

Renaissance News



Volume 7, No. 5

Vision - Integrity - Quality

May, 1993

COLOR SCHEME

by Jessica Charlene Brandon

When I read Dr. Peo's column in the December 1992 issue of Renaissance News, I felt compelled to write because I happen to be a crossdresser of color and a lot of what he talked about really hit home for me. I started dressing in my late mother's clothes twenty years ago when I was fourteen and thought I was terribly alone, apart from the "normal" world until 1983 when I discovered what I was and learned that there were thousands more like me. The knowledge left me giddy until I took my race into consideration. Then the remoteness returned.

As a comparison, even today when I attend meetings as a full fledged, card carrying member of Renaissance, I still feel that awful sense of detachment, of isolation because I'm black. Don't get me wrong, girls, it's not like I'm shunned at meetings, that isn't the case, Lord knows I'm never at a loss for companionship and camaraderie, and bighearted sisters like JoAnn and Alison went out of their way to make me feel right at home. However, I couldn't escape that pervasive sense of loneliness because I was a minority within a minority.

Besides the usual insecurities most crossdressers face, especially those fresh out of the closet, such as whether or not I look passable, or at best palatable, am I properly dressed for the occasion and if my makeup

is on correctly, I often wonder just what I'm doing in such an assemblage. Then I ask: where are the others like me? Why am I alone in a sea of white faces? Next is the question of if I'm displaying the correct image as both a black crossdresser and a black woman? And, for that matter, what is the correct image for same?

The only certainty I have regarding that question is that the image of a black crossdresser doesn't lie in prostitution or female impersonation as Dr. Peo mentioned, at least it isn't for me. I'm proud to say I patterned myself after my mother who was a bank manager and always dressed and acted like a true lady, so my image is that of a woman of style and sophistication. The notion of prostitution is repugnant to me while I could never impersonate a black movie star or recording artist. Besides, I have stage fright.

Now, I have no doubt that there are crossdressers of color out there, and I agree fully that money is one of two reasons why they have trouble in reaching us. In my case, I'm an enlisted man (person?) in the Navy and you don't get rich in the military! Major conventions are out of the question (And I'd kill to go to P-Town!) while it's difficult enough just to maintain a decent femme wardrobe on my salary. For most black men who are from middle

class backgrounds and don't have the financial resources, crossdressing can be prohibitively expensive.

The second reason is a combination of image and perception. This is probably a blanket statement, but black men are expected to be tough, strong, aggressive and macho because of the hard times we live in. The ultimate antithesis of the aforementioned image would be someone like myself who relishes the joy of donning women's clothing, adopting a feminine persona and exploring the softer side of gender. This easily makes me everything the stereotypical black male isn't, even though I'm in a profession where strength of character is an absolute must.

I came out of my own closet and discovered Renaissance in November 1991, and, like the majority of first timers who leave the safety and security of their caves to face the

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Chapters & Affiliates

New Jersey

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) 435-5401 or write Renaissance SJ, PO Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Chapter leader - Terri [REDACTED]; Assistant Leader - Phil [REDACTED]

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia: Meets on third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, PA. Doors open at 8:00 p.m. Write to Renaissance PHL, Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020 or call (215)630-1437. Chapter Leader - Maryann Kirkland

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Meets on the first Saturday of the month at The Greens at Westgate in York, Pa. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105, or call (717) 780-1LSV. Chapter Leader - Yvonne [REDACTED]

Affiliates

MOTG: PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701

American Educational Gender Information Services (AEGIS): PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033, (404) 939-0244

Renaissance News

© 1993 Renaissance Education Association, Inc., Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406
\$2/copy, \$16 per year, 12 issues
215-630-1437

Editor-in-Chief:

Angela Gardner

Managing Editor:

Gary [REDACTED]

Contributing Editors:

Brenda Davidson

JoAnn Roberts

Administrative Assistants:

Rachel and Beth Marshall

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

And, don't forget about...

Articles, opinion pieces and letters to the Editor are always welcome at the Renaissance News. Ideas for articles and opinion pieces should be sent to Renaissance News, P. O. Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020. Complimentary and irate letters to the Editor may be sent to the same address.

Significant Others who have article ideas or opinions they would like to share should send their ideas to Evelyn Kirkland, c/o Maryann Kirdland, P. O. Box 1242, Newtown, PA 18940.

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, 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics, and 9-Understanding Transsexuality.

Pen Pal Program: If you would like to be a pen pal contact Maryann Kirkland at P. O. Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020. Attn: Dept. PP.

If you are a transfendered person with children and would like to network with other transparents, contact Elsa [REDACTED] at: Transparent, C/O Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

For TS information and peer counseling in South Jersey call Kelly Harris at 609 641-3782.

Events Calendar

May: 15th - GPC Dr. William Stayton, "Sexual Lifestyles"

June: Susan McPhie-Cosmotologist, Makeover

July: Selma Blaker, Hair Styling & Wig Care

Sept: Vendor's night

Oct: Dr. Sheila Kirk, Hormones

Chapters wishing to have their programs listed should get them to the Newsletter at least one month in advance. Two is better.

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ROGER'S NOTEBOOK (#67)

by Roger E. Peo, Ph. D.

Last month I reviewed *Iron John* by Robert Bly. What does a book about men have to say to the transgendered community? It is a truism that among other things, our society is divided into "men" and "women." Neither our language nor our social patterns allow for any behavior in-between. You are either a man or a woman - there are no other choices. In some ways the story of *Iron John* perpetuates these divisions. Bly looks at the traditional, age-old process by which a boy becomes a man. He speculates that our society has changed radically in the last 100 years. With that change has come a significant change in the rearing of young boys - more specifically they no longer have the guidance of men in this process. The result is a loss in understanding what being male is all about. It has been replaced with an empty macho posturing.

Let me base my following remarks on the premise that there are *significant* differences between men and women. Some of these are biological and some are sociological. Which is which is immaterial. One of Bly's theses is that the boy

who grows without connection to the masculine image grows up incomplete. The "hole" is "filled with demons who tell him that his father's work is evil and that the father is evil." (Page 21) It seems to me that such perceptions can be extended to all men and masculinity. If one hates the masculine and one is male, then one course is to reject masculinity and embrace femininity. Couple this with the fact that most boys are raised by their mothers. Again quoting Bly: "If the son learns feeling primarily from the mother, then he will probably see his own masculinity from the feminine point of view as well. He may be fascinated with it, but he will be afraid of it. ... He may admire it but he will never feel at home with it." (Page 25.) Is this a sub-conscious perception of cross-dressers?

