

# Our Sorority

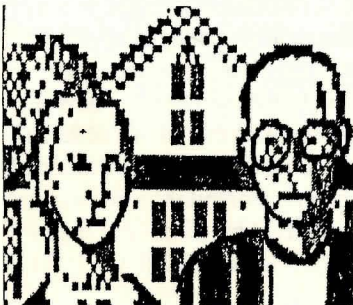
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**A**  
**special issue devoted**  
**to the concerns**  
**of the**  
**partners of**  
**transvestites.**



In the movie "Oh Men! Oh Women!" there is a line which roughly goes; "The husband wants a woman, and the wife wants a man. They want something completely opposite, something they know nothing about. That is why marriage will never work." When ever I see Grant Wood's *American Gothic* I think of this line from the movie and I wonder what the wife would say if her husband were to announce that he was a transvestite. What would she think with her thin lips and uncompromising eyes. What do the wives think? This issue of Our Sorority presents a fair cross section of views. It is a bit one sided since the focus is upon the viewpoint of the wives. It is also biased by the fact that this viewpoint is offered by wives who acknowledge and tolerate their partner's crossdressing. Wives who have taken hours of their free time to sit down and state just how they feel about their husband's crossdressing in hopes that other wives might understand and accept this facet of their marriage. Again, like our last issue, we enter a controversial subject filled with emotion and prone to misinterpretation and angry letters starting off with "my wife is not at all like..."

Continued on page 2

## EDITORIAL

I think that you should read first and then share this issue of Our Sorority with your beloved. We also provide a "hotline", (cited in one of the articles) which she may call for further information. We also include our list of groups, the further true adventures of Betty Ann, and other items of interest...

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### **Our Sorority** **An Outreach Publication**

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Outreach Institute and donations by its readership and friends who truly believe that the best therapy for cross-dressers is to meet others who share the "hobby of kings". Our Sorority is copyrighted, 1988, with the understanding that the republication of names, address, phone numbers, and articles used herein is prohibited by law without the written permission of its publisher and editor, Betty Ann Lind. All inquiries should be sent to The Outreach Institute, Attention: Our Sorority, POB 11254, Lincolina Station, Alexandria, VA 22312.

## HE,SHE,WE,THEY: PARTNERS OF CROSSDRESSERS

by The Partners At Fantasia Fair 1986

*This booklet became the dream of a small group of caring partners at Fantasia Fair, Provincetown, Mass. A year later it became a reality with the help of others via questionnaire. Each partner, whether heterosexual or homosexual, is in a relationship with a Cross-Dresser, some in marriages of 25 or more years. We are from different locations across the United States, come from varied backgrounds and religions, have been in various groups, including therapy with humanistic professionals, yet we all have something in common.*

### WHAT IS A CROSS-DRESSER

An individual, usually heterosexual, who desires and needs to dress in the clothing of the opposite sex at different times throughout his or her life. This compulsive behavior generally starts at a young age and the individual struggles alone for many years with this closeted need. Cross-Dressing is not a sickness, but represents a person who enjoys expressing another aspect of his personality and gains both emotional and physical pleasure from this transition. It is not a hobby, but a necessity, and Cross-Dressing is for life.

### IF YOU ARE THE PARTNER OF A CROSS-DRESSER YOU SHOULD KNOW...

There are many Cross-Dressers in the world today. We, the partners of Cross-Dressers, felt the need to put together this booklet and share our thoughts and feelings. And we want you to know:

#### **"YOU ARE NOT ALONE!"**

After first finding out that our spouses were Cross-Dressers, we experienced a multitude of emotions. We hope that this booklet will help you to understand and deal with the revelation that you are married to or involved with a Cross-Dresser.

Like most things in life that do not follow that straight and narrow way of thinking, when first informed of your spouse's Cross-Dressing, you experience shock and disbelief. The fact that a huge secret has been kept from you, even though you may have known this person for many years, has a profound emotional impact on you. From the start you may deny it not only to yourself but also to your spouse, but inside you know it is true. You may continue to deny the fact and then begin



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to feel a certain sense of guilt, asking yourself, "where did I go wrong?" or "What could I have done differently?" But, remember, you are not to blame! This is something your spouse has been dealing with for a long time.

At times, you may feel threatened by the fact that your spouse is now exposing a feminine side of himself and that he may not be the person you always thought he was. You also experience a great deal of fear and apprehension, the most fearful being the unknown and your naivete about Cross-Dressing. The quest to know and learn is a long trek on which you travel many miles of rough road. And every once in awhile,

### "YOU CRY!"

We first want to deal with emotions, listing many of the feelings that partners expressed about their spouse's Cross-Dressing, when answering our questionnaire: Stress, negativism, compulsion, love, fear, threatening, anger, acceptance, uncertainty, rejection, and understanding.

Marriages are affected in that you may feel alone...Cross-Dressing puts stress on the marriage, but when we can find other couples in the same circumstance and can share feelings with them, we begin to see we are not the only ones, and with help we can strengthen our relationship. Some partners do not and will never accept Cross-Dressing, and in these cases the marriage is destroyed.

Feelings are fairly divided on the question of telling our children. Some children accept it and others do not, which is typical of society in general. Most couples who have told their children have waited until the children were at an age when they could make an attempt at understanding the phenomena. There is concern, however, regarding post-mortem discovery when children do not know. One couple stated, "We've informed a very close friend where in the event of our demise, that friend will come into our home and dispose of that part of our life". Another suggestion might be to leave a letter, including reference materials for your family, explaining this lifestyle. Each individual couple will have to come to it's own conclusion on this question; each family presents a unique situation.

## PARTNERS OF CROSSDRESSERS

Most partners felt that Cross-Dressing does have an affect upon their sex lives. It weakens it; their sex life has become more inactive. It is a turn off, especially the shaven body or the lingerie... The Cross-Dresser spends time, thought, energy and money on his need and less of himself goes into their sex life. Some partners were not disturbed and felt he was a husband first and a Cross-Dresser second, that a decrease in sexual activity is part of the aging process and not a result of Cross-Dressing.

If you have confidence in yourself as a woman his Cross-Dressing may not be a threat to your femininity. You might be a role model for your spouse; not only with the clothes and the makeup but also with the gestures and mannerisms that help to create the image of the total woman. Usually you are not the role model he desires. "Threatened, no...But I sure would like to have some of his clothes!"

Discovery, exposure, becoming publicly known! Not an easy situation to handle. Very few, if any, partners when presented with this question could give a positive answer. The majority of partners experienced feelings ranging from simple reluctance to mortification. The thought of family and friends discovering the secret is absolutely frightening. The fears of ridicule and rejection could become reality. This is something that should be thoroughly discussed between the Cross-Dresser and his partner and it is not to be taken lightly.

When questioned about their feelings and reactions to their spouse's Cross-Dressing, many partners seemed to answer in the same way. The majority of partners said they accepted it and were comfortable with it. However, no matter how much they feel they accept or how comfortable they may be, there is always another shock or surprise somewhere down the road. Some partners stated that though it bothered them, they knew that their spouses were happy and content. This made it acceptable, although they would prefer he took up stamp collecting.

