



News & views

Vision • Integrity • Quality

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Renaissance

Right Wing Group's Founder Apologizes

Washington, D.C. — A co-founder of *Focus on the Family*, the largest right wing organization in the U.S., has apologized to women, people of color, gay men and lesbians, and non-Christians for the misleading and hateful words that are now the hallmark of the organization he helped to create.

"I apologize to lesbian and gay Americans who are demeaned and dehumanized on a regular basis by the false, irresponsible, and inflammatory rhetoric of James Dobson's anti-gay radio and print materials," stated Gil Alexander-Moegerle, one of seven founders of Focus on the Family. He also urged fair-minded Americans to "report the truth about the threat [current Focus on the Family head] James Dobson and other religious extremists pose to the American tradition... and the separation of church and state."

"Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people have long been a favorite target of Focus on the Family," said Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "Their politically charged rhetoric has become more force-

ful as James Dobson has increased the organization's reach and influence."

Alexander-Moegerle made his statement at the Gay and Lesbian Pride Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado in the offices of Ground Zero. While at Focus on the Family, Alexander-Moegerle was the executive producer of "Focus" radio and editor of "Focus" magazine. In addition to the apology, he called upon Dobson to step down from political activism. Of Dobson's political activities and continued misuse of his position, Alexander-Moegerle said, "That is un-American" and "un-Christian."

"James Dobson's entrepreneurial spirit and personal political agenda has turned racism, sexism, and homophobia into a profitable business," said Lobel.

Focus on the Family, founded in 1977, has become the largest right wing organization in the United States. Their 30 state affiliates do grassroots political organizing on anti-choice, anti-gay, and anti-sex education issues. They have also become a Christian media empire, with magazines reaching over three million read



Queer Lawyers Affirm Bi and Transgendered

On Sunday, 3 August 1997, the Board of Directors of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association (NLGLA), meeting in San Francisco, voted unanimously to affirm bisexual and transgender incorporation in its by-laws.

In 1994 transgendered attorneys were invited to present two transgender-issues workshops at the NLGLA's Lavender Law Conference in Portland, Oregon. In 1995, the NLGLA Board unanimously resolved that transgendered people should be included in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and other lesbian/gay ordinances and statutes being offered around the nation. In 1996, the NLGLA's Lavender Law Conference in New Orleans again presented several transgender-issue workshops while incorporating transgendered panelists and issues into other workshop subjects.

In January of this year, a proposal was offered by Phyllis Frye, a transgendered attorney and current NLGLA Board member, to insure that the bisexual and transgender-inclusive spirit of past NLGLA actions were not fads but an integral part of the

organization's by-laws. A committee formed to study the implications of transgender inclusion, and find appropriate wording for the by-laws amendment.

The study was necessary because of the evolution of the English language. Just as the word "men" no longer means "men and women," and the term "gay" does not necessarily include "lesbians," the term "sexual orientation" does not include transgender "gender identification" concerns and behaviors. Further, the NLGLA Board considered transgendered and bisexual persons to be integral parts of the diverse gay and lesbian community since 1994.

After the committee report and a long Board discussion, it was decided this was not a change of by-laws, but instead a more complete definition of the original by-laws to incorporate both bisexual and transgendered individuals who have always been a part of the diverse "queer" community. The Minnesota method was chosen to define the lesbian and gay community to be diverse and to include, but not be limited to, lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered people. The vote was unanimous.





Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

Wilmington, Delaware: meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808. Phone: 302-376-1990 or email to: [redacted]@aol.com

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia: Write Renaissance GPC, 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, Pa. 19087. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia. Doors open 8 pm all year 'round. Call 610-975-9119 for information.

Lehigh Valley/Pocono area: Renaissance Lehigh Valley, PO Box 3624, Allentown, PA 18106. Meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Allentown area. Call for directions and more information, 610-821-2955.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122 Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (780-1578) or send email to: <lsv@ezonline.com>.

Affiliates

California

Orange County: Powder Puffs of California, PO Box 1088, Yorba Linda, CA 92686, or email to <ppoc@aol.com>

Connecticut

Bridgeport/New Haven: connecticutView, c/o Denise Mason, PO Box 2281, Devon, CT 06460. Monthly newsletter and activities.

Georgia

Atlanta: The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 770-939-0244, or email to <aegis@mindspring.com>. Information resources & referrals.

Atlanta: Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 770-939-2128.

Illinois

Chicago: The Chicago Gender Society, PO Box 578005, Chicago, IL 60657, 708-863-7714.

Louisiana

New Orleans: The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 56836, New Orleans, LA 70156-6836, 504-833-3046.

New Jersey

N. Central Jersey: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Call 908-219-9094. Email: [redacted]@aol.com

Titusville: Meetings are 1st Saturday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing. Call Terri [redacted] at 609-[redacted].

New York

Manhattan: Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), write 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, NY 10014, or call 201-794-1665, Ext. 332.

Long Island: Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE), PO Box 1311, Water Mill, NY 11976-1311. Phone 516-283-1333. email to [redacted]@aol.com

Oklahoma

Central Oklahoma: Sooner Diversity, part of the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance (COTA). Contact, Vanessa Kaye, Oklahoma City: COTA, 6957 N.W. Expressway, #121 Oklahoma City, OK 73132. email to [redacted]@ionet.net>.

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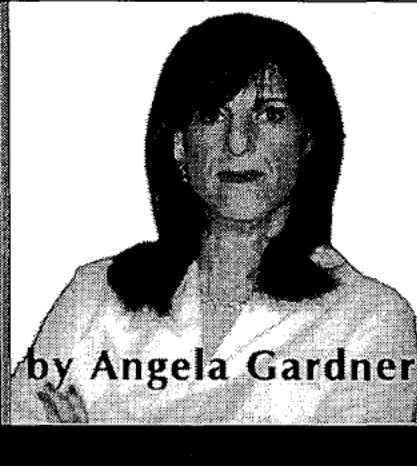
Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the transgender community and the general public. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, make your check or M.O., payable to Renaissance and send it to our National office. Your contributions will help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

Local Calendar

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27 MOTG - Angela Gardner

News Beat & Reminder



by Angela Gardner

Well class, how is everyone? The seven dollar newsletter assessments have been coming in, but slowly. Fortunately, some folks have sent in more, (in some cases *much* more), than their assessment. If you haven't sent your assessment yet we're still going to need it to fulfill our obligations for the rest of the year. Thanks to everyone, those who have already sent it in and those who are reaching for their check books right now. With the support of our members, Renaissance National will be able to keep doing what we've been doing and implement some exciting programs we've started to examine.

I've had yet another hectic time since last I wrote when I told you about the modeling shoot I did with Miss Minerva from the Big Apple. Well, being close to my deadline (as I often am) I didn't have time to get the name of the restaurant where Minerva slings hash. Oh, come on, it's not that kind of a place. It's real upscale and all. As Monty Python would say, "they got real cuisine and cookin' and such." For those with a need to know, it's called **Stingy Lulu's** and you can find it, and Miss Minerva, at St. Marks (8th Street) and Avenue A in Manhattan. If you see Minerva, which you may not since she informed me that she's taking a road trip this month, say hello.

Too Kathleen Turner?

Could famous FI **Charles Pierce** really be mad at columnist Liz Smith? Heaven knows sweeties, but it seems that in a recent column Liz commented that **Kathleen Turner** was a great **Tallulah Bankhead** (a famous

star well-known to ladies of a certain age). Charles, who has retired now and hung up his heels (come back Charles, don't let the glemma die!) picked up the phone and called Ms. Smith. His comments? I reproduce them for you here: "Liz! You told me once that I was Tallulah! And the odd thing is, when I was doing my act, I used to pat my hair and say (as Tallulah), 'Is this too Kathleen Turner?' I was way ahead of her time!"

I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Pierce briefly at a New York bistro called *Oh Johnny's* (sadly now it's gone) and we exchanged a few pleasantries. He's a sweet guy... and several great broads. Let's hope retirement weighs too heavily and he decides to cinch up the old corset at least one more time.

In an interesting sidebar, it seems that Tallulah Bankhead, at her nadir, played the rich, aging Flora Goforth living out her final days on an island in the Mediterranean in Tennessee Williams' play *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*. The brief run was on Broadway back in the late '50s and Miss Bankhead starred opposite Tab Hunter, who played a beautiful young hustler with a reputation for helping wealthy older ladies make their exit from this mortal coil.

Now, they're producing the show in London and the Flora role will be played by someone who would be considered more appropriate for the Tab Hunter role (by most people but the members of our community), Rupert Everett. Everett was one of the stars in *My Best Friend's Wedding*. Rumor has

it he was offered the Flora part in London since he's already done it for a Scottish production last year. We applaud Rupert for climbing into Flora's elaborate nightdress for a second time. Most of those other actor boys are too afraid of type casting to reprise a role, especially a female role.

Speaking of Female Impersonators

It's amazing what you can find on the Net. One night while cruising the cybersurf, I found a page put up by a talent agency for female impersonators. They're looking for talent. I tell ya, I'd be the first to sign up, but I don't have an act. Well, not a stage act. I'm more of a guerrilla street theater kind of gal. You'd be amazed how much attention you can attract lip synching to Madonna songs on a street corner at rush hour.

I'm just kidding. I'm more of a Gloria Estefan type. But, seriously, I'm too lazy to do all the rehearsal it takes to do great lip synch. If you've got what it takes (big hair, a lot of makeup, some foam boobs and a lot of moxie) you should get in touch with the folks at **Hello Gorgeous Entertainment**. They're an entertainment agency representing professional female impersonators with one or more solid celebrity impersonations. That's what leaves me out. I don't even vaguely resemble most of the celebs I can think of. Well, with long black hair I might be able to pull off a Cher but I have a real problem getting my mouth to do that kind of sneer thing she does. (Particularly when she talks to Sonny.)

So, if you have the characters and the tenacity to fight your way to the top in show biz remember it was me who gave you your start. Send my manager's cut in small unmarked bills care of *News & Views*. Hello Gorgeous is particularly interested in Liza Minelli, Tina Turner, Dolly Parton, Madonna, Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey Gloria Estefan, RuPaul, (wait... if you are a guy who impersonates a man who dresses up as a woman... are you really a female impersonator?) Whitney

continued next page

News Beat...

Houston, Rosie O'Donnell, Selena, Judy Garland, Carol Channing, Julie Andrews, and Marilyn. Hey, now that I'm a blonde (I know my picture in this column is still dark haired, but there's only so much time in the day, girls) maybe I can do Marilyn. Nah. If you want to sign up contact Patrick Ross or David Jarner at: Hello Gorgeous Entertainment, P.O. Drawer 1506, Los Lunas, NM 87031. (Ya know, New Mexico is a hot bed of drag. There's an annual drag show there in a little town called Madrid.) You can call them at 505- 269-7948.

Moving On To...

