

# GREATER PHILADELPHIA NEWS

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Editor: Dina Amberle

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## SUMMER HAS ARRIVED - SHOW SOME SKIN

By Maryann Kirkland

Summer can be a bummer if you lie around and watch the hair grow on your legs. If you have examined the summer clothes in the malls, and been swamped by the swimsuit magazines, how can you resist creating a summer femme image? There are many colors for summer. They appear in plaids, checks, stripes, dots and, of course, solids. Black and white checks continue to be popular. Some say black and white are timeless and never go out of fashion.

Too small for me? Yes, if you look in the juniors section. Over in the Misses, Alfred Dunner makes sizes up to 20 plus women's half sizes. Popular styles are the shorts set; split skirt or 'dress shorts'; and jacket/shorts sets. For the dressed-up look, hosiery and heels are still necessary. Hips are also necessary to wear these fashions correctly. (Most of us were not privileged to receive hips due to our testosterone heritage - so go buy yourself a pair.) Lastly, these shorts variations are immensely popular with genetic females because they do not require slips or petticoats (aw shucks).

Now here comes the price for joining the 'Al Dunner' set with your wife/girlfriend: stockholder status in the Gillette Safety Razor Company. That's right. Remove all body hair. I meet with my can of Soft Sense Shave Gel three times a week. Well, it's cheaper than going to a psychiatrist

If you were brave enough to follow me this far, then it is time for the swimsuit! One of our local board members admits to shopping en femme for a bathing suit, trying it on and, of course, buying it. Catalogs like Avon Fashions sell swimsuits just for our special needs: long torso maillots in sizes up to 20 with slimming lycra panels. If you can wear a two piece suit (decently), you should not be reading this and I hate you.

So when do faux-femmes like us wear a swimsuit? Well, in addition to your own imagination, let me suggest the following: gender conventions and fantasy weekends such as IFGE 'Coming Together', 'Be-All' weekends, Tri-Ess affairs, Pocono weekends...You see, you really cannot leave town without your swimsuit!



## PHILLY BOARD MEMBERS ON THE GO!

On the first weekend in June noses were being counted in anticipation of a Board of Directors' meeting in York PA. Noses belonging to Michelle Lynn and Alison Laing were found in Provincetown MA. Quickly, other members came to a consensus that a meeting could not be held. Perhaps more interesting are the nitty gritty details of Michelle's eight hour drive en femme. Service stations, public rest rooms, and dodging the Highway Patrol are items not normally encountered on a short hop to the monthly meetings.

Bonnie Allen, our local Board Secretary, was truly 'born to shop'. The malls, often packed with noisy and bored teenagers, are her stomping grounds. Even the enormous Franklin Mills complex on a crowded Saturday held no fear for her. Remember that 'passing' is an attitude and a state of mind; without it you are read like a newspaper.

Speaking of having an attitude, our Chapter Leader, Maryann Kirkland, is on the loose again. Following a Good Friday appearance at the Academy of Music, her encore consisted of a day at Longwood Gardens on the Saturday following the Chadds Ford Winery event. The Kirklands spent six hours strolling the palatial former Dupont estate, surely adding to the local color and diversity of the crowd. (See feature story below).

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### 'SLEEPING BEAUTY' AND OTHER BEAUTIES

By Maryann Kirkland

On June 12th it was Maryann's turn to tour Longwood Gardens. The dress code is clearly casual unless you are an Asian tourist. So a colorful teal shorts set with tennis shoes and a short shag wig was selected. It would be six hours before leaving so restroom strategy was made early. At one of the remote corners of the grounds, restrooms were thoughtfully placed. A two-stall ladies' room was a welcome sight in a place that sees thousands of visitors daily.

Admission to the grounds (\$10) contained two bonuses this evening: a 90 minute Brandywine Ballet performance plus a 30 minute lighted fountain show. Both events featured music from Tchaikovsky's 'Sleeping Beauty' ballet. This year observes the 100th anniversary of the famed Russian composer's scandalous death/suicide. To attend these shows required early seating in a public setting. Open air theaters are like malls - the lights don't go out and neighboring people get bored. My presence didn't cause a fuss or attention but Evelyn, my spouse, assures me that people were being kind. Thanks to my dear Evelyn for recording the event on film, counting the 'reads', and reminding me of them lest my head swell too big.

## THE LOWDOWN ON P-TOWN

By Michelle Lynn

I was walking down Commerce Street with my two friends from Canada, Debbie and Charlene Ann, taking in the local sights.

"Isn't this great?" Debbie bubbled. "What other place can you walk down a city street crossdressed and everyone knows and nobody cares?"

"That's nothing," I said, noting a recent purchase, "Where else can you walk down a city street crossdressed carrying a riding crop?"