When partners were questioned if they felt their spouses would always want to do more, the general consensus was "yes". Whether your spouse is just out of the closet or has been out for a long time, this is quite unpredictable. Some partners felt that allowing their husbands



## PARTNERS OF CROSSDRESSERS

to dress lessened the need, while others felt, given the opportunity, their spouses would dress more often.

Present feelings concerning their spouse's Cross-Dressing were quite varied. One partner stated that she feels more understanding, more fulfillment and is sharing his entire life, while another blocks out stress and must deal with negative feelings. A majority of the questioned partners said it was something that would always be a part of their lives and something that must be dealt with if they were to remain together. One partner is annoyed by it, tired of it and in constant fear of discovery.

"Helps knowing you're not the only tin can in the dump." At first many partners are fearful of speaking with anyone other than their spouse, however, ninety-nine per cent of the partners, in our survey, gave similar answers when questioned about communicating with other partners, Cross-Dressers, or couples, whether at group meetings, weekends away, trips, or in the privacy of one another's homes. Socializing is enlightening and very helpful, problems seem smaller and less stressful, a big plus is the friendship and the common bond formed with others. The release of tension from keeping the secret provides great relief.

Facing any new situation in life is always a learning and growing experience. We all have a built-in maturing feature, and the more we learn and the more we know the less we fear.

Cross-Dressing is no different!

It is significant to note that a survey of the answers to questions concerning the conflicts that arise between Cross-Dressers and their partners indicates one solution. This theme repeats itself:

"Talk it out."

"Discuss"

"Talk, Talk, listen, listen."

"Get priorities agreed upon."

"Negotiate."

"Respect each others feelings."

"Keep a communication line open."

"We talk, we argue, sometimes we yell, but we listen."

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"Try to work out a compromise we can be reasonably happy with."

And they conclude:

**"We need to keep working on it."**

All agree that they do not tell their spouses of the negative reactions to aspects of his Cross-Dressing, but they try to balance these with positive input. Much of the negativity occurred due to the partner's fear of the spouse losing control. The overwhelming fear is of careless self betrayal (perhaps deliberate with some), through loose talk or forgetting to remove the femme paraphernalia. This could be compounded with the increased desire to dress or participate in Cross-Dressing activities. A need to expand horizons worries some. Others attributed their negative reactions to not wanting either of them to experience the possible ridicule and rejection that might follow discovery. Also touched upon was the hovering shadow of Transsexual yearnings. There were indications that these fears lessen with time and understanding, yet some of the partners deny ever having such concerns at all.

Most partners interviewed encouraged the socializing with other Cross-Dressers, although a few did not. Some invite Cross-Dressers to their homes, while others encourage spouses to attend meetings and go to weekend or week long events. One fear expressed was that the Cross-Dresser might want to become more public in their activities, thereby flirting with discovery, but almost all partners recognize the need of a Cross-Dresser to share and gain the support of others.

Many Cross-Dressers are considerate, sensitive people who realize that limits must exist. Most are very supportive and understanding of their partner's limits. Some become more sympathetic after meeting with other couples and will give up their wishes to accommodate their partner's requests, but are resentful in their disappointment. A few have not learned to manage their fantasies, but stock up on "500 pairs of high heeled shoes" and "leave their nighties behind the bathroom door". One wife says, "It varies...sometimes I am more tolerant and sometimes he is less demanding."

When questioned as to how partners can tactfully influence their spouse's wardrobe, many replied that they are consulted about



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wardrobe and ensemble choices and that the Cross-Dresser seems to be very receptive to suggestion. A tactful way to effect a change of tastes is offered by one partner who suggests "pointing out fashion trends and complimenting him on his appearance". Although many Cross-Dressers have good taste, some lean towards the "vulgar and sexy", but will eventually learn by experiment or experience and are pleased with their partner's interest. A few report they have complete control over their spouse's wardrobe, while most say they have some input.

When asked if the partners shopped for their Cross-Dressing spouse or with him, we got an array of responses. "shopping can be a great deal of fun for both of you". In some instances partners contribute by sewing, "thus insuring a good fit and keeping the cost of the compulsion down". Sometimes the Cross-Dresser becomes an excellent "seamstress" and can make his partner's clothes.

All partners who responded to the questionnaire agreed that who to tell, whether it be no one, the family, or a few friends, is an ongoing process of evaluation, and it is a couple decision.

### MORE INFORMATION:

OUTREACH INSTITUTE  
Kenmore Station, POB 368  
Boston, MA., 02215  
(Literature is available from this source.)

MARILYN FRANK  
POB 9192

Morristown, NJ., 07960  
HotlinePhone: (201) 663-0772

(Mrs Frank is one of the wives who prepared this booklet.)

VERN L. BULLOUGH, PhD.  
State University College at Buffalo  
1300 Elmwood Avenue  
Buffalo, NY., 14222

NIELA MILLER  
People Systems Potential  
POB 132

Nagog Woods, MA., 01718

(The therapist who worked with the Partners Group)


## PARTNERS OF CROSSDRESSERS

Local Mental Health Centers in your area.  
Suicide & Crisis Intervention Centers in your area.

**NOT ONE WORD OF THIS REPORT WAS CHANGED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PARTNERS GROUP.**

"However, I feel strongly that if one word of what we presented to you, i.e. Outreach is altered, it will lack credibility. It will become suspect. And, dear Betty Ann, please understand I'm saying this remembering vividly all the good material my husband gave me to read, written by TVs, that I found suspect. I wanted objective literature!"

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**GROUPS** This list of groups is about as current as our data allows. It is not provided for republication except in non-profit Group Newsletters. If you write to these groups, please include a SASE. Because these Groups are staffed by volunteers your letter may not be answered for 2 weeks to two months. If you are not a Transsexual & you write to a TS Group **DO NOT** expect an answer.

Tiffany Club (TV/TS)  
POB 367  
Wayland MA 01778

F.A.C.T.  
of Southern New England  
%Karen Aldrich  
PO Box 9238  
No. Dartmouth, MA 02747  
(TS ONLY)

TSA  
POB 5753  
Weybosset Hill Station  
Providence RI 02903

The XX Club  
POB 6070 Station "A"  
Hartford CT 06106  
(TS ONLY)

Connecticut Chapter (GGA)  
POB 744  
Branford CT 06405

Harriet Lane  
POB 4002  
Yalesville Station  
Wallingford CT 06492

Northern N.J. Chapter  
%L.Smith  
14 Maple Avenue  
Pine Brook NJ 07058

Northern NJ Group  
POB 9192 %Ms L. Frank  
Morristown NJ 07960

NY City Chapter  
% Fem Fashions  
Penthouse B  
157 West 57th Street  
New York NY 10019

The Gathering  
POB 21052  
Columbia Circle Station  
New York NY 10023  
(TS ONLY)

Lee Brewster's Parties  
Lee's Mardi Gras Boutique  
400 West 14th St.  
New York, NY 10036

Lambda Iota (Tri-Ess)  
PO Box 3676  
New York, NY 10185

In Sisterhood  
Apt. 1C %T. White  
27 Clairmont Avenue  
Mt. Vernon NY

Confide  
POB 56  
Tappan NY 10983

## GROUPS

Metamorphosis  
POB 6245  
Broadway Station  
Long Island City NY 11106  
(TS ONLY)

