roulette, blackjack and dice games. Players bought chips, placed their bets, and could redeem their winnings from a lavish selection of gifts, some of which included dresses, gowns and accessories donated by Bill Blass, Don Klein and other leaders of the fashion industry.

News From Around The World

An Interview With Richard O'Brien...reprinted by permission from Chrysalis, the magazine of the Gender Transient Affinity, Isle of Wight, UK.

Richard, famous for his writing and acting, was author of the cult production Rocky Horror Show, in which he played Riff Raff, on stage and later in the Rocky Horror Picture Show film. He continued the theme of middle American naivete, but without the transgender touch in a sequel film Shock Treatment (This can be rented at most video stores-Ed.), again taking a part himself. Though modest about his abilities, Richard O'Brien commands respect in acting, demonstrating a feel for classic and gothic horror, whether played straight, or comic. Richard spoke with Chrysalis from his Surrey home, "Denton" - after the township in "RHPS" - about his perspective on the show, his view of Transgender and his future plans.

Chrysalis: Some have inevitably analysed RHPS, seeing allegories and messages. Do you still see it as raunchy, light entertainment, or as having an extended message now? If so, what?

R. O'Brien: Yes, I still see Rocky as a Rock 'n Roll show with a story line - if there was any message, it was "Don't Dream It, Be It", which I 'borrowed' from old Federick's of Hollywood ads. However, it should be read as "Don't Dream It. Do It", which has a much wider and more generous meaning.

CHR: Rocky's main ingredients are: horror films, rock music and transvestism - our readers have a vested interest in the last - so how important is Transgender to you now. Do you see it as something positive, and if so in what sense and on what plane; physical, mental, spiritual, or all?

R.O.B.: I believe that if we were all giving and taking in the fullest sense, it would be a much better world to live in. There are enough

'isms' to be going on with, sexism attacks everyone in so many different disguises that it would be lovely if we were all truly equal - besides, there would be so much more lovely bits to play with, and you could say to your partner, "shall I have the baby this time, to you?"

CHR: That's a pleasant thought for the future. But in the present, Rocky seems to be about the only camp and Drag show to have so far escaped the prudes and AIDS phobia which has shut down so many shows lately. What would you say makes it so untouchable?

R.O.B.: Rocky is about loss of innocence and is locked into traditional myths, as a result it reveals what, say, 'Babes in the Wood', only hinted at. It's a pantomime for eternal 14-year-olds.

CHR: A beautiful theme. I shall view it that way ever more. But, La Cage Aux Folles was about fidelity, and it still took a dive. Was it always so seemingly hassle-free to stage Rocky?

R.O.B.: Rocky had a life of it's/his/her own - it/she/he has controlled her/its/his own destiny - we (all involved) have simply watched with mouths open.

CHR: As enduring as Androgyny itself, I see. What do you think of some of its imitations which have cropped up since? "Little Shop of Horrors" or "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom" and the off-Broadway production "Have I Got A Girl For You" - do you think they compare at all?

R.O.B.: I don't approve of cross reference - all critique is suspect, or highly questionable (do it, don't talk about it).

CHR: -OW! OK, we'll skip that one. What's been the reaction to *Shock Treatment*? (N.B. *Shock*

Treatment is the "sequel" to RHPS and can be rented at almost any video store. Ed) Have traditionalist Rocky fans taken to it, or do they demand the return of the Trannie connection? Would you ever bring back Frankie and Riff Raff as themselves?

R.O.B.: *Shock Treatment* was to have been a traditional "Monsters Rising From The Grave" type sequel; it went in another direction due to the insistence of the director. We should have changed directors. The story is muddy; the sound track is great.

CHR: Moving onto your other roles, we've seen you play the wizard Gulnar in ITV's *Robin of Sherwood* and lately, telling a horror story on Night Network. Your writing and acting seem as diverse and eclectic as Rocky itself. But, do you feel your roles have become typecast cameos of late?

R.O.B.: I don't mind type-casting; it beats being miscast by a mile.

CHR: Horror gets miscast as the occult, often. Do you have any profound code of belief, in religion or the occult?

R.O.B.: I believe Man created God and in doing so God became a reality - the power of faith and prayer being enormous - I don't dabble in the occult, but death fascinates me and I love all things Gothic.

