

THE TRANSGENDERIST

OCTOBER 1994

A Publication of Transgenderist's Independence Club, Albany, NY

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - Winnie ██████t

I don't have to write much this month because we have received some very good articles from other members. I particularly want to thank Callan ██████ who also wrote several items last month and has given us much material for a number of future issues. Please note that Callan wishes to retain copyright of most of her contributions, and anyone wishing to reprint her works should contact her for permission (write c/o TGIC if you don't have her address). Callan has a talent for clear expression of her thoughts, and I know you will enjoy her writing. This doesn't mean that other members need not write; we welcome original articles expressing all viewpoints, and letters to the editor.

DINNER PARTIES

The first dinner party of the new season on September 10 was only a twosome - Joan and Tina, at a place in Schenectady. If we can't get better attendance, we might as well give up. So, let's try again for a large turn-out on *October 8* at 8 pm, and we will still plan to make reservations at the *Northway Inn*. Please sign up at the club room or call Joan by Thursday, October 6. **Leave your number** so we can call to confirm whether "go" or "no" and verify the location.

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GUYS & GRACE - Callan ██████

You're a guy. You were raised with guy rules: belching contests, barroom brawls, big hunks of meat, colorful language. These rules, you quickly found out, were the key to getting respect, to moving up the pecking order. You learned how to be rough and tough, how to get what you wanted by going after it.

You know, somehow, that the rules for gals are different. Farting for volume is not usually a skill women work to perfect, though you probably know some guy in your college dorm who was a pro. Women have some other kind of rules.

In fact, most of women's rules revolve not around how outrageous you can be, but rather, how civilized you can be. Women base their success on respect for others, getting what they want without taking it. Women work to find common ground, to put things in order, rather than trying to force themselves to the top of the pyramid. It is almost inconceivable to picture a woman in a T shirt that says: I didn't claw my way to the top of the food chain to eat sprouts.

Women have a set of rules for behavior. It is a complex and varied set, always under change, but it does work for them. One word that can describe this set of rules is decorum. Decorum is designed to offer respect and safety while allowing a context for communication.

Some guys have learned decorum. Guys like diplomats, or PR flacks, or weenies. But most think that decorum is primarily some block to their natural behavior - that of bears with furniture, as Rita Rudner says.

That's great. But crossdressers have an issue. If they want to pass as women, if they want to really express their femininity, they can't just get the clothes right. Nope, just looking like a woman is not enough. Rather, they have to get the attitude right. They have to play their part in decorum, in respect.

One woman who has often attended gender gatherings is appalled at the table manners of crossdressers. "They look lovely, then they sit down and shovel a huge hunk of prime rib into their mouth, seemingly all at once. It's a really jarring picture, pretty lipstick and powerful, chomping jaws." Of course women have learned to eat with decorum, to be lady like. In some cultures it is polite to cover the face while eating, but in ours they make sure that the actual actions of consuming food are as unobtrusive _ and as inoffensive _ as possible.

Transsexuals usually find that they have to leave gender groups to get on with their woman journey. The crossdressers continue to see them as guys in dresses, and to treat them that way, long after they have begun putting away their guy stuff. It becomes unpleasant to try to deal with the guys, who are still playing guy dominance games, when you want to be out of the game. So what can you do? First, decide what you want to do. If you're happy being a guy in a dress, great. Act like a guy, wear a dress.

If you want to express your femininity, then you better start to deal with what femininity is, not just what femininity wears. People like honesty, and having some guy say "I am feminine - and I'll pound the shit out of anyone who says I'm not!" can seem really disconnected. While your behaviors may not be as blatant as that, if you are into only paying lip service to femininity, cut it out. It's not pretty. Just be a crossdresser, and be happy.

It's not easy to give up all that maleness. You use it everyday, and it works for you. You like it, and your partner probably likes it too. So keep it, but be honest about it.