AS A WOMAN  
% B. Fortune  
POB 369  
Brooklyn NY 11235

Joyce Dewhurst  
37-50 76th Street  
Jackson Heights NY 11372

Long Island  
Femme Expressions  
POB 121  
Ozone Park NY 11416

Long Island Social Club  
50 Sunny Road  
Saint James NY 11780

Chi Delta Mu (Tri-Ess)  
PO Box 327  
Massapequa Park, NY 11762

TV Entertainers  
226 Jefferson Street  
Albany NY 12210

T.G.I.C.  
POB 13604  
Albany NY 12212-3604

Androgyny Unlimited  
POB 4887  
Poughkeepsie NY 12602  
(TS ONLY)

Eon  
POB 6293  
Camillus NY 13031

FACT Miss Robyn Bates  
POB 314  
Buffalo NY 14223  
(TS ONLY)

Transpitt  
POB 3214  
Pittsburg PA 15230

TVA  
POB 26533 % Sheila  
Rochester NY 17626

TS Support Group  
POB 15836  
Philadelphia, PA. 19105  
(TS ONLY)

Phi Chapter  
POB 2512 %W.Beeman  
West Chester PA 19380

Renaissance  
POB 1263  
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Baltimore-Washington  
Alliance %R.Lewis  
POB 50724  
Washington DC 20004-0724

Academy Awards of Wash. DC  
(Drag) 5104 S. 11th St.  
Arlington, VA 22202



## GROUPS

Janus/DC  
Sexology Associates  
4835 Del Ray Avenue  
Bethesda MD 20814  
(M to F TS Only)

Andros/DC  
Sexology Associates  
4835 Del Ray Avenue  
Bethesda MD 20814  
(F to M TS only)

My Choice  
% Kathy Stevens  
1417 McHenry Street  
Baltimore MD 21223  
(TS ONLY)

Butterfly Couples of  
Northern Va.  
(Couples only.)  
POB 3234 Ms. CA Costa  
Manassas VA 22110

Delta Chi Chapter  
POB 11254 Lincolnia Station  
Alexandria VA 22304

Norfolk TS Group  
% of Donna Johnston  
POB 1923  
Norfolk VA 23501  
(TS ONLY)

The Montgomery  
Foundation, Inc.  
POB 33311  
Decatur GA 30033

The Elite TV Group  
POB 47686 %G.Grant  
Atlanta GA 30362

Serenity % Nikki Bee  
POB 307  
Hollywood FL 33022

TVN  
POB 100279  
Ft. Lauderdale FL 33310

GIAD  
POB 76234  
St. Petersburg FL 33734-6234  
(TS ONLY)

Blossom C. Paster  
2203 Trident Court  
Wesley Chapel FL 34249

Butternut Belles  
Box 3585  
Knoxville TN 37917

Alpha Omega (Tri-Ess)  
POB 954 Attn: Jill  
Elyria OH 44036

Paradise Club  
POB 29564  
Parma OH 44129

Crossport  
POB 150 Attn: Heather  
2020 "B" Beechmont Ave  
Cincinnati OH 45230

## GROUPS

Indiana Crossdressers Society  
POB 20710  
Indianapolis, IN 46220

N.G.D.O.  
POB 02732  
Detroit MI 48202  
(TS ONLY)

Crossroads Chapter  
POB 1298  
Flint MI 48501

The Network  
POB 632  
Waukesha WI 53187

CLCC  
POB 16265  
Minneapolis MN 55416

Chi Chapter (Tri-Ess)  
POB 40  
Wooddale IL 60191-0040

Chicago Gender Society  
POB 578005  
Chicago IL 60657

National Gender Alliance  
POB 2312  
Chicago IL 60690

St. Louis Gateway Femmes  
POB 1262  
Saint Louis MO 63188

C.A.F  
POB 1154  
Belton MO 64012

River City  
PO Box 24060  
Bellevue, NB 68124-0060

Delta Omega (Tri-Ess)  
PO Box 461041  
Garland, TX 75046

Tri-Delta (Tri-Ess)  
PO Box 61385  
Houston, TX 77208

Boulton & Park  
Cultural Society  
POB 169652  
San Antonio TX 78280-3252

Alpha Zeta (Tri-Ess)  
PO Box 8425  
Mesa AZ 85204

A Rose  
POB 4351  
Scottsdale, AZ 85261

Transition Club  
POB 42454  
%TC Onekea  
Las Vegas NV 89116

Alpha Chapter (Tri-Ess)  
% Virginia Prince  
PO Box 36091  
Los Angeles, CA 90036



**GROUPS**

CHIC  
POB 562  
Duarte CA 91010

Neutral Corner  
POB 99732 %W.Thomas  
San Diego CA 92109

Shangri-La Club  
POB 18202  
%Nancy Watson  
Irvine CA 92713

Omega Chi (Tri-Ess)  
PO Box 9091  
Anaheim, CA 92802

Society for The Second Self  
POB 194  
Tulare CA 93275

Society of Janus  
% Sacramento Group  
POB 6794  
San Francisco CA 94101  
(TS ONLY)

ETVC  
POB 6486  
San Francisco CA 94101

Female to Male  
Transexual Group  
% Billy DeFrank  
Community Center  
1040 Park Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95126

Rainbow Gender  
Alliance  
POB 700730  
San Jose CA 95170-0730

Northwest Gender  
Alliance  
POB 4928  
Portland OR 97208-4928

Pride  
% Tiffany Wonder  
#A-1 9130 SW Oleson Road  
Portland, OR 97223  
(TS ONLY)

SALMACIS  
POB 1604  
Eugene OR 97440-1604

Capitol City Chapter  
PO Box 3312  
Salem, OR 97302

Emerald City  
POB 31318  
Seattle WA 98103

**INTERNATIONAL GROUPS  
Canada**

TAM  
BOX 1164 Station H  
Montreal QUE H3G-2N1  
Canada

(A.T.Q Inc.)\* % Viviane Belanger  
C.P. 691 Mont-Royal,  
QUE Canada H3P 3G4  
(French Speaking TS)

**GROUPS**

FACT  
Box 291 Station "A"  
Hamilton ONT L8N-3C8  
(TS ONLY)

FACT Toronto  
P.O. Box 1149, Station 'F'  
Toronto, Ont, Canada M4Y 2T8  
(TS ONLY)

Transitional Support  
% 2 2nd Avenue, Apt. 509  
Toronto, Ontario Canada  
M4C 2C3  
(TS ONLY)

TV/TS Contact Club  
POB 4667 Station "C"  
Calgary AL T2T 5P1

**England**

Audrey Stewart  
53 Bread St.  
Edinburgh EH39AH  
Scotland

Beaumont Society  
Box 3084  
London WC1N-3XX

The TV/TS Group Yvonne Sinclair  
2 French Place London,  
England E16 JB

Friends Merseyside  
14 Colquitt Street  
Liverpool, England L1 4DE

**Europe --**

Femme Travestie Postfach  
6788 Zurich, 8023  
Switzerland

M.A. Postboks  
192 DK2600  
Glostrup, Denmark

Beaumont Continentale  
Association  
Gaby Linsig  
2 Rue de Charpentiers  
Wittenheim, France 68270

