

# CROSS-TALK

The Transgender Community News & Information Monthly

#84

\$5.00



WHAT I WANT vs. WHAT YOU WANT vs. WHAT THEY WANT  
THE CONTROVERSY OVER GENDER IDENTITY DISORDER  
GENDER CROSSING IN ASIA  
MOVIE REVIEW: MAYBE ... MAYBE NOT  
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The Transgender Community News & Information Monthly

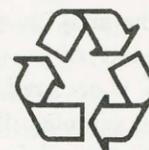
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## KYMBERLEIGH'S CLIPBOARD

# YOU CAN'T PLEASE ALL OF THE PEOPLE ALL OF THE TIME

by Kimberleigh Richards  
Publisher & Managing Editor

Lately, it seems like the first part of the old saying I've used as the title for my commentary this month is as incorrect as the title is correct. You can please some of the people all of the time and you can please all of the people some of the time? Yeah, right.

I have been taking hits from both ends of our polarized

she's right ... although many of you have read my previous articles about my life as a non-surgically created woman, of my openness in the mainstream, and of attending two (so far) reunions of my high school graduating class as Kym, relatively few know how I got to where I am, genderally speaking.

That I have not written of this before is an error brought on by the commingling of my roles within this community; while I am best known by some as the publisher and managing editor of this magazine, others know me better as a director of Tri-Ess, as system administrator of Cross Connection, or as a frequent lecturer at several Southern California college campuses. Because in the last role my personal history is opened for discussion, it is easy to forget that those lectures aren't made available to our community as a whole. Thus my mind is tricked into thinking everyone knows my life because I do talk about it so much in front of graduate students.

As you might surmise by the buildup, I don't fit any of the "usual" models that are held up to justify being a crossdresser, a transsexual, or even a transgenderist. In fact, I have elements of all three in my past and some things about the way I have evolved nearly defy categorization. First of all, I do not recall doing any kind of crossdressing until my late teens, nor any memories of even thinking of such a thing prior to junior high school. My earliest recollection of there being any real "difference between the sexes" came in 1968, when I was in seventh grade. Those who have knowledge of that era will recall that the period from the mid-'60s to the mid-'70s was the "original" era of the miniskirt ... and of a general loosening in general of women's styles. It occurred to me, at the ripe old age of 12, that there was an unfair disparity in the school dress code; girls could wear minis, midis, maxis, "hot pants", or even jeans, while the boys could wear pants, pants, pants, pants, or pants. I think you can easily understand that I felt there was something somewhat unfair about girls having far more choice about what they wore to school than did boys, and I spent the six years of junior high and high school longing for the freedom to

(continued on page 30)



## The NewsQueen

by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Ah, October! The month when procrastinating drag queens work themselves into a tizzy searching for just the right gown and closeted crossdressers can strut their stuff publicly. But nowhere is Halloween as big an event as it is in San Francisco.

After 16 years on Castro Street, San Francisco's Halloween party has become too big for the gay neighborhood. An estimated 200,000 people are expected to attend this year, and so the event has been moved to the Civic Center Plaza in front of City Hall.

"We're too big and successful for just one neighborhood," said Lester Olmstead-Rose, executive director of Community United Against Violence, sponsors of the party for the past few years. The party is the organization's primary fundraising event.

In addition to the change of venue, there will be another addition this year -- an admission charge: \$2 for people in costume or with a subway ticket, \$4 for those not in costume. Plus, makeup artists and costume vendors will be available outside the admission area.

"That's what Halloween is all about," Olmstead-Rose said. "It's about dressing up and coming out. We want people to come out and join the queer community and wear their queer souls on their sleeves for the night."

"It's going to be a real fun party," he added.

Trying to appeal to families, organizers said they will have special face-painting and costume booths for children.

After witnessing too much bad drag last year in Chicago, writer John Smith penned this advice for budding drag queens. Transvestites may benefit as well:

\* Two pairs of pantyhose will never substitute for a good leg shaving.

\* Women with moustaches are tragic; men with moustaches who dress as women ought to be tarred and feathered.

\* Morticia Addams was a television character -- not a role model.

\* Besides old Mae West movies, one rarely sees a *real* woman with a feather boa.

\* Fishnet stockings, though tantalizing on Victoria's Secret models, are not desirable unless you are dressing as a hooker.

\* Try at all costs never to be photographed. Documentation of you in high heels can later be used for ugly blackmail

purposes and may, if the photos surface, prevent you from achieving a career in politics. Photo evidence, however, will not prevent you from becoming director of the FBI.

\* Don't clutter the clutch with condoms. You are not going to score.

Smith may know fashion, but he doesn't understand the men who we call drag fans. Halloween is their favorite hunting season.

Canadian researchers said recently they have identified a distinct psychological group of men who are sexually interested in transvestites and transsexuals.

Called *gynadromorphophiles*, these men are "heterosexuals of some stripe," says Ray Blanchard of Toronto's Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, and they are more common than psychologists believe.

Blanchard said that psychologists and others who categorize men who seek out crossdressers as either closeted homosexuals or bisexuals are wrong.

"Admittedly this study is primitive," he said, "but from the data we can regard gynadromorphophilia as a distinct psychological condition."

Blanchard didn't actually speak to any gynadromorphophiles. He gathered his data by looking at personal advertisements and listening to messages on a voice-mail system in Toronto. He said actual interviews could be pursued in future studies.

Blanchard presented his findings to the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Toronto in August.

Gynadromorphophiles and drag queens looking forward to the 12th Annual Wigstock Festival in New York City over Labor Day weekend were disappointed.

The drag display, which was the subject of two films, a soundtrack, and several publications, was canceled.

Organizers said that they were unable to secure an "appropriate" location for the event, which drew 40,000 participants and spectators last year. They were quick to place the blame on the administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

Organizers had hoped to use last year's site, the Christopher Street Piers on the west side of Greenwich Village. But the piers are now undergoing renovation and were unavailable. Their second choice was Cooper Square. Although the community board approved the request, the mayor's office denied it.

Just five weeks before the event, the mayor's office proposed a site on Water Street near the South Street Seaport Museum, but organizers rejected it, saying it was an "impossible site for which to raise the essential funds" to produce the event.

"We felt we were getting railroaded into taking this space," Wigstock Producer David O'Connell said. He said

that he feared the Water Street location would become Wigstock's permanent home. He wants the festival to return to the Village where, he said, "the base of our support is."

Wigstock creator Lady Bunny confirmed that the cost of the event -- an estimated \$100,000 -- was also a factor in the cancellation, specifically because corporate sponsorship was down this year.

"We are disappointed that a company such as Cheseborough-Ponds, the maker of Aqua Net, refused to consider a sponsorship," she said, "given the fact we use so much of their product."

Instead of the street festival, organizers held a benefit for Wigstock '97 -- called Wignot -- at the Palladium. But that was something of a bust as well. Only 1,500 queens showed up and the headlined entertainers -- RuPaul and Debbie Harry -- didn't show up at all.

Reportedly, Lady Bunny is talking about moving the event totally to San Francisco. Over Memorial Day weekend she sponsored a successful "first annual" Wigstock West there.



But Big Apple queens were not left totally in the lurch on Labor Day.

Tompkins Square Park was the site of what was billed as "the largest drag picnic in the world -- Dragapalooza."

The "outlaw, outdoor drag picnic" featured Hedda Lettuce, international cult star Chicklet, and drag king divas Justine Kase and Dred. The invitations read "B.Y.O.W." for "Bring Your Own Wig."

But here again, the lack of advance planning doomed a good idea. The dragsters had a hard time bonding amidst the 5,000 or so Hare Krishnas who had rented the park for a religious observance.



One person who *could* tell the difference between lip-synching drag queen and a chanting Hare Krishna at Dragapalooza was Julian Fleisher, author of *The Drag Queens of New York: An Illustrated Field Guide*.

Fleisher, who used to think drag was "unseemly and embarrassing," spent the past two years on the Promethean task of charting the mysteries of New York's drag cosmos.

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●●●  
Dragapalooza notwithstanding, San Francisco is the mecca for drag queens.

Where else could you find a queen directing traffic after a massive power outage shut down the street lights?

Winnie was at the intersection of Castro and 18th handing out flyers for a performance of the Kinsey Sicks ("America's Favorite Dragapella Beautyshop Quartet") when the lights went out and traffic snarled.

"I did what any other civic-minded drag queen would have done in my pumps," she said. "I directed traffic."

As she stood in the middle of the street, admirers brought her cold drinks and a rainbow flag and a whistle to better attract the attention of drivers.

One man even gave her his orange safety vest.

"I was both touched by his concern for my safety, and impressed by his ability to accessorize," she said.



San Francisco is also the site of a new drag cabaret, Tricks, that opened in August at the Stardust Lounge. Drag waitresses serve dinner before a late floor show.



Drag in the Bay Area has a long history, as archaeologists at the University of California at Berkeley have discovered. When the university began excavating for a new wing to the law school on the site formerly occupied by the Zeta Psi fraternity house, Laurie Wilkie, assistant professor of archaeology was thrilled as burly construction workers began unearthing a garbage pit. Wilkie stopped the work long enough for her students to excavate some of the garbage, believed to have been buried next to the fraternity house more than 70 years ago.

Among her finds were numerous colored beads and a hat pin. These puzzled Wilkie and her students who knew that the fraternity had a strict prohibition against allowing women into the house. Historic photos provided a possible explanation: The brothers would dress up as flappers and suffragettes for skits and parties. According to Wilkie, the crossdressing was one of the many ways the young men reinforced their bonds to one another.



Ms. Sinclair isn't quite sure if Dennis Rodman is into

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male-bonding or exploring the phenomenon of gynadromorphophilia, but he certainly has been doing a lot of drag recently.

He caused a sensation in August when he told David Letterman that he was getting married in a few days in Rockefeller Center. So naturally, hundreds of Rodman fans showed up despite the light rain to see the lucky girl. Their excitement when the veiled bride stepped down from a horse-drawn carriage was nothing compared to their reaction when she lifted the veil of her \$10,000 Anthony Franco wedding gown and revealed that the bride was Rodman himself.

The hyped wedding was in actuality a publicity stunt for his book *Bad As I Wanna Be*. Later, Rodman, wearing above-the-elbow white satin gloves, signed books for admiring fans. Continuing the gender inversion theme, Rodman was flanked by six beautiful women wearing men's tuxedos.

Unlike his other drag appearances, Rodman actually looked like he was trying to look like a woman, not a demented drag queen. He wore a long blonde wig, orange frosted lipstick, false eyelashes, and his eyebrows appeared to have been shaped.

But of course he looked good; you would too if your makeup was done by Kevyn Aucoin, who fee for a session starts at \$2,500!

But despite the expensive duds and high-priced makeovers, Rodman was still named to *People* magazine's worst dressed list. Go figure.



Rodman may really meet his match later this month when he is a guest on a new talk show on cable channel VH1. The 30-minute, Saturday night show is hosted by RuPaul. In just three years (has it been such a short while?), Miss Ru has gone from being a local celebrity in the rarefied atmosphere of Manhattan nightlife to a superstar with commercial endorsement contracts. As one wag put it, "Not since Burt Reynolds has the American public so warmly embraced a celebrity in a wig."



With all of these newcomers bursting on the scene, it's nice to see an old queen make a comeback.

Mick Jagger, whose gender bending was positively shocking in the '60s, has been given a part in the movie *Bent* being filmed in England. Jagger plays Greta, an androgynous nightclub singing star of Berlin circa 1930. The movie is based on a play about the Nazi treatment of homosexuals.



According to British rocker Peter Burns (of Dead or Alive), the gender-bending era of rock 'n' roll "was a fashion thing" ... Jagger, David Bowie, and the New York Dolls did drag to attract attention.

RuPaul *et al* notwithstanding, Burns claims that drag has gone out of fashion in the music world, yet he continues to wear women's clothes on stage. Why?

"For me it has a deeper connotation," he said during a recent American tour. "It's a natural state of being."



Crossdressing -- at least crossdressing of a certain type -- has gone out of fashion for Geraldo Rivera.