Race car drivers!? That's right kittens. The good old boys at NASCAR are a little vakleempt, as Linda Richman would say. It seems that one of their drivers has deserted the manly, tobacco chewin' and cussin' world of the male NASCAR driver to become a woman. I do hope she's given up chewing and cussing. It's so unladylike. Her name is **Terri O'Connell** and around five years ago she used to be **J.T. Hayes**, a top money earning driver. It's really a shame that she wasn't a drag racer, but I guess that would have been *too* perfect.

Ms. O'Connell lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she has done some modeling, and started a graphic-design business. Most of her clients don't know that she used to drive race cars or was a man at one time. I guess after the publicity push she has started they'll soon find out. Why the push? Terri's written a book, of course. It's an autobiography called *Pink, Blue & Checkered*. She hasn't found a publisher yet (somebody call JoAnn Roberts) but she's working on the publicity. She has challenged **Howard Stern** to a race. Hey! This could be another chance for Howard to dress up.

Another reason she has decided to come out is that word leaked in the Charlotte area and she felt that it was better to meet things head on rather than wait to react. In her own words,

"It's a homophobic world, and this gets grouped into that. I've been threatened. People have tried to beat me up." I hope she's got a wrench left over from the old days that she can use for self defense.

Ms. O'Connell kept some ties to those old days. She was involved in doing graphic design for Charlotte-area racing teams. Once the good old boys heard about her gender change she found herself without those clients. Ain't it amazing how macho guys who will drive a car at 200 miles an hour can get scared as hell over one little woman who used to be a man? Don't worry boys, it's not catching.

Apparently NASCAR isn't too happy that O'Connell has decided to come out. The whole NASCAR thing is the province of one family: the France clan of Daytona Beach, Florida. They've dictated the rules—and the image—of the sport for 50 years and according to O'Connell they feel that a transsexual isn't good for the "family values" image of auto racing. I guess being a homophobic good old boy is?

It may just be paranoia on O'Connell's part, and of course NASCAR denies having anything against her, but... you never know. In any event she's looking for a publisher and, if she can find a sponsor (how about Cover Girl cosmetics? Maybe MAC?) she is set to return to the world of auto racing. Best of luck Terri.

The Playhouse is The Thing

American actor **Sam Wanamaker** had a dream. He wanted to rebuild the Globe Theater, the hangout of a cat named **Shakespeare** a few centuries ago. This proved not to be that easy a task and it took a darned long time and a lot more cash than the original. If you care about all the blood sweat and tears that went into the restoration you can read about it at the Globe Theater Webpage, <<http://www.reading.ac.uk/globe/Globe.html>>.

The thing of interest to us is the fact that in Shakespeare's day no women were allowed on stage. Which was probably a good idea since the theater in Will's day was not the polite, refined experience it is now. So, whether they

were just trying to spare the ladies delicate sensibilities, or because the actors were all interested in dating boys, the ladies roles were played by boy actors. In fact it's claimed that the word "drag" originated in those halcyon days of yesteryear when the stage manager would write D.R.A.G., meaning Dressed As A Girl, next to the actor's name.

The recreated Globe is doing its best to adhere to the traditions of theater in Shakespeare's time so they are doing some productions with male actors in drag. One of the opening performances is *Henry V*. Director Richard Olivier (son of the Olivier) has staged the play in the fashion of Shakespeare's day, with lots of handsome Elizabethan costumes and female roles filled by men. Hand me my ruff, honey! That's my cue. Check the Globe site before the end of September cause they promise photos from the shows. I saw a shot of two of the "ladies" and they looked so good that at first I was completely taken in. Then I said, wait a minute... Shakespeare, male actresses. Lemme check that shot a little closer. The actors are not exactly boys, as in days of yore, but they are quite fetching. Check it out. As Shakespeare said, Yaz just might get sum cultcha.

A Bad Actor

Attempting to get culture, and cash, a certain little scam artist has been at it again. Marc Hendley was in the news a while back for posing as a female soap star and taking limo companies and hotels to the cleaners. He'd call up speaking in a male voice and inform them that Miss So & So was in town for a promotional tour and need a driver to pick her up in a white stretch limo. Since Marc has been working this scam in the great American Heartland they're just not as suspicious as, say, a New York limo service might be. They don't get a deposit and they pick up Miss So & So. The hotels are also an easy touch since Miss So& So tells them the airline lost the luggage and will be picking up the tab.

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News Beat...

Marc is 27, five foot four and weighs 135. Well, 135 on a five foot four frame is a little hefty, but I hate him anyway for being 27 and five foot four. He also has hazel eyes, long blonde hair and an expensive looking dress. His acting skills must be at least as good as a soap actresses' since he pulled this last year and has returned to what he does best. This time he did it in Minneapolis. The Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* reported that he was arrested in coiffed hair, full makeup and a dress in his room at a suburban Minneapolis hotel, and charged with theft by swindle. Claiming to be an actress from *Days of Our Lives* he "allegedly" (I always love that allegedly stuff. Do you see any other hazel eyed blonde guy in drag claiming to be a female soap star?) racked up a \$916 twelve hour limo ride, got \$500 in cash advances from the Airport Hilton and briefly signed autographs at Planet Hollywood in the Mall of America before being taken into custody.

Hendley is already on probation for his previous escapades so I think soon he'll be starring in *Days of My Sentence*. You think that the few hours of fun he gets out of wouldn't make up for the court appearances and hard time.

It would be lovely if Hendley got probation again and could learn to channel his acting skills into more approved lines. If he looks that much like the woman from the soap perhaps he could start a whole new drag perfor-

mance genre—impersonating soap stars on stage. I'm sure Hello Gorgeous could find a spot for him in a Vegas revue. But I think this time it's off to the slammer. That might not be all bad, the prison food will probably help him lose those few extra pounds. Thanks to Georgia Hilbert for bringing Marc's latest performance to our attention.

Wrapping It Up With Pretty Pink Bows

Keep your eyes open at the art theaters in your town for a film called *Different For Girls* from First Look Pictures. I'll be in New York City for a viewing early this month and I'll have a review for you in October. Let's hope it stays around long enough for that review to be relevant to your entertainment planning.

What's so special about this flick? Well, if you haven't heard, it's about a TS in England who runs into an old school chum. I can't say she's the first MtoF TS played by a straight male actor (i.e. Terrence Stamp in *Priscilla*) but she is more interested in blending into society as a female than she is in lip synching to Abba in the Outback. The relationship that develops between the two lead characters should prove interesting. I'll have more after I see the film. British actor Steven Mackintosh stars as Kim Foyle, the transsexual heroine.

Keep those assessment checks coming and don't take any wooden undergarments. See ya.



Text of TG-Inclusive Resolution Passed at NOW National Conference 1997

Oppression of Transgendered People

"Whereas, the National Organization for Women (NOW) has worked for the elimination of all forms of oppression in our society targeted at groups who are systematically mistreated; and Whereas, the transgendered and transsexual communities confront oppression daily and are systematically mistreated because of artificial gender constructs in our society; and Whereas, there is a lack of understanding and information on issues affecting transgendered and transsexual people; and Whereas, one of NOW's goals is to eliminate all sex stereotypes including so-called gender roles; and Whereas, NOW affirms and honors the right of people to self-identify; Therefore, be it resolved, that NOW and its sub-units encourage education and dialogue within NOW and other organizations on gender and sex stereotypes including those who are transgendered and transsexual people. Be it further resolved, that NOW reaffirm its commitment to end all sex and gender stereotypes. Be it finally resolved, that we acknowledge that gender is a patriarchal social construct used to oppress women."

Renaissance salutes NOW for their support of transgendered people.



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So, Have You Graduated, Yet?

by Jessica Brandon

My inspiration for articles about transgendered life often come from the strangest, most remote places. Case in point: during the July Board meeting of Renaissance National (which I attended in my capacity as Greater Philadelphia chapter leader), the board discussed, among many things, the decline in members in the organization.

A theory floated by Board member Beth Marshall was that some people who attended meetings regularly for the support function stop coming because they, in Beth's words, "graduated" and no longer need the support groups like Renaissance provides. I thought about this for quite some time, and was prompted to pen this article.

By "graduate," what I think Beth was getting at was that these people felt secure enough about their image, their self-confidence and their femininity to the point where coming to support group meetings was no longer necessary to them. That they possessed all the knowledge they needed to tackle the outside world.

Of course, when I speak about the outside world, I'm talking about the ability to pass in public, or at least go out and about without attracting any sort of embarrassing attention that comes from getting read. To the people who first come to support groups, that happens to be one of their

goals, if not their primary one.

Not all of us pass, whether because of heredity or lack of skill with cosmetics, no matter what we do, we're bound to be read. But, after awhile, with advice and encouragement from caring sisters who have "been there, done that," we gain the strength to come and go as we please, regardless of what the rest of the world thinks.

This, I guess is what Beth meant by "graduating"—that we outgrow the support that groups like ours provides, like a child who grows up and moves out on his own. I see this as a natural progression and evolution in our lives as crossdressers, a necessity—otherwise, we stagnate, not just as crossdressers, but as human beings.

I like to think that I've "graduated." Compared to the poor, pitiful creature I was when I came to my first Renaissance meeting in 1991, I'm almost a Rhoads Scholar today. By soaking in all the knowledge from the girls I've come in contact with, I was able to grow and develop as a crossdresser.

Today, I can pretty much go wherever I want whenever I want, though, ironically enough, I rarely have the time to do so. Despite being over six feet tall, even in low heels, I pass fairly easy as a woman, if anything, I sometimes get annoyed when I'm out and about and no one even so much as gives me a double take.

When I stop to think about it, in

terms of support, I really don't need Renaissance anymore. But I still come to meetings religiously for the camaraderie I enjoy with my sisters whom, over the years have become some of my closest friends. Because I only see most of them once a month at best, I enjoy being with them whenever I can.

Another reason I continue to be part of Renaissance, even though I've "graduated" is to give something back to this organization that gave so much to me when I came out of the closet. That's why I've been a Board member, a chapter leader, not to mention volunteering my time in an outreach capacity on the phone watch.

I suppose you could look at everything I do for the organization as "post graduate work," but it's important work, helping others like I had been helped over five years ago. I imagine all the other "graduates" among us continue to come to meetings for the social benefits which are just as important as helping newcomers escape the shackles of their closets.

A key part of a support group's mission is social interaction, bringing together people who share a common bond. Considering just how small our community is compared to the rest of society, that interaction is crucial. So, even if you're a "graduate," I implore you to continue supporting groups like Renaissance which are still needed if our community is to prosper.



Benefit FI Show for Pediatric AIDS

On Saturday, November 8, 1997 at the North Country Inn and Restaurant in New Milford, Connecticut, the connecticuTVView presents *Boys Will Be Girls*, a benefit for Pediatric AIDS, Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Denise Mason, founder and organizer of the 60 member club, cTVView, says several professional female impersonators, including Morgan Stevens and Diane Van Horn, will appear in a show featuring 20 acts.