TRANS-CCL Minorites Sexuelles  
3 Bis, rue Clairaut  
Paris, France 75017

FPE-NE BOX 728  
101 30 Stockholm  
Sweden

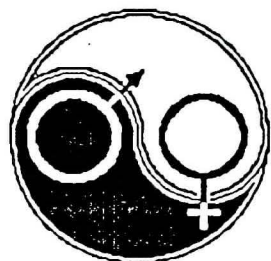
**Australia/New Zealand -----**

Seahorse Victoria  
% GPO Box 2337V  
Melbourne Victoria Australia  
3001

**Africa -----**

The Phoenix Society  
PO Box 375 Parow 7500  
Cape Town Republic of South  
Africa





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Achievement Institute

**Recommended Reading List**

<u>Title</u> .....	<u>Price</u>
Transsexuality in the Male.....	\$28.95
Female to Male Transsexualism .....	29.95
The Androgyne: Reconciliation of the Male and Female.....	21.95
Men in Frocks.....	14.95
Bisexuality, a Syudy .....	21.95
Sex & Gender, A Theological & Scientific Study .....	24.95
The Tapestry .....	10.00
Understanding Crossdressing.....	11.95
Dressing Up .....	12.95
A Year Among the Girls .....	15.95
How to be a Woman though Male.....	12.95
The Transvestite and His Wife .....	11.95
Mirror Image (Nancy Hunt) .....	14.95
Canary, Story of M-F Sex Change (Canary Conn) .....	15.95
Mother Camp, Female Impersonators of America.....	9.95
Splendor.....	15.95
Gender Dysphoria.....	39.95
Information for the F-M Crossdresser & Transsexual .....	6.00
The Language of Clothes.....	16.95
Monograph #1 (Crossdressing).....	5.00
Monograph #2 (Transvestites) .....	5.00
Monograph #3 (Androgyny).....	5.00
Monograph #4 (Partners of Crossdressers) .....	5.00

Legal Aspects of Transsexualism.....	15.00
Abstraccts of a Symposium on Gender Issues for the 80's.....	6.00
Herland.....	7.95
The Woman's Dress for Success Book .....	4.95
TV - TS: Mixed Views .....	15.95
Sex & Gender .....	24.95
Sexual Signatures .....	9.95
Ariadne.....	10.95
The Spirit & The Flesh .....	26.95
Looking Terrific .....	8.95
Man & Woman, Boy & Girl .....	7.95
Designing Your Face .....	11.75
Toward a New Psychology of Women .....	8.95
The Transvestite Memoirs of the Abbe de Choisy .....	9.95
Transvestia (#100).....	10.00
Second Serve (Renee Richards) .....	19.95
Natural Selections .....	19.95
Geraldine, The Love of a Transvestite.....	13.95
In Search of Eve: Transsexual Rites of Passage .....	15.95
Color Me Beautiful .....	16.95
Gender, an Ethnomethodological Approach.....	17.95
Standards of Care for Transsexuals (HBI/GDA).....	5.00

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## MANY LITTLE KINDNESSES

by Betty Ann Lind

### Chapter IV

My total excitement was directed towards the fact that tomorrow I was to become a girl! The inferno of the burning pipeline tank farm, screaming emergency vehicles, and the general panic that surrounded me seemed totally unreal. Reality was that I was going to be a girl!

The cabin motel was on the edge of town situated at the crossroads of a Federal highway and a county road away from the fire. Sarah and I were placed in one cabin unit while my uncle took a separate unit.

"Earthquake," the motel owner announced, "You might find your room a bit shook up. We're keeping the kitchen open if you want a bite to eat." The phone rang at his switchboard so he tossed the keys to my uncle and Sarah took one suggesting that Uncle Louie might bring us a late snack.

Pictures, drinking glasses, lamps and other items lie thrown and broken upon the floor about the cabin; but the ceiling lights in the bedroom, kitchen, and small bath were intact and those items stored within cabinets and drawers were not broken.

"You hold the dust pan and I'll sweep," Sarah announced finding the broom and dust pan in the kitchen after she deposited her luggage on one of the twin beds. "First, we will clean up things and then I will measure you so that I can alter your new clothes while you take your first beauty bath."

We straightened up the cabin room and by the time that we had finished our little chore Uncle Louie arrived with our late snack to be informed by Sarah that it was time for "us girls" to get our beauty rest. Once "we girls" were alone Sarah found her sewing kit and soon set about to measure me while I ate my hamburger.

"My, you are little girl, aren't you," she sighed looking at the cow girl clothes, "I think I can French sew this, but you must promise to be a very good little girl and behave so that the stitches do not come un-

## MANY LITTLE KINDNESS IV

done. No running about and rough boyish things. Do you understand me little miss?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am," I promised finishing my snack as she retreated to the bath room to start the water and soon I could smell the sweet aroma of flowers. "Must I take a bath? I had one last week."

"Oh, did you," she laughed, "Not a little girl's bath, I bet!" With this she motioned me to the bath room and soon I was sans my underpants and in the hot tub surrounded by bubbles beginning to wonder if I had made the right choice.

Leaving me little choice for modesty I soon found myself subject to her wash cloth, a hand scrub brush, and a bar of fragrant soap which were all applied with equal vigor as if I had never bathed before!

"You have lovely lashes," she announced to produce a pair of tweezers, "But, I think your brows need a daintier line." With this announcement the painful tweezers began to pluck hairs until I wondered if I had any left. "There, that is much better. Now, let us see about your hair line."

She produced a box of curlers, comb, and brush along with a yellow hair net and bobby pins. "We will do a simple curl pattern that you will do for yourself while I explain it," Sarah explained showing me how to shampoo my hair, apply the setting lotion, and roll my hair into the curlers. My arms hurt from holding the rollers and working my hair about them but soon my shampooed hair was set under the bonnet and she used the tweezers to clear out any sideburns and the back of the neck telling me that since I was a little girl it was quite alright if I cried. Frankly, tears did come to my eyes from the tweezing, but I was really too anxious to see the results of her handy-work to care!

"If you expect to be a beautiful girl you should expect a little pain and discipline." Words of truth I would hear again and again most of my life as a girl.

Stepping from the bath I was treated to a lovely floral bath powder and a touch of cologne. Daintily I touched my silken smooth skin while I thrilled at the idea of being so pampered and feminine.



## MANY LITTLE KINDNESS IV

"I think this will do for a night gown," an amused Sarah noted realizing my joys while producing a white silken under vest from her lingerie. "A bit loose, but it will do."

I sat in the silken undergarment feeling the wonderment of its soft touch while she set about to give me a pedicure and manicure finishing them off with a pinkish clear nail polish.

"Well, well," she sighed once she had taken me to my bed. "Like a nice little girl you will kneel by your bed and say your prayers." Once satisfied with my prayers she tucked me in and kissed me on the cheek. "Sleep tight, you will have a very busy day ahead of you. I will leave the bath room light on for you."

In delight I crawled among the clean cool sheets feeling the soft silken fabric of my "night gown" as I tried to find a way to rest my head full of curlers upon the pillow. But, soon sleep over took my excitement, the noise of the world outside, and my anticipation of what tomorrow might hold.

An explosion awoke me to the shadows of night. Uncertainly I tried to separate my dream world from the real world outside, and in a daze I went to the bathroom before crawling back into bed. Drifting sleep shifted to the sounds of morning birds and Sarah moving about our room in response to a wake up knock on the cabin door. And then sleep returned.