Sociologists observe that many boys are brought up in a predominantly feminine environment. Their fathers may be distant, uninvolved or workaholics. Teachers in grammar schools are predominantly women. Male role models are unreal images in television and mov-

ies. I do not mean to lay these situations at the feet of mothers, for they do an admirable job. The fathers are simply not providing the examples that are needed.

As a therapist, one of the things I observe is the dislike of the masculine role by the male-to-female cross-dresser. There is little that is good about it, just responsibility and restrictions. (As an aside, most women don't picture the masculine role that way.) I wonder if cross-dressers are caught in a never-never land. If they do not know, understand or accept their innate masculinity and see femininity from a flawed masculine perspective then they have little to anchor them. Most learn to "play the game" to survive but there is little joy in that.

Am I suggesting that learning about masculinity will somehow rid one of the desire to cross-dress? Far from it, however, if a person hates that which is his core then everything else loses something, including cross-dressing. I believe that exploring femininity can not truly occur unless the masculine side is also evaluated, explored and understood.

You may contact Dr. Peo at P.O. Box 3445, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 or by phone at (914) 452-8405. All communications are kept confidential.

This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter if Dr. Peo's name and address appear in the reprinted version. Others must obtain written approval from Dr. Peo. A copy of such a reprint should be sent to Dr. Peo.



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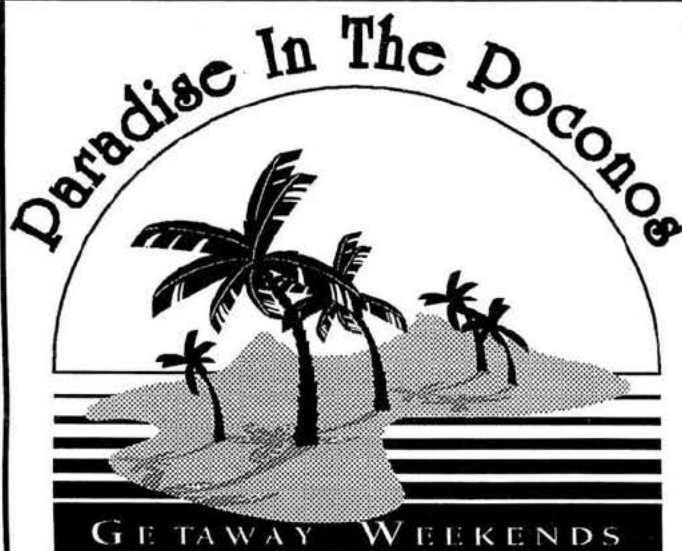


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Reminder Beat

by Angela Gardner

It was back in June of 1990 when the Renaissance News first reported that the 1993 IFGE convention was on it's way to Philadelphia. Back then the IFGE's Executive Director, Merissa Sherril Lynn was still talking about what a great job San Francisco's ETVC did with the '89 convention. She actually said that two potential host groups had been "scared" off by the great job done by ETVC. Well if ETVC scared 'em in 1989 I wonder what they're saying around the country about how that little old support group from Philly did in '93? Merissa herself told me that it was the most convention like convention they ever had. It turned out that way for one reason, lot's of hard work from the Renaissance people who pitched in to help out. Thanks again everyone!

Speaking of thanks, we all got nice notes from IFGE thanking us for the wonderful jobs we did. Renaissance got a general note thanking the whole group and some people got personal notes. All of these missives of thanks were written and signed by IFGE's medical liason person, Doctor Sheila Kirk. Sheila is a lovely lady and I know her thank you's are sincere. It's just a shame

that the Executive Director of IFGE didn't get involved in the thank you note process.

And now...the news!

GIRL'S SCHOOL

I tell ya girls, they're coming out of the woodwork. I have received clippings from folks all over the country and three of them are about places to go and get yourself feminized. Ok, two of them are about the same place but it does seem as if more people are jumping on the, "let's make a buck off the guys in dresses" bandwagon.

Items one and two come from Tiffany in Chicago. Tiffany says she loves the magazine and reads us all the time. Guess she doesn't read too closely though since she addressed the clippings to "The News Queen." When did N.Q. leave? Oh well I don't mind Tiff not noticing my by-line. Much. Just let me wipe this mascara off my cheek and we'll get to item one.

A whole page of a Chicago paper called the Reader was devoted to a story about a place called Translucere where a man can go to bring out his femininity. The shop opened three years ago as a lingerie

shop for large women. Business wasn't good. Then the owner noticed that some of the best customers she had were men. Now business is booming and men are coming in for everything from a pair of panty hose to a complete make-over. If you're in Chicago and want to check it out, Translucere is located at 2652 North Lincoln. How much can you expect to drop for a full make-over? About \$150 according to the article.

Add another hundred and fifty and you can get a session in Manhattan's exclusive crossdressing school, Miss Vera's Academy of Crossdressing. Miss Vera's PR firm has been busy. Tiffany sent us an article from the Chicago Tribune. We also got an article from another contributor that ran in New York Magazine and I've heard a lot of talk about her school. Miss Vera and her all female staff not only do complete make-overs but if you can pay for enough sessions they'll give you complete training. After you've mastered the lesson taught by the Dean of High Heels, unraveled the mysteries of makeup with the Dean of Cosmetology you can have an all day photo session with the Dean of

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MC/VISA ACCEPTED

Photography, Annie Sprinkle. Annie, or Miss Sprinkle as the students refer to her, is an ex-porn star who now handles the photo sessions. You get posed and pampered! Dressed in a variety of outfits and she let's you have a souvenir photo album. She should. They charge you a \$1000 for the day. Boy, I didn't know this crossdressing stuff could be so expensive. Thirty six dollars gets you a Renaissance membership. For that you get to mix and mingle with some of the nicest (and hardest working) CDs on the east coast at eleven monthly meetings and you get the News as well. Now that's a bargain.

DRAG KINGS

It seems that going the other direction on the gender highway is cheaper. What evidence do I submit? Our own Michelle [redacted] sent me a copy of the ETVC newsletter with a blurb from the Big Apple. A woman named Diane [redacted] who is a female to male crossdresser is conducting a workshop for Drag Kings. Women will pay fifty dollars to learn how men use space, pick up objects and lots of other guy stuff. Fifty dollars doesn't sound too bad when you get all that but participants must supply their own male clothing, hair gel and fake penis. After the work-

shop the, "men" will go to a public place to test their male persona. They'll no doubt knock back a few brewskis and make rude comments to women at the bar. It is in New York, remember?