The connecticuTVView, a Renaissance affiliate group, is an open social

and support group whose members want to contribute something in support of those who are afflicted with AIDS. "That is why we chose Pediatric AIDS—Connecticut Children's Medical Center as the beneficiary of our show," said Ms. Mason.

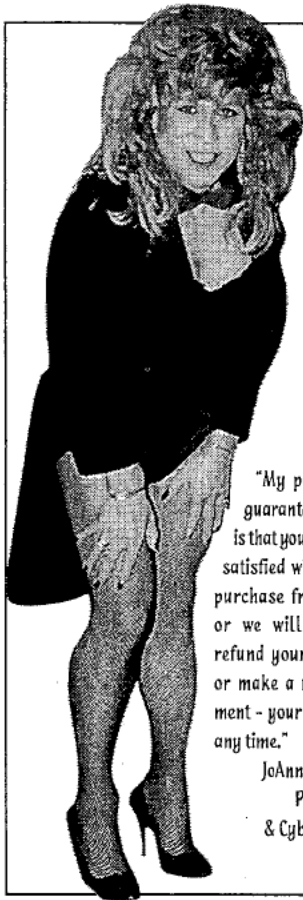
Tickets are \$35 for the buffet dinner and show, or \$15 for just the show. Cocktail hour starts at 7:00 PM, followed by dinner and *Boys Will Be Girls* at 9:30 PM. Tickets are available at the North Country Inn and by mail from connecticuTVView, P.O. Box 2281,

Milford CT 06460, or from Jim Copeland of (I-COPE), P.O. Box 153, Kent CT 06785.

To just make a donation to the benefit, make checks out to: Pediatric AIDS—Connecticut Children's Medical Center and mail them to Connecticut Children's Medical Center Foundation, C/O Joan Lincoln, 181 East Cedar St., Newington CT 06111

For additional info contact connecticuTVView P.O. Box 2281, Milford, CT 06460 or send email to [redacted]@aol.com>.





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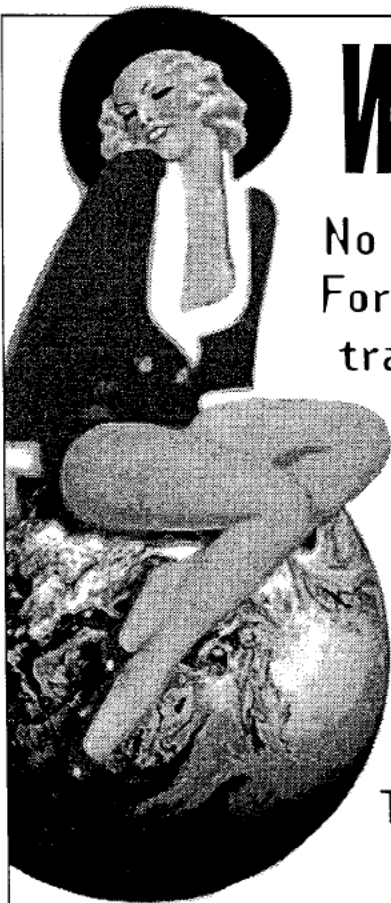
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The hunt for the great American bogeyman of this summer is over. Andrew Cunanan is dead by his own hand. But like all good bogeymen, his legend approached epic proportions and was soon to become the explanation for all manner of dastardly deeds. "Cunanan did it!" could have been our mantra for anything bad that happened.

The financial difficulties that befell our beloved Renaissance occurred right in the middle of his fugitive status. Where did the money go? "Cunanan got it!"

Who really proposed the controversial by-laws in the Chi Chapter of Tri-Ess? "Cunanan did it!"

The controversy fomented at the California Unity/IFGE convention? "Cunanan strikes again!"

At the height of the manhunt for Cunanan, after the Versace murder, he was "spotted" in every state of the union except Hawaii. Of course, it turned out he was mere miles away from the scene of the crime in Miami. Still, our suspicious minds wonder...could he maybe have snuck away to wreak havoc elsewhere before returning to the houseboat where he met his fate.

The space station Mir was having a hell of a time during that same period. Is it possible that Andrew could have gummed up their works? "Cunanan glitched it!"

Who really killed "Joe Camel": some sleazy tobacco executives or Madison Avenue hotshots? "Cunanan took out ol' Joe!"

Remember that video of Frank Cifford and the stewardess? Yep, "Cunanan had the adjoining room!"

Autumn Jackson sired by Bill

Cosby? I think not, folks. "Cunanan's her Daddy!"

But evidence of one of his fiendish acts was published right here in last month's *News & Views*. Did you see my photo from the 10th Anniversary party? Yes, I looked a little chubbier than usual. It isn't the fact that I'm getting older, eat more, and get less exercise, my friends. There can be only one plausible explanation for that double chin. "Cunanan made me fat!"

A Different Type of Crossdressing Survey

Dee Dee [redacted] wrote of an interesting first person experience in the Erie (Pa.) *Mirror Images* newsletter. She was doing a bit of mall shopping crossdressed when one of those pesty market research survey people cornered her. Dee Dee took the bait of the free gift offer and found herself spirited away to watch a short video and answer the surveyor's questions.

Her original surveyor was a man but he was called away, at which time a woman took over. When the man returned, the woman surveyor told her partner that she had gotten as far as question number 17 with "him." The man looked down at the question sheet, looked over at Dee Dee and said to his accomplice, "Her?"

Dee Dee gave the fellow a smile and conspiratorial wink and the survey continued to its conclusion. For her trouble, Dee Dee received the promised gift and an unexpected compliment from the woman. She said that Dee Dee's visit to the survey center was the best thing that happened to her all day.

Dee Dee concluded her essay with

this nugget of wisdom: "The moral of the story? Not passing can be even more fun."

Being stalked and then accosted by these mall survey people is always a pain in the fanny. Imagine how intimidating it would be to get snared while shopping in drag! Dee Dee (whose attractive, smiling face appeared in last month's *News & Views*) seems like a fun-loving sort and just the type of person who would appreciate the lesson that being "read" can be more fun than stealthing through life.

Beauty Hints: The Subtle And Unsubtle

The Gulf Gender Alliance's *Flip Side* newsletter from down in Biloxi, Mississippi carried a list of "Beauty Hints" compiled by member Lucette in the July 97 issue. The list of 35 hints was specifically aimed at the "over 35" crossdresser. And Lord knows... we need all the hints we can get.

Lucette's list included the subtle things each of us can do to improve our appearance as we fight the ravages of the aging process. But I thought that some of us could also use some "unsubtle" improvements to camouflage our shortcomings. Here are just a few of the items culled from Lucette's article:

Subtle: "A cosmetic sponge is essential for smooth makeup application to wrinkled skin." **Unsubtle:** A mason's hod and spackling knife may also come in handy.

Subtle: "If your face is thinning with age, apply blush to the apples of your cheeks to give the illusion of fullness."

Unsubtle: Place real apples inside your mouth to achieve a perfect "Hillary Clinton chipmunk cheek" look.

Subtle: "Be careful with concealer."

Unsubtle: Use so much concealer that no one will be able to find you.

Subtle: "Skin tone may change with age but don't use foundation to alter the color of your complexion."

Unsubtle: Use foundation to alter the color of your complexion and change your name to LaToya Jackson.

Subtle: "Use a few drops of moisturizer as a quick touch up for caked

makeup.”

Unsubtle: If makeup cakes, powder your face with confectioner's sugar, stick small candles around affected area, and tell everyone it's your birthday.

As always, the *Vis a Vis* Help Desk is here to help you.

Through A Glass Darkly

A couple of columns ago, I reviewed a letter written to the *Sweetheart Connection* newsletter, a publication sponsored by Tri-Ess for wives of crossdressers. The letter was very critical of the spousal “support” that is encouraged by mainstream crossdressing organizations. The correspondent felt that the burden of support responsibility was biased in favor of the crossdressers rather than the wives affected by their spouses' activities.

The Spring 97 issue of *Sweetheart Connection* carried a rebuttal letter from a crossdresser who took offense to the “bitter” tone of the original complaint. As one who read that original letter, I would agree that it was bitter. However, given the facts laid out by the wife in question, she had reason to be bitter. The crossdresser's rebuttal proved, ironically, to bolster that woman's contention that “support” is seen as a one way street by too many married crossdressers.

The wife had complained that after being supportive of her husband's crossdressing, he decided that he was really a transsexual. The feminization stakes were raised by the husband to a point that disrupted the normal course of family life, including embarrassment for their children. Her final impression of the crossdressing/transsexual community was that it is comprised of selfish individuals bent on pleasing themselves at the expense of anyone who stands in their path to feminine expression, however hurtful it may be to their loved ones. This does indeed seem “bitter”—but with just cause.

The rebuttal focused on the hurt and anger expressed by this wife and questioned if she was really as “supportive” as she claimed to be. The crossdresser tried to defend some of the crossdressing spouse's hurtful actions but ignored many of the more

telling points raised in the original letter. The net effect of these weak defenses is to illustrate how crossdressers can rationalize almost any of their (our) own actions and turn the argument back against anyone who dares to question their (our) selfish motives.

Distance Makes The Heart Grow Fonder

Melanie Yarborough wrote an insightful article titled “Tolerance from a Distance” for the *Girl Talk* newsletter of the Powder Puffs of Southern California. I happened to see it reprinted in the Spring 97 *Sweetheart Connection* newsletter. Melanie focuses on how some women acquaintances may seem supportive and helpful to us while some of the women closest to us in our lives (wives, girlfriends) may seem less accepting of crossdressing in the relationship.

Except for those fortunate crossdressers who have supportive spouses, almost every CD is hoping to find a woman with whom he can share his feminine journey. When they meet a woman in a social setting who is accepting of their crossdressing, it is natural that their hopes are raised.

Melanie writes, “Many women may at first be intrigued by crossdressers. They may see us as more sensitive to women's issues and appreciative of the difficult task of being a woman. These understanding women may become our makeup/wardrobe consultants, or accompany us for a ‘girls' night out’. However, if a woman finds that same crossdresser is someone close to them, it's threatening.”

The key to understanding this phenomenon is the different emotional distances between a social acquaintance and a wife or romantic friend. As Melanie states, “A female casual acquaintance doesn't have an emotional investment. They can afford to be supportive as it costs them nothing.” If a wife, girlfriend, or mother is confronted with crossdressing, there are understandable concerns raised about their place in the relationship. Crossdressing personas can be viewed as a threat to their relationship with the male they love.

Taking Melanie's theory a step further, it would probably be erroneous to assume that a female social acquaintance would want to become emotionally involved with a crossdresser. A deeper involvement may change her perspective towards crossdressing—perhaps not completely negative—but probably with a different set of parameters. It is true that many women enjoy the company of crossdressers as friends. That's a far cry, however, from desiring an emotional relationship.