"Wake up, little Shirley," Sarah's voice exclaimed as she set packages upon the end of my bed and came to tickle me awake! "Time to dress up, princess!"

In giggling delight I allowed her to take me to the bath room where I washed up and brushed my teeth before she led me back to the bedroom.

"Let's see if our little girl can dress herself," she said opening a paper bag to separate from white tissue paper a white cotton vest and romper styled short bloomers decorated with little rose bouquets and trimmed with lace. "Aren't they adorable?"

## MANY LITTLE KINDNESS IV

Frankly, I was a bit uncertain about the "bloomers", some girls still shared in the "droopy drawers" style of the past decade that showed like baby diapers below their short skirts much to their chagrin and their mother's delight in the baby doll look. I dreaded the very idea of being seen in such an infantile outfit!

Seeing no response from me she handed me the bloomers thinking that perhaps I was about to abandon the fantasy.

"Now, a little girl is expected to be all excited and gushy about lovely new clothes and give a big hug and kiss," she stated firmly. "Unless you want to be a boy today?"

Woken from my fears I quickly took the cool cotton panties and put them on as a thanked her with a hug and kiss in near fear that her teasing might be reality. Eagerly I slipped the vest on to stand while she tucked it neatly into the all too plump "baby panties". From another paper sack came a matching bouffant finger tip length slip which barely hid the panties. My worst fears seemed to be coming true!

"You will have to be a perfect little lady to keep those panties hid," she laughed as if reading my fearful mind.

But then she grew serious as if to resolve not to tease me.

"You are really a little child, and this was all that I could find to fit you without going to toddler clothes."

Opening a shoe box she produced a pair of pink anklets and a pair of white leather baby doll style shoes. "The cow girl boots are just too large for you to wear, dearest," she noted, "So tuck your skirts like this so that they will cover your panties and not wrinkle while you put on your stockings and shoes."

Following her guide I tucked my slip skirt and reluctantly slipped on the anklets and white baby dolls allowing her to secure the straps of the shoes. Next came the pink satin blouse, which was quite full because of its size and the cuffs were neatly secured by moving the buttons so that the over all effect was that of 'leg-of-mutton' sleeves and



## MANY LITTLE KINDNESS IV

shirt waist look from the turn of the century. The brown and white calico leather skirt was a bit bouffant for a western skirt because of my slip skirt; but, much to my relief, it reached to my knees and well hid the dainties beneath.

"Now I know how the skirt fits we can take up the hem," Sarah announced, "it is much too long for a girl your age."

"It seems alright, Sarah," I protested while I slipped on the matching vest to the skirt and arranged the white satin bandanna. "I don't want my skirts shorter, please."

"Don't be silly. Stand on the chair so that I can hem your skirt properly," she countered taking thread and needle in hand to carry out her plans, "You do want to look like a regular girl don't you?"

Having no choice I nodded and stood while she hemmed the skirt up to within an inch of the petticoat hem! I may have wanted to be a girl, but she was determined to define what kind of girl I was to be. As I continued to stand on the chair she had me turn until satisfied with the skirt length and until she had me facing the bedroom dresser mirror where I could see for the first time my total image.

"I will tell you how to comb out the curlers," she announced removing the yellow bonnet and handing me a large comb. With my hair set in circles of rollers all rolled under and set like tiers of a ruffled petticoat she had me first gently comb the top tier into a bang like circle, then do the same with each tier until my longish golden curls were styled into a little girl's summer hair style which Sarah completed by a little white silk hair bow at each side of the bangs in front.

The little girl in the mirror mimicked me with each gesture and when she turned I could just catch a glimpse of her slip hem peeping from beneath the cowgirl skirt. I could not believe the joy I felt over being such a pretty girl which was confirmed by Sarah's delight.

"You should stay a little girl, you are perfect," Sarah exclaimed lifting me from the chair. "You can wear your little hat by pushing it back over your head so that it is worn on the back like the cowboys do so that your pretty hair will not be mussed."

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"Where are my cap guns?"

"Well, I have packed them with your boots and things since I really don't think that little girls should play with guns. It is not at all lady like," she announced much to my disappointment since I was dying to try out the cap guns.

"I have something else for you to play with. But, first I think we shall practice how to sit, walk, turn and tend to your skirts so that you will have the mannerisms of a well behaved little girl."

Soon she had me going through the paces of a heel to toe gliding walk with my hands held bent at the wrist to touch my skirts at the fingertip hem while avoiding my hips, simple turns, sitting up straight with my ankles crossed and my hands neatly folded in my lap, and standing with my hands placed palm to palm behind my back with erect posture. To finish this off she taught me a simple curtsy noting that since I was a little girl I was not expected to curtsy except when greeting someone or asking permission to leave. This "training" was all new to me and I did want to do everything right because what I dreaded most was someone discovering the truth of my little charade.

"I think it is time for our little Shirley to meet her uncle for lunch," she noted opening the cabin door while I summoned up the courage to venture out into the real world for the first time as a girl. "Now, when you see him you will curtsy and then rush into his arms and give him a big hug and kiss to thank him for your pretty clothes. And this."


From a box on the bed she produced a baby dolly dressed in pink complete with nursing bottle and rubber romper panties!

"Much better for my little girl than guns," Sarah exclaimed showing me how to carry the dolly seeing to her delight that I was looking at the dolly in utter fascination not believing that it was mine! "Oh, all little girls adore their dollies and this one even has a little layette so that if she wets herself you can be her little mother and change her."



## MANY LITTLE KINDNESS IV

With this dire warning she took my free hand and led me out into the sun light and to the motel restaurant where Uncle Louie awaited his pretty little niece..



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## Q & A ... IS CROSS-DRESSING CRAZY

### QUESTION:

I have in one form or another cross-dressed for the last 18 to 20 years (I'm 30 now), and I have a question about it. Is cross-dressing a mental disorder? If it is, am I just a little crazy, or a lot? Fortunately my wife is about the same size that I am, so when she isn't around I can wear her clothing. Although my wife knows that wearing her clothes excites me, she gets very upset. She says that it isn't right. I told her that I don't hurt anybody by it, but she still gets mad if I suggest that she let me wear her panties or her nightgown, or if I suggest that I would like her to paint my toenails. Is there some way I can get her to at least understand me?

### ANSWER:

This question was referred to Roger E. Peo, Ph.D., whose areas of expertise are transvestism and transsexualism. Here is the insight and advice he offered. "...Cross-dressing is often defined as a mental disorder, but that definition is probably more of a social commentary than of psychological fact. Cross-dressing, like any other sexual behavior, can either be under control by the individual or be damaging to that individual or others in relationship with him. The dividing line that makes it a "mental disorder" is when that behavior interferes with the person's functioning in some way.

### Interfering With Wife

"In your particular situation, the cross-dressing is clearly interfering with your relationship with your wife. You state that it upsets her, and yet you persist in pushing her to let you do it in her presence. While I am not suggesting that you should stop your behavior, it would certainly be better if you did not cross-dress in her presence and did not try to involve her in this activity. The way to get her to understand you is to try to understand her and her feelings.