But no matter if you try to be feminine or not, make sure you respect others as they change. The biggest advantage of any gender group is to give people a safe place for exploration of their own gender issues. Through experimentation, they can find what their own path is. This experimentation may seem odd, but gender groups are designed to give us a safe place to explore the odd or unusual we hold inside.

It can be difficult to accept change in others. You may be at a stagnant point, not accepting change in your life, and find it difficult to accept change in others. You may find that other's changes push emotional "buttons" in you that make you uncomfortable and resistant. You may resent other people's changes because you are in a situation where you can't make the changes you want to make. You may disagree with another person's choices, and resist accepting them because you don't approve.

There are lots of reasons we resist change. We resist change away from the male way that we have been trained in. We resist change because we are afraid of the potential effects of change. We may even end up being more macho, playing against our pretty outfit, so that people won't think we are wimps. Yet change is the only constant.

The one thing we must achieve some level of decorum in our expression, no matter how feminine we care to express. This means that we must learn to be honest and gracious in our own presentation and to respect others and their changes. We need to examine our resistance to honesty and respect, and learn to honor others.

One good trick that works well for men is the "What would Cary Grant do in this situation?" technique. If you feel yourself getting angry, or someone else identifies that they are upset with you, just ask yourself what Cary Grant would do in one of his movies. He would find a solution with humor and grace and still be masculine. He would cut to the essential humanity of the situation and get his point across with wit.

If Cary Grant doesn't work for you, find someone who does. But one hint: don't try Sly Stallone solutions while wearing a beaded dress. It's not pretty.

There is nothing wrong with being a guy. There is nothing wrong with being a guy in a dress. However, you will find that some grace and a sense of decorum will help not only those around you, but also help you to be more warmly accepted. And that is a good feeling.

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HER ODYSSEY - Jackie

When I bought my word processor recently, I jokingly told the salesperson I wanted to write a great novel, to justify my extravagance. But, was I really joking?

Perhaps the title of the novel I wish to write will be "HER ODYSSEY". It will be the story of a heart and soul struggle to find peace while being tortured by a body and mind gender conflict. What is happening when a child's innate, very core identity is at conflict with the label, the unyielding identity the world assigns. The protagonist, Jacqueline, battles to resolve the difference between her ethical values and the moral commandments of her Catholicism. Does she have the right to define herself in the face of society, culture and religion.

As her death approaches, Jacqueline begins to see that she never changed gender. That her male body, her childhood as a boy, and all the male things she did were because she had let the world define who she was to be. That maleness had been only superficial. That her autonomy began as she truly faced herself as a woman. Life style change, surgery, and all the things that went with it were testimony of her inner acceptance. That the femininity was always intact merely waiting there to be found, accepted and manifested to the world. That it was a buried treasure, a brilliant diamond and worth every price she had paid to get it. She realizes there was no

attachment outside, no intimacy with her lover, no relationship with anyone that could compare with the closeness of her heart and soul that she now experiences, her feeling of wholeness and happiness that is finally present now that she profoundly accepted herself.

TGIC

PO Box 13604, Albany, NY 12212-3604
(518) 436-4513 (live Thurs. 8-10 pm)

Transgenderist's Independence Club (TGIC) is a nonprofit, educational, non-sexual social support group for persons wishing to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of gender, including crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends.

TGIC Officers


President	Winnie [REDACTED]
Vice President	Joan [REDACTED]
Secretary	Joyce [REDACTED]
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Newsletter Editor	Winnie [REDACTED]

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HOPECHEST - Callan [REDACTED]s

Put it away, there. It's not for playing with.
You're not going out like that! Go upstairs and put that away!
That's not for you, it's your sister's. Put it away.
Put it away. Away in your drawer, away in the closet, away in your heart.

So many things to put away, so many things not to play with.
So you don't play. Don't feel free, don't let loose.
Might break something, might make Mommy mad.

But somewhere in your heart is a hopechest.
Full of dreams, and hopes, and knowledge of your secret self.
The charms of your magic are there
as potent as the day you learned to put them away.