In The Year 2000

You may have read about the massive troubles anticipated for the turn of the century when computers all over the world may crash because of the “00” in date programs. It seems simple, but apparently it will expend billions of dollars and years of programming to rectify the potential problems in everything from personal checkbooks to nuclear power plants.

Here at *Vis a Vis*, my staff of programmers are working furiously to convert my bank of computers for the millenium. Some of my braintrust are advising me that we may fall short on re-programming. My January 2000 *Vis a Vis* column may actually kick back to the column I wrote for January 1900!

I went back to the archives to see what I wrote in my *Vis a Vis* for 1/1/1900. Here's what you may be reading about if we can't get these blasted mainframes re-coded:

“A Comparative Survey of Military Crossdressing in the Spanish-American and Boer Wars, 1898-1900”

“William McKinley or William Jennings Bryan: How Crossdressers Should Vote in the Presidential Election of 1900”

“Muslin: the Miracle Fabric for the New Century!”

“A First Time Experience: Shopping Crossdressed in the Main Street Dry Goods Emporium”

And finally, a personal profile, “Virginia Prince, Hot New Babe on the Block”

All I can say is we're working on the problem but if we can't fix it in time, we'll just throw our hands up and “party like it's 1999!”





Gender Reflections

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

The Compulsive Crossdresser

The compulsive crossdresser has two burdens to bear. First, he carries the stigma of requiring an unusual erotic turn-on. Also, he has the experience of being driven toward, rather than choosing when to indulge, his erotic needs.

Not all crossdressers are compulsive. Rather, they have a narrow range of erotic triggers — usually focused on wearing one or several items of women's clothing. Many crossdressers can function sexually when denied this outlet, but they usually report diminished satisfaction and sometimes lessened interest in sex when such garments are not available to them.

The compulsive crossdresser, however, must have these items to function and he obsesses about their accessibility and frequency of use. Sometimes this drive is so insistent that it occupies time that should be more productively devoted to family relationships or work. He is usually very upset by this burgeoning need but feels helpless to resist it.

If he is partnered and lives with family members, the family often becomes aware of his distress, although they may not know its nature. The fear of discovery or censure adds yet another weight to the pressure on the compulsive crossdresser. He is in a terrible bind. While indulging in the compulsive activity relieves anxiety temporarily, the fear of exposure and the awareness of his lack of self-control ultimately raises his stress level, requiring more engagement in the compulsion. A cycle is set in motion in which behavior, which is voluntary for

most crossdressing individuals, becomes compulsive.

Even when discovery of crossdressing is not an issue, most of these men do fear their partner's awareness of their growing preoccupation with sex. In some instances, increased demands on the wife cause her to reject his sexual advances. In other situations, the man indulges increasingly in solitary sex, leaving his wife feeling neglected or giving rise to suspicions that there is another woman in his life. Another issue that arises is the neglect of family participation and/or work obligations. When compulsive crossdressing reaches the magnitude that I have outlined, treatment by a knowledgeable mental health clinician is indicated.

Having any compulsion is difficult. It takes up a lot of time and energy for a relatively small payback — temporary relief from anxiety. It is often accompanied by shame and secretiveness, doubly so when the compulsion has a sexual component. The psychological aspect of compulsive crossdressing is difficult for most men in a partnered relationship to conceal from wives and family members. Their escalating sexual needs, whether met within the marriage, outside the marriage or alone, create marital pressure and discord. Any secrecy compounds the difficulty as does the tendency to spend increasing time indulging the compulsion.

At this point some crossdressers seek psychological counseling. They may seek it alone or with a partner.

Complaints range from fear that the crossdresser is a "sex maniac" to accusations that he is falling out of love with his spouse. It is helpful if both partners at least accept the crossdressing. Then just the compulsivity has to be dealt with.

Understanding that compulsive behavior is a temporary, and ultimately futile, effort to relieve anxiety is essential to treating this condition. Next, one must identify the cause(s) of the anxiety. Ideally, removing the root cause is the most effective and efficient approach. For example, I might suggest improving parenting skills, career counseling, conflict resolution training, stress reduction activities, or environmental manipulation. When anxiety is internalized, the most useful approaches are medication, psychotherapy, marital counseling, and/or improving communication skills.

When either or both individuals do not accept crossdressing in the relationship, treatment is more complex. If the transvestite rejects his own crossdressing, this has to be addressed prior to dealing with his compulsion. In many cases the simple acceptance of his transvestism relieves his compulsion. When his partner rejects his crossdressing his anxiety is fueled by either the need to keep it secret, give it up, or assert his needs in the face of her disapproval. Unless the spouse is involved in treatment and open to examining her disapproval, the source of the anxiety remains and the compulsion is kept alive for the meager relief it provides.

Fortunately, the last unhappy scenario is a relatively infrequent outcome. The essential ingredients are clients open to finding creative solutions before symptoms become overwhelming and a counselor experienced in treating transgender issues, relationship problems and compulsive behaviors.

Dr. Anderson is a therapist in the San Francisco Bay Area. She can be reached at 415-776-0139.



An Open Letter To The Community

KyMBERLEIGH RICHARDS SAYS GOODBYE

I have had a month since the demise of Cross Connection to think about what I wanted to say as my final words to all of you. Given that this year saw the demise first of "Cross-Talk" and then the BBS, my original thoughts were to blast some connected angry thoughts. However, even as I prepare to bow out from the transgender community entirely, I feel a responsibility to try, one last time, to impart truth that you may not want to hear, but need to. (After all, that's what I used to do every month in the magazine.)

My honest opinion is that my use of the term "transgender community" is less than accurate, because what I have seen and experienced does not qualify as a "community." A community has a mutual support infrastructure, and lately an attitude of selfishness has had the effect of destroying the infrastructure I—and many others like myself—worked very hard to create for you.

This is not going to be a case of sour grapes, because the loss of the two resources I was operating are not the only loss you are facing as a result of your inability to provide financial support to those who have tried to be of service to you. IFGE is on the verge of defaulting on the lease for their headquarters, on the heels of being left with a substantial uncollectable balance with a magazine distributor who filed Chapter 11 early this year. Renaissance recently sent a letter to its members indicating that they no longer have the funds to publish their newsletter, and they are probably likely to have to give up their office space next. AEGIS has been given an ultimatum of sorts by Dallas Denny to become financially viable by the end of the year or risk losing the ability to continue publishing "Chrysalis" and provide resource information. ICTLEP is waiting for someone to deliver the eulogy after Phyllis Randolph Frye professed her exhaustion and no

one has been able to adequately fill her shoes. Tri-Ess operates on a virtual shoestring and I find myself wondering how much longer they can continue.

What I do not believe any of you realize is that the loss of these support mechanisms seriously jeopardizes your freedom to express transgender identity. We live in an era where lawmakers, dependent upon the Christian conservative organizations to fund their re-election campaigns, will attempt to legislate anything "immoral" out of existence. How long will it be before we, the transgendered, become their target? And if all the organizations and leaders who spoke up for you have been run out of existence because you didn't give them the support they needed to continue helping you, who is going to fight your battle for your freedom?

No one, that's who.

We may well find ourselves thrust 40 years into our past, where cross-dressing took place completely in secret, with clandestine organizations... where raids will result in drag queens being hauled away en masse... where sex reassignment surgery will only be legal in a handful of countries, and you may not be able to return to your country of origin afterwards... where there will be no weekend events where you can express yourself full time for a few days.

Sound farfetched? I suggest you think about it while you count the money you've saved for that new dress, or wig, or prosthesis, or whatever... money that you *could* have given to IFGE, Renaissance, AEGIS, ICTLEP... even for a subscription to "Cross-Talk" or Cross Connection.

I can tell you where I will be when those dark days come to pass. I will be somewhere, living my life, presenting an image to the world that is so conformingly "normal" that no one will realize the new restrictions should apply to me. Having spent the last ten

years trying to be of service to this so-called "community," I am now going to look out for my own interests and self-preservation. In other words, I am getting on with my life and leaving all of you behind like a bad dream.

I realize that many of you are going to want to reply in anger to this final missive of mine. Save your time and energy: By the time you see this I will have shut down the Internet server at Cross Connection permanently, so I'll never see your response. And that's the way I prefer to make my exit... unreachable and deliberately detached.

So, at least for me, the battle is over. For the rest of you, it is likely just beginning. Good luck to you all. You'll need it.

KyMBERLEIGH RICHARDS; Former Publisher, *Cross-Talk*; Former System Administrator, Cross Connection BBS; Former National Director, Tri-Ess.

Editor's Notes: Miss Richards makes a few incorrect assertions in her letter. We believe she was trying to make a point, but we also feel those inaccurate statements need to be addressed.

(1) IFGE is defaulting on its lease... *Incorrect. IFGE is moving to a new building and saving over half their previous year's rent.*

(2) Renaissance no longer has the funds to publish their newsletter... *Incorrect. You are still reading it aren't you? At this point, there are no plans to give up our office space.*

(3) ICTLEP has no successor for Phyllis Frye... *Incorrect. Ms. Frye is not stepping down as Executive Director. Instead, she has turned over the management of the annual Law Conference to the board of ICTLEP.*

While Ms. Richards' letter paints a bleak picture of the community, we at Renaissance do not believe that things are quite as bad as she suggests. Please respond to her message and support the groups and organizations working for you.



Hot-Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



"Everyone has the right to be an asshole. That doesn't make it ethically proper, though, and one should always be prepared for the social consequences of his actions." — John Perry Barlow, cofounder Electronic Freedom Foundation

I received some interesting feedback on last month's column. One respondent didn't like my take on **Sally Can't Dance** in *Con Air*, while many other agreed with me. Oh well, that's why ice cream comes in so many flavors. One of the more interesting comments had to do with **Virginia Prince** and her treatment by **Pat Califia** in *Sex Changes*. If you recall, I took a shot at Califia for referring to Prince as "he" throughout the book. Well, it would seem that Califia isn't the only one questioning whether Virginia warrants the pronoun "she." After the *Cross-Talk* Prince vs TS debacle, the online wires were abuzz with debate on which pronoun Prince deserves. The most cogent remark opined that the appellation "woman" had to be earned by assimilation and acceptance into the community of women. I couldn't agree more. I don't care what you have between your legs or your ears; if other women don't treat you as another woman, you ain't.

I never ceased to be amazed at how other parts of the world just seem to zip

right by the U.S. when it comes to enlightenment about sex and gender issues. For example, the regional government of **New South Wales**, Australia has posted online information on changing the sex designation on your birth certificate if you've had a sex change operation. It's at www.agd.nsw.gov.au/bdm/cname.html#34.