The interesting thing which ETVC's editor also noted is the teacher at this workshop on manliness is a woman. When we have someone in to teach us femininity it's someone with a lifetime of experience. Michelle wondered if these women could de-program male crossdressers who wanted to butch up. Maybe so but if there's a chance you could break a nail with that de-programming stuff, it's not for this girl.

SILICONE SIGHTINGS

We must thank Tiffany again for two breast augmentation stories. First if you have implants and you're worried that silicone may be leaking out and destroying your health don't remove them with a razor knife. Two surgeons have invented a procedure that allows them to conduct an endoscopic exam of the implant. The endoscope, a tiny magnifying camera type of thing is inserted into the breast next to the nipple. I guess this must be effective and not cause any more leaks but they just taught twenty five surgeons how to do the

procedure. It might be prudent (and proper) to wait awhile and see if there are any follow up stories on Hard Copy or Geraldo.

Maribel Hemingway was so worried she had those silicone bags pulled out and replaced with saline. She keeps that fab figure and saves her health at the same time. Very prudent. Not so prudent was the Atlanta transsexual who died while getting an illegal silicone shot in her tush. The quest for a well rounded feminine butt lead to the loss of her entire body. Dallas Denny of our affiliate AEGIS has commented that Atlanta is developing a reputation as a black market for silicone shots. Not a good idea girls. Say, wasn't that study on HIV positive TS prostitutes done in Atlanta? Yeah but I'm sure it's a lovely town. Besides, if we outlaw silicone only outlaws will have silicone! Aww, just don't mess with it. OK?

SHOW BIZ NOTES

Madonna is not happy being a disco diva, a movie star and naked in a book. No it seems she wants to make like the big time folks in Hollywood and get a project or two in development. One of the projects she's busy on is a film version of Holly Woodlawn's autobiography,

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Letters ... We Get Letters ...

To Renaissance,

My dear sisters and brothers, on behalf of IFGE and certainly from me as well, I send my deepest appreciation for all that you did to make the Coming Together 1993 IFGE Convention such a success.

Your huge effort and involvement is very appreciated. We can't put on an event of such magnitude without cooperation and involvement and yours, I want you to know, has been the very best that we have ever experienced with a hostess organization. You made things very easy and smooth and we are forever grateful for all that you have done.

Your efforts at this convention also bring us much closer together and I want you to know that we here in Waltham do feel this and that we look forward to much more in the way of association and cooperation in the future.

With much love and again appreciation,

Sheila Kirk, M.D.
Secretary
IFGE Board of Directors

To Renaissance,

On behalf of the Make-A-Wish Foundation please accept our deepest thanks for the monies raised through your Casino Night. That money will enable us to grant an entire wish for a family to go to Disneyworld, of which we have many.

My thanks to Chuck also for his coordination and we will be happy to send you copies of our newsletter when it is printed.

Again, thank you to all involved.

Very truly yours,

Krista Friedrich
Executive Director
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GLAD RAGS

by JOHN UPDIKE

Those of us who were alive and sartorially active at the time, it was saddening to read in the Boston *Globe* recently the allegation, by "New York socialite" Susan Rosenstiel, that in 1958 J. Edgar Hoover was parading around in a Plaza Hotel suite wearing women's clothes: "He was wearing a fluffy black dress, very fluffy, with flounces, and lace stockings and high heels, and a black curly wig." I was saddened to think that future generations, trying to grasp the peculiar splendor and excitement of high-echelon cross-dressing during Eisenhower's second term, will imagine that dowdy bit of black fluff, with its fussy flounces and matching wig, to have been *très à la mode*, when the truth is we all considered J. Edgar something of a frump.

Ike, for instance, dear Ike with his infallible instincts, would never have let himself be caught in lace stockings, even though he did have the legs for them. I remember, within a month of Saint Laurent's 1958 collection for Dior, Ike coming out in a stunning cobalt-blue wool trapeze, with white open-backed heels and a false chignon. That very day, if memory serves, he had sent five thousand marines to Lebanon, and not a hair out of place. It was with this outfit -- or was it a belted A-line from the previous year? -- that he sported a flowered silk neck cloth, when scarves were still thought to be strictly for babushkas. He was very conservative as to hemlines, however; when Saint Laurent lifted skirts to the knee in 1959, the President waited three months for Congress to decide the issue, and then,

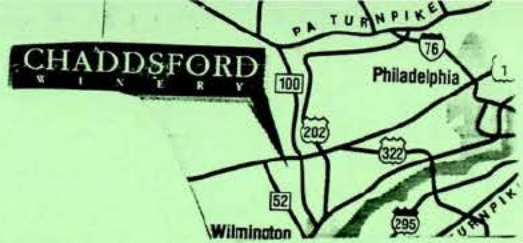
losing all patience, switched to Balenciaga with a stroke of his pen. Thenceforth, to the very end of his Administration, he stuck with long-waisted day dresses in neutral duns and beiges.

John Foster Dulles, on the other hand, favored a slinky-pajama look and pastel pants suits with a touch of glimmer in the fabric. Oodles of bangles, upswept blond wigs, and pom-pommed mules. Despite his staunch anti-Communism, he was oddly partial to red, though I believe on good authority that Sherman Adams at least once took Foster aside and made the point that bright colors did not become a big-boned frame. Sherman, though he was undone by vicuna, lingers in my mind's eye as a creature of whimsical ostrich-feather boas and enchantments in lightly starched lemon voile. Neil McElroy, the Secretary of Defense, vied with Senator Dirksen for the title of Most Quietly Elegant, at a time when bell-shaped skirts and full-sleeved blouses were controlling the silhouette, McElroy denounced Pentagon cost run-ups in a shimmering jade-green sheath, side-slit to the thigh and topped by a cloth-buttoned brocade-linen bodice with shoelace shoulder straps. Foster Dulles' brother Allen also preferred the slim look-tailored suits of pencil-striped wool, the jackets sharply cinched at the waist, with wide lapels piquantly emphasizing the bosom of a padded corselette. That terrible weekend after Sputnik, to rally our spirits Ike commanded a ballroom at the Mayflower and sent down the directive: *Glad rags only*. My God, what floods of organdie and tulle, ruffles and ruch-

ings and appliqued beadwork! Present-day Washington, with its dreary cutbacks, has no concept of our kind of style. Of course, the United States had half the world's refrigerators then, and the national debt was peanuts. I went up to Allen, who in the spirit of the occasion had forsaken his pinstripes for a so-called "corolla" gown by Capucci of dusty-rose taffeta, with a real rose stuck in his silver-dusted wig, and I recall saying, "My goodness, what ever are we going to do about the Soviets and this terrible Cold War?"

