



News & views

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TRANSGENDER
COMMUNITY

Governor Pete Wilson Signs Historic Hate Crimes Bill

[San Francisco Bay Area, CA, September 29, 1998]

Yesterday Governor Pete Wilson signed into law AB 1999, a bill which clarifies that gender and gender expression are protected categories under California's existing hate crimes laws. AB 1999 was authored by Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica). Assemblyman Kevin Shelley (D-San Francisco) was the principal co-sponsor.

The major effect of the bill is to clarify that hate crimes against transgendered people are covered under California hate crimes laws. District attorneys in San Francisco and Los Angeles counties, who supported AB 1999, already prosecute such hate crimes under existing law, but other district attorneys do not use this interpretation of the statute. The new law creates uniformity of application of the broader

reading of the law.

"This is a milestone for the transgender community of California" said Vicky Kolakowski, Co-Chair of the Bay Area Transgender Law Association (BATLAW), a sponsoring organization of the bill. "Hate crimes are a major problem for transgender people everywhere, including the Bay Area, and I am very happy that the legislature and the Governor understand the importance of enacting this legislation. I hope that this becomes a model that will be used nationwide."

"What a miraculous change from two years ago, when former state senator Milton Marks' (D-San Francisco) transgender civil rights bill SB 1964 died in committee without a single yes vote," Kolakowski added. "Last time, most leg-

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PFLAG Votes "Yes" to Trans-Inclusion

[Washington, D.C.]

At their Annual Meeting in San Francisco on September 12th, members of Parents, Families and Friends of Gays and Lesbians (PFLAG) voted overwhelmingly to include transgendered people in the group's mission statement. The organization's By-laws now read: "The purpose of this Corporation shall be: To promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons..."

PFLAG, based in Washington, D.C., has more than 420 chapters in all 50 states. A group within the organization, The Transgender Special Outreach Network, was directly responsible for the trans-inclusion statement. Network members

met several years ago at a PFLAG conference. The Network has published and distributed over 12,000 copies of its popular booklet, *Our Trans Children*, and runs a telephone help line.

Network Chair Mary Boenke said the group looks forward to helping PFLAG members work toward providing the same kind of critical support on behalf of trans-people that they have always provided for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. "We're pleased and excited," said Boenke. "We've been working for this trans-inclusion resolution for 3 years. It's a benchmark of a long process that has just begun. We passed the law; now the work of education begins."



Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

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

Pennsylvania

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

Lehigh Valley/Pocono area: Renaissance Lehigh Valley, PO Box 3624, Allentown, PA 18106. Meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Allentown area. Call for directions and more information, 610-821-2955, or email to <RenLV@ren.org>.

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

Affiliates

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

Connecticut

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

Georgia

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

Information resources & referrals.

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

Illinois

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

Louisiana

New Orleans: The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 56836, New Orleans, LA 70156-6836, 504-833-3046. Website: <www.gga.org>. Email: [REDACTED]@juno.com>.

Missouri

St. Louis Gender Foundation, P.O. Box 9433, St. Louis, MO 63117. Phone: 314-367-4128, email: <stlgf@aol.com>.

New Jersey

N. Central Jersey: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 2972, Princeton, NJ 08543-2972. Call 732-219-9094. Email: [REDACTED]@aol.com>.

Western Central New Jersey: New Jersey Support, call Susan at 973-[REDACTED] or Dorothy at 215-[REDACTED] (weekends only). Write PO Box 0034, Montville, NJ 07045 for information. Email: [REDACTED]@aol.com. Meetings are the first Saturday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing.

New York

Manhattan: Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), 561 Hudson Street, Box 45, New York, NY 10014. Call 201-794-1665, ext. 332. Email, [REDACTED]@mindspring.com>.

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

Oklahoma

Central Oklahoma: Sooner Diversity, part of the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance (COTA). Write to P.O. Box 60354, Oklahoma City, OK 73146. Email to <cota@transfemme.com>, website: <www.transfemme.com/cota>

TRANSGENDER News & COMMUNITY Views

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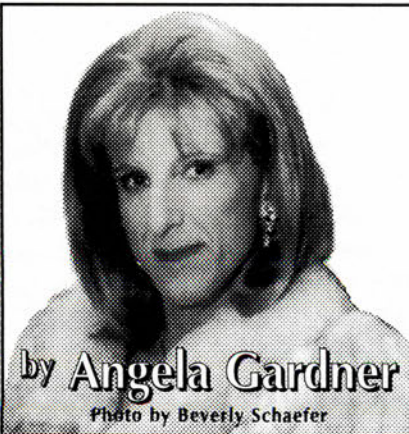
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News Beat & Reminder



Welcome to November. Has everyone settled down from the demands of the busy Halloween season? The demands of crossdressing costumes can be pretty stringent. It's such a pleasure to take off the spike-heeled boots and leather corset ... for now. But, enough of this frivolity. Let's get down to brass tacks. Or steel studs.