Now contrast that to this ignoramus. Florida Congressman **Cliff Stearns** has written a letter to Florida state officials asking them to set dress standards for government work places after a transsexual, **Sabrina (Dale) Robb**, began transitioning on the job. Some employees in Ms. Robb's office complained that her attire distracted and offended them. Stearns said, "It sends the wrong signals to our children and people in this county... I think the public would have a high level of discomfort with his work activities... It's antithetical to our morals in Ocala." Meanwhile, Robb's immediate supervisor, **Dotti Pohleven**, said Robb's change of dress has not affected her work and has resisted the interference from Stearns. Good for her! Stearns' office has been contacted by gender activists and "enlightened" about transition and the real life test. His office was also flooded with negative email from the tg online community. Ah, yes, democracy at work.

But there is some hope. **Evanston**, Illinois, became the first city in Illinois to extend human **rights protection** to transgendered residents and visitors. The City Council voted unanimously in favor of Ordinance 61-O-97, which adds transgendered individuals as a protected class to their Human Rights Ordinance. This ordinance prohibits discrimination in employment, public accommodation and housing. Addition of transgender people and passage of the ordinance was due to extensive lobbying by It's Time Illinois (ITI), in particular Miranda Stevens, vice-chair of ITI. It's Time Illi-

nois is an affiliate of It's Time America!, an loose knit collection of state-level activists. Many of these affiliates have had stunning successes at the state level attaining gender rights protections. It is a shame that ITA could never get its act together as a national organization.

Not too long ago, a production assistant for **ABC television** posted this message online: "ABC News is hoping to hear from parents of children who have been diagnosed with **Gender Identity Disorder (GID)**. We would like to discuss the issue of gender identity with the parents and the psychologist/psychiatrist/therapist treating the child. We are especially interested in speaking to the parents of younger children (not teenagers) who are currently undergoing treatment for GID." Well, the response was instantaneous and negative. Here are two examples: "Assuming that there is such a thing as 'Gender Identity Disorder,' and not just the adult rejection of their child's natural proclivities, and assuming this message is even remotely close to credible.... why on earth would any sensible parent expose their troubled child to the glare of microscopic examination on international television? I often wonder which is the bigger problem... transgender issues, or the stupidity of the people who exploit them like some marketable commodity." And: "Dear ABC: Please do NOT exploit these children. There is a stigma associated with being gender dysphoric. Presenting information about gender different children is one thing—exploiting children by exposing their issue, in a world that is less than friendly isn't going to help them resolve their issues, nor is it going to improve their life. Even as adults, these issues can be most difficult. You will... be marking them."

It's starting to get a little crowded in the halls of Congress. Representatives of the **National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF)** made the rounds of Capitol Hill recently meeting informally with

Hot•Buzz

a number of congressional offices and progressive organizations. The mission of the newly-formed NCSF is to combat violence and discrimination due to "sexual orientation, identity, or desire." Now, to me, that sounds an awful lot like what **GenderPAC** says they're doing nowadays. NCSF founder **Susan Wright** says, "People involved in alternative practice have been stigmatized for too long. The bottom line is, we are people who lose our jobs, our children, and sometimes our lives because of sexual or affectional preference. All we are seeking is equal rights." Sound familiar? Maybe with NCSF focusing on sexual and affectional preference issues, GPAC can get back to tg issues.

If you live in the middle of nowhere and are looking for some drag entertainment, look no father than the Internet. **Brothers**, a small show bar in Tallahassee, Florida is presenting its weekly drag show live on the net each Saturday night at 12:30 AM (half-past-midnight). The show, hosted by Toni Denise, may be viewed directly from your browser. No special "plug-ins" are needed. The URL is: <www.livebars.com> and follow the links to Channel 1, then select Brothers.

There is a script circulating in Hollywood tentatively titled **Guys In Brasieres**, but you'd be wrong if you thought it had anything to do with crossdressing. The script is a fictionalized account of the life of **Benjamin Masstab**, a brassiere designer for Peter Pan and Oleg Cassini and was penned by Masstab's daughter, Michelle. According to Ms. Masstab, the bra business has a lot of gangster types.

Donna Karan, who claims to be famous more for her hosiery than her clothes, is introducing a new line of pantyhose for the next millennium. They're called **Evolution** and they compress the entire leg from waist to toe. Evolution comes in three opacities with the thickest comparable to jersey leggings. Evolution will retail for \$22, about \$5 more than her Nudes line. Coincident with the release

of Evolution is a new book **The Leg** for which she has written the forward. *The Leg* is dedicated to the history of the human leg as seen by photographers, painters and sculptors. The Leg will be published by General Publishing Group and cost about 2 pairs of Evolutions.

Ms. Karan's experimentation with hosiery doesn't stop at the waist. Her **Sheer Satin Waist Cincher** begins just under the bust, where a woman's bra normally ends. It is said to be the perfect liner for knit dresses, straight skirts and other waist defining styles. The Karan slimmer is about \$15 in most department stores. Of course, **Nancy Ganz** of Bodyslimmers is not to be outdone in the body sculpting department. Her Bodyslimmers **Tank Bodysuit** gives an hourglass shape and a tummy tuck for a mere \$40.

Speaking of hosiery, believe it or not, the August **Mademoiselle** showed seamed stockings in colors but declared that black is still the "classic" color. Mini-skirts, stilettoes and seamed stockings? It would seam (Ha, a pun!) that fashion has been taken over by transvestites. Don't believe me? According to **marie claire**, this Fall's must-have's are: a mini skirt; a power suit; something leather; a turtleneck, a cardigan, or a v-neck; a clutch bag; a pointy-toed spike heeled boot; and something beaded for evening. Now, if that doesn't describe my closet, then I don't know what does! My fave is the "something" leather.

Just what is "masculine" about women's wear? What the fashion mavens mean are boxy and wide, or long and slim. **Frock** style coats will be all the rage this Fall. Fabrics will be heavy, i.e., tweed, flannel and bouclé. Patterns will include pinstripes and checks. Shoes with this look can range from a very masculine loafer to a sky-high stiletto.

On the decidedly more feminine side, wild animal prints are still hot. Try a zebra stripe dress from **Nicole Miller** (\$400) to a leopard-spot trench coat from **Marc Jacobs** (\$600). Another wildly feminine color for Fall is **Fire Engine Red** and it's appropriate on everything from a Richard Tyler frock coat to

a Donna Karan leather dress, to a **Versace** blazer. (You know, I'm wondering if old Versace clothing will get to be like Ferraris, more expensive). Meanwhile, the citrus colors—orange, lime and lemon yellow—are still hot for Fall.

Here are a few quick and easy makeup tips... **For Eyes:** Pre-powder eyelids to create a "foundation" for shadow. Sweep powder under eyes to catch any eyeshadow or mascara remnants that may land there during application. Apply powder on top of shadow to soften blend and tone down a color... **For Face:** For an **extra matte finish** dip a disposable puff into powder, tap of excess and roll generous amount onto skin. Massage into skin with fingertips. Let set. Brush off excess... For a **semi-matte finish**, apply powder with a makeup sponge in an outward and downward direction... **Never** reapply new makeup over old. Instead smooth out and revive old makeup with a damp makeup sponge and reapply powder... To **soften facial lines**, apply concealer directly on lines with a brush. Pat blend. Let dry. Gently pat makeup over entire face with fingertips. After all makeup is applied, dot additional concealer over any visible imperfections. Set with powder.

The latest craze in cosmetic surgery is the **body lift** and if ever I was interested in cosmetic surgery, this would be it. Basically, some fat is liposuctioned from the abdominal area. Then a section of skin is removed (as in a tummy tuck) and the muscles beneath are tightened. The remaining skin is pulled taut and stitched. The result can be an hourglass figure. The procedure takes **2 to 10 hours** depending on the extent of the work and costs range from **\$5,000 to \$25,000**. The procedure has tripled in popularity since 1992. Come to think of it, for \$25,000 I'd rather have an 1965 Corvette convertible. It would be lots more fun and probably last longer.

So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? It is said, there's an ass for every seat. Comments? Write me care of this publication or send me email at [\[redacted\]@cdspub.com](mailto:[redacted]@cdspub.com).
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True Spirit Conference '98

The organizing committee of *True Spirit Conference '98* invites all gender variant people on the f2m spectrum, and our significant others, friends, families, and allies to come celebrate the spirit within. The three-day event will include:

- Workshops with panelists renowned in the gender community.
- A Latin/club dance with DJ Calico Rechy.
- A film festival.
- A swim party.
- Informal caucuses.
- Transgendered readings by authors and playwrights. (Last year the conference featured Leslie Feinberg,

Minnie Bruce Pratt, Laura Antoniou, Cecilia Tan, Gary Bowen, and many others.)

Conference registration is \$45 until December 31, 1997 and \$65 after. The price includes lunch on Sunday.

Call 301-776-5300 for hotel reservations at the Best Western-Maryland Inn, Laurel, Maryland. Rates (until January 31, 1998): Single/Double: \$75; Triple/Quad: \$85. The price includes a complimentary lunch on Saturday to all registered guests of the hotel. To get conference rates and complimentary Saturday lunch, you must mention True Spirit Conference when registering. After 31 January, standard hotel

rates apply and lunch is not included.

To register send a check or money order to: The American Boyz/True Spirit Conference 98, P. O. Box 1118, Elkton, MD, 21922-1118.

The American Boyz is an organization for gender variant people of any orientation, including but not limited to tomboys, butches, f2ms, transmen, drag kings, crossdressers, intersexuals, and those who support the aforementioned, including their significant others, friends, families, and allies (SOFFA). Contact American Boyz if you have any questions. Write to them at the address above or email to: transman@netgsi.com.



New E-Journal To Debut on Web

The International Journal of Transgenderism is a scientific journal on all aspects of transgenderism that will debut in September on the WorldWide Web. The frequency of publication will be quarterly. Additionally, a short version of each issue will be available in print, containing the abstracts and the URLs of the articles.

The Table of Contents of the first issue includes:

Blending Genders: Contributions to the Emerging Field of Transgender Studies by R. Ekins of the Transgender Archive in Northern Ireland

Gender Identification and Sexual Orientation Among Genetic Females with Gender-blended Self-perception in Childhood and Adolescence by A.E. Eyler, M.D.

Self and Gender: Narcissistic Pathology and Personality Factors in Gender Dysphoric Patients. Results of a Prospective Study by U. Hartmann, H. Becker and C. Rueffer-Hesse

The Medicalization of Gender Migration by S. Hirschauer

Legal Aspects of Transsexualism in Brazilian Law by C.L. Marques and E. Ramos da Silva

The first issue will also introduce the archive section with: *A Sex Difference in the Human Brain and its Rela-*

tion to Transsexuality by J.N. Zhou et al., originally published in *Nature*. The archive section will serve as a source of milestone articles, published elsewhere. The first issue will also contain the abstracts of the papers, to be presented during the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in September.