Eavesdropping as he always was, J. Edgar came up to us in some perfectly inappropriate, pathetic little frock of cocoa crêpe gathered in front and trimmed with a ribbon bowknot. That winsome bulldog-puppy face of his was crowned by a grotesque paste tiara, and the spike heels of his patent-leather pumps kept sticking in the parquet floor. Allen suavely elbowed him aside and spoke sotto voce to me. "Mr. Under-Secretary" -- I was always being Under-Secretary of something or other in those giddy years -- "not to worry, though the Commies have the rocket power for now. Our top-secret reconnaissance flights, I can inform you, have come back with photographs of Khrushchev in an evening dress of gold-threaded silk chiffon, and Mikoyan in a two-piece, low-backed outfit of velvet and shirred georgette. If this is the game they want to play, we'll outspend the bastards right into the ground!"

Reprinted by permission; © 1993 John Updike. Originally in the *New Yorker*.



WINE TASTING!

8 P.M., June 11, 1993

Chaddsford Winery, U.S. Route 1 5 miles southwest of Route 202 intersection

Philadelphia Chapter invites you to join us for a summer evening wine tasting, conducted by the winemaker, Mr. Eric Miller. There will be snacks as well an opportunity to taste some of the latest 1992 vintage releases. The fee is \$16.00; send directly to the address below or bring to the May Philadelphia Chapter meeting.

Send To:

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Attn: Special Events
Box 60552
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Check or M.O. for \$16.00 enclosed. . . .

HEY, WHERE'D EVERYBODY GO?

Ok folks, we've got several programs running and a few of them are dying on the vine for lack of response. So far Elsa's Trans-parent organizing effort has not gotten any mail. Sounded like a good idea at the time. Why wouldn't transgendered people who happen to be parental units want to share their thoughts and tips on parenting? If you would like to get involved in what should be a useful effort look for Elsa's address on page two in the And, Don't Forget About section.

We've mentioned Carolyn in two or three of the last issues. Carolyn is a VLSV member who can't make the meetings because she works on the weekends. She would like to organize a week night meeting for people with the same problem but again, response has been zip. There had been a problem with Carolyn's address when we first put this in but that has been fixed. If you would like to be part of a week night meeting write to: Carolyn, PO Box 15, York, PA, 17405. Somebody must want to get out on a week night.

Where are the great significant other writers? No one has sent anything to our Partner editor, Evelyn Kirkland. Don't any women out there have feelings about their relationship with a transgendered man? At the last meeting I heard a spouse who was attending for the first time talk to some other women about how she was so

nervous that she was somewhat ill on the way to the meeting. How did you feel the first time you attended a meeting with your husband? How do you deal with being out in public and having people stare? Make those feelings into an article and share them with other spouses and the transgendered men who are looking for relationships with women like you. The Partners address is on page two. If you don't have an article idea contact Evelyn anyway and start a dialogue that may need to an article or even a workshop.

Even less response has been garnered from our effort to start running classified, service oriented ads. Zilch, nada. That about sums it up. We'll keep trying. Maybe we should make some up. "Transvestite chimney sweep available. Will work in traditional frock coat and top hat or

French maid costume. Results guaranteed." You get the idea. If you have a regular, everyday service you can offer the transgender community - buy an ad. \$3.00 for three lines for three months. Send to the Renaissance News, PO Box 530, Bensalem, PA Att: Ads.

Programs that are proceeding include the Speakers Bureau training which registered and trained ten individuals last month to enable them to go out and inform the public. This year letters will go out to more colleges in the area offering our services to psychology and sex education classes.

Shifting in to high gear is the Clergy Outreach Project which now has a data base of church addresses and is only waiting for budget approval at the next board meeting. Then we will have Jodi generate the mailing labels and organize a stuffing party. Watch for further details.

Remember, the Newsletter is the way you find out about the various things we are trying to accomplish as a group. It's up to you to pick up the phone or write a note and get involved.

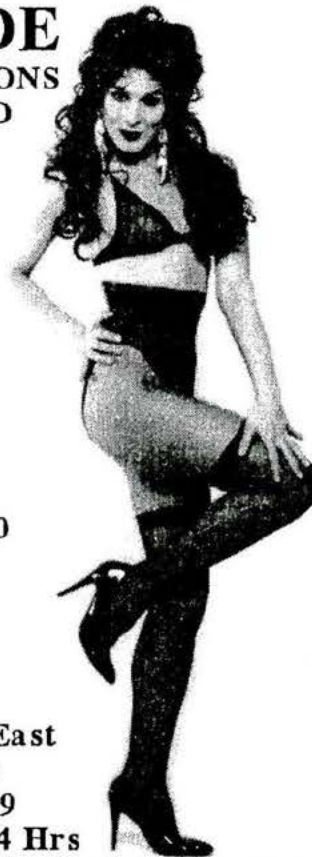
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(REMINDER continued from page 7)

A Low Life In High Heels. That's right girls. The Material Girl may end up playing a man. Holly's name used to be Hector in the old days. Actually, Madonna won't be playing Holly. The script, penned by Harvey Fierstein, will feature Madonna as Candy Darling. Now what was that Lou Reed lyric? "Candy never lost her head, even when she was..." Yeah, should be a hot flic.

Since her vogueness will not portray the central character of the book we probably won't get to see that much of Hollywood lawn, Andy Warhol or the other Factory regulars. As the Y say...that's show biz.

MALE MODELS

In an attempt to stir up controversy and see a few more rating points Geraldo has found a fashion model who has a beef with men who model women's clothing. The former Mrs. Michigan, Mary Degiulio (good resume piece Mary) is steamed at people like Lypsinka and Ru Paul because they are strutting their stuff on the catwalk.

"I think it's a little ridiculous. I mean, how do these designers expect us as women to relate to wearing their cloths when a man is parading down the runway in them?" They don't Mary. They use TV models to get publicity. Most of the things the New York and Paris runway models appear in are never even sold to real women in places like Michigan. When TV models are no longer shocking at all then designers will go another direction in their quest for publicity.

In a related item one of the first males to model femme fashion has passed away from AIDS. Kevin was a man from the Philadelphia

area who went to Manhattan and became well known on the runways as a high fashion model. He was a perfect size 8 and some designers would create their designs on his body. He appeared on Evening Magazine and several other talk shows in the eighties. He got into modeling by dressing up in outrageous outfits and going to Studio 54. There he and a friend would pose in a good spot and soon they had met the right people. Others had worked the runway before as drag models but Kevin never tried to conceal the fact that he was a man.