That's the beauty of Provincetown. A cultured, diverse community, its reputation for tolerance, to say nothing of its New England charm, is well deserved. While many of us have been out to one of the major dressing events that seem to pop up everywhere, P-Town is the only place where you don't necessarily need an expensive event as an excuse to have fun. Sure there are things you can attend such as the Tiffany Club weekend in June or the Fantasia Fair in October, but the real fun is the Provincetown experience itself.

For those contemplating an en femme weekend (or week), a bed and breakfast is a great place to start. (The Elephant Walk Inn is highly recommended). Target late spring through early fall as the Cape area becomes a ghost town in the winter. Avoid holidays as they tend to be crowded; too much so to leisurely enjoy this beautiful seaside town.

Located at the far tip of Cape Cod, the town consists of two main streets with residential streets fanning out from the harbor. Bring flats - you will do a lot of walking. And bring your credit cards - Commerce Street is filled with countless shops selling everything from handcrafted jewelry, leathers, and fine antiques to touristy flotsam from the sea. Or stop by Fantasy Foto and impress your friends with a photo of your lovely face atop the body of a well-developed fashion model.

And the food! French, Greek and Portuguese are prominent and it is a seafood lover's delight. (Fresh-caught lobster at \$5 a pound - and this is not a misprint).

But best of all is the atmosphere, the feeling of tolerance, heck, of pure welcome, is like nowhere else. As one person said, "Provincetown is like what the rest of the world should be." Take the opportunity to do Provincetown at least once. It's guaranteed you'll want to go back again and again.



POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE: ON THE ROAD WITH MICHELLE LYNN

(In her own words)

It's all of eight hours from P-Town to Philadelphia if you miss the New York rush hour and I learned some interesting things about traveling en femme for an extended time.

I was very conservatively dressed. Unless you have no plans to stop, common sense tells us cross country travel is not the place for fantasy wear. Besides, who can work the clutch in five inch spikes?

Watch the speed limits as it is very easy to get lead-footed on a long trip. If you are pulled over, remain calm, have your license and registration ready before you start your trip, and make it plain to the officer who you are. As more than one legal eagle has told us, crossdressing itself is fine IF there is no attempt to deceive in conjunction with an illegal act (e.g. beating a speeding ticket by pretending to be someone else). And if you are pulled over, take heart in knowing you have just joined a select group that includes some of the biggest names in Renaissance. (You know who you are!)

Restrooms: everyone's favorite topic of travel. State laws vary and in Pennsylvania it's not illegal to use the Ladies' Room unless it is in conjunction with creating a public disturbance or indecent act. When in doubt, use one-person restrooms available at service stations and fast food places that dot the interstates.

Appearing in public alone and away from home (eating in a restaurant, buying gas, etc.) means you should keep three things in mind:

- o Passability, which means not necessarily 'fooling' everyone you meet so much as blending in. Be what you are: an ordinarily dressed lady going about her business. 'KISS' - Keep It Simple, Sister.

- o Confidence. Don't attempt solo activities if you're not ready for them. Project the ease and confidence that comes from being comfortable with yourself. A nervous person only makes everyone nervous too.

- o Be Safe. Being alone is not the time to get adventurous. Respect your limitations. Being away from your home area is not an excuse for being outlandish. It's a reason to be more cautious than ever.

Travel is like every other public outing. Don't be one of those girls whose wig got too tight and cut off the circulation to the brain. Let your common sense prevail. Happy motoring!!

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CHADDS FOR WINERY OUTING

The oenophiles of our group had an enjoyable time hosted by winemaker Eric Miller at his quaint but growing winery. It was a lovely spring evening to sip from the varieties and learn about the art of winemaking from someone who truly loves his work. If you missed it this time around, too bad. Maybe next year....