The Barbie dolls and stories, magic crystals and paints
that let you play, that let you free
express who you are, who you will be.

It lays in a minefield, deep in your heart.
Protected by old taunts, and fears deep and dark
As it calls you shrink, visions of loss in your head.

From the top you grab an old pair of pantyhose, a ratty cheap wig.
And feel the power those talismans have.
Everything tingles, you shoot for the sky.
~~The thrill of the forbidden.~~

But the hopechest is still there, layered deep with treasures.
And the most magic is still at the bottom.
Sealed in layers and layers of shame guilt fear.

You know that it's there. It calls to you loudly.
And the only question becomes who is stronger
Your heart says you need your hopechest

But mommy says
Put it away, there. It's not for playing with.
You're not going out like that! Go upstairs and put that away!
That's not for you, it's your sister's. Put it away.
Put it away. Away in your drawer, away in the closet, away in your heart.

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Götterdämmerung

The Smallbany Experience, October 1994

By your pal, Miss Take

Okay. My last column wasn't quite perfect. After protracted discussions with the lawyers, we have had to cancel the *Sniff A Drag Queen* contest announced earlier. Sorry. Seems there were a number of legal, and well, how can I say it, *logistical* problems with the idea, problems that I would rather not go into here. Suffice it to say, they were not pleasant. So that idea bit the proverbial big one. If you want to sniff any drag queens, do it on your own time, not ours. Thank you.

There were also some questions about how I got the name for this column, *Götterdämmerung*. Was it from *The Damned*, the Lucino Visconti movie about the Nazis, starring Helmut Berger tarted up as Marlene Detrich in *The Blue Angel*, or is it a reference to *Das Ring Der Neibelung*, Wagner's epic ring cycle operas? Is it an allusion to the divine & depraved decadence of Berlin between the wars?

Actually, I just thought it sounded like Jennifer's old car (Miss Thang just got a new one) cruising down The Avenue. ChugChugChug just didn't have the same guttural note. The rings are in the pistons, and they need changing, if the dramatic blue smoke means anything. Go through fire or misfire? You decide! Sorry if I got your hopes up.

Anyway, October is here, the prelude to Halloween! Get down, get funky and plan for costume parties every weekend! At least that's what I'm doing!

Clubs

An Alternate Universe here in the Capital District? No, not simply getting lost in Troy, we are talking about the **Gaylaxians**, an SF group for queers and their friends in the area. They meet once a month and have a good old time. If any of you genderoids want to join them, October is the perfect month, with their annual Halloween party! Slip on your silver lame, strap on (or up) your ray gun and join them! Call Brian or Steven at [REDACTED], or drop a line to Alternate Universe Gaylaxians, P.O. Box 6054, Albany 12206. May the force be with you... or in your corset!

If you are home on Sundays, try tuning your radio to 91.5, WRPI, at noon. That's the time for **Homo Radio**, a program that covers the interest of the gay, lesbian & transgendered community. It all starts with a half-hour national newscast, and continues with another hour and a half of chat and music about what's going on in the area. From discussions to upcoming events, you will be in touch. They are nice people. Give 'em a listen.

To really have fun though, you have to join them. The *Homo Radio* folks are looking for volunteers to come in and be a radio engineer. You get to hang with some charming dykes and some sweet gay gays, dressed in anything you want, and run an entire radio station! Sounds like a Sandy Thomas novel, *Engineer in Crinolines*! But its real! Just call Allyson Beletti at [REDACTED].

If you are looking for some spiritual connections that are respectful of your gender issues, try the **Metropolitan Community Church**. MCC is spread around the country, and they are a Christian community that is affirming of the diversity of humans. Locally, they meet at Emmanuel Baptist, 275 State Street in Albany, every Sunday at 1PM. They promise affirmation & encouragement, which we can all use!