LITERARY LAMBDA

Lambda Rising is a gay oriented mail order book service from Washington, DC. I recently had the opportunity to peruse their catalog and a couple books of transgendered interest caught my eye.

First up is "Cross Dressing Paper Doll: Queen of the Night/Cestrum Nocturnum." A big title for a cute little book. It's a cut-out paper doll/coloring book. You can mix and match different outfits for the dolls coloring each bit of wardrobe and accessories to suite your taste. Come on girls, you didn't get to do this when you were little so give it a try now. It's available for \$8.95.

Second on the TV reading list is a book about Dame Edna Everage. No, not her hilarious autobiography. This book by John Lahr is called, "Dame Edna Everage and The Rise Of Western Civilization." Yes, she's responsible for all of it, not just her own fabulous career. The book takes the reader backstage and lets us in on the transformation from Barry to Edna. It's a hardback and it will set you back \$22.00.

You can order books and maybe

even get their catalog by calling their toll free number, 1-800-621-6969. Good reading!

OYSTER SEX CHANGE

FROM SPACE

Did you know many of the lower orders of fauna are of a hermaphroditic nature? Yes, boys and girls. Listen while Miss Angela tells you the story of the mutant sex change oyster from outer space! Millions of years ago... opps. Sorry. I got carried away for a minute. Too many Saturday afternoon creature features for Miss Gardner.

Dave from West Virginia sent us a clipping about animals in the lower orders who change their sex. Oysters for example change sex several times during their life. The female swordtail changes her sex to avoid getting hurt during copulation. It seems the male swordtail's penis is a modified anal fin covered with sharp hooks. Ouch! It's much more romantic and feminine for the female to change sex, fertilize the eggs then change back.

Other species into sex changes and role reversal are the dreaded Homo Sapiens, (of course we all know about them) and the European flower crickets. The male cricket actually lets the female mount him during copulation. Can you imagine that?

For other information on these wacky animals check out *The Book of Beasts* by John May, Michael Marten and John Chesterman. Thanks for the tip Dave.

SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

Are you a spouse? A partner? Of a transgendered person that is. If so maybe you would like to attend S.P.I.C.E., the Spouse/Partner In-

ternational Conference for Education. It's being co-sponsored by Tri-Ess and Renaissance and it's happening July 9, 10 and 11 in Dallas, Texas. Registration is \$95.00 for wife/partners and \$50.00 for their transgendered significant other. Room rates at the Summit Hotel are \$48.00 per night.

"Programs are geared to the importance of wellness as a woman, physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally, and finding ways to deal with the problems in our lives, with special emphasis on our husband's dressing and gender issues." In other words this one's for the significant others who had to follow their crossdressed hubby around the IFGE convention telling him how he looked and helping him keep his seams straight.

For information contact: Linda Peacock, Tri-Ess Wives/ Partners Concerns, PO Box 7241, Tallahassee, Fla. 32314-7241.

EYES ONLY:LTE FILE

We get it all in the Renaissance mail bag. Recently we recieved some literature from a company in Rhode Island called the Carox Company. The first two pages are a good explanation of the difference between a crossdresser's appearance and that of a real woman. Achieving a natural (they underlined it) feminine appearance and **PASSING** (their caps) should be the primary goal. Then at the bottom of page two these words, "For many years now we have witnessed a paucity of interest from all relevant suppliers in the types, designs and quality of lower torso padding." Gosh, could this guy be an engineer?

The next two pages and the accompanying two page letter extol the virtues of the Lower Torso En-

hancer or as it is referred to, the LTE. You can wear this baby for up to twelve hours a day. No annoying little pads to contend with and it allows you to wear those ladies slacks that just won't fit without padding. I was almost sold till I came to the price sheet. One LTE will run you \$100.00. They recommend that you buy two so you have one to wear while one's in the wash. To wear your LTE you'll need panty hose to hold it up. Can you buy a pair of Legs Classics on sale for \$1.95? No. You get "special" panty hose from Carox. Additional pairs of hose are listed priced at \$10.00 each. As if that weren't enough the company has included two xeroxed snapshots of the LTE. The front profile isn't that bad. For a grainy, high contrast outline. The side profile is what tears it. If you wear these things in the words of Fred Sanford, "You gonna have a big old butt."

In case you'd care to do your own evaluation (and who knows, maybe they'll suit your needs.) you can write to the Carox Company at PO Box 14025, East Providence, Rhode Island, 02914.

BROKEN BONES

ABOUT

We got a note from Krystyna containing what she called an "Almost But Not Quite" story. It seems that while out earning her daily bread in male attire, except for those stockings and frilly underwear, Kyrstyna had the misfortune to slip in the snow deposited by one of our March storms. After getting up and starting back to work she felt as if she had bruised her hip. No point in trying to work like that she thought. Better go home and rest a bit.

She made it home even though

that stick shift was a bit hard to handle and she managed to change clothes. She was trying to rest when the pain increased. Yep, that bruise turned out to be a broken hip. Krystyna expressed a great feeling of relief that she had been able to get home and change before going to the hospital. Explaining the frilly undies could have been difficult.

The moral of the story: Be prepared. If you think that you may be in a rough weather situation or doing some dangerous activity like sports or splitting logs maybe you should wear underwear that you won't mind having a stranger cut off you. It's either that or be prepared to have the nursing staff, emergency room doctor or ambulance crew look at you funny. Chances are that's all they'll do. They won't alert the media or call your boss. If you feel you need to you could even say, "Look Doc, I'm a crossdresser and not everyone knows. I'd appreciate it if you would not say anything to my family and friends."

Best wishes for a swift recovery to Krystyna. I hope you've got a nice flannel nightie to keep you warm. Not one of those fru fru things with no insulation.

BAD BREAK TWO

As we came down to our final deadline I recieved a call from our fearless leader Brenda Davidson. I said, "Hey Brenda I was just about to call you. Where's Vis A Vis? We're ready to put this baby to bed." (I love that newspaper talk.)

"I had a little accident" said Miss Davidson.

"Uh oh" said I. It seems the poor thing was doing some dreadful man type work and dropped a teensy

(continued on page 18)

Hot • BUZZ

JoAnn Roberts

"Those who deny freedom to others
deserve it not for themselves."