Access to the *International Journal of Transgenderism* will be free of charge for the current issues. Starting in early 1998 they will offer additional services for a small subscription fee, including: a short version of the IJT, to be mailed to subscribers in printed or electronic form in advance of the new online issue; access to the complete archive section with milestone articles and past issues of the IJT; electronic versions of books on transgenderism, starting with *Follow-up Studies on Sex Change* a commented review of the literature from 1961 - 1991 By F. Pfafflin and A. Junge; and full text search of all our contents.

For more information please email Claudia Wrede at

[\[redacted\]@compuserve.com](mailto:[redacted]@compuserve.com).



Washington State To Vote On Employment Discrimination

The Washington State Secretary of State announced recently that gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people, and family and friends had collected more than the 188,000 signatures needed to qualify a non-discrimination in employment initiative for the November ballot.

If passed, the initiative would make discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation or identity illegal in Washington. Hands Off Washington (HOW), the organization which planned the initiative and coordinated the signature gathering effort, has hired a campaign manager, begun to raise funds for the campaign, and developed a "300% project." According to Jan Bianchi, executive director of HOW, "We must get 100% of our community registered to vote, 100% of them to the polls, and 100% of them to vote 'Yes on I-677.'"

For more information, contact Susan Thomas (Hands Off Washington) at (206) [redacted].



Making a CONNEXION in New Jersey

By Carol and Babs

As lifelong New Jerseyites, we have found it disconcerting that if Babs wanted to go out for a fine meal in a "safe" friendly environment, certainly with a group, we would have to cross the state line, either into New York or Pennsylvania. Recently, thanks to email from Danielle, a lovely local "T" sister, we've found our garden spot in the Garden State!

Just a hop and a skip away from exit 44 off Interstate 287, we pulled into the parking lot of **Connexions**, what used to be the Boonton township railway station, and now Jersey's newest alternative lifestyle club! Walking upstairs, we passed a busy bar with pool table, and came to a high ceilinged, semi-open space appropriately named *Amante's Cafe* (Lover's Cafe).

Tastefully decorated with wood and mirrors (yes, we gals love those mirrors, don't we?), *Amante's Cafe* features a sophisticated Italian-Continental menu.

For starters, we savored the scallops wrapped in bacon over spinach and finished with a light Cognac butter sauce. Imagine, girls fighting over the spinach! Carol swooned over her Shrimp Provencale, jumbo shrimp, seasoned with fresh herbs and tomatoes in a balanced light garlic lemon sauce, just wonderful. Babs had her tri-color salad in olive oil and lemon, sans garlic. Other appetizers that interested us included grilled Portobello mushrooms in a balsamic glaze with cheese (which we will sample next trip), Pasta Fagioli and a homemade mushroom soup.

One of the signs of a very good restaurant is their willingness and ability to prepare dishes not on their menu, or to accommodate their patrons' (matrons' in our case?) special diet needs or tastes. Our compliments go to Chef Jackie Tinney for her accommodation and expert preparation. Carol's Veal Parmesan was a large "queen" size

portion, while our daughter's Chicken Parmesan was smallish, but accompanied by enough pasta to be a course in itself. Babs had the daily fish special, Filet of Flounder, served in a light, yet rich, tasting sauce.

The wine list featured several modestly priced selections. We tried a carafe of the house Pinot Grigio. It was light, yet balanced, with a hint of lemon, and went well with the fish, shrimp and chicken. An excellent value. There are a large selection of pastas, penne, fettuccine, rigatoni, capellini, and more, each available in a wide variety of sauces.

Because we were quite full, and the fact that Summertime is bathing time, we passed on the desserts, but were really tempted!!

We met one of the owner-managers, John, who welcomed us and made it clear that all trans-people were welcome any time! We spoke to a few of the local "sisters" who have already

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Ms. Lynda



Letters to the Editor

Dear Angela,

After reading Linda Buten's reply to the *Born Free* editorial I'd like to set the record straight on the events that led up to the infamous Saturday Night Awards Banquet confusion and other happenings during the California Unity convention. I feel that I'm the most qualified to do so since I was the one that was most involved in interfacing with my IFGE counterpart concerning convention matters.

A. BOARD MEMBERS

IFGE Board Member Recognition — I certainly don't remember agreeing that IFGE board members wouldn't be allowed to wear any kind of identification ribbon or medallion, but I might well have somewhere along the line. I just don't remember it specifically. While the IFGE board members didn't reach out to the local community leaders I can truthfully say that we didn't go out of our way to introduce ourselves either. In retrospect I think it would have been a prudent move for both the IFGE board members and the local community leaders to have worn some kind of unique identification in order for each party to be at least aware of who was who. One thing that didn't happen, but should have, was a private cocktail party where IFGE and local leadership could get together and at least make some attempt to get to know one another.

B. RECOGNITION

1. I acknowledge that the partners agreed that there would be no special awards for those volunteers who worked on the convention, however, I had planned to take a few minutes at the beginning of the Saturday night banquet to introduce the local people that had worked so very hard on the convention and have them at least receive a round of applause for a job well done. I was in-

formed at the very last moment that there weren't any more time slots available due to presentation schedule changes and additions made by IFGE.

2. IFGE and California Dreamin' had an agreement that the Saturday evening banquet would be dedicated to giving both the IFGE Virginia Prince and Trinity Awards plus the California Dreamin' Alicia Lichy Memorial Award for outstanding community service. After reviewing the proposed time schedule for Saturday evening I determined that the number of awards to be given, and times allotted for each recipients thank you speech, would place us not getting out of the banquet until after 2 am in the morning. I therefore volunteered to move the California Dreamin' portion of the awards ceremony to the Friday evening fund raiser—which we did. After California Dreamin' had acquiesced IFGE then proceeded not only to fill our former time slot but then loaded up the Saturday schedule to include presentations of the Winslow Street awards, Transgender Tapestry writing awards, FtM awards, and the Partners in Diversity awards, etc., etc., in addition to their previously mentioned big awards. So much for gratitude.

3. The Queen Mary Hotel added another twist to the scenario. The convention was scheduled to have the Saturday Night Banquet in the Grand Salon which is a large and open banquet room with a stage. Saturday afternoon the hotel staff informs us that our banquet had been changed to the Britannia Salon because they needed the Grand Salon for the larger Titanic Society convention. The Britannia Salon, though large enough to accommodate the size of our crowd, was less than adequate because of the number of pillars throughout the room which prohibited viewing of the central stage area. To rub more salt in to the already festering wound concerning the introduction of the local volunteers, all—and I mean all—of the choice table seating was reserved by IFGE for their board members, their award winners, and their major monetary contributors, with the locals being assigned to the cheap seats outside the range of sight and sound. So although we were sup-

posed to be co-partners in the convention we found ourselves on the outside looking in.

4. While it's true that IFGE had wanted to present me with a miniature replica of a Trinity Award I was certainly unaware of it beforehand, so I and several members of the local community had vacated the banquet room in favor of the Observation Bar frustrated by our inability to see or hear anything that was going on at the podium.

C. COMMUNITY AWARDS

The Virginia Prince/Trinity Awards; the reply stated that IFGE board members have received about 30% of the awards. I believe the correct figure is 99% for the VP award and over 50% for the Trinity's. A lot of the IFGE board members that have served between 1989–1997 have won both awards. Overall, the majority of Trinity awards are given to either IFGE board members or people closely associated with the board. I don't have any axe to grind or misgivings about the giving of these awards, nor do I think those that have received past awards weren't deserving, I just wish they'd call them what they truly are... The IFGE Virginia Prince and Trinity Awards. They're not the community awards; the community doesn't have a damn thing to do with really determining who gets one of those trophies. I wish IFGE would adopt the same policy that California Dreamin' has concerning its awards in order to get away from the gross appearances of favoritism, i.e., making standing board members ineligible to receive one of the major awards.

I hope this clarifies a few misstatements and brings this whole sordid affair to closure. God knows we've had enough verbal exchange since April concerning the convention and we all need to get down to the business of figuring out how we're all going to survive as a community both financially and politically.

Joan Goodnight

Secretary/Treasurer, Cal Dreamin'

Dear Sisters,

To be a crossdresser with class we must present ourselves the best possible way. The need to crossdress is not

continued on page 19

Carol & Babs...

made Friday nights in the bar and dance club a sort of regular meeting and mingling place.

At 10:00 PM the music got a little louder for the dance/show room next to the restaurant. As we walked in for the 10:30 Friday night drag show, we were pleasantly surprised to see our favorite Ann Margret impersonator, dear friend, and newest "Lady" of the Imperial Court, Morgan Stevens. (She's also the inspiration for Bab's boobs) She just wowed those boys and girls!

For fine dining, or just having a relaxing drink at the bar, to shoot pool, dance, or meet an old friend, then Connexions is the place to go!

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Making Sense of It All

Puzzlement and Peace

The last seven years have represented for me a long period of transition from living as a man to living as a woman. During the first two years, while still living as a man, I attended weekly gender counseling sessions. At the end of those two years I began living full time as a woman. But it was only a little over a year ago that I began electrolysis with a certified electrologist and then a hormone program under the guidance of an endocrinologist experienced in the treatment of transsexuals. During this last year my appearance has noticeably improved, and I have really begun to enjoy my gender change.

A major benefit of that change has been a general feeling of inner peace. I don't seem to be fighting myself anymore. I don't deprecate myself or apologize, one way or another, for my existence. Instead, I feel I have a right to exist, that I have a voice worth hearing. I have opened several closet doors in my life, the gender door being the biggest one of all. I have also emerged from a writing closet as well as from a music closet, so that I now write to be read and play my trumpet to be heard. I relate better to people and generally feel more involved in life. I am not saying, nor do I mean to imply, that the world has simply opened its arms to me. There are many family, social, and vocational issues for me to face, but my self-perception has allowed me to function better, even in the face of a myriad number of difficulties.

And yet, even with the benefits of my gender change and with the inner assurance that I am doing the right thing for my life as a whole, I am still puzzled. My body has changed but my puzzlement remains. I keep wondering why all this had to be. What kind of a trick has God played on me that I have this inner need to be different from what I was supposedly intended to be? My inner life, my feelings, have been

one thing, but the shape of my body has never matched those feelings. My inner and outer lives have always been at odds with one another. I tried to change my feelings, but nothing and no one could help.

At last I have undertaken to change the external aspect of my being to fit my inner self. It is that outer change which has brought with it a high degree of inner peace mixed, however, with a lingering puzzlement about it all. I doubt if my puzzlement will ever disappear. It represents a perpetual mystery, unless medical science can someday provide an explanation for gender confusion and maybe even a treatment for it. Until such time, I live with both inner peace and a certain measure of inner disquietude as I strive to resolve my gender issue the best way I can.

I am reminded of a poem I once wrote, called "I Stand In Awe," which reflects my growing realization that some of life's realities, such as my gender change, must be seen as one of life's ongoing mysteries.