When the contract expired for *Geraldo!* he didn't try to get a renewal for the show many claim started the downward spiral of daytime talk shows. Now there's *The Geraldo Rivera Show*, a program he describes as "an issue-oriented, clean show."

"I could never match [Jerry] Springer or Ricki Lake or Jenny Jones," he said, "I couldn't go there and have any residual self-respect. I was just trying to go through every sweeps and put together shows with this melancholy parade of hookers and transsexuals."



Although Rivera and the others did sensationalize complex subject like transgender issues, there can be no denying that they were also responsible for giving transvestites and transsexuals a lot of visibility and some limited measure of acceptance. But there is still a long way to go.

In Buenos Aires a few months ago, transgender and gay activists demonstrated outside a meeting where a new

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legal code was being drawn up for the Argentine city. The activists were angry about the continuation of official edicts that basically allow police to detain transgendered persons and gays at will.

One of the groups joining in the demonstration was the Argentinean Republic Transvestites and Transsexuals Organization.



While some activists take to the streets, others seek help from the courts.

A British female-to-male transsexual wants the European Court of Human Rights to recognize him as the father of the child born to his female companion through artificial insemination from an anonymous sperm donor.

The man told the court in Strasbourg, France, that the Registrar General gave his name to the child but refused to recognize his role as father to the child and to register him as the father.

The transsexual argued that the Registrar's refusal breached the European Convention on Human Rights which guarantees respect of family life.



The transgendered rights movement in the United States earned a measure of respect recently when the august *New York Times* published an in-depth analysis of the issue.

The article quoted a wide variety of transgender leaders, including Riki Anne Wilchins or Transsexual Menace; James Green, a female-to-male transsexual and head of FTM International; Dana Priesing, Gender PAC's principal lobbyist; Nancy Nangeroni, host of a weekly gender radio talk show in the Boston area; and Alison Laing, director of the International Foundation for Gender Education.



Besides Halloween, there is another reason to be happy October is at hand -- the presidential campaign is nearly at an end! Although President Clinton earned points in certain circles for using the "G" word during his acceptance speech, little mention has been made of the fact that Elizabeth Dole used the "T" word, as in "transvestite."

In *Unlimited Partners: Our American Story*, an autobiography written by the Doles with a brace of ghostwriters, Mrs. Dole writes of a year's stint as a defense lawyer in night court in Washington, where she represented a prostitute who proved -- to her astonishment -- to be a transvestite.



As straight-laced as Mrs. Dole seems to be, she was probably less astonished than the English woman who discovered after 17 years of marriage that her husband was actually a woman.

The couple, whose identities were not revealed to protect

the privacy of their two children conceived through artificial insemination, were in court recently battling over the husband's rights after their marriage was declared null and void. A lower court had earlier ruled that the husband had no share in the property of the marriage and could not visit the children, aged 9 and 4 because the marriage was based on a "profound deception." The husband was appealing that decision.

The attorney representing the husband claims his client, "J," has "unshakable conviction that at his core he is a man, although he is trapped in a woman's body." Before J met the woman he later married, he had surgery to remove his breasts and had begun hormone therapy. However, he never told his wife that he had been born a woman, a mistake he now regrets. During sex, J used what newspapers called "an artificial sex aid."

The woman hired a private detective to look into her husband's background following an argument during which she accused him of not being a real man.

The detective was able to find J's original birth certificate.



Maybe they used a private dick and maybe they didn't, but somehow officials of the Elvis Presley estate learned that a certain Elvis impersonator is actually a *woman* and they were not happy.

Leigh Crow, who performs under the name of Elvis

Herselvis, stirred up a controversy at the Second International Conference on Elvis held this past August in Oxford, Miss. Several major funders -- including Elvis Presley Enterprises and the Presley estate -- threatened to pull out unless Crow's booking was canceled.

The conference was intended to be a serious, scholarly event, looking at various sociological aspects of the continuing Elvis phenomenon. In addition to the Presley contribution of \$5,000, the nearby Tupelo (Miss.) Convention and Visitors Bureau had promised another \$5,000, and the University of Mississippi also said it would contribute. The conference was the idea of Old Miss English professor Vernon Chadwick.

"Upon learning of performers scheduled to participate in the 1996 conference, and after careful consideration of the possible media exposure of this controversial event, Elvis Presley Enterprises wants no involvement with this conference," a letter to Chadwick stated. Officials at Elvis Presley Enterprises had no further comment.

Crow, who is openly lesbian, said the withdrawal of funding was homophobic.

"But," she added, "it's also inherent sexism, even probably above homophobia."

It's a woman infiltrating the last bastion of masculinity, it's like they're saying, 'Well, there's one thing a woman *can't be* and that's Elvis.' Well, I've got news for you."



Maybe Crow should look into getting bookings in Japan where both Elvis *and* male impersonators are wildly popular.

When the Takarazuka Revue played in Tokyo recently, women lined the streets outside the theater hoping to catch a glimpse of the female actors.

The Revue was founded in 1914 in a small town in western Japan. It is the oldest and only surviving female musical theater troupe, with women playing both female and male parts. In a sense, it is the exact opposite of the classic Kabuki theater where *men* play all the roles.

Not surprisingly, whenever the audience performs, the audience is 95 percent female. And some obsessed fans travel hundreds of miles to see the shows night after night. Does this mean that millions of Japanese women have secret lesbian tendencies? Again, the opposite is true. On stage the suave *otoko-yaku*, or women playing men, treat the female characters the way real Japanese men seldom treat their wives or girlfriends. They woo them, dance with them, and cradle them in their arms as they sing in manly baritones of their undying love.

All of this fantasy masculinity doesn't come easy. The troupe has its own school where girls have a year of intensive training before they first appear on stage. The girls who are selected to play male roles have another year

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Mire Hana is a star *otoko-yaku*. She says she never stops watching men to learn their mannerisms.

"When I see a man, somehow that leaves an impression," she said. "I walk with a wide stride, sit like a man, even my thinking is like a man. But we aren't men. We are women being men. We have a sexiness that men don't have."

"If I marry a man, since I have been one, I know what he wants from a woman. So I will always be one step ahead of him, knowing exactly what he needs before he can even ask for it."

And what do Japanese men think of their women's passion for *otoko-yaku*?

"No matter how handsome my wife says an *otoko-yaku* is, I wouldn't be worried," said Keiji Hirano, 32. "There are no men like that. In the end, they are women."

There is yet another group of Japanese women who impersonate men. They are called *onnabe*, and work in clubs patronized by women where they provide the patrons with the same services Japanese men receive from "hostesses" in a typical Tokyo nightclub, bar, or "love hotel." But unlike *otoko-yaku*, *onnabe* are closer to being considered transgendered (although the use of such Western terms may not be appropriate in the East). There is an important difference that is the same in either culture: being a *otoko-yaku* is an honored profession. Each year, 1,600 applications flood the school. Being a *onnabe* often involves hiding one's identity from one's family.

Whether *otoko-yaku* or *onnabe*, a key part of the illusion is lowering the voice. Traditionally, Japanese women are trained to speak in an artificial falsetto, especially when at work or when speaking in public. Even the natural female speaking voice is sometimes thought to be too low and therefore too aggressive and manly. So women in service jobs take special lessons to get a squeaky little girl's voice. Japan may be just the place for crossdressers who haven't figured out that Lauren Bacall probably has the sexiest voice around.

Or, they could just wait another half century. According to Australian researchers at Flinders University, women's voices are 10 to 20 percent lower than the average pitch 50 years ago. The researchers postulated three reasons. First, women have more authority and responsibility and their voices reflect it. Second, women don't shift speaking tone as often as they did 50 years ago. Third, women today are larger, resulting in more resonance in their voices. To this, Ms. Sinclair would add a fourth -- more women smoke nowadays.

The news reports didn't say how George Meadows sounded when he propositioned two undercover police officers in Charleston, W.Va. last month. But Ms. Sinclair can imagine what he sounded like when they showed him their badges.

The elementary school principal, who was dressed in women's clothes, offered to undercut a female competitor's price for performing oral sex on the two officers authorities said. He was arrested and charged with soliciting prostitution. He later pleaded guilty and was fined \$550.

As soon as news of his arrest was known, Meadows, 55, was suspended as principal of Sylvia Elementary in Beckley, W.Va., a post he had held for 17 years. He later resigned. Former co-workers said he was recently divorced and is the father of two sons.

Another educator has come out, but in a more tasteful manner.

Mathematics instructor Dick Giles finally decided to stop pretending to his students, so he came to class as Diane. Giles, a father of 10 who teaches at Santa Rosa (Calif.) Junior College, revealed this week that he is transgendered.

"I accept what I am," Giles said. "I just decided I needed to quit living a lie."

Giles, 58, who admitted that few people knew his secret, said he has identified with the opposite gender for as long as he can remember.

This summer, with the support of his wife, Giles decided to come out -- and began dressing full-time in women's clothes. He even visited his family in Quincy, Ill., and attended his 40th high school reunion in a dress.

"I've known about it all the time we have been together," said wife Anne Giles. "I'm glad the hiding, the worrying and the concern for the mental health of Diane is over. This is the person she is."

Administrators at the school 50 miles northeast of San Francisco said Giles can continue to teach as long as his lifestyle does not interfere with his duties.

The biggest challenge has been which bathroom Diane Giles should use, said Ed Buckley, vice president of academic affairs.

The problem was solved by putting an interior sliding bolt on the faculty men's bathroom, he said.

Thankfully, the past month has had relatively little crime involving transgendered folk. But one of the reports was deadly serious.

A judge in Honolulu recently ruled that there was sufficient evidence to send Anthony Tyrone Briscoe, 22, a soldier assigned to the Schofield Barracks, to trial for the murder of a transvestite.

Another transvestite, Anthony Marcos, testified that she saw Thomas Hall, 33 with Briscoe behind a restaurant just before she heard Hall scream.

Marcos rushed to the scene, and found Hall bleeding from several wounds to the head and face inflicted by a brick found nearby. Hall died the following day.

Marcos, who works on the street under the name of Angel, testified that she and Hall were together when Hall flagged down a passing motorist and directed him to park behind the restaurant.

If found guilty of the second degree murder charge, Briscoe will face a mandatory life in prison sentence.

It is dangerous on the streets even if you are minding your own business.

In Philadelphia in March and later in August, police arrested two crossdressers and charged them with disorderly conduct and obstructing a highway. Both charges are often filed against people police suspect of prostitution when they have no concrete proof. The only problem is that both men say there were just walking along the sidewalk in drag minding their own business. An witness has substantiated the claim of one of the girls.

Both incidents took place in an area of Center City with numerous gay bars and commonly frequented by drag queens. The Public Interest Law Project is now investigating to see if these two arrests are part of a pattern that could indicate police harassment or possibly misconduct.

As Ms. Sinclair can testify, it is *not* against the law to walk down the street in drag. Furthermore, at least *one* Philadelphia police officer of her acquaintance can think of better things to do with transvestites than arrest them!

Ms. Sinclair hopes that stories of the terrors that have befallen some transvestites on public thoroughfares will not frighten her readers and prevent them from visiting their post offices to mail her clippings relating to crossdressing. And she hopes that they are not so rattled that they forget to jot down the name and date of publication.

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## HotBuzz

by JoAnn Roberts

"If you can't go over, you must go under."

-- Jewish Proverb



I see a situation shaping up as our community attempts to find its political center. One the one side is a coalition of national organizations working together and on the other is a loose-knit collection of activists that work on their own, each side vying for the hearts, minds and purses of the community. In most endeavors, I believe competition is healthy. It keeps one from becoming complacent. In this case, however, I believe competition (perceived or real) between these two camps will cause damage in the community. Egos and super-egos are involved. This person won't work with that person. That's so childish and self-centered. Our political efforts need to be developed and coordinated through our organizations which are our greatest strength right now. Forget about the individuals involved. If the representative of organization X should die tomorrow, will that stop X from participating in the political representation process? No, I don't think so. **Ben Franklin** said it well, "If we don't all hang together, we shall all hang separately." Our ability to participate in the political process as a peer group depends on our ability to put aside egos and develop a clear vision of community. Those who need their egos boosted at the expense of community will find themselves alone.