Those activists up in Syracuse, NY, EON Inc., don't take a back seat to anyone. Alla that city is buzzin' 'bout their latest project, an apartment building owned and operated by the transgender community for the transgender community. According to Angela Sheedy, the building has twenty-eight apartment units that they hope to rent out for about \$350 per month. EON Inc. is after a federally subsidized loan to cover the mortgage. Of course, EON would like to fill the building with people from our community. If you're lookin' for a place to live and you can wait about a year, write to Ann [redacted], c/o EON Inc., 523 W. Onandaga St., Syracuse, NY 13204.

Well, babies, the hot buzz is still about the IFGE convention held here in March, but some of the buzzin' is disquieting. For example, lotsa people are wonderin' why we haven't received a "Thank You" note from the head cheese in Waltham, or why she didn't show up at the charity benefit? Jeez Louise! That's gratitude!

Gossip! Gossip! Gossip! — The buzz from the IFGE board meeting was the rather abrupt departure of Nancy Cole, acting chair of the board. Not only did Cole resign as chair, she resigned from IFGE altogether. That act diminished IFGE in more ways than just reducing the board by one member. Cole is the latest in a long line of well-intentioned people who were chewed up by the IFGE juggernaut.

Never let it be said that MTV isn't doing their part to bring transgender behavior to the masses. Or rather, is it Aerosmith? Some time back, that band released a song *Dude Looks Like A Lady* which is an obvious reference, but there wasn't any real crossdressing in the video. But, Aerosmith's latest tune, *Livin' On The Edge*, features a crossdresser prominently.

Layering is still the rage in the fashion scene and here's an item that combines the two great looks of leather with a fitted waistcoat — the halter neck vest, a great piece for layering. Check it out at Wilsons Leather; about \$60 — cheap!

Are you confused, bunkie, when you look into your closet and can't find a thing to wear. The Queen rarely has that problem, but if you do, perhaps this new book *Chic Simple* is for you. The book shows you how to achieve "that" look in bold graphic pages even a kid could read. In fact, it covers "His", "Hers" and "Kids" too. Credit card orders can call 800-426-9922 or write to Condé Nast Collection, PO Box 10214, Des Moines, IA 50336. Price \$22, plus \$2.50 p&h.

Wanna lose ten pounds in ten seconds? Cut off your... (Oops, wrong story). The folks at MiracleSuit claim you can look ten pounds thinner in one of their swimsuits because they use triple the Lycra of other manufacturers. MiracleSuits are used in many beauty pageants for precisely that reason. Cost is around \$90, but what price beauty, eh?

Model Makeup Tricks — from Helena Christensen: Eyeliner — make the line as thin as possible; Under eye — lighten under the eye with a light powder or even a white eyeshadow applied over your foundation; Mascara — everybody uses Maybelline Great Lash mascara, the one in the pink and green tube.

More makeup tips, this time from my hero: Rex of New York. For nighttime makeup you have to adjust for the softer lighting, so you can go with high-impact colors like deep red, pink and coral on lips and cheeks. For eyes, add a dot of glimmery shadow in the center of the lid.

I know a lot of queens, TVs and TSs with tattoos. Some are attractive and feminine, but many were applied in the hope that the person would become a little

more macho and fit in better. Mistake. There are ways to remove tattoos, including dermabrasion, chemical peels and cryosurgery, but the latest technique uses that scientific jack of all trades, the laser. Developed by the Candela Laser Corp., in Wayland, Mass., and approved by the FDA, the laser is said to be quicker and less painful than other techniques, although more expensive. Need a tattoo removed, call Candela at 800-733-8550 for a referral in your area.

Last month I mentioned the Estee Lauder CD 80 eyeshadows. Several magazines have featured full color fold-outs showing the complete range and they're pretty fab at \$10 each. There are eight shades in ten families: Neutrals, Teals, Naturals (earthy tones), Browns, Pinks, Blues, Greens, Oranges, Corals & Violets.

Blue is buzzin' in the makeup world again, but not on eyelids this time. Would you believe blue lipliner? What is this, Dracula's makeup artist? No, according to NYC artist Craig Gadson, even a pale pink or beige lipliner is too much color for the pale, shimmery summer lip colors. So he uses Maybelline Sapphire Blue eyeliner pencil or Cover Girl Pro-Lining Eye Pencil in Sky Blue.

There's been much buzz about the glass ceiling and mismatched pay scales for women versus men. Well, there's one occupation where women make quite a bit more than the men; modeling. Yep, male models make about one-half to one-third what a female model makes. Can anyone blame Tula for becoming a model? Not this queen.

A true story: My seamstress person (well, that's what she calls herself!), Lorraine of the *Occasional Woman*, has been going to a certain woman hairdresser in a certain salon locally. During a recent visit the woman asked my friend what she does for a living and my friend replied, "I sew." "Oh, what do you sew?" "Uh... (what the

Hot • BUZZ

hell)... I sew clothes for crossdressers." Pregnant pause: "Honey, 20 years ago my name used to be Dominic!" Yah just never know these days.

Wrinkles away! After doctors have been prescribing Retin-A as a treatment for photoaged skin, Ortho Pharmaceutical, the manufacturer of Retin-A, has applied for approval of another retinoid, Renova, specifically as a treatment for wrinkles.

I really should have announced the annual MONAs last month, but I was a leetle bit busy. However, lest anyone say that I'm shirking my responsibility as the Harlan Ellison of the transgender community, allow me to award a post-April MONA to the Outreach Institute for their recent letter touting the 1993 Fantasia Fair. Doesn't anyone in that office know how to use a word processor? For an organization that claims to be the only "professional" among us, that letter was most *un*professional.

With unemployment still high, many transsexuals in transition are still looking for jobs. If you're a M-t-F and job hunting, here are a few faux pas to avoid, as noted by several Human Resource managers: Chipped Nails indicate a lack of self-discipline; Nails too long signal "sexy" not "vice-president"; Bright shoes (like red) are perceived as frivolous; Cute bows or Mary Janes suggest immaturity; High heels or strappy pumps are too sexy for office work. Hey, some days you eat the bear; others the bear eats you.

Hey girlfriend, think it's only TVs and TSs taking 'mones? Uhn, uhn honey! According to various reports, between 250,000 and 1 million teenage boys are taking anabolic steroids "just to look good." Talk about walkin' time bombs! What is it about this culture that makes us hate who we are so much that we resort to drugs?