I stand in awe of ultimates
that humble victory
and despair,
no matter when,
no matter where.
There seems no reason for it all,
just the mystery of each day
demanding depth along the way.
Time and space,
the great infinities,
perhaps the great divinities,
outlast all growth
and all decay.
My time,
my space
is all I really know,
and when my knowing ends,
the greater truths
are all that really show.

In order to live with both puzzlement and inner peace simultaneously,

and especially without the puzzlement eroding the peace, I have had to learn, or relearn, the meaning of faith. It was with a certain measure of faith, mixed, I must admit, with at least an equal measure of inner desperation, that I undertook my gender change in the first place. But it is my faith which is now helping me to cope with life's ongoing outer challenges and especially with the inner challenge of living with puzzlement and peace at the same time. I'm not sure if I can describe that faith, that something inside of me which tells me that this or that step is the right one to take. Words and phrases that come to mind to describe, or at least point to, my sense of faith are: trust, letting go, being, self as sacred, dignity, entitlement, self-belief, awareness, courage, purpose, resolve, and commitment. What is becoming clearer to me is that my recognition and acceptance of the ongoing puzzlement which has accompanied my gender change is in itself an act of faith, for as my poem points out, there are certain puzzling realities, certain mysteries, before which one can only stand in awe.

Money, and the whole matter of simply surviving in the physical world, always stares me in the face, regardless of whether I am transgendered or not. Sometimes I become so frightened, especially as I get older, that my faith is truly challenged. I think not only of the need for money to pay for necessities, let alone luxuries, but also of the general disappointment and sadness which accompany the money issue, especially when I think about my spouse and children. If money, or the lack of it, frightens me, the impact of my gender change on those closest to me, especially in terms of money, saddens me just as much, if not more. It is that fear and sadness mixed with puzzlement which I carry around with me, even as I experience greater inner peace.

But that inner peace outweighs ev-

continued next page

Letters...

the same for all of us but we must do it with style.

The woman image we present in this chapter (Greater Philadelphia) should be the best, for we are also the largest in the area. To be in public view both our appearance and behavior must be top notch. Only [in] this way can we get a good reputation for this chapter.

Let's not be loud and joke around like men in drag in public. There is a way to do this in a tasteful womanlike behavior. We have taken the role of a woman and need to get respect from all women for they are the majority.

We need to have tasteful outfits that fit the occasion. We need to select the proper wig and hair style to look good. We need to select the proper makeup shades to properly project a woman of distinction. We don't need the public to see us looking like drag queens or hookers and something from a Halloween show. Professional help is available to create the perfect you. The help could or can make a dramatic change even for those of us who may feel they have created that woman they feel comfortable with.

There is a lot to learn. The clothes, hair, wig selections and makeup must fit each of us a certain way to be right. Whether we dress for a couple of hours a day or more, we must do our best when presenting this chapter. We come in all sizes, shapes, weights, voices, etc. If we feel beautiful and do it right we can be beautiful.

This lifestyle may be hard for some of our better halves, our wives or girl-

friends, but to have a special person like this in our life, we must show them proud when we dress.

We only live once girls, we are not ashamed, we are here to stay and we are from the same Human race. Let's do it and live it with class and style. We are the best. We are the Renaissance girls.

Your friend,

Gina

Gina,

Yes, we are all Renaissance girls and we should do our best to look and act in a feminine manner. We must also remember that Renaissance is an *open* support group. That means we offer peer support and information to anyone who has an interest. Not everyone is going to meet everyone else's standards for makeup, hairstyle or wardrobe. We will have people come through the doors at any chapter who may not have the skills and physique to become a totally acceptable woman. No matter how they look or act they must be treated with respect and a womanly friendliness. If we don't look at them as people who dress funny or act in a manner you don't like, then perhaps they may become our friends. While you can't tell a stranger that it might be better if she changed her hairstyle or ditched the electric blue eye shadow, you can introduce the idea to a good friend.

You are correct that there are people available to help us be all we can be, but they cost money and not everyone can afford their services. With the help of good girlfriends giving solid advice maybe those girls will be able to improve their images.



Auction Item List Growing

As mentioned in the last issue, the Greater Philadelphia Chapter has volunteered to hold an auction to benefit Renaissance National. Members were asked to donate items of some value for our auctioneer, Beth Marshall, to sell. The proceeds will go toward diminishing the budget deficit of the National Organization.

The Benefit Auction will take place at the November GPC meeting in the large meeting room, which will be setup to display the donated treasures. Already donated items have begun to arrive at the National office. Among the items to be auctioned are: a Grid laptop computer with carrying case; a Uniden cellular phone; a limited edition Renaissance mug; a 1998 Renaissance Christmas Party album filled with photos; a 1948 Pennsy Railroad calendar top; a Macintosh IIsi computer (less monitor); a radio controlled model Corvette; a theater card from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*; two Axford's corsets; and the original artwork by LeVaughn for the cover of *Speaking As A Woman* 2nd Edition.

We are still in need of items to auction. If you have anything of value that you would care to donate contact Angela Gardner at the National Office. No clothing will be accepted unless is an upscale beaded gown or a fur. Jewelry is limited to high quality costume and real diamond, pearls, etcetera.



Making Sense...

everything else to such an extent that I am constantly renewed in my faith and my inner mission. The more I honor myself, the more I live in terms of my true self, the more I can honor, love, and accept others and can more effectively deal with life's challenges. Facing those challenges takes a lot of strength and a lot of courage day after

day. If I as an individual cannot find within myself that daily strength and courage, then I will be in big trouble with both myself and those around me.

And so, after seven years of effort and many prior years of inner misery, I now feel more of an inner strength and clarity as opposed to an inner weakness and confusion. I feel more together, more integrated, and better equipped to live from day to day. Regardless of my transgender identity (that is, re-

gardless of whether I am transvestite or transsexual), the fact remains that I have to deal with my particular gender feelings in a way that allows me to live meaningfully and productively. Any ongoing puzzlement about it all has been offset by my increased inner peace, an inner peace that helps me, as I have said, to live more effectively with myself and with others.

Want to comment? Send email to Dr. Etscovitz at [redacted]@voicenet.com>

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Shopping With Jessica

by Jessica Brandon



Greetings, girlfriends! Oh, my stars and garter belts! Is it Fall already? Where on earth did Summer go? One minute I'm in hot pursuit of an air conditioner to keep from melting during the scorching hot days of July and August, and the next I'm dodging yellow buses ferrying grim faced kids back to the dungeon they know as school. At the speed time's flying, I'd better get my coats outta mothballs, and off to the dry cleaners before I blink again and it's Winter!

This month I have a rather interesting story to tell you, which began out of sheer curiosity. Back in June, in my male persona, I was in a downtown Philly **Payless Shoe Source** hunting for men's dress shoes to wear to a neighbor's wedding. After having found what I sought, I then went to check out what they had in the women's department. I knew Payless had women's shoes in size 13 and wanted to see what kind of styles they had. Nothing to write home about.

The next day at work (At the time, I was employed at Neiman Markup at the King of Prussia Mall), I strolled into the Payless during my lunch break and noticed that the women's sizes only went up to 12. This piqued my curiosity, having remembered that a similar store in the city went up to 13. Wondering whether or not this was an aberration, I decided that I would devote some time during an upcoming weekend to research whether or not every Payless went up to size 13.

When the weekend arrived, armed with a full tank of gas and a list of some sixteen urban and suburban Payless lo-

cations from my Yellow Pages, I went out to conduct my research. I hit all the stores in the city first, and, with the exception of two locations that had been shut down, each and every one carried women's sizes up to 13. After a break for lunch, I visited all the locations outside the city limits along with two in southern New Jersey malls... and all of them only went up to size 12!

At the risk of sounding naive, this greatly perplexed me. How could a national chain store have such a difference in sizes between the city and the suburbs? Even though I rarely if ever buy anything from Payless because the majority of their women's shoes consist of man made materials instead of leather, I just couldn't figure out why inner city stores had higher sizes than suburban stores. This may be a nitpicking question, especially to those of you who'd kill for size 13, but I had to have an answer.

When I told this story to Angela Gardner and Helen [redacted] during the July Greater Philly meeting, Angela voiced the opinion that inner city stores have size 13 to cater to African American women who have larger feet than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts who live mainly in the suburbs. Definite food for thought, and a theory that never would've occurred to me. It makes perfect sense since the majority population in most of Philadelphia just happens to be Black.

Also, I've noticed that Payless seems to have cornered this particular market. Many other stores I've visited within the city limits (And this includes department stores as well) only go up

to 12, some, just to 11. Now I realize that women who wear 12 and higher are more the exception than the rule, and to carry such sizes for so small a consumer base would be a waste of both display space and money. Still, they should have these sizes available in case someone should need them.

Someone like me.

This subject also got me to thinking about classifications of shoe sizes. For instance, to someone who wears a size five, they may consider size 10 to be humongous, while to *moi*, a 10 would be looked upon as small. It all depends on your point of view. So, I've come up with my own classification system for shoes. Please feel free to agree or disagree with the following: SMALL: 4 to 6; MEDIUM: 7 to 9; LARGE: 10 and 11; JUMBO: 12 and up.

Now I know that the term "jumbo" might be looked upon by some, if not most of you, as insulting, but let's face it, girls, women's shoes **that** large stand out like nobody's business! While I have no concrete facts to back up my opinions, I happen to believe that the average shoe size for most genetic women is in my "medium" range, I'm talking 70 percent, followed by 15 percent for "small" and 10 percent for "large." That leaves a mere five percent for tall girls and, of course, **us**!

I don't mind telling you, for someone like myself who lives for shoes and can't get enough of them, it hurts like hell to wander through stores, gazing upon rows and rows of gorgeous footwear knowing I'll never find a 13 wide. I'm sure those of you reading this have experienced the same sort of pain and frustration when shopping for shoes, thanks to the capricious double whammy of fate and heredity. When you find stores offering shoes that large, it's an absolute blessing.

Again, Payless isn't my idea of Mecca when it comes to shoes. Of course, that's just my opinion, such as it is. I've heard from folks who swear by Payless, mainly because of the low prices, and I won't discourage them, or you from shopping there. If that's your choice, then more power to you, but

continued on page 23

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Shopping...

I'd like to think that there are better alternatives for "jumbo" sizes.

To this end, I'm sending out a plea from coast to coast and beyond. If you know of stores or mail order outlets that sell size 12 and higher, please pass the info to me at Renaissance. There are sisters out there who, even as I type, are desperately seeking jumbo size shoes and are unable to find them. Any help you can provide will be greatly appreciated. Especially by me, as I can always use new sources!

Well, girls, that's it for now. I have to go out and buy some Air Jordans to help me dodge those yellow school buses which are practically everywhere now. Himm. I wonder if they come in petal pink? As always, my electronic mailbox is open for your comments at voicenet.com.

Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping, sisters!



Southern Comfort in Oct.