Movement in the right direction (IMHO) seems to be coming from **GenderPAC**. There is discussion afoot to make this informal committee into a legitimate educational organization. More on this at a later date. Meanwhile, please keep sending your tax-deductible contributions to GenderPAC, c/o PO Box 229, Waltham, MA 02154.



I felt so sorry for former **IFGE** Executive Director and founder, **Merissa Sherrill Lynn**. She wrote an OpEd piece for *Transgender Tapestry* #75 titled "What's Wrong With this Picture." Lynn clearly demonstrated in the piece why she is no longer one of this community's leaders. According to Lynn, "I come from a place of love and respect ... the March was the antithesis of what I was about." The "March" as Lynn calls it was the First National Gender Lobby Day last October. Lynn says that those of us

who were in Washington to lobby Congress had no idea what we were doing there or who we represented. Well, I certainly can't speak for others, but I was there representing myself as a transgendered person making my voice heard. But, more importantly 100 t-people showing up in one place to represent themselves and speak out brought us together for a common purpose, and, for at least two days, we had a common identity. That had never happened in this community before and that alone was worth the trip.



You don't have to wait for GenderPAC or any other organization in order to make your voice heard. Write a letter to your Representatives and Senators. According to Washington insiders who know, one well-written letter is assumed to represent the views of about 500 people because only about 1 in 500 take the time to write. So, if a given issue generates a lot of mail, it will be considered important. Here are some guidelines for writing ... Tell your policymaker you are a registered voter in their district ... Keep your letter brief and to one page if possible ... Address only one issue ... Handwrite your letter unless you have an unreadable scrawl. Otherwise, type it and handwrite a P.S. under your signature ... Write from your heart. The best letters describe how an issue affects you personally ... Need to know what the issues are? Here are a few places on the Web to find out: **20/20 Vision** <<http://www.2020vision.org>>; **The National Political Index** <<http://www.politicalindex.com>>; and **GenderPAC Reports** <<http://www.gpac.org/>>.



The **Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)** may seem like an issue that has little to do with transgendered people, but think again. DOMA could cause countless problems for lots of people who are legally married. First, there are the post-op transsexuals, both FTM and MTF who are now legally married. DOMA would effectively undo their unions. Second, there are millions of apparently heterosexual married people who are intersexed, i.e., neither 100 percent male nor 100 percent female. According to **William O. Beeman**, an associate professor of anthropology at Brown University, DOMA does them in as well. Sure, the GLB community is against DOMA, but maybe we ought to be too. Some transgender activists, GPAC included, tried to get some amendments tacked onto DOMA to protect these present marriages. There are also a few firebrands who couldn't wait for Clinton to sign the bill ... so they can start a lawsuit. So the fight continues, and we need to be part of it.



Transgender continues to be popular with the Hollywood crowd. **Dennis Rodman**, the crossdressing roundball superstar, made a guest appearance on *3rd Rock from the*

*Sun* on September 23rd. *3rd Rock* features a transgendered character of sorts. **Kristen Johnston** plays a male alien who must inhabit a female human body. On top of all that, *3rd Rock* is one of the funniest shows on the tube.



**Kurt Russell** has been known to do it up in drag for a film (*Tango and Cash*), but in his latest outing, *Escape From L.A.*, Russell teams up with 6 foot tall actress **Pam Grier** who plays a post-op transsexual. With a little Hollywood technical magic, the sound studio drops Grier's voice an octave or two making her sound both masculine and feminine.



The fashion industry is "all in a heap," as one of my friends is wont to say. According to several articles appearing in the *New York Times*, several fashion standards have taken big hits on fashion trends that were big misses. **Anne Klein**, **Donna Karan**, and **Escada** are just a few of the recognizable names that are in the dumps. The reason? Women don't want fussy clothes anymore. The look and fit is casual. Khakis are the uniform of the moment and they're much less costly than so-called high fashion looks even with a Liz Claiborne tag. The result? Stock prices reflect what's going on. Donna Karan stock opened at 28+, slid down to the low 20s and still hasn't recovered. Meanwhile GAP stock soared from \$16 to over \$32 in the last year and a half. Believe it or not, one of the best places to find affordable, good looking clothes these days is **Sears**. While you're there, check out their new cosmetics department.



As a result, fashion for Fall '96 seems to be much more sensible than ever. Here are the hot trends ... The color of the season is **deep purple** ... The fabric of choice is anything that's **knitted**. It travels well and resists wrinkles ... The purse for fashion mavens is big. Little bags are out ... The overall look is one long and lean line of **monochromatic color**.



At least they didn't use "cyber" in the name ... **Revlon** is introducing a new cosmetic collection for Fall called **Virtual Violet**. The look they say is Sheer to Shocking. Many fashion magazines are carrying a Revlon Report insert that shows the colors and how to apply them. The new color I like best is Violet X-treme. It comes in lipstick, nail polish and eyeshadow. Not wanting to be left behind, **Maybelline** is offering its own brand of deep violet cosmetics called **Rogue Vogue**. Also look for Maybelline's **Gold Lights** Natural Accents. It will add shimmery highlights to your face or even your hair.



The word is silicone and it's appearing everywhere.

Silicone based cosmetics are the hottest and greatest advance since sliced bread. Following the lead of **Max Factor** Lasting Performance and **Revlon** Colorstay, **Almay** introduces Amazing Lasting Makeup.



Among the new colors for Fall, you'll find some scary ideas like **Baby Blue** and **Gold** lipstick. Fear not. These are not opaque colors; they're sheer stains that give your lips a nice but different look. If you're too conservative to risk a trendy mouth, take a look at some of the more bold colors of nail polish being offered. Among them are **Estee Lauder** Naughty, **Cutex** Gilded Burgundy, **She Umura** 069 (which is almost glossy black) and **Hard Candy** Haze.



For those of us who are large, fear not. You too can be fashionable. Stop by a Lane Bryant shop and you'll find affordable and fashionable clothing in sizes from 14 to 28. One example, a leather skirt, is just \$69. Which reminds me, Fall is always the time for suede and leather clothing and accessories.



Keep an eye out for **Cindy Crawford's** latest effort *Cindy Crawford's Basic Face*, a makeup workbook that covers everything from skincare to application tips. Its published by Broadway Books and costs about \$25.



Every so often, especially for the part-time women out there, I have to remind you to dump your cosmetics. Nothing lasts forever (well almost nothing). So: lipstick -- toss after 2 to 3 years ... mascara -- toss after 3 months ... pencils -- toss after a year ... powders -- the exception to the rule ... cream or liquids -- 1 year.



Fall fashion for less than \$100: Purple lace top by **XOXO** \$28 ... Black satin shoes by **Ann Marino** \$62 ... Purple velvet pants by **Joe's** \$68 ... Khaki pleather skirt by **Trina Turk** \$88 ... Shimmery colored tights by **CK Calvin Klein** \$13 ... Jean jacket in waxed leather by **Gap** \$68 ... Striped sweater by **Gap** \$38 ... Schoolgirl plaid pleated skirt by **Betsey Johnson** \$85 ... High-heel loafers \$65 ... Army-green wool skirt by **Banana Republic** \$78 ... Purple velvet pants by **Rampage** \$58.



Did you get the idea? Purple is the color for Fall. But, if purple seems too extreme for you, try **deep blue** in a fabric with some shine, like satin or velvet or cashmere, or a matte surface like wool crepe (my fave). Try it, even if you only add a hint like tights or gloves.



Best tricks and tips from the pros: **Kevin Aucoin** ... curl lashes ... apply cream blush with fingers not only to cheeks,

but to bridge of nose and temples. **Dick Page** ... make your own creamy eyeshadow by mixing powder shadow with a little Vaseline ... finger-apply lipstick instead of blusher to cheeks. **Mary Greenwell** ... apply eyeshadow powders with a quarter-inch rounded brush. **Francois Nars** ... always use loose powder ... iridescent dark green eyeshadow is great for evening, especially blended with gold powder ... instead of a pencil, brush on dark green shadow to line eyes. And the latest trick is for Caucasian women to use dark blush intended for African and Latina women.



I never quite understood it; some guys love to wear lingerie under their masculine clothes. I remember talking to one guy who went to work like this everyday. Of course, part of the thrill, I suppose, is the risk in getting caught. I mean it's hard to hide a bra strap under some circumstances. At least it was until now. **Bestform** has introduced the **Invisibra**. Its meant to be worn under clingy knits and tees with no seams showing through.

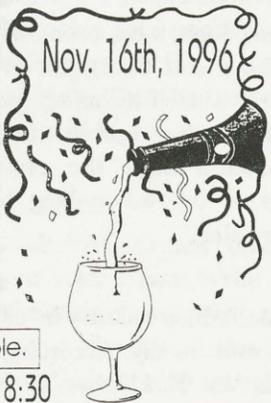


So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? I think we can work toward unity, not uniformity. Comments? E-mail them to <cyberqueen@cdspub.com>. Copyright 1996 by Creative Design Services.

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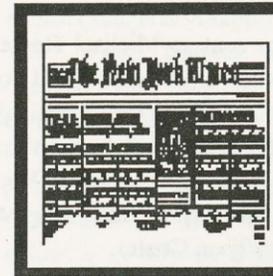
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## THE CONTROVERSY OVER GENDER IDENTITY DISORDER

Part One  
by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Later this month, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) will be the target of a demonstration protesting the diagnosis of "gender identity disorder" in APA's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. The demonstration has been called by members of the Chicago, Connecticut, New York City, and Boston chapters of the direct action group, the Transexual Menace.

The demonstration at the APA's annual convention will be the latest salvo in an ongoing battle between the APA and several gay, lesbian, and transgender organizations. In addition to the Transexual Menace, they include the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

The Chicago demonstration follows by five months a Transexual Menace demonstration outside an APA meeting in May at New York City's Jacob Javits Center. This past summer, a book on gender identity disorder claimed that desperate parents and unscrupulous therapists use it to institutionalize children as young as 4 years old in an attempt to ensure that they grow up to be straight. Yet, it is the same diagnosis that enables some transsexuals to claim insurance coverage for all or part of the expenses involved in their sex changes.

Just what is GID and why are some activists so upset about it?

The fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, commonly called the *DSM*, is a 886-page catalog of mental illnesses, ranging from acute stress disorder to voyeurism. Therapists use the *DSM* as an aid to diagnose a patient's illness and to claim reimbursement through some health insurance plans. It is not enough, for example, for a therapist to say that Patient X has a mental disorder that the insurance plan has to pay to treat, the therapist has to say *which* disorder. All possible disorders are contained in the *DSM*; if it isn't listed, it isn't a mental disorder.

One problem is that folks other than therapists use the *DSM*, sometimes in ways that it wasn't intended for.

Years ago, the *DSM* listed homosexuality as a disorder.

While the listing enabled many troubled gays and lesbians to obtain treatment so they could adjust to being homosexual, it also encouraged a legitimate search for a "cure" for homosexuality. And by being officially listed as having a mental disorder, homosexuals could be denied all sorts of sensitive jobs.

The APA remedied the situation in 1973 when it came up

**Does the American Psychiatric Association  
have something against transvestites,  
transsexuals, bull dykes, and sissies?**

with a new classification, ego-dystonic homosexuality. In other words, being gay or lesbian is not a disorder, being unhappy that you are gay or lesbian *is*. The APA thought it had accomplished the same destigmatizing of transsexualism less than two years ago when it removed transsexualism from the *DSM* and replaced it with GID. The idea was that it was okay to be transsexual; it is unhealthy to be a transsexual who is *not* well-adjusted. But according to the activists opposed to GID, that isn't the way the diagnosis is being used.

According to Shannon Minter, staff attorney for the National Center for Lesbian Rights and director of the center's youth project, psychiatrists use GID to confine young people in institutions where their sexual orientations and gender-role behaviors are forcibly changed.

"This is totally outrageous," Minter said. "It is profoundly dangerous to tell these young persons that everything about them is wrong. This diagnosis is used to justify any treatment designed to change a young person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender behavior."

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission has issued an "action alert" urging its members to ask the APA to stop "stigmatizing young people who do not conform to socially imposed gender roles or heterosexual norms."