It's gonna take bal..., uh... Chutzpah to pull off this fashion look — sheer. Yes,

sweeties, come this summer the *real* women will be wearing sheer everything. So, here's how it goes: layers. A few sheer layers add up to opaque, and sexy. For example, under a sheer skirt try tap pants (I always wondered what to wear those under).

Know why it's so easy for folks to shift genders? 'Cause contrary to popular belief, males and females are *very much* more alike than different. For example, it's always been said that women have more body fat than men. Not so, according to a new study at Yale University School of Medicine. Using sophisticated Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and careful measurements, the researchers concluded that males and females have the same percentage of muscle (26%) and fat (23%). It's just distributed differently. Vive la difference!

No one answered the QwickiQwiz from March: what animated film featured a robot named "Peace." The answer is *Wizards* a really wild film by animation wizard Ralph Bakshi. Check it out at your local

video store. Cool.

The best kept secret in film this year was no secret to any transgendered person. Those of us in-the-know "read" Jaye Davidson the moment he first appeared onscreen in *The Crying Game*. Best of all was Davidson's nomination for Best Supporting Actor. While he didn't win, the film did win an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay. Those wishing to know more about the enigmatic Davidson are directed to the April issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine, where Davidson confess that he'd never done drag before. Right. Not!

So, the QwickiQwiz for this issue has to do with an Oscar awarded to a person for best supporting role in a film. This person played a character of the opposite sex. For a free CDS video, name the person and name the film.

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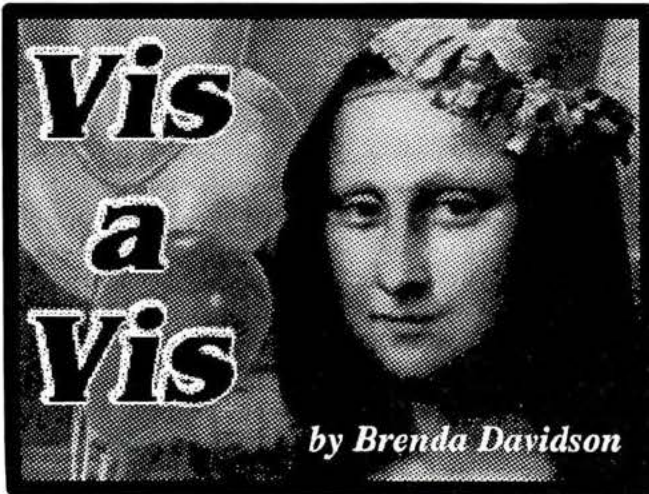


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Since the newsletter buzz across the country is mostly from the I.F.G.E convention the column will take on a slightly different look. Sorry I couldn't be in print these last two months but one who shakes the trees and catches the coconuts at the same time is not always available to make change for a fifty... or something like that. We'll resume with all the news that should be in your face next month.

WHAT I DID AT SUMMER CAMP

Nothing like beating a dead Unicorn. OK, another and hopefully the last great success and personal growth story from the convention you people will have to suffer through. It does make for some interesting reading though, and who knows you may learn something about me or yourself. After returning from the I.F.G.E convention and getting some much needed rest, grasshopper started to think about what the convention meant to me. My checkbook tells me it should have been a very educational and meaningful experience. Let's take a look.

Attending only for the last two full days of the event there was a lot of catching up to do, so after taking an "unbelievable amount of time" (quoted from my roommate for the stay, LSV treasurer Dawn G.) getting ready it was time to see what and who was going on. Just as a note: Witnesses will attest that I did arrive full blown

macho, time is money and coal does not turn into diamonds overnight. Finding all of the people needed to fill me in on the past days strong points took much longer than expected which left me with very little time to attend any of the programs for the day. Already feeling like this was a waste, it did not help matters to watch my checkbook jump up and down in front of me shouting something in German while doing a Japanese death dance. I was here to learn and so far had learned what other people had done.

It was Casino Night and I had volunteered to "spin the big wheel" so after donning my dealers garb it was down to the pre-opening meeting to see how many other volunteers had showed up. Thirty seven people graciously gave of their time and made the evening a resounding success. This was surprise number one and my enthusiasm went up a few notches. After figuring out the game, "Let me get this straight, if they put something down on five-to-one and the wheel lands on five they get five times whatever something they put down?... Are you sure you want to do that?... Oh, and the wheel spins right or left?... Are you sure you want to do that?... No, I've never been thrown out of a Gamblers' Anonymous meeting, why?" I had a fantastic time. Capping the evening with a stop in the lounge we were recognized as members of Renaissance and told to order what we wanted for a job well done. Later another group of conventioners entered the lounge and the whole scene was played over. On the way back to our rooms Michele [redacted] and I were arrested for drunk driving the elevator. Make no mistake, these people were well pleased with everyone in Renaissance who contributed to the convention (and there were many). My spirits were raised and my body was telling me to lay down and get some rest before sun-up. (That was the transvestite holiday part of the story, read on it gets better.)

My five hours of sleep were peaceful and looking at the clock gave me the adrenalin rush needed. This wasn't just a jeans and sweater day it was a make-up, dress-up, hair-up day. If I "hurried real good" I would make it just in time for

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brunch at 12:30 PM. Either I was fifteen minutes late or they were thirty minutes early because by the time I arrived everyone was finishing their salad. My tardiness was rewarded by having my saved seat taken, (hey, they thought I was dead, first come first served) and Emily "the kindness on steroids lady" Sheldon was much too gracious and gave up her seat at one of the front tables. I've been to many luncheons and they always leave the following impression... A room full of tables facing an elevated long table doing its rendition of the Lincoln Memorial staffed with a bunch of George Washingtons telling me the finer details of their work of which I only need know the end result. Being one to use the past as a compass, not as a road map, the eminence of hopeful maturity suggested that someday one may be one of the George Washingtons so one might see fit to tread lightly... NOT! This luncheon was going the same as the rest, until Dr. Stayton began to speak. Although some of his shtick was reused, his use of it seemed like the one-two punch reality-check the George Washingtons needed and got. Next came my own one-two punch. I can count the number of times that I have cried since the age of ten on one hand. This is not from some macho thing laid on me by either of my parents because many times my parents were standing with me in support. At this age something just clicked inside of me and crying became the emotional outlet of an absolute irreparable ending. Until now. Debbie Galbraith, director of the Philadelphia area Make-a-Wish Foundation stood up and gave what I am sure is the same sorrowful speech she gives in front of every donating organization. I felt like such an ass losing my water in front of everyone and was wishing my seat had been at one of the rear tables. Wait a minute, this is supposed to be a feminine quality and maybe by crying in front of everyone they will see how dedicated I am to the cause. WRONG!