### Threatening To Her

"Apparently she is very threatened by your cross-dressing. To find out why is a complex process and one that SHE has to want to do. The more pressure you put on her, the more unlikely it is that she will be accepting of your cross-dressing. Without counseling by a knowledgeable therapist for both of you, the best thing for you to do is to confine your cross-dressing to private times."



## IS THE GIRL WITHIN US THE OTHER WOMAN? A SURVEY OF WIVES

By Betty Ann Lind

During Dream '78 I wondered about the wives and girl friends who had agreed to attend the week long retreat by the Pacific with their beloved, who were enjoying a vacation "en femme" attending a real fashion and modelling school. Were these the fabulous "A" GG's I had read about in Transvestia Magazine? What was it that set them aside from other women?

As an officer of both local and national TV/TS support organizations, and as a bachelor, I thought that I should interview these women to determine if there was anything I could do to build a stronger tie between the TV and his GG as well as strengthen our organizations.

Before I report my findings, I wish to explain that Betty Ann is a matronly person, who has since age six, been a bi-genderist in that, for at least twenty years she has lived as a woman from time to time. Her male counterpart is a very successful executive, and enjoys the best of both worlds. However, her lifestyle has given her a mature womanly outlook which, quite frankly, served to help in understanding the undercurrents of sensitivities existing during the interviews. The fact that Betty Ann shares in an advanced degree in social psychology and counseling also helped.

So, starting at Dream, and for two and a half years afterward, Betty Ann has interviewed in private, forty three women using a simple unstructured interview approach to encourage open observations. Once confidentiality was assured and the purpose of the interview was established, the wives were extremely frank and open about their life with that "other woman" within their husband. Yes, they recognize "her" as the other woman; in fact none of the women viewed their partner as androgynous.

Of the forty three women, thirty eight were married to heterosexual TVs, two to borderline TSs, two to bi-genderists, and one to a bi-sexual TV. They were primarily middle to upper class, with a bias toward the established social role of the working homemaker rather than militancy concerning feminism. Of the group three were considering divorce for reasons other than TVism. (All have since divorced.) Otherwise the group ranged from new brides to mature matrons with at

## Wives Survey

least thirty years of marriage. All of them had seen their husband dressed as a woman.

It was my impression at first that this survey would lead to wide range of differences in opinion between these women. The surprising result was their general uniformity on the subject of their husband's "hobby". I thought that such variables as years of marriage, income, education, or social status might influence their answers, yet I could detect no real polarization due to such influences. Where there was a spread of opinion I have noted it.

I shall try to relate the results of my poll in the hope that it will serve to help others. However, I must observe that many of my findings may upset my dear readers, especially those who have allowed their fantasies to obscure the realities of their marriages. Also, I urge a great deal of careful thought on the part of both partners before they take to heart any of my findings. Remember that generalizations are just that. It is your marriage that counts.

And as one who has sought to understand, Betty Ann wishes to thank the forty three who have one wondrous gift in common, a delightful curiosity about that other woman that exists in the man that they love.

### When did you first learn?

- a). After the marriage: 30
- b). Before the marriage: 13

The clear majority did not know about their husband's crossdressing, and of these twenty did not find out about it until several years after their marriage; usually during the male mid-life crisis period of the late forties.

### Would you have married him if you had known?

I don't know. (Almost to a woman this was the honest reply.) . . . I was pretty young and pretty naive about such matters."



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### Given what you now know about him, would you have married him?

Yes. (Even the three who intended to divorce their husbands said yes, and then added later that their divorce plans had little or nothing to do with the crossdressing. IN FACT IF THEIR HUSBANDS REALLY TRIED TO UNDERSTAND THEM AS A WOMAN MIGHT, THE DIVORCE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NECESSARY.)

### Would you advise a transvestite to tell his bride about himself?

I'm not certain that would be wise considering the social risks involved, but if he is sure of her general understanding I think it would be the most honest thing to do even if she might say "no".

(Despite their words, my own feminine intuition told me that they were satisfied with having found out about his crossdressing after their marriage. Thirty percent found out about their husband's crossdressing before their marriage. Their general viewpoint was that they were fascinated by this revelation from a rather macho male. They held an uneasy combination of curiosity and amusement. Since they loved their husband to be, they tended to accept him for better or worse, and his secret could have been something worse.)

### Did you see him dressed before your marriage?

"No. And I had no real desire to." (Four noted that they had, with one taking some delight in describing a counter wedding in which the husband dressed as a bride. One wife said that she almost didn't marry. The other three were candidly a bit concerned, but took it in stride admitting that it was certainly an interesting experience.)

### Before the marriage did you see pictures of him dressed as a woman?

That was his desire. (But only seven actually elected to see the pictures with the remaining six accepting his story as "proof" enough.)

Setting aside first impressions for later discussion, I think that there was a rather serious undercurrent during this discussion with this particular grouping. Of the thirteen women involved, ten freely admitted that they thought this peculiar behavior would cease after marriage and

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six of them believed this for ten or more years. Three wives from this group totally accepted their husband's activity before and after the marriage, with one admitting that she liked the "other woman" as a companion better than she did her husband.

### How far will he go?

This was not my question. It was in fact the question asked by every woman shortly after the discussion above. Usually they would look at Betty Ann as if to add, "I hope not as far as you." This backhanded compliment reflected their general opinion that Betty Ann, with her natural hair, matronly image, and general decorum was an extreme that they did not desire for their husband; and understandably I might add.

At this point they would confess that they understood people like Betty Ann (who most believed to be a TS). It was a natural expression of a desired sex role, i.e.: have an operation to marry a man and settle down to be a housewife, etc.). ut TVs were something else. Although most of them listened politely to my discourse on the basic differences between TVs, TSs, bi-genderists, and so forth, I soon realized intuitively that their direct assumption was that there was a clean line between the simple stereotype of the TS (or drag queen for that matter) seeking to be accepted as a "normal" female sexual role, and the TV as a man caught somewhere in between. I am not stating what they understood logically about the classifications used to define components of our paraculture, but rather what they projected emotionally woman to woman. This "rationalization" of sex role to gender role and vice versa is clearly a dangerous basis for trying to relate to their husbands, since it reinforces the very image they desire not to accept in him. Thus, "their husband and the other woman."

Their questions centering on "How far will it go?" moved toward the basic definition of crossdressing as compulsive behavior.

"Why must he go out dressed?"

"Why must he tell others? (Doesn't he know the risks?)"

"Why does he try to force the issue after so many years without a word?"

"Why is he so extreme between the two?"



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"Is he becoming a TS?"  
 "What must I do?"

This myriad of questions, which I tried to answer objectively, reflected a consuming interest and desire to express concern to another kindred soul, a need to probe for an answer from an experienced person, or simply served to state her own position relevant to her acceptance of the terms of her condition in marriage.

At this point another insight emerged. These women were accommodating to make their marriage successful, often at extreme emotional cost and often as not it was a one way street. Would they admit this to their husband? I doubt it. By and large they were not oriented by their own role model standards to openly seek to confront their husband's compulsive behavior. Much as I hate to say it, I caught fleeting glimpses of a mother baby-sitting a cranky child with the patient understanding that it was just a phase he was going through. This was a very difficult phase in the interview.