While there is evidence to support the gay and lesbian activists' claims that GID is being used improperly in an attempt to prevent children from growing up to be

## You can make a difference!

### Help us fight for your right to be transgendered.

In June of 1995, several of the national transgender organizations created the community's first political action committee — GenderPAC. It's purpose is to fund the increasing number of political activities of the transgender community such as the Transgender Lobby Days last October. In just a few short months, GenderPAC, through the evangelism of a few dedicated people, managed to raise and disburse over \$10,000. It is not enough.

It's time for the entire community to pitch in. GenderPAC wants to ensure that your right to work, your right to fair housing, and your right to reasonable public accommodations will not be denied. GenderPAC will continue to lobby Congress in 1996 for transgender inclusion in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). But, we can't do it alone and we can't do it for free. Your tax-deductible contribution will make the crucial difference. Give and give generously. You'll feel really good about it. Send your contributions to:

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homosexuals or even transsexual, transgender activists are on thinner ice with their opposition to GID.

Phyllis Frye, executive director of the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, uses a broad brush to tar the APA. "We need to tell the psychiatric community that being transgendered is not a disorder," she said. "There is nothing wrong with us as far as our gender identity."

Transsexual Menace seems to recognize that GID falls into a gray area: having the diagnosis available to therapists has helped some transgendered persons obtain counseling and surgery, but it has harmed many others.

According to a Transsexual Menace statement issued to promote the Chicago demonstration, "It's important that people get their surgery and insurance reimbursement. But it's also crucial we do so without pathologizing millions of gendervariant and transgendered teens, adults, and kids. GID isn't about dysfunction. It's about punishing gender difference and enforcing gender norms in the guise of practicing medicine. Just like the earlier disease of "homosexuality," GID is inevitably used against the most vulnerable among us -- our genderqueer kids."

All three are prepared to cite horror stories, all of them involving children or teenagers who behaved differently from "typical" boys and girls. Daphne Scholinski is a typical example. When she was 14 years old, she was institutionalized in three different mental hospitals. She was given -- along with anti-psychotic medications such as Thorazine -- these goals to work on: to wear makeup and dresses, and curl her hair because she was diagnosed with GID.

"I was teased a lot for being tomboyish," she said, sitting in the San Francisco apartment she shares with her girlfriend, Marieka Brown.

"Eventually I wasn't attending school. I was becoming pretty rebellious and angry. I wasn't acting like a typical teenage female. I enjoyed sports." She said she looked so little like a girl that she would be mistaken for a boy and thrown out of women's rest rooms.

She began therapy and her parents were told that girls with her condition often spent the rest of their lives in

mental hospitals.

In September 1981, Scholinski was sent to Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago and six months later transferred to Forest Hospital in Des Plaines, Ill. Her principal diagnosis was Gender Identity Disorder and her entire hospitalization was paid for by medical insurance. Her third hospitalization -- the one that lasted until August 1984 -- was at Constance Bultman Wilson Center.

Until she turned 18 and her father's medical insurance no longer covered the treatments, Scholinski was treated for the classic symptoms of GID: "the insistence that one is of the other sex" and a "persistent discomfort about one's assigned sex."

But Scholinski, now 28, says she has never had any confusion or discomfort about her gender. Despite her masculine appearance, she says, she is a woman and a lesbian. It was because of her sexual orientation that she underwent what she now describes as four years of "psychological torture" and institutionalization.

But no one can give specific examples of how the diagnosis been used against adults, either transgendered or homosexual. The closest is a Transsexual Menace claim that "transpeople are routinely turned down for health and disability coverage because they must answer 'yes' when asked 'Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental illness?'" on health questionnaires.

Some psychiatrists defend the treatment given to Daphne Scholinski. Dr. Annye Rothenberg of the Children's Health Council in Palo Alto, Calif., even go so far as to say that "emotionally children like Daphne will have an easier life if they are heterosexual." But Dr. Chester Schmidt of Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore and chair of the APA's sexual disorders group does not support the use of GID to institutionalize children against their will.

"That kind of abuse of the diagnosis would certainly not be supported by the American Psychiatric Association," he said. But "doing away with the diagnosis seems like an extreme way of dealing with bad apples."

He said that if the diagnosis was cut from the DSM, irresponsible therapists who want to institutionalize young people for variant gender behaviors would just "use

another diagnosis inappropriately."

What about charges, like those made by Transsexual Menace, that anyone who displays *any* behavior not consistent with their physical gender has GID?

At the demonstration in New York last May, Transsexual Menace says that it handed out a 1,000 copies of a flyer that stated "... the APA supports pathologizing gender behavior in infants, adolescents ... If your boy plays with dolls or your girl with trucks, you can get them 'corrective treatment.'... If you're a woman who enjoys wearing pants, you're 'normal,' but if you're a man who likes to wear a dress, you suffer from a 'disorder.'"

Schmidt says that activists are guilty of misrepresenting the definition of GID by singling out a few aspects of the definition and asserting that anyone who exhibits those behaviors can be diagnosed with GID.

For example, he said, the APA does not view effeminacy in boys or tomboyishness in girls as psychologically disordered. For an effeminate boy to qualify for GID, "you would have to have an effeminate boy who insists he is a girl and wants his genitals removed," Schmidt said. The opposite would have to be true for a girl to be correctly diagnosed with GID.

But that is only part of the criteria for GID. According to the DSM, a person's "persistent discomfort with his or her sex or sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex" has to include an aversion to one's biological sex organs and/or a desire for a sex change, as well as "clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning" resulting from discomfort with one's own gender.

Symptoms of the disorder may include girls who insist "on wearing only stereotypical masculine clothing," or "an intense desire to participate in the stereotypical games and pastimes of the other sex."

But, Schmidt said, that does not mean the APA thinks that all girls who prefer flannel shirts to dresses or all men

who prefer high heels to boots have GID. To qualify for the diagnosis, the subject must satisfy *all* of the diagnostic criteria, not just a few.

"It's a constellation of symptoms and behaviors, and it has to be pretty pervasive," he said. "You can't pick out one or two of the behaviors and say the person has gender-identity disorder."

Specifically, the DSM warns that the GID diagnosis "is not meant to describe a child's nonconformity to stereotypical sex-role behaviors as, for example, 'tomboyishness' in girls or 'sissyish' behavior in boys. Rather it represents a profound disturbance of the individual's sense of identity with regard to maleness and femaleness."

Schmidt presented the textbook example of how the diagnosis is supposed to work: a person presents the "constellation of symptoms and behaviors," is diagnosed with GID, receives counseling, may eventually have a sex change, and "is comfortable with her new status as a female." That person "no longer would be seen as suffering from gender-identity disorder," he said.

Likewise, drag queens or transvestites are not seen as disordered simply because they like to crossdress, he said. The key is psychological contentment.

"If a person is psychologically comfortable and is functioning well, it's difficult to call that a disorder," Schmidt said.

He agrees that in the case of children the issue of psychological comfort is difficult. Often the child is comfortable with his or her behaviors; it is the parents who are not. These are the parents who ask therapists to change their child's non-conforming gender behaviors.

"Good therapists, I think, would not buy into that," he said. "Any therapist worth his salt would realize the problem is with the family, and not the child. They would turn around and say, 'Okay, parents, this is the way your child is. Why don't you accept that?'"

(continued on page 21)

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## VIRGIN VIEWS BY VIRGINIA

# GENDER FUNDAMENTALISTS

by Virginia Prince Ph.D.

Another of my strange titles, right? You thought there were only religious fundamentalists like Islamic fundamentalists, the Ultra Orthodox Jews and the Religious right and fundamentalists of other various sects in the Christian world. (I could have said various "sexes" and still be pretty much correct.)

way. I guess you get the point as far as religions go. But in a great many other non-religious areas of human concern there are those who are thoroughly persuaded that {they} know best what is good, right, proper, effective and "the way to go." You find it in politics, economics, government and in business. Strangely, you find it in the so-called transgender community too.

I say "so-called" because even though the word "community" is used, it isn't a community. It is an association, an affiliation, a coalition or some other word that implies some areas of common interest by individuals, companies, cities, states and countries. Two examples:

The American Medical Association and the American Bar Association are composed of persons having medical or legal degrees respectively and practicing (or retired from) their professions. Yet within each there are many groups that have their own rules, policies and practices. A surgeon, an internist, a pediatrician, a psychiatrist and many other specialists may all belong to the AMA but they have their own specialties and separate associations. Among lawyers, all belong to their state's Bar Association but those practicing corporate, patent, accident, malpractice, divorce and other legal specialties have their own groups. No one of these specialty groups in medicine, law, insurance and other areas, attempts to speak for all doctors, lawyers or whatever. That is because few of them have enough knowledge beyond their own area of interest to function successfully in other fields. (There are, of course, conspicuous exceptions who have multiple degrees in several fields and are thereby qualified to speak for different areas of practice.) Thus there are no fundamentalists in law and medicine.

Another example is the group of nations collectively referred to as Scandinavian. It is comprised of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. But each of these nations has its own history, language, culture, and national feeling. They can and do cooperate in lots of ways, such as their joint airline called SAS. But none speaks for all. They therefore are not really a "community" of nations, but are more properly a "coalition" of nations with various common interests.

In our "community" we have gay drag queens, impersonators (who prefer to be referred to as

"impressionists"), crossdressers, transgenderists, transsexuals and a few other smaller divisions. Here too, each group has its own individual and collective history, problems, desires, needs, culture, etc. These are very real differences between the various groups, and the only real common ground is the greater society's lack of understanding and therefore of intolerance of each group. To improve that common problem education of the public on the motivations, activities, needs, purposes and legal problems of each group can be undertaken collectively. But whichever of these groups you personally belong to, do you really think someone from one of the other groups could understand, feel for, and identify with you and other members of your type? I don't! The so-called "she-males" have grown long hair, had electrolysis, tracheal shaves maybe, face lifts and nose jobs but have not had genital surgery. They live full time and in many cases make their living from various kinds of sexual activities. Now I personally share many of these changes with them except for the sexual activities. But since I don't share that aspect of their life with them I can't share much empathy with them and certainly would not presume to speak for them in any debate about various aspects of their lives. By the same token I would not want any one of them to undertake to speak for me and other heterosexual transgenderists. So similarity is not the same as identity.

But there are those out there who feel that they can. I refer to them as Gender Fundamentalists because, like all other fundamentalists, they think they know best and know how things ought to be. So their message is "we have a hold on the truth and the right way ... we know what's best, so come over to our point of view and do things as they should be done." It is strange but true that the ones who are most vocal, most in print and most publicly active are the transsexuals. Their main point of attack is Tri-Ess because of the policy (which in their anointed wisdom they like to term "exclusionary") of selecting heterosexuals only, which

conflicts with what they proclaim to be the only right way for a group to be ... open to all comers. Why can't they just let things lie and be the way the members of Tri-Ess want it to be? Because they are the fundamentalists who know what is best for everyone and take it as gender gospel that since God created all kinds of people (many of whom crossdress in one way or another and in various degrees), any group in our field should be open to anyone who walks in the door.

I don't know of lawyers who belong to the American Dental association unless they also have a degree of D.D.S. nor of Chiropractors belonging to the Aeronautical Engineers Society. All over our society there are groups designed for people with specific education, interests, talent, or occupation. That is, all kinds of groups are selective about the kinds of people they admit and they are not considered bigoted, narrow-minded, or exclusionary for doing so. Now to the extent that there are laws that may affect any or all of the constituent groups in the so-called "transgender community" adversely, heterosexual crossdressers as individuals or Tri-Ess as an organization can and will cooperate in efforts to get rid of oppressive laws or to lobby for new ones. If there is police persecution of individuals or groups in that community we will certainly do what we can to help stop such activities. If there are professional conventions the attendees of which need some education about our people, groups or activities

**"Transsexuals "know" that SRS is the 'way to go (so why don't you come our way too?)."**

But maybe we should start off with some understanding about what distinguishes a fundamentalist from his (or her) contemporaries. Among the Moslem fundamentalists the Koran contains all the certain truths that the religion prescribes and a devout and fundamental Moslem must subscribe to and live by those precepts because they are true and basic and Allah dictated them to Muhammad. So those that believe it literally and seek to live by its teachings are called fundamentalists because they have the "real truth" (and all Moslems should follow their example). But all Moslems don't take that seriously. There are secular Moslems who read and revere the Koran but try to make some compromises with the real world.