If you are wondering why these events don't include transgender, remember that it is a chicken & egg situation. If they have TG people involved, they will remember about us in names. So get out there and pitch in. Gender issues are out of the closet. Isn't it time for you to be?

Remember that when going to open gay events, no matter what your personal orientation, all that's required is a smile & an open mind. Gay people know how hard it is to be yourself in a culture that would rather have you be a clone, and they know how to smile back. Let them, you will enjoy it.

That said, note that some places are private spaces for people with specific issues. If you don't have exactly these issues, or aren't sure, ask if you can enter first. Respect begets respect.

Bars

Loved the **Waterworks** ad in Metroland. Are we out or what?. Ozz got best dance club, and WaterWorks best gay bar in the Best Of Issue of Metroland. Our community is our community. Support it.

Club Ozz is still trying hard with a full schedule of Saturday Night specials, from 6-10. October 1,22 and November 5 are Dave DeSisto's Oldies night and October 15 is Country. These are nice, like a dance rather than a pickup joint, and with a very mixed crowd, ages & genders. It is a fun night out, maybe even for you and your partner.

Sunday night T dance battles continue between **Power Company** and Ozz. The battery boys appear have the early lead with \$7 for 6-12, while the wizards come up from behind with \$7 from 7-1. Dance mix? Each has their favorite, but most agree that both do a good job, although Jennifer claims to be able to outspin either one of them. Will she get the chance? Stay tuned.

Films

What is Queer Space? It is simply space for people to be out of the norms, a third space that fits between our rigidly drawn roles. Who is welcome in queer space? Anyone who is willing to call themselves queer, or out of the ordinary. This includes artists, gays, lesbian, the transgendered, thinkers or anyone else who is willing to admit that they are unique and are that they have a lot in common with other unique people have a lot in common. It is a space of mutual respect of both our differences and how much we have in common.

We don't have much queer space in Smallbany, except for the bars, but **The Third Annual Lesbian & Gay Film Festival**, on October 21-23 will be one of those spaces, letting us share in queer moving pictures from all over.. You buffs won't want to miss these great queer films.

Its at Page Hall with over 30 films & videos, and even a special brunch at Belmonts. And at only \$7 per session, and discounts for packages, its not only safe and enlightening, its a deal. Call 463-1051 for more info.

And for you fetishists, this is a great time to feel yourself up in the balcony. I hope that sticky stuff is just a spilled Coke! Siskel & Ebert, move over!

Ed Wood, please call home! Actually **Ed Wood** is the name, and the subject, of Tim Burton's (Batman, Edward Scissor hands) new film on the director of such bad, bad, classics as *Glen or Glenda?* a made for TV film. (Ed's the TV.)

Johnny Depp plays the transgendered one, and it will be a hooter, or maybe two. Opens October 7. Reviews to come.

Priscilla, Queen of The Desert played the Spectrum! Keep a weather eye! Hope you got a chance to see it. I was the one in the front row adding my own *Unforgettable* scent (by Revlon). *DragaVision* & *Smellavision* too! Maybe *Smallbany* is getting something together. Support it, baby-baby!

Media Alert

Our own Julie [REDACTED], a pre-op TS, who was denied custody of her daughter purely because of her gender dysphoria, will not appear on *Sally*. The other people on the show skipped and went to Donahue. More as we know it.

Julie still needs your support in her battle. Do what you can.

Reading Material

Drag is *hot, hot, hot!* in NYC, and you can be sure that you will read about it in the *Village Voice*.

David Finkle, on August 30, did a great essay **The Uses Of Drag**, which he starts with a quote: **Drag is in everything.**

Its not just buffoon drag but drag as revelation, as a part of showing a true side of yourself. Its drag as outcast, drag as the pain of maintaining appearances, drag as a battle between inner and outer forces, drag as denial, drag as isolation, drag repudiation, drag as illusion, drag as honesty

"The irony here is that the person in drag, the person supposedly hell-bent on creating illusions, is the one person in a position to comprehend that absolute honesty precludes illusions."