**DISHIN' DIRT IN DRAG...**One of our sisters in the Big Apple, Dee Dee Ann Summers, reports that there's a new place to go for our crowd in Manhattan. It's called Club 580 and it's located at 580 11th Street. It's run by the people who brought us the Sleaze-A-Rama that was Club Edelweiss (R.I.P.). If you're just dying to know all about it, call (212) 629-1021...Speaking of Dee Dee, she turned up on a Maury Povich show with her friend Monique (they were both here for the IFGE convention in March) and provided some lighthearted good humor about crossdressing and bar pickups...And while we're on the subject of bar pickups, April Love met a gentleman at Club Interlude a few Fridays ago who became intoxicated with April's enchanting personality. Or was it the vodka stingers that got him so plastered?...Not plastered but perhaps a little giddy, were Dina and Samantha Ryan, who visited a couple of joints up New Brunswick way. Samantha never orders the same drink twice I found out. And that ain't all I found out - but we'll save that for future newsletters...South of the border down Wilmington way - that's where April, Diane Franklin and Dina spent a Friday evening at Roam nightclub. But the best part of the night was watching Diane saunter across the parking lot of Dempsey's Diner in her red stretch minidress. Now we know why truckers always find something delicious at roadside diners...Tapestry, the magazine of the IFGE, ran some photos from the convention in Philly and our gals Joann Roberts, Joanne White, Emily Sheldon, Winny (that's a new name to me so introduce yourself, girlfriend), and Miss Vikki were pictured...Michelle Lynn, who caught the Orchestra while in town for the convention in March, attended a concert of the NJ Philharmonic in Trenton recently. I didn't know there was a classical version of "I Am What I Am"...Kristina and Elaine were two of our local girls attending the Pocono weekend in May. There's nothing like some good mountain air and 24 hour-a-day crossdressing to refresh the system...For an all-jock sportstalk radio station, the guys at WIP sure love to crossdress. Midday host Jody MacDonald put on a blue dress, pantyhose, some borrowed earrings and did his show in drag one afternoon because he lost a bet with a caller. Last year, morning host Angelo Cataldi did his turn in drag after losing a bet. Guys, guys: don't you know that the lamest excuse in the world to wear women's clothes in public is the old 'I lost a bet' gambit? Next, they'll be telling us they only do it on Halloween...Oh, and Jody, do us a favor: lose the sneakers and try a pair of 4" pumps next time...Another revelation about celebrities in drag hit the news this month. A new book on Mick Jagger says that he enjoyed dressing up as Tina Turner and wearing girlfriend Marianne Faithfull's frocks on occasion. It didn't say how much lipstick La Mick needed to cover those famous smackers...A letter to Ann Landers from a crossdresser was printed in a recent column. The reader extolled the relaxing virtues of feminizing oneself after an otherwise macho day at work. Hey, you don't have to sell us on the concept. But if you think shaking your groove thing in a drag disco is relaxing, you just aren't dancing fast enough...The show 'Married...With Children' began a recent episode with beleaguered Al Bundy relating how a beautiful shoe customer came into his store wearing a short skirt and garter belt with expensive stockings. Only after drooling awhile did Al realize that the gorgeous customer was a guy in drag. Okay girls, 'fess up: which one of us was it?...Hollywood celeb watchers are saying that Guess? jeans model and new Playmate of the Year Anna Nicole will be the Next Big Thing. Well, you read it here first months ago when I pointed out that the 5'11", 38D platinum blonde dish already was A Big Thing...



#### PLACES TO GO

RENAISSANCE GREATER PHILA. CHAPTER MEETINGS Third Saturday of each month. July meeting on the 17th, speaker Selma Blaker on Hair and Wigs, care and styling. August meeting on the 21st, program about electrolysis. September meeting on the 18th: Third Annual Vendors' Night! Doors open at 8PM. Call 215/630-1437 for further info

THE CARTWHEEL "DRAG SEARCH '92" Every Monday night, 11:30 PM amateur contest leading up to Miss Cartwheel pageant in Sept. The Cartwheel, Rte. 202, 1 mi. west of New Hope Center, New Hope, PA; Call 215/862-0880

GATSBY'S Popular nightclub and disco features something different each night of the week. Sunday nights: amateur Drag talent (lip-synch) contest for cash prizes. Gatsby's, Cuthbert Blvd, between Rtes 38 & 70, Cherry Hill NJ. Call 609/ 663-8744

WSC CLUB Roomy nightclub has different attractions Weds. thru Sun.. WSC Club, 624 West Main Street (in rear), Norristown, PA; Call 215/278-9646

KEY WEST Multi-level gay establishment in center city features Miss Key West contest each Sunday night at 11:00 PM. Key West, 207 S. Juniper Street (between Broad and 13th; Walnut and Locust sts). Call 215/545-1578

#### QUICK CLUB NOTES

The PRELUDE nightclub in New Hope has risen from obscurity and may become one of the hottest new clubs in the area for our gang. Word has it that many former CARTWHEEL employees have walked down the road to man the PRELUDE after a shake-up at the beloved CARTWHEEL. The PRELUDE is running full-page ads in the Gay News with a drag night on Mondays just like the CARTWHEEL's. The PRELUDE is located at the jct of Rtes 202 and 179 in New Hope. Call 215/862-3600 for info.

If you're looking for some new places to go, try these tested favorites a little off the beaten path:

RODZ/TYZ at 15th and Rodman just behind South St. in Center City. A wonderful, friendly piano bar atmosphere. 215/735-2900

ROAM 913 Shipley St. Wilmington DE, a cozy, sophisticated bar where you can hold a conversation without shouting, plus it has a good dance floor. 302/658-ROAM

CLUB INTERLUDE on the Black Horse Pike in Mays Landing NJ ( $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of the A.C. Racetrack). Big bar, good dance floor, friendly crowd. Features drag shows on Fridays. Call 609 information for number.

CHECK OUT The Philadelphia Gay News (75¢) and Au Courant (Free) for current events at clubs, etc. Available in Center City and various spots around the area, including the nightclubs listed above.

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