Jews have the Torah and the Old Testament of the Bible, much of which was supposed to have been delivered into the hands (or ears) of the prophets by Yahweh (Jehovah) and is therefore the fundamental statement of the faith. This creates conflict between so-called secular Jews and the Orthodox, such as the recent uproar about closing one of Jerusalem's main streets on the Sabbath. So the Orthodox have the "real and fundamental truth" (and all other Jews should recognize it and live by it).

Essentially the same situation occurs in Christianity wherein there are sects that believe quite literally in the Bible as being the word of God and interpret it in their own way. Since it is the "real truth" they think that all other Christians should believe it and live by it as they do.

Now note the common thread here. All of these types of persons who recognize the "real truth" of their religion are called fundamentalists, because they base their beliefs on that fact and try to persuade others to see things the same

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we would certainly cooperate and we have done so. In short, where common action is called for and appears to be in the best interests of Tri-Ess as a constituent member of the transgender coalition, Tri-Ess will participate, but only when it has nothing to do with the nature of our membership.

It is interesting to note in passing that Tri-Ess doesn't accept bisexuals or homosexuals either; but their community doesn't raise a hue and cry about it as the transsexuals do. This is because transsexuals are the main fundamentalists; many "know" that SRS is the "way to go (so why don't you come our way too?)." Besides, "selecting us out" as it were is particularly hurtful to people who believe that they really possess the secret of happiness. The gays pay no attention to Tri-Ess because they don't have to. They have their own political action activities, their own newspapers and magazines, their own restaurants and meeting places and they have achieved a pretty good level of social tolerance (I can't quite say social acceptance). Why should they care if some hetero organization doesn't want gays as members?

But those poor transsexuals! They don't have any of the confidence building mechanisms that gays have. They don't have anywhere to go because there are no effective organizations for TSs. So they remember somewhat longingly that they were crossdressers once and they kind of look back on those days with a kind of what might be called "sexual nostalgia" ... remembering the days when they were a kind of human, a male or a female burdened with requirements and expectations to be sure, but nevertheless they fitted in somewhere. Now after surgery they are neither fish nor fowl since they have no reproductive organs of any kind and they probably could not survive without synthetic hormones of one kind or the other the rest of their lives. They are not really male and really not female and that has to be a major mental burden (although I am sure they would be the last to admit it). But nobody made them have the surgery, so now that they have had it, why don't they just go about living their own lives, forming their own organizations and building their own amorphous psychology and leave the rest of us alone? We feel no need to bother them; why do they feel a need to bother us? ("Bother" in this case refers to their complaints about Tri-Ess' policy of selectivity.) After all for every TS in the country there are probably a thousand heterosexual males who enjoy their little occasional "micro-vacations" of an evening, a weekend or a convention away from the limitations of masculinity.

It occurs to me that the XY fraternity in general is "exclusionary" in that they don't permit any XX people in. Also come to think of it, how much more "exclusionary" can you get than surgically excluding the rest of humanity except fellow TSs from their little (and I do mean little) club?

Finally, I believe that little word "coalition" should be used

in place of community. A true "community" is a place where a lot of individuals and families live rather close to each other and share a lot of life's problems, They cooperate with each other when there is some kind of threat to the integrity of that group, but do not undertake to tell one or another members of that community what color to paint their house, what kind of car to buy or what stocks to buy. There is no place for fundamentalists in that kind of a true community. But some of the various kinds of people who make up our "coalition" are fundamentalists and believe that they know best how others should run their lives and their groups. It is bad enough when the facts led someone to make up the riddle "what is the difference between an Iranian terrorist (who are well known fundamentalists) and a transsexual?" The answer is that "you can negotiate with a terrorist." But now we are being deprived of even that outlet since the fundamentalists have become the transsexuals and the transsexuals have become fundamentalists. Apparently we can run but we can't hide.



Virginia Prince is a co-founder of *The Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess)* and the former publisher of *Transvestia* magazine. She may be contacted at P.O. Box 36091, Los Angeles CA 90036.

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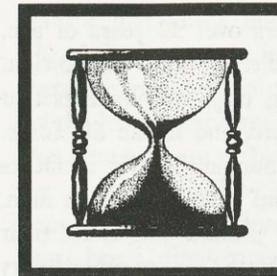


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## HIS/HERSTORY

# CHANGING GENDER ACROSS ASIA

by Roberta Perkins

Crossing gender in that vast area of the world called Asia occurred in a great variety of environments, in teeming cities and lonely desert oasis towns, in steaming jungle villages and peasant communities everywhere.

**Mukhannathun and Xanith of the Middle East:** In Islamic concepts little separates homosexuality, crossdressing and hermaphroditism. In the Koran, IV:20, sodomy and anything considered associated with it is fiercely condemned. Translated to law, both practices were forbidden in Muslim states and in the more fundamental communities both were considered as serious as murder and punishable by stoning to death. Earlier than Islam in Persia, the Zoroastrian laws, based on the Vendidad's condemnation of sodomy as the vilest of sins, punished homosexuals and crossdressers with disemboweling and beheading. During its recent period of fundamentalism under the Ayatollah Khomeini, such ferocious laws were reintroduced in Iran. Yet, throughout the long history of the Arabian Middle East gender crossing took place everywhere. The 9th century Koran scholar Al-Bukhari referred to men who desired to be women as *Mukhannathun* and to women who wished to be men as *Mutarajjulut*. But, in fact, whilst there are many reports on male gender crossers, there are very few on their female counterparts. This situation may reflect the confinement of women in the purdah system. In Cairo male gender crossing took two forms: the *khawals*, or female impersonators who danced in the streets for an income, and the *ginks*, or male crossdressing prostitutes. In 1834 when Egyptian law forbade women to dance in the street, the *khawals* had a monopoly on this form of entertainment. Because it was too dangerous for women to travel on caravans Afghan merchants took "travelling wives," boys dressed as girls, with them on their journeys. In the Turkish bath houses of Constantinople crossdressing boys attended to patrons sexual needs. In Bedouin oasis camps trannie dancers performed for desert sheiks. But in earlier times, drastic measures were sometimes taken, such as the Caliph Suleiman of 8th century Mecca who ordered all trannies castrated to make them appear more like women.

A recent study of trannies in Oman demonstrates the ambivalence with which Muslims react to gender crossers.

Referred to as *xanith* (soft men), these trannies survive by working on the streets as prostitutes (there are no female prostitutes on the streets). In Sohar, a town with 3,000 adult men there are as many as 60 *xanith*. Whilst these *xanith* clearly identify as women, Omani law forbids them to dress in female clothing, so they improvise by wearing their male clothes in a way that signifies effeminacy.

## The history of gender crossers in the societies that populate the Asian continent.

Anthropologist Unni Wikan, who investigated the *xanith* in the 1970s claims they are seen as a third sex with some of the privileges of both men and women. For instance, they can sit with the men in a mosque where women are prohibited, and they may visit women in their homes when the household males are not in, which informality is forbidden to non-related men.

**India's Hijras and Tribal Trannies:** In the various laws of Hinduism homosexuality is lightly frowned upon but crossdressing is not considered at all. This may reflect the androgynous nature of many Hindu gods and there is a long ideological tradition in India of the same soul for both sexes, which was often expressed in art as a figure with both breasts and a penis. Little wonder that the traditional trannies of Hindu society, the *hijras* (eunuchs), were treated with a mixture of respect and good natured fun. Their ostracism of recent years is due first to Islamic then to Christian reactions to them. The *hijras* are often thought of as a third sex, like the *xaniths*, but it is probably better to describe them as androgynous since they express the melding of the sexes. Although, most *hijras* would hotly demand that they be received as women and they insist on having the same privileges as women, though not necessarily men. Some *hijras* have sexual relationships with men, but most claim they are asexual. Although most would be described as transgenders, some are intersexuals, and others, referred to as pseudo-hijras by genuine hijras,

are simply crossdressers, homosexual or otherwise. Traditionally hijras earned a living as entertainers, often hired by the rich to perform at social events, but these days many work as prostitutes due to a declining demand for hijra dancing.

The institution of the hijras continues today, and is centered in Bombay, where seven houses, or local communities, of them exist. Each community has its *guru* who has a teacher-disciple relationship with the rest of the community. A new hijra must appear before the guru and prove her genuine intention to permanently change gender. In previous times the novice hijra were obliged to undergo castration, but this is no longer obligatory. After receiving the blessing of the guru the newcomer enters a commune of up to 15 other hijras with whom she lives and shares incomes. They adopt female kinship terms such as "sister," "mother," "daughter," "grandmother," depending on the nature of the perceived relationship.

Although the institution of the hijras is widespread across India, it is largely urban based. There are other traditions, such as the male sect of the *Vallabha*, devotees of the god Krishna, who dress as women because they believe it pleases the deity. A tantric sect devoted to the goddess Durga includes male worshippers who dress as women as a way of understanding their inner feminine selves and experiencing true love. Apart from the Hindu-related gender crossings, in India's tropical interior certain forest and hill tribes have crossdressing and gender crossing traditions that preceded Hinduism. Some Hijra men were castrated as boys and thereafter lived as women. Among the Lhoosi and Kooki men who found themselves impotent were forced to dress as women. These traditions are unlike the sacred gender crossers of Southeast Asia, and appear to use crossdressing as a means of humiliating inadequate men.

**Yin and Yang and Tan:** As elsewhere in Asia, the vast region of China has had a myriad of crossdressing and gender crossing behaviors in the cities and in peasant communities. But the traditional criminal codes established by Ta Tsing Leu Lee in the Sh'in Dynasty treated homosexuality and transvestism as the same misdemeanor, punishable with 100 blows with a cane and

one month in prison for offenders over 12 years of age. There appears to be a contradiction with the ancient Chinese ideology of *yin* and *yang*, opposite elements that are found in the cosmos, in nature, and in the life force. Accordingly, both exist in every human, but yin elements tend to be stronger in women, and yang stronger in men. Nevertheless, the essential fact of yin and yang is not their opposing characteristics, but their complimentary attributes. Thus, the human cosmology is only harmonious when females and males are combined. However, the ideology and the reality have rarely been in harmony in China.

When Marco Polo visited China in the 13th century he found male prostitutes dressed as women staging a street demonstration in protest over their treatment by the authorities. The Chinese authorities under Kubla Khan were also attempting to close down the theaters because the female impersonating performers were making a bit extra on the side by offering sexual services to the patrons. These were some examples of Chinese outrage towards attempts at crossing gender. On the other hand, one of the most respected of Chinese traditions was the institution of the *tan*, or female impersonator in the classic theatre and opera of imperial China. The *tan* came into their own after the emperor Ch'ien Lung in the 18th century barred women from performing on stage because too many of them ended up as courtesans. But, unlike the female impersonators of the Elizabethan stage, the *tan* lived as women, and in many cases were more feminine than biological females. Some of them became national superstars in their time. One of the greatest *tan* of recent times was Mei Lan-fang (1894-1961), who was voted China's most popular performer in 1924. With the coming to power of the communists the *tan* were seen as remnants of a decadent past and the institution finally died with the cleansing of the cultural revolution. One *tan* who did manage to survive the communist purge in tact was Shi Pei Pu, but only by becoming a spy for the government. Pei Pu had a love affair with a French diplomat, and even feigned pregnancy, without him ever knowing. The diplomat was genuinely shocked when the whole matter of the spying was brought to court in 1983.

Pei Pu had never undergone sex reassignment surgery (the story was made into a play, *M Butterfly*). In recent years the institution of the *tan* has been revived in China, but the female impersonation is confined to the stage.