Well said, Mr. Finkle. How are you doing on that scale, honesty/illusion? Can you do both? At the same time?

In the second part, he goes on discuss the range of drag being used, and how it has come a long way, and has a long way to go.

"In societies where gender is rigidly bi-polar, rituals of cross dressing show our continuous, common, humanity," said Anne Bolin at Southern Comfort 93. That's all you do, showing that while sex is between the legs, gender is in the mind, and we all are mostly the same.

Drags, TG, TS, CD fetishists, whatever. We are all fluid in some way in our gender expression, transgressing (at least for a moment) conventional sex/gender roles. We are family, and like any family, while we fight inside, we have much in common. Sisters, Brothers, we are us!

Travel & Conventions

Holiday En Femme, the yearly Tri-Ess event, hosted by the sorority for heterosexual crossdressers, will be taking place in New York City, November 20-22.

It's close enough for a day trip to see the vendors and have a nice dinner dance. Would you really rather go down to the city for the boat show or for a gala evening?

Prices go up 10/25, so get your money down now to Lynda Frank. See the ad in this issue, or the flyer in the club room.

Dressing for Pleasure (a pause now, as you savor that name) has announced that it's gala will take place over a November weekend in the Poconos, which will calm the legendary Barbara, who had her head spinning last year as she had to decide what to do when they held it on Halloween.

DFF, as affectionados call it, is both a store in New Jersey and an incredible ball where you must wear leather or rubber to attend. If you were wondering where Babs got the rubber corset she wore last BooNight, wonder no more.

If you have the yen, do it then! And please let Miss Take see the snapshots!

Shopping

It's Halloween, and that means a month of open season on shopping when simply preceded by the words, "I'm looking for a costume...."

One poor gal at the club asked if we could really go in and buy anything we want. The answer, dear friends, is a ringing Yes! Yes, Yes, Yes! This is a free country, and if you can pay for it, you can buy it.

There is no need to buy staples from an outrageously priced mail order store. Just head to the mall, and smile!

And if you are still uncomfortable, there are malls in Utica (great \$30 wigs at **Big Daddy's Beauty**), Holyoke and Poughkeepsie. They don't know you there.

It's Halloween, and you can go nuts and hide yours. Do it well enough, and you might even hear "It takes balls to dress like you don't have any!"

That said, there are a couple of specialty boutiques that are worth the trip. No staples here, though if you want to be pierced, just ask!

Vernon's Specialities in Waltham MA, just a mile or two from the intersection of the Pike and 128, has an incredible range of lingerie, fetish gear, wigs, makeup and other essentials, like Ed's Boobs. Their magazine rack is over flowing, and there are always a bunch of cute gals who will smile at you and help. Parking is in the back, and you can come dressed as you are.

At the top of a tiny elevator is **Lee Brewster's Mardi Gras** in NYC Lee has been selling all the requirements for about 20 years, and they have an enormous range of stuff. I was there with the legendary Barbara when she bought a pair of silicone nipples. They don't carry much fetish gear, but there are plenty of places in the Big Apple for that stuff.

It's worth the trip to either of these places anytime you have some cash, but for Halloween, the crossdressers high holy day, it's almost a pilgrimage. Ah, but the *Canterbury Tales* in these days include garters & seamed stockings!

Finale (Finally)

Between *Wigstock*, the festival of Hairpieces and love, held by The Lady Bunny over Labor day, with over 20,000 attendees and *Southern Comfort 94*, September has been a drainer. I hope you had as much fun!

I'm going to take my nap now. I have to rest up for Halloween. This is Miss Take, saying "Until next time, Take me, I'm Yours!"

I am still discovering stuff about my self image. I am the only child of a nuclear family, dysfunctional, but not brutal. The pride of maleness and male sexuality either got suppressed or at least was never addressed. I've never had a strong sense of "maleness", and sexuality was no man's land, no information to be had about it. My father did not take pride in his appearance, he was something of a slob. I rate my father with a 6 out of 10. His self image could have been a 6. I've already told you about my mother. She gets a 3. Her self image was deeply sabotaged, unbearably low.