Casually looking over to the table beside me two tear stricken faces were seen. Looking behind me I suddenly realized that we were a whole room full of blubbering souls and that one lady had turned our gender steamroller into a puddle of water. Back to the room for a quick makeup repair and then on to the rest of the day.

Reviewing my personal purpose of finding something to educate myself instead of worrying how others were being educated was answered by a presentation on hormones for female to male transsexual partners. Now what could a male transvestite possibly get out of this? Plenty! These people knew more about my body chemistry than the Russians know about vodka. It was so interesting that the hour went by and I decided to stick around for their next program about issues unique to female to male transsexual partners relationships. Over the years I've grown to loath the words "self absorbed" and have refused to believe that a Person with such a well rounded ectivity

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list such as myself would fit into such a category. My first wife (Satan's messenger) used this as a key ignition word in arguments and when my second wife made that innocent mistake in a calm discussion my whole head glowed red right before the top of it blew off. Just after this is when I began to fully understand the word "denial". It was nice to be given the opportunity to see "self absorbed" from the other side of the fence and I don't mean this in a demeaning sense. Now comes confession time. The human mind works in mysterious ways and mine is no different. My feelings could comprehend why certain males would go to great lengths to sooth their inner consciousness in depths of femininity. Those doing the same in depths of masculinity were more like "pretty wierd, but those who live in glass houses don't throw stones so live and let live". You see, this thinking is just acceptance, not understanding. There is a difference and acceptance is not the end answer I'm looking for. By spending an afternoon listening and learning about my complete opposite I have gained a wealth of knowledge of them and a better way of mentally dealing with me. Back to the room again for another go-round with make-up and clothes to transform into the proper evening social groupie.

The formal banquet and award presentation is the crowning event of the convention. After the initial pomp and circumstance the George Washingtons get to relax and leave their hair down. (A little)...(WAY little). Now before your Good Time Charlie hot iron comes out let me say that I've been to many formal events that have and did not have anything to do with me being a transvestite. In fact I enjoy immensely the ones that are done right and have sat in the audience as well as the Lincoln Memorial table. I can and have slung the pomp with the best of em baby. Someone once told me that if a person was to be anything at all they should just try to be nice. A very simple but effective statement that I sometimes fail at miserably but always try to remember. So will someone please explain why the nature of some people from I.F.G.E. headquarters comes off as silent Englishman arrogance? Maybe I'm tramping on some sort of geographical or sacred code of conduct among these people. If so please accept my apologies for my igno-

rance but don't expect me to act this way.

Hate to tell you this folks but one of the things learned at the convention was most of our leaders are nothing more than individual or group glorified paper heros. Being a little bit more exiting to read about than to meet in person. But on a positive note, what these paper heros are doing is paving the way for the young people of tomorrow. They are the true future of this community. With the early realization of their numbers and the truth, stronger and more meaningful lifetime achievements will be reached. They are the ones who are going to say "this is us, we're living this way, we're happy and we refuse to be spooned society's guilt. They are the heros our community is looking for.

In review it looks as though a lot of valuable information, insight and knowledge was gained in two days. It certainly feels like hindsight is 20\20 vision ... and I've told my checkbook to stop doing that stupid dance.

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PRIDE FEST

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**TRANSFORMATIONS, PRIVATE SESSIONS, PHOTO SESSIONS, BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS
FOUR PUBLIC ROOMS (A BONA FIDE RETAIL OUTLET) FOUR PRIVATE ROOMS (SO ASK)**

(COLOR continued from page 1)

unknowns of the outside world, I was flat out terrified. To date, that had to have been the most courageous thing I've ever done in my life, I could've spent the rest of my life hidden behind walls and doors, but I wanted to go and meet others like myself, in fact, I was all but obsessed about it, to confirm the fact that I wasn't some sort of freak. Merely that I was different, nothing more.

I can imagine that most CD's of color, not just in the Delaware Valley but across the country may well lack the courage I showed in exposing Jessica Brandon to the world. The risk of discovery, embarrassment and rejection is probably ten times greater for a black man who dares to cross the lines of gender because of the perception, mistaken at best, oppressive at worst of being a second class citizen in America, despite the enormous strides made in both human and civil rights. Nevertheless, the fear can be overwhelming. I should know.

What can be done to bring "soul" sisters out of their closets? Publications such as Ladylike and Tapestry would help them immensely as they helped me, unfortunately, such magazines, despite being tastefully well crafted can't be found next to Newsweek and Cosmopolitan because of the incorrect image of crossdressing as being a homosexual function, and that doesn't help the uninformed learn that they're not alone. However, articles on the recent IFGE convention held here might help open the eyes of a sister trapped behind walls of ignorance.

In closing, I've often wondered if I was the first black crossdresser in the history of Renaissance and, in a

rare moment of ego, I wore that particular distinction like a medal of honor. Still, there should be more, many more of us, not just in Renaissance, but in every organization from coast to coast. In the 90's, as in past decades, blacks can do absolutely anything they want once they decide to do it, that much is a proven fact. And that should also include putting on a dress and being a woman.

If you are a crossdresser of color and you have ideas about how Renaissance can reach out to others like yourself please drop us a line with your thoughts.

(REMINDER continued from page 11)

weensy motorcycle engine on her previously damaged by high school sports knee. By the time you read this she will probably be up and around wearing long skirts and loose pants. Meanwhile if you don't see her anywhere you'll know what's up. Get better babe!

She neglected to tell this writer what kind of undies she was wearing. We'll save that tidbit for another issue and....that all she wrote!

TASTE BUDS ARE TINGLING

The second, "whenever we can get it together" wine tasting is happening Friday, June 11 that the Chadds Ford Winery. Things get under way at 8PM with a tour of the winery, cheese and crackers and of course wine. This is a special private tasting just for us conducted by the wine maker Eric Miller. Cost is \$16.00 per person and reservations must be made in advance. Look for a flyer in this issue that will have a handy registration form and all the information you'll need. See you there!

The Inner Demands of Crossdressing

A small group, two-hour discussion of the emotional and spiritual pressures faced by a crossdresser.

Held at the Wayne Counseling Center with Dr. Lee Etscovitz, Renaissance National Librarian and former Professor of Human Behavior at Drexel University.

Sessions begin at 7:30 PM on Mondays & Wednesdays. The fee is \$25 per person per session.

Advance registration required. Write PO Box 471, Willow Grove, PA 19090 or call 215-657-1560.

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