**The Onnagata and Tolerated Trannies in Japan:** Japan has both a similar and a very different history of transgenders than China. For one thing, prostitution has long been condemned by Japanese morality, while transvestism was tolerated, and homosexuality did not become illegal until 1868 when efforts were made to stamp out the cult of the *Samurai*, in which warrior-novice sexual relations were commonplace. In 1652 a law attempted to stop youths soliciting in the theaters, but the boys simply moved onto the streets as transvestites. Elsewhere crossdressing and prostitution went hand in glove amongst geisha-boys in tea houses, and by boys on most streets of Osaka. The tradition of stage female impersonation known as the *oyama* dates back to 1629 when females were banned from appearing on stage. The greatest of the *oyama* was Yoshizay Ayame, a late 17th century female impersonator who wrote the script for the profession. He supported himself by prostitution from an early age and occasionally crossdressed to please his customers. One client was so impressed by his beauty when dressed as a woman he suggested he take up female impersonation on stage. Soon he became the best of them, and eventually the most famous of all *oyama*. Ayame wrote a guide for future *oyama*. To be a successful *oyama* the guide recommended an actor had to live the daily life of a woman. Studying feminine mannerisms became an art

with the *oyama*, who claimed that this close observation of women made them more feminine than most females. The better known *onnagata*, female impersonators of the *Kabuki* theatre, also believed that men could make better women than women themselves, and they too were so dedicated to their profession that they also lived their lives as women. What has confused the issue for the *onnagata* is the long association of homosexuality amongst actors of all kinds in *Kabuki*. This reputation has tainted the true professionalism of the *onnagata*, who, one recent writer claims "are able to express the feelings and the beauty of the Japanese women of old more vividly than actual actresses." The most recent *onnagata* superstar, Bando Tamasuburo, has even taken the profession into western drama by playing the roles of Lady Macbeth and Desdemona. The *onnagata* is a highly respected continuing tradition of modern Japan. Writer-historian of female impersonation on stage, Roger Baker, says that the *onnagata* "symbolises femininity rather than impersonates it, for he represents a sort of archetypal androgyn, the bisexual nature of both men and women." If this is true then the concept of *onnagata* is closer to the ideals of Hinduism than of the Chinese *yin* and *yang*.



*Roberta Perkins is affiliated with the School of Sociology at The University of New South Wales, Kensington. This series is adapted from her thesis in anthropology; the concluding installment, on transgendered people of more modern times, will appear in Cross-Talk #86.*

**GENDER IDENTITY DISORDER ... continued from page 15**

Dr. Rochelle Klinger, immediate past chair of the APA's lesbian and gay issues committee, agreed that in theory the diagnosis is sound. But she is concerned that the diagnosis is sometimes seriously misused. Besides, she believes, it is unnecessary. She says that a person who is seriously distressed about is or her gender can be diagnosed with "adjustment disorder," which covers all of the cases GID is meant to cover. But Klinger also worries that attempts to destigmatize gender nonconformist behavior may backfire. She notes that two years ago, when the APA removed the diagnosis for transsexualism, the chief opponent was the Christian Coalition. The conservative group believed that the new diagnosis was too lenient toward transgendered people by acknowledging that not all transvestites and transsexuals, for example, had a mental disorder. Her fear is that by reopening the debate, gay, lesbian, and transgender activists may open the door for another assault by the Christian Coalition. One possible result could be the reinstatement of the transsexual diagnosis abandoned by the APA two years ago.

"I think the activists should focus on individual cases (of misuse) rather than on the APA as a whole," she said. Next month: Some of the individual "horror stories" about what happens when the GID diagnosis is incorrectly applied.



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## The Bearded Lady

by Ricky Hunt

Illustration by Rita

[Editor's Note: The Postal Service somehow managed to lose Rita's artwork for Ricky's column this month. Rather than disappoint our readers by running the column sans illustration, we are repeating the most requested past column of Ricky's (and the first column to appear in our pages illustrated) to give Rita time to recreate the lost artwork. This column has thus originally appeared twice previously; in *Cross-Talk* #42 (April 1993) and *Cross-Talk* #15 (May 1990).]

"He can't be serious", quoth the editor. I mean, how can a transvestite with a beard be serious? Of course our friendly neighborhood editor didn't tell me this until we had gotten to know each other thru the mail and he saw me in my unshaven state, but I've got to admit he has a point.

But before I haul out the razor let's start at the beginning. If a man in woman's clothing has a odd ring to it then a 6'2", 250 pound wolf in sheep's clothing is surely fair game for some hearty guffaws. If there is one thing serious about the situation it is that I have enjoyed bras, panties and garters for the last 20 years, and I still do, but I only enjoy this apparel in the privacy of a motel room or other secluded setting. When I dress it is for the feel of the clothing and the intrinsic pleasure it brings, and this pleasure is largely separate from the rest of my life. I make no distinction between Ricky and Ralph, and when you add this to the fact that I am in serious contention for the laziest person in the world it becomes obvious that shaving is an activity that holds little fascination for me. Besides, the beard hides my double chin and keeps small children from running off screaming.

But all things change. I discovered Tri-Ess and as I got to know others with the same peculiar hobby a tiny devil began to rattle his pitchfork between my ears. I mean, just what did I look like under all that hair? As I looked thru the directory I felt a pointed thought take shape: "Maybe you could look like her" (him?) (them?). When I strolled thru Lane Bryant, "Wouldn't it be nice to know if this thing will fit before I pay for it?" scratched at the base of my neck. When the night became late in my motel room, "Damn, it would be nice to take a walk in a skirt" began to claw somewhere above my right eye. But the next morning, when I crawled blearily out of bed, the thought became "I'm gonna kill myself if I get my hands on anything sharp



when I feel like this", and the beard was safe for another day.

That is until the weekend before Thanksgiving when, with the kids gone for the night, curiosity overcame me. Before sanity could return in the morning my wife hauled out the scissors, soap and razor and the deed was done. Well, started anyway. Along the way we made some discoveries. Like it takes a long time to get rid of a beard that has had all those years to take root. Like two hours. Like the first shave after 15 years hurts! like razor burn is not any better than it was when a teenager I knew was trying desperately to shape what he then called a beard. Like the beard I had now was rather blue immediately after a close shave, and the young man who could miss shaving for two days and never notice was gone forever. Like I had to shave my chest or wear turtle-necks. Like I'd be damned if I would shave my arms too. Like it was a Dumb Idea to start this at 10:00 on Friday night. Like my wife doesn't use the kind of makeup I need and that the body paint pencils just won't cover a beard.

Talk about your learning experiences. I won't go into detail about the other things I learned about trying to procure makeup in a small town that would cover a blue shadow, or the gyrations involved to get another night alone to get the pictures that all this was being done for, or the funny looking stranger who stared back at me in the mirror. Suffice it to say that Saturday night all was ready and Ricky made her first appearance in full regalia. It is difficult to describe the experience. Since the beard made the use of makeup rather unnecessary I had never experimented with it before. I can only try to describe the warm glow as I sat there, dressed in my favorite bra and best blouse while my wife curled my hair, painted my face and generally worked me over. There was a deep, warm glow to simply sit there and be fussed over, an intensely

pleasurable feeling that every man should know. In a sense this was the culmination of the feelings that make me dress, and to be totally accepted for awhile is a beautiful experience.

Even the pulled hair, curling iron burns, and exasperated demands to "Keep your eyes open until the mascara dries!" could not dampen the excitement and pleasure. Finally all was complete and I looked in the mirror. It was kind of a shock to see my sister in there. Now I know that one of my stature should not expect Miss America to return his gaze in the mirror, but anyone but my sister! Please! Oh well, I guess we are what we are, or at least what our makeup makes us seem.

Anyway, out came the camera, the flash, the backdrop and the commands to "keep your legs together, you're supposed to be a lady" and "straighten your shoulders, if you're going to wear a bra you may as well show off your attributes." Somehow those 36 exposures ran through my wardrobe and poses from serious to whimsical. I'll let you in on a secret. I'll never get a ride if I hitchhike with my skirt pulled up on one leg. The ten days before the pictures came back were an eternity, and then I learned something else. I was so excited about my first pictures as Ricky that I forgot everything I knew about photography. They were undoubtedly the most technically bad pictures I have ever taken, and I'm glad that they were processed by a computer because they were embarrassing. But still, in all they did provide an excuse for Ricky to sit under the ministering hands of her hairdresser and makeup artist a second time, which made the situation easier to bear.

This time I retained my former professional instincts, set the equipment up properly, and zipped thru another 36 frames all too quickly. The results were technically better, but I fear Ricky will never be able to hide her hairy arms or blue shadow without enough makeup to keep Max Factor in business forever. A head and shoulders shot provides a view of a matron that will now be known to the world as Ricky, for better or worse.

Ah, but now comes the problem. The morning came once again and I found that I could not convince Miss America to replace my reflection, even with lucrative offers of multi-year contracts and promises of anonymity. The thought of looking at that face every morning while employing a razor took on its old horror, and the fun of watching the double takes diminished as I ran out of people who hadn't seen me lately. Much to the dismay of our friendly neighborhood editor I regret to announce that I have given the razor to my wife for her legs and the phiz is once again hirsute. Sorry 'bout that.

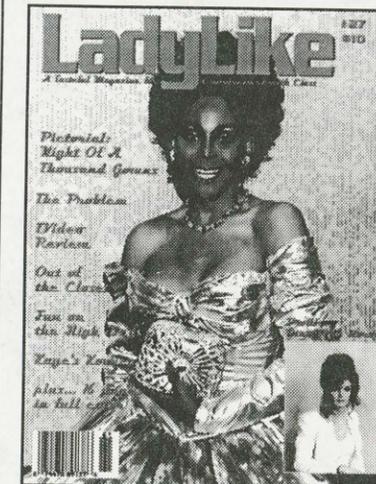
But I still am serious. Really I am ...



Another reprint of Ricky's -- this one dealing with the serious subject of telling teenagers about crossdressing -- is available from *Cross-Talk*. See page 32 for information on Hey Dad ... Do I Have To Watch The TV?

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by Kay Lightner



from the archives of Ralph Judd



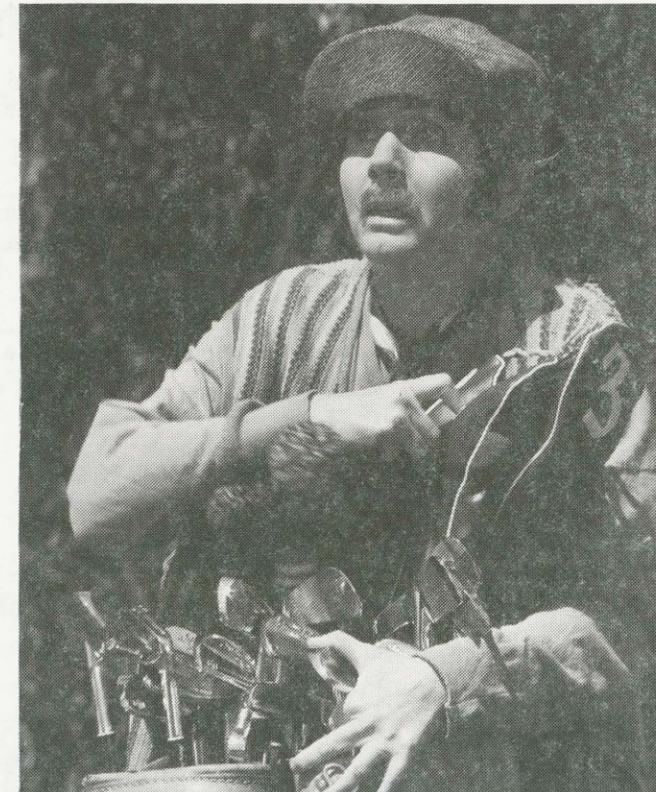
3/13/72: Alan Sues plays Jo Anne Worley opposite Dick Martin's Tiny Tim on *Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In*, NBC.



10/4/65: Vic Damone, Andy, and Eddie Fisher in a sketch on *The Andy Williams Show*, NBC.



12/1/62: Mama Weaver (Cliff Arquette) welcomes Edgar Bergen and Effie Klinker to *The Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Show*, ABC.



Airdate unknown (1969-70 season): One of Debbie's schemes involves impersonating a male caddy, on *The Debbie Reynolds Show*, NBC.