CHR: Rocky is seriously good, but there is a serious side to Androgyny, as you know. Have you considered doing a piece of straight theater based on it, or sci fi, as Moorcock does - (See the *Cornelius Chronicles* by Michael Moorcock, Avon Books in the US. -Ed.) you seem to have as mercurial and creative a mind as he.

R.O.B.: Not particularly, I'm a bear of very small brain.

continued on Back Page

A Letter From C.J.

...C.J. is one of the earliest supporting members of Renaissance.

"It is easy for people to take things for granted. It's something we all have done but there comes a time when that something important is gone or taken away and then we miss it.

For along time now a few people have carried the load for Renaissance. True, it's something that they like to do. But, did anyone stop to think that the people carrying that load for us have other things to do, family, friends, jobs, homes to take care of, etc. Heck, may be they're just tired of it all (burned out), but feel if they stop to take a breather then the group will suffer.

Yes, this is a plea for help for all

of you. We all have something to give, something to share with our friends, sisters and people who care or show concern for us. It is written:

*I am only one
but still I am one.
I cannot do everything
but I can do something.
And because I cannot do
everything,*

I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

E.E.Hale

I'm sure none of us want Renaissance to take the path of others who have come and gone. With

that in mind, take the time to come to a meeting, share ideas with others, write a short story or something of interest. Do something for the group or better yet do it for yourself.

I'll be the first to tell you I've never made it to a meeting yet. I will this summer and look forward to meeting a lot of you. This letter is a start for me. With it I hope to transform myself from a drone into a productive member of Renaissance.

To JoAnn, Paula S, Paula K, Angela, Trudi and all the others, I thank you. Please continue the outstanding work."

Chelsea Jennifer

Interview with Richard O'Brien...from page 5.

CHR: Big enough to confuse the Hell out of me with an answer like that! A cautious answer, so, have you ever suffered, being a media victim?

R.O.B.: I'll pass on that one for the moment if I may.

CHR: Certainly. So, what are your plans for the future? What would you like to do with the rest of your life, and what do you think you will end up doing?

R.O.B.: Writing seems to be the

main thing in my life at the moment, but being what we know most of the world to be, and that it is narcissistic exhibitionists with various other qualities thrown in, neither, and/or either less or more important, there's no way I shall stop performing.

CHR: Thank yours and our God for that, and I hope you go on doing both for many years to come. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed by Chrysalis, Richard, and

before we end, have you any special message to give our readers?

R.O.B.: My regards to you and your readers. Be kind to each other - vanity isn't a sin - only when you lose your sense of humor. Stay forever Angels.

CHR: A beautiful sentiment from a gentle person. Thank you, Richard O'Brien. I hope our readers keep that theme in mind.

Texas 'T' Party & 2nd Pocono Event

The Bolton & Park Society, San Antonio, has announced their plans for what will, hopefully, become an annual event. The *Texas 'T' Party* is a three day weekend to be spent, en femme, at the beautiful Sheraton Seven Oaks Resort in San Antonio. The dates are Feb 24th through the 26th.

B&P is planning a full program of fun, self improvement and outings. All for the outrageously low registration price of \$75. Wait, there's more good news. You make your room reservation direct with the hotel (1-800-346-5866) and if you mention Boulton & Park, you

get the room at \$44.07 per person per night!! WOW, do these people know how to throw a party or what? For registration send your money to the: Boulton & Park Society, Attn: Jan Rupard, Box 169652(T), San Antonio, TX 78280.

JoAnn Roberts announces *Paradise in the Poconos II*, slated for Sept. 15th through the 18th. JoAnn says that additional services have been added for this event. Cost is \$225 per person/double occupancy. A \$50 deposit will hold a reservation. Write or call the Renaissance office for details.

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Subscription & Associate Membership is \$12/year. Full Membership is \$30/year.

Renaissance is a non-profit corporation which has the purpose of providing education about transgendered behavior.

Renaissance meets once a month, on the 3rd Saturday of the month, unless otherwise noted. Starting time is 9:00 PM in the late Spring/Summer, and 8:00 PM in the Fall/Winter. Regular meetings are held in the Valley Forge area.