Both my parents were failures in life by my standards. And what are those standards? By my reckoning at this point, we are here to do three things: 1) Care about our fellow humans (and all the Universe pertaining to us), 2) Discover ourselves, 3) Develop ourselves. My parents did not love themselves very much at all. Their self discovery and self development were absolutely minimal. My mother was a seriously distorted person. My father was totally victimized by her dysfunction. Today, she would have been called a very serious co-dependent. My father went to his death without ever getting unhooked from her manipulations.

Where does that leave me? At least, I should have grown up a co-dependent. I did marry my mother regardless of attempts not to. I am a sucker for manipulation. I see it coming, and even so, I am over the edge and lost it in a moment. This happened in my religious trip and my marriage.

The compulsion to crossdress was always strongest after a period of depression. I needed something to feel good about, and Tina became a salvation from a deplorable self image. That pattern became set when my sex hormones came into play. Now Tina is a necessary part of my self image. Even during those times when Tina was only in the mind, she was there. During the first six months of my religious experience, I

even forced myself to not think of cross dressing, but the pattern of compulsion was there. The religious garbage fell apart, but Tina didn't.

The only way I feel sexy is to dress as a woman. Nothing else does it for me. That alone says more for the existence of Tina than everything else I've explained.

Since I have truly incorporated my feminine persona with a place in my life for her to exist, I feel more whole and balanced as a person than ever before. I feel better about myself, my personal hygiene has improved, and I even found the discipline to stop biting my fingernails.

I have spent a good deal of effort in this biography tearing religion apart and dismissing it as garbage. About two years ago, I had a wonderful and very striking dream. In the dream, I had just come upon a bunch of people living in a community. It was morning. The people were making breakfast and preparing to meet the demands that the day had in store. Everybody was singing in unison, and it sounded so incredibly beautiful. I found myself being flooded with a feeling of intense Joy and Well-being. It was Overwhelming. Then I felt a message that said "Join us. There's a place here for you." For a moment, within me welled up a feeling of "I'm not worthy of this". I broke down and cried. I bawled like a baby. At this point I woke up. I was still with Carole at this point, and I told her about it. I even said, "I wanna die and go there". Then in the waking state, savoring the Overwhelming Joy, I broke down and cried again. My sense of unworthiness was a bit of sadness, but the Joy and well-being was so strongly manifest as to overcome everything. It was awesome and truly wonderful.

It has taken the past two years for me to heal enough to be able to see more deeply what this dream was telling me. I am convinced now that what I felt was a small sample of the love and mercy God has

available for us. I am adding this last thought to this story because last night from this time of writing, I thought of that dream and understood right then what I am telling you here. Folks, this life at best is a life of disease and blight. Those of us with some sense of vision are only a little less blind than all the rest. The Bible tells us we perceive dimly, as though through a veil. Especially in this time of moral decay, life on Earth is disease and blight at best.

The capacity God has for Mercy and Love is More than Enough to conquer ALL of this and totally obliterate all hurt and heal completely. Why doesn't God do this? Why does the world continue in deep travail? First, we are responsible for ourselves, and this life is a learning experience. The more we learn about life and ourselves, the more able we are to deal with whatever comes into our lives. It is meant for us to have that responsibility. Also, if we are to make the choice of loving God, that love must be totally and unequivocally of a free will with no coercion and no conditions of any kind whatever, neither of any indoctrination, nor any blindness derived by conditioning. The love we nurture for God must be voluntary, conscious, and 100.000% pure in motive.