We welcome a couple of advertisers with this issue. **The Yardley Aesthetics Center** not only welcomes our business, they have hired a Renaissance member, Ms. Sandra Lynn, as a Quick Light hair removal technician. How much more accepting can ya get? Give them a call if you have a problem with unwanted hair. They also offer many other aesthetic services so give them a call at 215-321-7100 to see if they can help you achieve a more lovely you.

Also in this issue you'll find an insert for **The Fetishes Boutique**. They are a former advertiser of ours who has returned to our pages in a removable flyer format. They'll be with us for the next eleven months and when they have special sales and events their flyers will let you know. If you happen to need a leather corset... or a studded dog collar, give them a call.

It's That Time Again

Last month the National Office (meaning hard working Executive Director Angela Gardner, I do that as well as edit this newsletter) sent out individual membership renewal notices to all those whose memberships expire on December 31st. This

was done despite what we said in the first page article of the October issue about a renewal flyer that would be included in the November and December issues. As Editor I didn't speak to the Executive Director about how to handle renewals. Actually, all kidding aside, it became necessary to get out the notices as soon as possible in order to build our revenues. The cash will be needed to pay for the production of the new magazine and, oh yeah, pay the rent for the rest of this year.

I also decided it would be a good idea to start the new renewal procedure right away, since we will have to do it this way from now on. Folks are already starting to renew. A big thank-you to those who have. If you haven't sent in your check yet, please take a moment and as they say in the sneaker ads, just do it. If you haven't received a renewal notice, then your membership is not due for renewal. You'll get your notice about a month before your membership is up. Thanks to everyone for your support. And now, the news.

Unemployed

It seems **RuPaul** has been given the axe at VH1. The poor thing was let go and now she just wanders the streets in boy drag looking depressed. It's sad to know that now all we'll have of *The RuPaul Show* is reruns. Of course, it's not like she'll go hungry. She's still the most seen queen in the history of drag. From her appearances on *Nash Bridges* to her various spokesmodel gigs, the girl will not be

going away anytime soon. She's even appeared on *Walker Texas Ranger*. Not since **Boy George** appeared on *The A Team* has there been such a clash of cultures.

I have no idea what the plot was about, but Ru looked very sweet in a baby doll dress, and I loved her hair. If she weren't a foot taller than the stars she'd be almost demure. What's next for Ru? Will we see her on *Touched by an Angel*? If it happens you'll read about it here.

H2O at Shampoo

Mr. John Waters, famous film director, was in Philadelphia last month for a local film festival. As part of the festivities he made an appearance at my local watering hole, **Shampoo**. I got there early and thanks to my local celeb status (and a little begging) I got admitted to the VIP area where John would hold court. The club had arranged for a couple of **Divine** impersonators (now there's a concept, two Divine impersonators in one spot) to put in an appearance. It must be kind of bizarre for John to see people impersonating his deceased friend, but I guess if anyone could take it, it would be the man who brought us *Pink Flamingos*. In any event, the Divines were, as far as I could tell, a no show. They're probably in the unemployment office today with Ru.

The one Divine who did show up was a Baltimore babe who journeyed up Interstate 95 to pay homage to Mr. Waters. After saying hi to John, and mentioning a mutual acquaintance of ours, I tastefully withdrew to witness the feeding frenzy of queens as they descended on the poor man and actually forced him to sign autographs. I was told by his personal assistant that John has been on the road for two months promoting his new film, *Pecker*. I remarked to John that he must be reduced to a quivering bowl of jelly by the demands of his schedule, and he said he was too tired to even quiver. He was the perfect gentleman to one and all throughout his

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ordeal, but he did manage to slip out of the club around eleven thirty. I hope he gets some rest. He'll need all his energy to produce his next film. It's a little story about a TG writer/editor and the wacky column she writes every month. It's tentatively titled *Typewriter*, and I can't reveal the name of the fabulous actress who's starring. All I can say is, she's slimmer than Rikki Lake. Meow.