# WHO'S WELCOME IN WOMEN'S SPACES? (Analysis)

by Jane Anna Langley

**Combining Tests:** The results were a little disappointing; none of the tests/definitions met all of the criteria, but some only just missed out. It is natural that we would want to do better, so let's see if we can combine the strengths of the tests to see if we can come up with a test that does meet the criteria. One of the reasons I have used small, precise (in most cases logically atomic) definitions is that we could generate more sophisticated definitions by logically combining them.

There are two obvious ways of combining the tests. Let's take two tests; let's be romantic about it and call them A and B. First we can create what is known as a conjunction of the two tests, which means that the subject must pass both tests. We say the subject must pass "A and B". Alternatively we could create disjunctive tests -- that is the subject must pass "A or B". In other words they need only pass one of the tests to succeed.

In logic, *and* and *or* are known as connectives. Other connectives we could use are *not*, *implies*, *exclusive-or*, and there are many others, however all of these logical connectives are equivalent to combinations of the connectives "not" and "or." For example A and B is equivalent to *not(not A or not B)*.

So let's find out if "not" and "or" allow us to build on the strengths of our tests.

*Not* -- To negate a test all we have to do is apply the test and declare the opposite result. If the test says "yes" the negated test says "no" and vice versa. Since the test is not modified in any other way its properties with respect to the four criteria are unchanged.

It seems like the connective "or" is our only chance.

*Or* -- Unfortunately for us "or" doesn't accumulate the strength of the tests. In fact it is even worse, it accumulates

Summary of results

Test/Definition	Testable	Effective	Repeatable	Objective
Essential	maybe	maybe	yes	no
Spiritual	maybe	maybe	maybe	no
Recursive	no	no	yes	no
Oppression	no	no	no	no
Group Self-definition	yes	maybe	no	no
Genitalia at Birth	no	no	yes	maybe
Sexual	no	yes	maybe	no
Genital I	no	yes	yes	maybe
Genital II	no	yes	yes	yes
Upbringing	maybe	no	yes	no
Functional I	no	no	no	maybe
Functional II	no	no	yes	maybe
Visual	yes	no	yes	no
Voice	yes	no	maybe	maybe
Clothing	yes	no	no	no
Mental	no	no	maybe	maybe
Legal	maybe	yes	no	no
Chromosomal I	no	yes	yes	yes
Chromosomal II	no	yes	yes	yes
Hormonal	no	yes	no	yes
Cultural	maybe	no	no	maybe
Behavioral	yes	no	no	no
Binary Opposite	maybe	maybe	maybe	maybe

their weaknesses. How is this so? Let's use tests A and B again. Imagine that B meets all the criteria, but A fails on say "repeatability". If we then go and apply the test on someone who passes test B then the combined test will be fine, but if we apply it to someone who passes A only, then the combined test will have the same repeatability problem as test A alone.

So when I say that the weaknesses are accumulated, I mean precisely that if we use "or" to combine a test that fails "repeatability" with one that fails "objectivity", then the combined test will be neither repeatable nor objective.

**Where does this lead us?:** 1. None of the 23 candidate definitions or their associated tests meet all of the criteria.

2. Any definition of "woman" that meets my four criteria cannot contain any of the definitions I have listed above. This is because any test we build using any of the candidate definitions will be flawed with respect to the four criteria. For those that are interested, this can easily be proved inductively.

As a corollary to these results, we now have a means to weed out defective definitions in the future. We simply have to look at the "atomic" definitions from which a definition is composed, if any of the "atomic" definitions fail to meet any of the criteria, then so will the overall definition.

Phew!

**A Thought Experiment:** Suppose we try an altogether different approach. Instead of the black and white approach we have just examined, let's look at all the shades of grey.

Here is a little thought experiment for you. My experiment is from Martine Rothblatt, in her book *The Apartheid of Sex*. I can't put it any better than Martine does ...

*A teacher assigned Gordon Allport's The Nature of Prejudice as required reading. The book aims to demolish prejudice by letting us understand the nature of stereotyping. It suggests we imagine everyone in the world lined up from darkest person to lightest person and asks us if we could possibly agree where "black" begins or where "white" ends. Of course it is impossible. The book then suggests that races don't exist out there in the "real world" but instead exist only in our minds. We try to simplify the world by grouping like things together. Like skin tones become races. Like characteristics become racial stereotypes.*

It doesn't take much imagination to adapt this example to the subject of gender.

Let us imagine that we can rate every person with a "femaleness-rating" according to how well they fit each of the candidate-definitions that I have described. Although, any other method of ranking

people for "femaleness" will do just fine.

Could we possibly agree where "male" (or maybe just "not female") ends and "female" begins. I see no reason to believe that we could.

**What is the Point?:** All this discussion has been centered around the notion that there is some legitimate reason for determining whether each individual is male or female. As a society we seem to be passionately interested in the sex of each individual. As a transsexual, I can vouch from personal experience how deeply ingrained that interest is, it may be almost invisible unless you have some reason not to play by the rules. But this interest is not an idle one; government, the law, medicine, and almost every other institution in our society want to know your sex when they deal with you, and it may well make a difference to your entitlements.

The fact that people's opportunity in life is in many ways determined by sex, when we cannot even come up with a fair and reliable test to differentiate the sexes, is blatantly unfair. It is also totally unsupportable in a society that claims to have done away with discrimination on the basis of sex.

This may never present a problem to you if your membership of the male or female sex has never been in dispute. But if you pass one person's (or institution's, or nation's) test for being female, but not another's, watch out!

**Conclusion:** I propose that since we seem unable to come up with a definitive definition, that we adopt a working definition of womanhood in the interim.

"A woman is anyone who defines them-self as a woman."

It doesn't meet the criteria, but I think it is the fairest one we can come up with for the time being. Then who can use women's spaces? Anyone who defines "them-self" as a woman.

Now many people have opposed transgendered women using "women's space", claiming that they have behaved badly in the past, being domineering, talking over people, generally behaving inappropriately. I am not going to defend bad, boorish behavior. However, if someone behaves badly in women's space, kick them out ... whoever they are!

I would argue that to exclude transgendered women from women's space on the basis of them not being women is unfair, until you can come up with a fair definition of "woman". To refuse them as a class on the basis of a stereotype of their behavior is prejudice -- in exactly the same manner as it is prejudicial for a club owner to refuse service to a Koori based on a stereotype of Koori behavior.



[This work is a more complete version of the presentation by Jane Anna Langley at NOWSA95. The author may be contacted by e-mail at <janie@natasha.ironbark.id.au>. Copyright 1995, Jane Anna Langley.]

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## Alternative Presses

by Kimberleigh Richards

While it has been a year since *Monsieur d'Eon Is a Woman* (BasicBooks, 1995, ISBN 0-465-04761-0) was released, I have delayed reviewing it for one compelling reason: The story of the Chevalier Charles-Genevieve-Louise-Auguste-Andre-Thimothée d'Eon is so legendary in our community that I felt an obligation to give Gary Kates' work a thorough (and careful) reading before reporting on it.

I should advise, at the outset, that Professor Kates told me over a year ago that many of the fables and interpretations of the story of d'Eon would be challenged by this book, and that has turned out to be an understatement. For in his research, conducted painstakingly over several years and involving the collection of d'Eon's papers at the University of Leeds Libraries, Kates has discovered that the reason for the Chevalier's gender-bending was not as related to the modern-day crossdresser or transsexual as we have always presumed. What we instead learn is that d'Eon was a feminist in an era when women were decidedly excluded from even so basic a thing as a decent education and that the politics of the late 18th century had more to do with his living the last half of his life as a woman than any desire to emulate the opposite gender.

D'Eon underwent his gender transformation in response to a failed political career -- both as a spy for Louis XV and as an ambassador to England around the time of the American Revolution -- and then used the circumstances of that transformation to improve women's role in society, Kates argues. Surprisingly, there was also a strong moral/theological thread underlying d'Eon's actions (he felt that men were created by God to "do bad" and that women held exclusive claim to virtue) and this is explored in great detail as well.

Reading *Monsieur d'Eon Is a Woman* feels more like reading a spy novel set in the late 1700s than to read the biography of a gender outlaw, for it is only after Louis XVI declared him a woman in 1776 that d'Eon conceived of a way to turn that attempt to discredit him into a matter of



public record. Contrary to the fictionalized and fantastic musings of our community, d'Eon was not transgendered in the sense of the word as we define it; indeed, he had no true desire to appear publicly in women's clothing, wishing instead to continue wearing his Dragoon uniform (which any former Dragoon officer was *required* to wear in public, according to the customs of the day) and thus elevate women to a higher status.

The subtitle of the book reads "A Tale of Political Intrigue and Sexual Masquerade," but it is much more the former than the latter. It is only because the Chevalier d'Eon is so well-known in history for the "deception" he so successfully engineered that the fascination with the later years of his life have captured the attention of so many.

This book, then, is for those who want the unvarnished truth about d'Eon rather than the whimsical tales spun around the last four decades of his life; if you look to this book for validation of your own transgendered behavior or for tales of his "wonderful, liberated life as a woman" you will be disappointed. But as a historical tome (the author chairs the history department at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas), this is a fascinating look at one of the more interesting figures in modern times, and is well worth the time to read.

One last thought: Do not fail to peruse the extensive notes section at the end of the book, as there are a few things there that will surprise you as well!

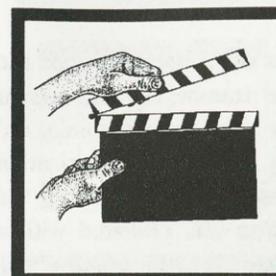


I am three months late in mentioning the release of the summer issue of the *Harvard Educational Review* (vol. 66, no. 2) on "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People and Education" which was released in late June, for which I apologize.

The inclusion of transgender is not mere lip service; included is an article recounting the struggle in 1994 to bring Leslie Feinberg to speak at commencement exercises at a small liberal arts college (the administration had decided that Feinberg's message was "inappropriate" for a commencement speech), an article on identity development and two-spirit people uses the *berdache* as an important example, and an article on the shifting of gender roles as a result of women assuming greater responsibilities in society relies heavily on the gradual masculinization of women as a factor.

The one thing I found interesting, given that Cambridge is still in the same state as IFGE -- at least last time I checked -- is that they are conspicuously absent from the resource listings in the back of this issue of the *Review* (the only transgender-specific resources listed are **Cross-Talk** and **AEGIS**).

For ordering information, telephone 1-800-513-0763 or write Gutman Library 349, 6 Appian Way, Cambridge MA 02138.



## MOVIE REVIEW

### MAYBE ... MAYBE NOT

by Diane Chaplin

Who knows why Sonke Wortmann's mildly entertaining sex farce, *Maybe ... Maybe Not*, has become one of the highest-grossing German films in history.

Is it because the movie was adapted from a popular late-'80s German comic book? Or is its depiction of a group of homosexuals as lecherous gorgons camping it up in clownish drag all it takes to tickle the German funny bone? Or is Til Schweiger, the actor portraying Axel, a young man who becomes the heart's desire of almost every gay man and straight woman to cross his path, the European heartthrob to end all European heartthrobs?

One problem with this German-made movie is that it is English sub-titled. Sub-titled comedies are seldom very funny unless the sight gags are so hilarious unto themselves that no one really cares very much about the dialogue. With this film, I sense the subtleties of the delivery are *much!* (Where is Mack Sennett when we need him?)

The review is short because the film is almost plotless. It is, moreover, a series of boy meets girl, boy meets boy, girl finds out stuff, coupled with a lot of stereotyped gay jokes, probably because the premise for the film was taken from a German comic book.

*Maybe ... Maybe Not* follows the adventures of Axel, a handsome twinkling-eyed waiter who finds himself kicked out of the house by his girlfriend, Doro (Katja Riemann), after she catches him cheating with another woman. Axel ends up rooming with Norbert

(Joachim Krol), a gay sad sack whom he meets at a men's discussion group. When Axel moves in, he brings along a noisy pet bird named Shevardnadze, who has mastered the canny trick of playing dead in order to be let out of his cage. Once liberated, the bird devours every plant in sight. Don't ask how, but just when Doro discovers she is pregnant and decides to forgive all, she stumbles upon Axel in what only appears to be a sexually compromising situation with Norbert. It is the first of several times in the movie that Doro receives the wrong signal about Axel's

sexual orientation, and each time she goes ballistic. The story builds to a frenzied bedroom farce sequence at the height of which Doro goes into labor.