You're Invited! Southern Comfort Conference cherishes its reputation for being a well-organized, inclusive and economical conference serving the transgender community. Join them for their Seventh Annual weekend of seminars and activities. Most of their programs apply to everyone in the community, though they don't neglect to address the specific needs of identifiable groups. They work hard to offer a valuable experience for everyone who attends—whether married or single; younger or older; FtM or MtF. It doesn't matter who you are—transsexual, transgenderist, crossdresser, spouse, straight, bi, gay, post-op, pre-op or non-op—if transgender is an issue in your life, or the life of a loved one, you are welcome at Southern Comfort Conference.

Seminars and activities for 1997

The organizers have put together a seminar schedule that includes many topics of interest to everyone. Also, they offer programs of particular concern to those who identify as crossdressers, transgenderists or transsexuals and their significant others—whether MtF or FtM. From basic pre-

sentations for newly out crossdressers concerned with beauty and appearance, to nitty gritty legal, medical and political issues, to informative seminars on family relationships, sexuality and spirituality, the schedule of programs reflects a deep commitment to serve the diverse needs of the transgender community and to probe the cutting edge of thought on gender issues.

Every attendee at Southern Comfort is welcome and encouraged to attend any and all programs they may find of interest.

Partial List of Seminar Presenters (subject to change)

Richard Adler, Ph.D., Maxwell Anderson, Max Beck, Anne Bolin, Ph.D., Holly Boswell, Jim Bridges, Linda Buten, Sandra Cole, Ph.D., Brianne Corbett, Jason Cromwell, Ph.D., Dallas Denny, M.A., William Drago, Ph.D., Virginia Erhardt, Ph.D., Daniel Greenwald, M.D., Jan Heckler, M.A., Daniel Helminiak, Ph.D., Sheila Kirk, M.D., Maryann Kirkland, Alison Laing, Delia Van Maris, M.D., Jessie McGowen, Neila Miller, S.W., Terry Murphy, Douglas Ousterhout, M.D., Zantui Rose, Eugene Schrang, M.D., Mirha-Soleil Ross, Martine Rothblatt, Marilyn Volker, Ph.D., Riki Anne Wilchins, Vikki Wilcox, Callan Williams.

Transgender Town Hall Meeting

This year, Southern Comfort Conference again pushes the boundaries, presenting a Transgender Town Hall meeting, which the organizers feel certain will be provocative, exciting and enlightening for all conference attendees. This moderated event will be held Saturday afternoon in the Grand Ballroom, and no other seminars or activities will be scheduled at that time in order to encourage everyone to attend and participate.

The theme of this gathering will be: "Transgender Mystery: Who Are We? Where Are We Going? How Do We

Resources

Background Papers

Background Papers are \$1.25 each:

1. Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing
2. Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing
3. PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others
4. The Matter of Children
5. Annotated Bibliography
6. Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View
7. Understanding Transsexualism

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

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continued on page 24

Sou Comfort...

Get There? And Who Can We Expect Will Help Us Along The Way?" A diverse panel of experts will share their respective views on these broad questions and then entertain questions and comments from the audience.

Issues to be addressed include: Who exactly do we mean when we say "transgendered," and how much do we all have in common? How do we best work toward preventing discrimination in employment, housing, parental custody, and access to medical care? Who are our allies in this effort, and how to we best work with them? How closely do we identify with the gay, lesbian and bisexual community and how does the leadership of that established civil rights movement respond to us? Who are the intersexed and how do they fit in this picture?

The discussion will be kept on this agenda by a moderator who will recognize audience participants and probe the panel for multiple perspectives. A lively and informative discussion will help everyone concerned with these issues to better understand all responsible points of view on these provocative questions.

Activities

There's lots to do outside the seminar room as well. Many attendees spend a lot of time casually visiting with old friends and meeting new acquaintances in the safe confines of the hotel/conference center. There's also

plenty of time to shop the large Vendor's Marketplace for everything from makeovers, jewelry, clothing and shoes to wig comb-outs, manicures and prosthetics.

Sightseeing/Shopping

SCC organizes daily outings to sightseeing venues and some renowned shopping malls. In the past they've toured CNN Center, the World of Coca-Cola, the High Museum of Art and other local attractions. Tickets for these optional activities are priced to cover expenses and they will be available at the registration desk at the conference.

Optional dinners

Wednesday night is an old SCC favorite, a night of dinner theater at Agatha's *A Taste of Mystery*. This popular downtown destination presents a campy comic mystery in four acts, along with an all-inclusive five-course dinner (wine and soft drinks included). Tickets (which include transportation) must be ordered in advance (Sept. 1 cut-off) and can be purchased on the attached registration form.

Thursday night, SCC will visit Atlanta's Hard Rock Cafe for a group dinner. The ticket price includes transportation and a three course meal with choice of entree. Last year 72 people went to Planet Hollywood and had a ball. Tickets for this dinner may be ordered in advance, though a limited number of tickets will be available at the conference.

Friday Night Talent Show

Preserving a favorite entertainment event, SCC will once again present some of the most talented and creative amongst us in an eclectic presentation of song, dance and comedy. Those wishing to participate should sign-up in the registration area as soon as they arrive at the conference and be prepared to meet with the show coordinator in advance of Friday night for planning/auditions.

Late night celebration

After hours, Southern Comfort keeps right on, moving into Atlanta's vibrant night life with special parties at local nightclubs. You'll enjoy free admission to the clubs and travel there via free regularly scheduled mini buses that leave and return to the front door of the hotel approximately every 20 minutes. And they run into the wee hours of the night, so there's no worries about driving.

What Does It Cost?

The full-day conference fee for one attendee includes: five meals, three days of seminars, free admission and free transportation to nightclubs, access to the Vendors Marketplace and all open areas of the Conference Center, as well as invitations to all special receptions.

The cost is \$205 and various discounts are available. For further information call Terry [redacted] at 408-[redacted] or send email to Terry at [redacted]@aol.com>.



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Philadelphia Lesbian and Gay Task Force..... For Release

Pennsylvania Civil Rights Initiative (1996....)

Statewide Conference: October 5, 1997 [Revised: Current August 6, 1997]

In response to a Task Force led initiative in 1982, the Philadelphia City Council on August 5, 1982, adopted [13-2] an amendment to extend the city's Fair Practices Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation" in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Since that time, Harrisburg [1983], Pittsburgh [1990], Lancaster City [1991], and York City [1993] have established similar civil rights laws.

The Task Force in cooperation with leaders, statewide, are positioned to organize the introduction and adoption of an amendment to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act [Act] which prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations, and to expand the Act to include "education" as a specific protected category. In tandem, we will amend the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act, focused on postsecondary education, to reflect non-discrimination education regulations and policies [effected in 1993].

The essence of the Core Principles to encourage public officials' and organizers' accountability to our multifaceted community during each phase of the legislative process follows. The principles are intended to forge unity and solidarity and to avoid the adoption of *homophobic* civil rights laws [e.g. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maine].

We are committed to organizing, educating, and negotiating with integrity for a Pennsylvania wide civil rights bill, inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. We will be grounded in and guided by the principles that we deserve our full rights. We will support the achievement of civil rights protections, *minimally*, in employment, housing, public accommodations, and in education. We will not suffer any restriction of our rights (e.g. parental rights, domestic partnership rights, the recognition of marriage) nor homophobic insults (e.g. the presumption of criminality or immorality) in a Pennsylvania civil rights law. We will assure the strengthening of civil rights laws on behalf of all women and all minorities. [For a copy of the Task Force's *Civil Rights Briefing Packet*, September 1996 and continuing, please call.]

Over the September 1996 through May 1997 period, nearly 150 people participated in Task Force convened meetings (Philadelphia [n=55 participants]; Harrisburg [n=40]; Lancaster [12]; and Pittsburgh [n=35]) to discuss the findings of our *Study of Discrimination and Violence* [Gross and Aurand] to brainstorm strategies to guide a successful Pennsylvania Civil Rights Campaign. Pittsburgh activists [May 3] proposed a statewide conference to determine the decision making structure and processes necessary to engage in a collaborative and challenging long-range campaign for full civil and human rights now scheduled for October 5, 1997 [see below].

On March 11, 1997, the Task Force convened and presented its 1996 Study to 25 of 250 legislators at the Main Capitol in Harrisburg, PA. On July 10, 1997, we convened a team of 15 academics, activists, attorneys and religious to begin a dialogue with the Pennsylvania Governor and eight selected Cabinet Secretaries/Commissioners. On July 28, we met with Senator Greenleaf [R-Montgomery County], Majority Chair, Judiciary Committee, and that same day presented the Study and proposed twin civil rights legislation to the Board of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Join us, now, for an important conference to strategize a successful statewide campaign for inclusive civil rights legislation. Register early.

Conference: Sunday October 5, 1997 1 to 6 pm
Penn State University Conference Center, University Park, PA

Registration: Send \$10 (\$5 low income) with your name, address, city/state/zip, phone and fax numbers, and e mail [Additional gifts are welcomed]

Deadline: Pre-registration is required and due no later than September 20, 1997 to the Task Force [see below]

Who's Invited Community and business leaders, activists, students, academicians, attorneys, social service providers etc.

For further information, call your local organizing committee or Rita Addessa, Executive Director, Lesbian and Gay Task Force, 1616 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. 215-772-2000 or plgtf@op.net -- [1mswcrst.97-5rept.doc]

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August, 1997.rev.

Dear Friend,

Re: *The Task Force's 20th Anniversary Gala*
Thursday evening, October 23, 1997
Warwick Hotel, Center City, Philadelphia, PA
RSVP: By September 19, 1997

In the fall, we will celebrate the beginning of our *20th anniversary* year. We invite you to enjoy a very special Gala on Thursday evening, October 23, 1997 at the Warwick's *Grand Ballroom* for an early evening cocktail reception, a luscious buffet, and a dance party throughout the evening.

The 20th anniversary marks a special time - a time to celebrate our past accomplishments and a time to build on those accomplishments. The *Pennsylvania Civil Rights Initiative* embodies our hope and vision for a future in which each of us is free to live our lives fully, free from legally sanctioned discrimination and violence, and free from social censure and stigma. [A summary is attached.]

The Task Force's *20th anniversary* is an opportunity to enjoy a *fabulous* evening and to meet *wonderful* new people. It is an opportunity, as well, to financially and morally support our *very critical work* on behalf of each member of our rich and diverse community.

In closing, I invite you to become a *sponsor* of our 20th anniversary *Gala*, and invite you to *join* us at the Warwick with your friends and families. And, if you can, I invite you to join us at *Leadership* meetings to develop events to celebrate our 20th anniversary throughout the year. The Leadership meetings will be on *Wednesday, September 10 and 17, 1997 and at 5:30 pm* at Temple University, 1616 Walnut Street.

Thanks for your support, Rita Addressa

P.S. A return form and pre-paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience. I look forward to seeing you and welcome your most generous contribution. We will send sponsors a *confirmation* on receipt of your gift.

CR Bills Please see reverse side.

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