### Do you know about the system used to rate Wives?

Almost every wife had heard of the system to rate wives on a scale from "A" (perfect) to "F" (terrible). They described it as being degrading (pardon the pun). When I pressed this issue further, most wives would thoughtfully counter by saying, "Perhaps an "F" wife who absolutely frustrated all efforts of her husband to dress as the "other woman" was really an "A" wife for that particular man. She knows in her heart that if she encourages his behavior, he will go of the deep end and will ruin their marriage and their lives."

They would then shift from this position by suggesting that there might well need to be a rating scale for husbands (and the "other woman"). Not a system oriented toward how well he "passed", but one based on how well he understood the consequences of his actions with respect to the reality of his life as a husband and father with real responsibilities (and, for that matter, how well the "other woman" accepted her responsibilities as a mature woman).

At this point the interview opened out into open hostility focusing on the unfairness of the situation. But when I suggested that they assist

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in making up a counter rating system, none responded. So I have merely stated what happened at this point in the interview and hope that my reader will understand their desire for a balance,

### THE NEST CONCEPT

From the rating question sprung a series of comments by the wives which caused me to realize that these women were focusing on what might be called a "nest" oriented lifestyle. Except for four wives who skirted this topic altogether by simply stating that they preferred a sister/lesbian relationship with their husband and therefore they totally accepted their husband's behavior, the other women delineated their relationship with the "other woman" in terms of the bedroom, the house, the neighborhood, and elsewhere. Thus, the wives described their lifestyle in terms of distance from the "nest" or bedroom.

The "nest" focused on the bedroom to start. The bottom line repeated again and again was, "I married a man, not a woman." Suddenly the girl within their husband became the "other woman in her bedroom", (Whoever called it the master bedroom?)

Tones of ultimatum came into their voices insisting upon the fairness that "she" belonged elsewhere in the house, "her" clothes should not be kept in the bedroom, but in some other secure storage place. The majority were clearly opposed to body shaving and the husband wearing "her" clothes to bed. (Again, "I married a man, not a woman,")

Further probing revealed that this was an emotional response, but did not in fact represent how over half of them co-existed with the other woman in their "nest", ("With children, where else can we put her clothes?") Whatever can be said about this Betty Ann must confess that time and time again she has observed an amazing insensitivity on the part of the husbands involved, (Look up the word "compulsive".) This does not mean that the wives who accepted the invasion of the bedroom did not occasionally enjoy their "game", it is just a straightforward statement that the husband is playing a very dangerous game indeed by imposing upon his wife a steady diet of the "other woman" in this setting. A desire to please does not mean



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that one is in fact pleased. This is very true, my dears, between women.

Interestingly enough, the husband's crossdressing in his own house, out of sight of the neighbors and family was not considered by most of the women to be too bad. There was an almost amusing byplay here, "At least it keeps him off the streets!" However most wives expressed a certain amount of resentment concerning the "other woman" not doing her fair share of housework.

The house is a giant closet, excluding the nest, was a standard dynamic. Yet, there was an undertone of acceptance of the other woman as a companion or sister, which I found most interesting in terms of the affection often spoken with deep understanding on the wife's part. The change between the "nest" focus and the house focus upon the husband as the other woman versus the husband as a sisterly companion was quite dramatic. (This was very strongly expressed by the wives of the transsexual and bi-genderist oriented husbands and only to a lesser extent by the other wives. Interestingly enough, the "lesbian" relationships did not express this in the context of the house.)

Outside the house, the wife panics. Here she see the crossdresser through the worst eyes, those of her intolerant neighbor. She envisions a telephone call, the police, social and economic ruin all in one brief totally destructive moment. No man who does not totally depend on another can understand the emotional depth of the wife projecting this disaster onto her children and all she holds dear. This projects out into the neighborhood shopping center, and wherever "she" is known. "Why does he want to destroy us?"

When I shifted to group meetings and weeks like Dream and Fantasia Fair, I received the same fears as they related to his going and coming to such activities dressed as a woman. But there was general approval of the activities themselves. From there the opinions varied from the wife enjoying the chance to go to such activities (to meet other wives) and learning about their husband through others - through an attitude that she goes to "babysit" (Note the comment on the "cranky child".) Most wives were anxious to be involved in a group

## Wives Survey

as long as there were other wives. None were interested in joining a male-feminist group.

It became clear that the average wife interviewed did not want her husband to associate with either transsexuals or gays while he was at such meetings. Nor, did she particularly desire to associate with such people when her husband was dressed as a woman. It was far too easy to draw comparisons. Also, "How can they go on about hormones and such? It is all so disinteresting." Or, "Perhaps I am afraid that he will be attracted to them. Who knows?" A curious point was that although many of them appreciated a female impersonator show, their husband was best dressed as a man when they attended.

Which brings us to the interesting curiosity of distance. The farther away the wife is from home with her husband dressed as a woman, the more relaxed she is. The vacationing "sisters" approach came out as a recurring theme. The motel room was not a "nest". Only a few admitted going out in public on such "vacations".

### **Tell me more about your view of the "other woman".**

"She is a pre-teen playing dress-up." Somewhat spoiled and self centered, immature, narcissist, with an compulsive desire to be the center of attention even at the risk of exposure. ("If I sought complements like he does, my husband would think I was nuts! Yet he doesn't make an effort to compliment me.") "She tends to overdress or dress up rather than down (To suit the occasion)." Her image of a woman is female, not womanly, a mirror image of a satin doll, not a real person. Her image is generally not feminist, in fact she see herself as as a sex object. Often this is expressed by his dressing and using make-up in the fashion of women when he was in puberty, not now. This was an underlying theme expressed again and again as if they all knew the same other woman.

### **What did you think when you first saw "her"?**

"I was absolutely stunned, she was actually prettier than I was. In fact I felt compelled to return to make-up and get myself back into shape." This was the response of about one third of the wives, a somewhat plaintive complaint mixed with a sincerity and personal uncertainty



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which caused Betty Ann to consider the real impact of such TVs on their wives. "It is not really that bad, it's just that I was born a woman and "she" is so damned pretty. How can I compete with her?"

"Well, I really felt sorry for "her." She is so big! I mean it is so hard for her to find clothes and such. And she is so very hurt by the unfairness of it all. God knows what would happen if she were to try and pass. Yet, she is so sweet and considerate and tries so hard. It is sad in a way." About one third of the wives followed this theme reflecting their concern. "But perhaps she will stay out of trouble because she really couldn't pass, you know?"

"It was a kind of mixed bag, really. She really wasn't together. I suppose she could pass if she put some effort into it. It was a bit funny, but she couldn't smile and I wouldn't laugh. Very difficult but we managed."

(An interesting point is that the viewpoints were more often than not held only by the wife herself about her husband when he dressed. In many cases I found that there was very little correlation between what the wife saw and that seen by others.)

### What have you done to help "her" since then?

This question did not fall on deaf ears. In fact the wives all suddenly took a rather dramatic turn from their earlier evaluation of the "A" wife as a possible negative to casting themselves in that role, i.e.: serving to help their husbands by buying them dresses and so forth.

### Do you help your husband so that he can "pass"?

The problem that their husbands compulsion might drive him to try to "pass" was recognized by all the wives. However, they were almost equally divided on the question as to if they should help him to do so. The basic argument against helping beyond token efforts started from the basic issue that as women they had been trained to present themselves as women in public and it was natural for them. Furthermore, such efforts to help their husbands might encourage them to take risks. The other side recognized the issues but also took the position that if they helped their husband it might reduce the risks involved.