*Maybe ... Maybe Not* lampoons anyone who takes sex too seriously. And who doesn't?

The men in the discussion group where Norbert and Axel first connect are a bunch of humorless milquetoasts who sit around ludicrously theorizing about activities they are far too terrified ever to dare to try. Doro and her friends are the jealous, man-obsessed German equivalents of the "Cosmopolitan" girl, obsessively scheming to trap a man. They are also insatiably lustful. When Axel meets an ex-girlfriend for a tryst, she cajoles him into sniffing an inhalant called Bull Power, which she promises will turn him into a grunting, uncontrollable beast.

The gay characters are downright creepy. When not getting themselves up in outlandish drag costumes, they are either whining about their fleeting love affairs or drooling masochistically over unavailable males like Axel.

When Norbert, who is a vegetarian, begins a relationship with Horst (Armin Rohde) a flabby, leather-vested butcher who is sexually impotent, the movie can't resist making jokes about sausage.

What lends this flimsy comedy a certain grace is the unselfconscious performance of Schweiger as the hunk everyone wants a piece of.

In a role that would bring out the narcissistic worst in almost any actor, Schweiger exudes remarkably little vanity. His Axel is simply a good sport, an easygoing, careless sensualist who doesn't have a mean bone in his body.

How funny is *Maybe ... Maybe Not*? It delivers some laughs, but they are really titters stored in a junior high school locker room of the mind.

*Rated R. Starring Til Schweiger, Katja Riemann, Joachim Krol and Armin Rohde. Written and directed by Sonke Wortmann, based on the comic books by Ralf Konig. Produced by Bernd Eichinger. Released by Live Entertainment.*



Rufus Beck and Axel (Til Schweiger).

wear a skirt to school.

Yet it was not until *after* I graduated from high school in 1974 that I crossdressed for the first time, for the most part because I had already formed an impression of the social stigma attached to boys wearing girls' clothing (after all, if it was acceptable, wouldn't they have let us boys wear miniskirts back in the seventh grade?). And as much as I remember the first time I used Nair so that my legs would look feminine once I put on pantyhose and the short, yellow-and-white skirt I'd purchased for fifty cents at a thrift store (come to think of it, I still *also* remember how horrid that hair-removal product smelled), I also remember taking great pains for weeks afterward not to let anyone see my bare legs for fear they would realize what I had

been doing.

Although I didn't even crossdress often back then, by the late '70s I believed myself to be transsexual and sought help on that basis. My first entry into our community did not come through Tri-Ess or any other such organization but through Sister Mary Elizabeth (then Joanna Clark), the post-op transsexual Navy diver who was affiliated with a psychologist in San Juan Capistrano (yes, the home of the fabled swallows) who -- miracle of miracles! -- worked with transsexual patients and actually helped them get to sex reassignment surgery. So convinced was I that I was transsexual that I started living full-time several weeks before my first interview with anyone at the program.

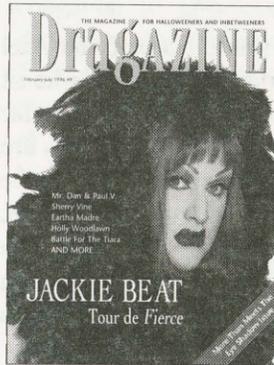
Nearly four years later, with virtually nothing standing in my way for SRS as far as my psychologist was concerned except my personal hesitancy to move forward, I began to consider the possibility that changing genitalia wasn't the answer to my personal dilemma. So I abruptly ended that track, went back to presenting as male, and cut myself off totally from anything transgendered. (There are likely still a few of my friends from that part of my life who resent the completeness of my distancing myself.)

Of course, no one ever stops being transgendered once it has surfaced as part of your nature; you can shove that aspect of your personality into the back of your mind, but eventually it will work its way back into your active consciousness. Thus, by the mid-'80s, I had reinvented a part-time "female" version of myself and began actively exploring life as a crossdresser. It was then that I also became active as a leader in this community, although I never set out to do so. Suffice it to say that by 1990, having been active in founding both a fledgling Tri-Ess chapter (which merged into Alpha less than two years after its creation and left **Cross-Talk** as its sole legacy) I was shifting back and forth between identities so frequently I couldn't even keep track of who I was supposed to be on a given day! So, one week before giving my very first college lecture on the subject of all things transgendered, I made the decision to become Kymberleigh Meghann Richards 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Six years later, I still don't regret it. One of the major factors in that decision was that there was nothing in my life that *required* Kevin to exist, and that's still the case. And I've continued to evolve on a personal level, constantly reinventing my look as I've felt the need -- perhaps that is the greatest freedom I feel, in fact -- and continuing to add information to the database in my head about what makes us all tick.

So my past experience includes elements of crossdressing, of transsexualism, of fantasy and reality. *That* is what qualifies me to continue publishing this diverse journal of our community's experiences and history. And while I hope this month's commentary silences some of my critics, I know from experience that it will not be so.

Hence the title of this month's column.



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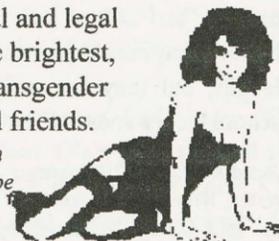
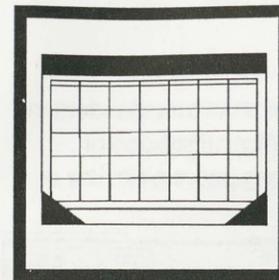


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**EVENTS  
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**October 17-20, 1996:** "Danielle's Getaway", Greer's Ferry Lake AR. Contact Danielle Storm for information at P.O. Box 61, Jonesboro AR 72403-0061 or telephone (501) 972-1826 evenings.

**October 17-21, 1996:** "A Kindred Spirits Vision Quest", Dixon Mountain NC. Details from Kindred Spirits, P.O. Box 18332, Asheville NC 28814, or by calling (704) 253-9882.

**October 20-27, 1996:** "Fantasia Fair '96", Provincetown MA, sponsored by the Outreach Institute for Gender Studies. Contact Registrar for information at P.O. Box 147, Haverford MA 19041-0147; telephone (610) 446-6042; fax (610) 688-1762; e-mail <fanfair@lng.com>.

**October 31-November 1, 1996:** "Fall Harvest '96", Cedar Rapids IA, sponsored by Mid America Gender Group Information Exchange (MAGGIE) and hosted by Iowa Artistry. Information from P.O. Box 75, Cedar Rapids IA 52406-0075, telephone (309) 755-2310.

**November 6-10, 1996:** Tri-Ess "Holiday En Femme", Chicago IL. Details from Chi Chapter at P.O. Box 40, Wood Dale IL 60191-0040 or by telephoning (708) 262-8707.

**November 8-10, 1996:** "Rainbow Spirit Convergence", for LGBT and Native healers and teachers, Highlands NC. Information from Kindred Spirits, P.O. Box 18332, Asheville NC 28814, or by calling (704) 253-9882.

**November 22-24, 1996:** "Riverside Gala Weekend '96", Cambridge Springs PA, sponsored by Eric Sisters Crossdressing Club. Details from P.O. Box 1571, Erie PA 16507.

**March 11-16, 1997:** 9th Annual "Texas 'T' Party", Dallas TX. Send SASE to P.O. Box 17, Bulverde TX 78163; phone/fax, (210) 980-7788; e-mail <txparty@aol.com>.

**April 15-20, 1997:** "California Dreamin'/IFGE California Unity", Long Beach CA, hosted by Powder Puffs Of California and other California organizations. Details from IFGE, P.O. Box 229, Waltham MA 02154 or by phoning (617) 899-2212.

**May 15-18, 1997:** "Paradise in the Poconos", Canadensis PA, produced by Creative Design Services, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia PA 19406. Information via Internet: <poco@cdspub.com> or by phone: (610) 640-9449.

**June 20-22, 1997:** Second "International Congress on Sex & Gender Issues", Valley Forge PA, co-sponsored by the Human Sexuality Program at the University of Pennsylvania and Renaissance Education Association. Contact Renaissance, 987 Old Eagle School Rd. Suite 719, Wayne PA 19087 for information, or JoAnn Roberts at Creative Design Services: (610) 640-9449, fax (610) 648-0257, or e-mail <cngrs2@cdspub.com>.

**September 18-21, 1997:** "Paradise in the Poconos", Canadensis PA. See May 15 listing for details.

*(Please send information on national transgender community events to Cross-Talk, P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365. Listings must be accompanied by a written authorization by an officer of the sponsoring organization or be listed in their group newsletter. Information will not be accepted via e-mail.)*

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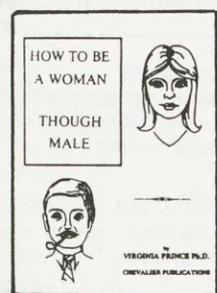
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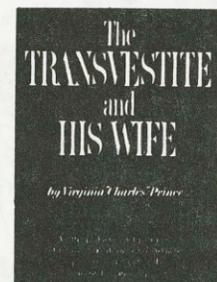
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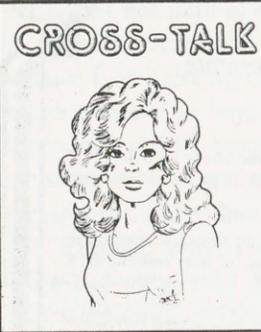
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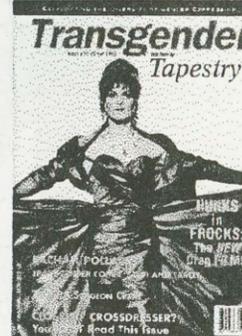
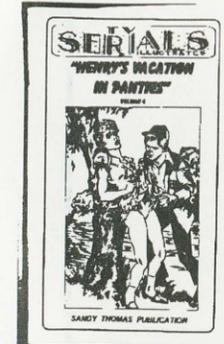
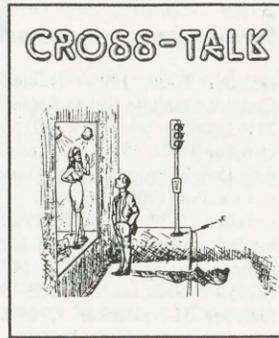
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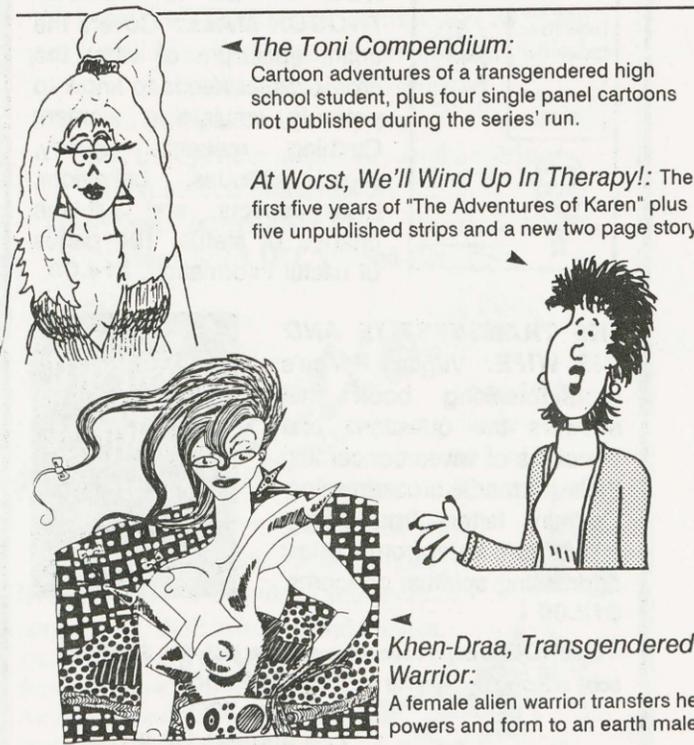
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