I am so glad I am a musician. I will be one forever and ever. Nothing has blown the music out of me and nothing ever will. It is a source of deep joy for me, and one means by which I give joy to others. It is my gift which I pass on. I am a transvestite because I stumbled upon that mechanism to nullify a poor self image, incorporated the pattern into my life, and now it's part of me. I worried about Deuteronomy, 22:5. It says I am an abomination. I'm no longer worried. God's Love, Mercy, and Forgiveness is bigger than all the abomination I can be!!! It is bigger than ALL the grief Man has piled upon himself. What's my future? I don't know, but I'll be growing and learning.

This concludes Tina's autobiography. If you wish to comment on her story, she may be contacted c/o TGIC.

WHY CROSSDRESS? - Callan [REDACTED]s

Why crossdress? Why do some people feel a strong need to dress up in clothes that society assigns to the other gender? This is a question that people have been investigating for a long time, because evidence of people who express transgender traits exist in virtually every human culture that has been fully studied. From the Native American berdache, to cross-dressed courtiers, like the Chevalier D'Eon, there are a wide range of stories about people who express more than simple male and female roles.

Many people have come up with theories about the causes of this behavior. Some have blamed it on socialization, on the lack of a good gender role model, others on sexual stimulation, such as a first sexual experience with an item of clothing. But today we know that many children show a strong interest in cross-gender play very early in life, usually before the age of five. These children will dress and play at being another gender role. It seems clear that this behavior comes from some cause that is biological rather than environmental, either a genetic difference, or a hormone "shock" in the womb that creates the conditions for being transgendered, for having a need to express themselves as another sex.

It also seems clear that both the intensity of the need and the environmental conditions affect how transgendered children grow up. Key factors include the sexual orientation of the child, parental attention, community pressures, and a child's other traits, such as intelligence and disposition. Some have been studying if environmental changes can be made that minimize or eliminate cross-gender behavior, but it appears that these changes are not effective after about eight years of age.

From this range of factors we get a range of behaviors from fetishistic, where masturbating with clothing is all that is desired, to transvestite, to drag queen, to transgenderist, to transsexual, where the

intensity is strong enough that the individual needs to physically change the sex organs to get their body in line with their internal gender. While this is a range, it is not a progression. Most people get to a stage that they are comfortable with and stay there, at least until there is a major change in environmental factors, such as the loss of a spouse.

What every person on the gender continuum shares is the need to keep their cross-gender activity secret, or within very firm limits. For example, while Halloween is the crossdressers "high holy day", and drag shows are an outlet for the gay crossdresser, most activity has to be in secret. Even transsexuals who have had surgery often have to hide their history. The effect of having this "horrible" secret can be very damaging. It often makes people unable to be fully open with their partners, damaging the intimacy of the relationship. It can create a feeling of shame that damages the self image, and leaves a person vulnerable to rage. It may be the trigger for addictive behaviors in the hope that the pain of keeping the true self hidden will be held back, if even for a moment.

The effects of the closet, of having to hide from the world, can be tough. We often see crossdressers who do not look well in their clothes. This can come from the lack of feedback and experience, a resistance to looking good in order to keep their male identity visible, or an interest in sensual clothing over practical. Because the crossdresser only dresses for special occasions, they tend to wear only special occasion rather than everyday outfits. They may also have an unrealistic fantasy image of themselves that blocks out the reality of their appearance.

Most crossdressers need love and acceptance, but this can be difficult. Often, people are shocked and dismayed when they find out someone is a crossdresser, and this further validates the feeling of shame that a crossdresser has. Even if people try to give love and acceptance, many crossdressers reject it because they are not yet able to love and accept themselves.

They know that their behavior is "bad" and think that they are bad for having this need that they cannot stop.

Understanding of the persuasive nature of transgender feelings, and of the ways that various people have dealt with it can be very useful for the crossdresser. Many crossdressers find that they only need to get a period of exploration and acceptance out of the way, and then are happy with participation in a support group. For others, organized conventions where crossdressers meet are a good way to explore how others deal with their transgender issues.