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**In our conversations you draw a distinction between female and woman. What does that have to do with the image of the "other woman" ?**

Most of the wives tackled this question by stating that the "other woman" had in her mind's eye an image of themselves as a female, or a kind of satin doll reflection. Few of the wives saw in the other woman's self image the completeness of a mature woman willing to accept womanly responsibilities.

### Have you made any efforts toward consciousness raising?

This crossover to the feminist dialectic caused some amusement and only a few had considered the effort worth the candle. "If she were a woman she would prefer Total Woman to Sisterhood as reading material." They would then add, "Although there is plenty for her to read around the house concerning women, she really isn't interested." Then there would be a pause, "And perhaps that is for the best."

### Have you ever required "her" to be womanly, to accept household duties and so forth?

The response was evenly distributed between "She helps around the house." to "Neither of them lifts a finger." The idea of using permission to dress up as leverage to get "her" to help wasn't really of much direct interest but most of the wives recognized that their husbands did cooperate a bit more if the other woman was asked to help. (It is clear that the male half of most TVs is fairly chauvinistic.)

## CONCLUSIONS

I suppose that before I offer any conclusions concerning my survey of wives who accepted their husband's girl within, I should pause and observe what seems to be the basic difference between these women and the dozen or so wives that I have met who have absolutely no desire to accept their husband's "hobby".

I found a common thread of reasoning in these women, not unlike the positions expressed by the wives who accepted their husband's



## Wives Survey

fantasy, but with a single difference. The wives who rejected the other woman did so in the solid belief that in doing so they solved the problem, and the problem was "How can I preserve what is mine?" This self centered focus exists in all of us, but only mature people know that by giving of ourselves to those we love are we complete. The desire to preserve the status quo in the face of family crises is natural, but these women tend to think in absolutes. By refusing to recognize their husband's needs, these women accomplish the very thing which they do not want, destruction of the status quo. Their approach is that of the small child, "If I close my eyes, it will all go away."

I found that the accepting wives recognized that life is a changing stream and that if they wished to preserve anything they would have to adapt even if their husband was not capable of doing so. In short as one wife said:

"I have the best of both. A husband who is a man in every way and at the same time he is capable of being the sister I have always wanted as a dearest friend and companion. I love then both as one."

Perhaps that's the best conclusion to my survey.

- Betty Ann Lind

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR PARTNERS OF CROSSDRESSERS

**NOTE:** These notes originated during the program held for partners of crossdressers at Fantasia Fair 1987. The suggestions are by no means exhaustive, but they are a start and cover what a group of five wives felt would be most immediately helpful for the crossdresser to know when s/he decides to face the issue of crossdressing with his/her partner.

### What and How to Tell Her

The partners agreed that this information might not be shared all at once but over a period of time according to the individuals involved. Some partners might want to know as much as possible as soon as possible; others might need to have time to absorb information. If you are not sure, proceed gradually as you start to share.

### **The crossdresser speaks...**

"...I have a secret which I need to share with you because I love you and I want to be closer to you."

"...I am a crossdresser; I like to wear women's clothes."

"...It has been very stressful to me to keep this to myself. I thought it would go away when we married but it didn't. That's why I didn't tell you until I was sure it wasn't going to disappear. I didn't want it to get in the way of our intimacy."

"...I didn't want you to suddenly discover the clothes and make-up and think I'd been unfaithful to you. I'm not interested in any other woman. I love you. I want our marriage to work."

"...I am not homosexual; I am sexually attracted to you. This is not your fault. No one knows exactly why it happens but I started when I was very young."

"...I don't ask for you to like or accept this, just to try to understand and support me. I recognize that it will mean stress for you as well and I am prepared to accept your feelings about it without turning away."



## SUGGESTIONS

I want this marriage to work and I acknowledge your right to be angry and sad about this."

"...I'd like to share all the information and feelings I have about this with you. Also, there are wives' support groups and individual wives who will be glad to talk with you as soon as you are ready."

"...Just as I am asking you to acknowledge my need to dress periodically (it will not go away), I acknowledge your need to set some conditions on when, where, how and with whom I dress. We will need to negotiate until we can find a compromise we can live with. Over time our agreements may change."

### Other Suggestions

- Give her books and articles to read. Especially recommended is "He:She:We:They", a booklet written by wives at the 1986 Fantasia Fair.
- Tell her you welcome questions, but give her space to set her own rhythm of wanting to know, Do not nag or force it on her.
- If possible start dropping hints before you actually tell her, It might ease the shock. (For example show interest in a mail order catalogue of women's clothes and ask her opinion.)
- BE SEXUALLY ATTENTIVE. MAKE ROMANTIC GESTURES SUCH AS BRINGING FLOWERS. KEEP LETTING HER KNOW YOU LOVE HER AND THAT SHE IS YOUR PARTNER OF CHOICE.

### Dealing With Reactions

#### DENIAL

She doesn't want to see it, hear about it, discuss it, or read about it. This may very well be the first reaction.

## SUGGESTIONS

TV: "I'm in pain. So are you. We need to talk." (Don't harass, just state this truth... Eventually, unless she decides to leave, she will realize that if you are going to be together you must communicate.)

**Keep acknowledging her feelings:** "...I know this is hard for you; you didn't ask for it; you have a right to be angry, etc."

**Make gentle, helpful suggestions:** "...You need to talk to someone beside me. Here is a wife(or a group) you can call."  
"...Here is a booklet written by wives of TVs you can read."

**Have patience:** Depending on the person, sometimes it takes a while for her to be ready to face it with you. Just let her know you intend to hang in there. If the marriage has been basically good and supportive there is a good chance of becoming allies. If not, it will expose all the weaknesses of the relationship. It will take time, perhaps years, to resolve.

**BOTH PARTNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE:** Help her to see that each of you have choices, stress and coping mechanisms. That you must be allies in working out the issues. It takes negotiation and compromise on both sides.

#### OVER SUPPORTIVE

She totally identifies with you, wants to do everything for you, takes over, competes for attention in social situations. You feel jealous, crowded, etc..

**Encourage her to differentiate her feelings from yours:** It's all right to disagree, have different tastes in clothes, not do everything together

**Ask her to understand what need this is filling for her:** She may need to be doing something for herself which she is doing vicariously through you.



## SUGGESTIONS

### ANGRY/HOSTILE

She makes critical comments about your appearance in public. She withholds sex. She tells people about you without discussing that action first with you.

Share your vulnerable feelings of hurt and pain with her. Acknowledge her right to be angry but ask her to be more direct with it and to do it in private.

Thank her for being willing to come out with you despite her angry feelings:

**Ask that both of you agree on actions you will take that could affect the other, prior to taking the action :** For example you will not secretly take hormones or go in public places where you'd be likely to meet people who know you. She will not tell friends or relatives or criticize you in public.

**Don't force her to do things she's not ready for:** Such as seeing you dressed. Know your goal and what's motivating you to ask. Then work jointly on that, (i.e.; "...I'd like to dress more at home.")

- Compiled by Niela Miller, fa-  
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