It is very rare for crossdressers to decide they need to change their physical sex, though it is very common for them to have fantasies about doing it. When they take the fantasies into the real world, they find that being a woman is about the same mundane things as being a man is about. Being a woman is not all 4" heels and mini-skirts. Most crossdressers find that coming out of the closet, getting an understanding of the realities in a safe and secure environment frees them from shame, and lets them get on with their lives. They find a way to balance the needs rather than swallow them, and become better partners and people because of it.

Most crossdressers who come out of the closet find it a journey of self discovery, of exploring their own inner landscape in a way that most people never do. This exploration can make them more aware both of their own motivations, but also the needs and motivations of those around them. While this period of discovery might be difficult for those around the crossdresser, it will provide life long benefits for both the crossdresser and their partner.

While there is no clear answer to the question of why some people need to crossdress, it is clear that crossdressing is simply "wired" into some people. Those people may have a mild to intense need to explore their gender issues, and the level of the need may change as life conditions, including, for example, family/work demands and age, change.

There also has never been a cure for crossdressing. Many therapists treat it like an eating disorder: the requirement will always be there, but it can be managed and integrated into a full and satisfactory life. This, of course, requires that both partners and crossdressers understand and accept the effects of shame that crossdressers feel, and learn to accept transgender as an integral part of a person.

Crossdressing can be a lot of fun, a range of sensual delights and wonderful pleasures. But as long as it is a behavior laced with shame and self loathing, it cannot be something that can truly be shared and enjoyed. Understanding the nature and reality of transgender behavior can help everyone live more easily and happily.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUPPORT GROUP FOR TRANSEXUALS

To be held Wednesdays, 5-7 pm, September 21 to November 30 at the office of facilitator Josie Speckert:

30 East Housatonic St., Suite 3
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Fee: \$110 for 11 weeks.

Phone (413) 499-5858 for more information.

SHOPS IN PLATTSBURG

For you gals in the North Country, Patricia Ann says there are two excellent resale shops in Plattsburg, both carrying an upscale line of clothing:

The Fashion Exchange, 164 Boynton Ave.
The Wearhouse, 58 Bridge St.

Also, Ann's News Stand across from Plattsburg AFB has a good selection of TV publications in its Adults section.

ANONYMOUS HIV ANTIBODY TESTING

Your regional HIV Counseling and Testing Program provides free HIV counseling and antibody testing, support and referral. No names will be asked. (NYS Health Department) **Albany Area:**
(518) 486-1595 or 1-800-962-5065.

CALENDAR

Regular Meetings are held every Thursday at the TGIC Club Room on Central Avenue in Albany, 7:30 - 10:30 pm. Some come earlier and stay later, but it is wise to call if you are not a Keyholder or if it is your first visit. Come dressed either way, meet and talk with friends. Many continue to socialize at one of the Central Ave. night spots after the meetings.

OCTOBER 1994

- Oct 6 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Oct 8 **Saturday Dinner**, 8:00 pm
Northway Inn
- Oct 13 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Oct 20 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Oct 27 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

NOVEMBER 1994

- Nov 3 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Nov 10 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Nov 12 **Saturday Dinner**, 8:00 pm
Northway Inn
- Nov 17 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Nov 24 *Thanksgiving. NO MEETING*

MAJOR COMING EVENTS

Contact TGIC for more information. Some registration brochures are available in the Club Room

- Oct 6-10 *Tiffany Club Fall Fling*, Provincetown, MA
- Oct 16-23 *Fantasia Fair*, Provincetown
- Nov 2-5 *Fort Lauderdale Freedom*, Sunrise, FL
- Nov 10-13 *Tri-Ess Holiday en Femme*, New York, NY
- Nov 17-20 *Fall Harvest '94*, Iowa City
- Nov 18-20 *Riverside Gala*, Cambridge Springs, PA
- Dec 5-7 *Investments Christmas on the Cape*, Cape Cod, MA
- Feb 21-26 *Texas T Party*, San Antonio
- Mar 13-19 *IFGE Coming Together Convention*, Atlanta, GA