Speaking of domestic pets...

There's Something About That Dog

I knew there was something up with that pooch in the **Taco Bell** ads. Some gay people say they have an innate sensing device called "gaydar" which allows them to detect other gays. I have "tgdar," which is not nearly as good a term, but functions in much the same manner. I knew something was up with the Taco Bell pup. Sure, he has a deep voice and a machismo manner, but there was just something, well... feminine about him. Sure enough, the pooch is TG.

Born a GB (genetic bitch) Dinky was drawn to studded dog collars early in life. When the other little lady Chihuahuas were practicing demure little poses and eating dainty bowls of Puppy Chow, Dinky was eating raw steak and strutting around like a little Bulldog. It made his early years hard, since no one in the puppy mill could figure out why "she" acted so butch. It wasn't until his big break, a bit part in *Dog Day Afternoon*, that his career turned around.

When the Taco Bell auditions came up Dinky was ready. His agent didn't even tell the producers that there was something different about the macho mutt, and his natural acting ability and smoldering Latin looks got him the part. It's rumored though that he can get really bitchy if a member of the crew refers to him as "she" while he's working. While acknowledging his female body Dinky prefers to com-

pletely immerse himself in the role at hand. He said in a recent interview, "Sure, I'm really a bitch. I know that, my agent knows that. It's no big deal. I can cut the part. In this biz that's all that matters. Do you think it was a big deal that Lassie was a male? No. He was a big sissy, and it paid the bills. That's the bottom line."

Dinky is prepared for the eventual end of his run in the Taco Bell ads. He is developing a one-dog show called "Transgender Mutt," which he plans to take on the road as soon as his commercial obligations cease. We'll have the tour schedule here as soon as his people tell my people. Bow wow, baby.

TG TV

Anyone catch the *Letterman Show* on October first? The musical act was **Hedwig and the Angry Itch**. Not your typical **Goo Goo Dolls** or **Blues Traveler** type pop band,

Hedwig & the A.I. is a rock musical that's been playing in New York and attracting all kinds of good press. Hedwig is the lead singer, and she happens to be a transsexual. She's a transsexual in the New York drag queen manner and the music is pretty heavy and NYC influenced. It's wild that the cast appeared on *Letterman* at all since the show is certainly not mass appeal, like *Cats* or *Phantom*, but it's even stranger that Dave consistently used feminine pronouns when referring to Hedwig.

Oh, and I can't forget, the back up singer was a leather clad drag king. Pretty cutting edge for *Letterman*. I did note that Dave didn't come over to shake hands, as he does with most musical acts that appear on the show. Could there be a littler transphobia there? You bet. But at least they had Hedwig on in the first place.

Jay Leno has been sticking it to **President Clinton** and **Monica Lewinsky** for months. He has an actress who looks just like Lewinsky and has used her in many sketches about the President's peccadillo. Last month he took a page from

Letterman's book and used the old, oops-my-announcer-is-missing-stay-here-I-gotta-go-find-him bit. Leno ran offstage and the television cuts to a shot of him running on to the set of the Roseanne daytime talk show where we see Monica Lewinsky being interviewed by **Roseanne**.

Only instead of the Lewinsky look alike, the "Monica" is Tonight Show announcer, Ed Hall. Hall looked remarkably good as Lewinsky. Jay pulled Hall's wig off and exposed him to Roseanne as a phony Monica. The gag was that Hall was trying to get the million bucks Roseanne has said she'll pay Lewinsky to appear on her show. Leno carried the dewigged Hall off of the Roseanne set and then appears back on the Tonight Show stage with Hall still over his shoulder. Further big yucks came when Ed was told to sit with his legs together. All I can say is you'd never catch Ed McMahon doing a skit like that. You are correct, Sir!

Fans of British tellie have no doubt been aware of the TS character on *Coronation Street* for sometime. Her name is Hayley, and while she's portrayed by a genetic female, the plot involves her preparing to move in with her boy friend. He wants to be a perfect gentleman and not have sex until they are married. This causes Hayley much consternation since transsexuals are not legally recognized in England and cannot marry anyone of the opposite sex.

In the eyes of the law they are still their birth gender and as such if a MtF TS married a man, to the courts, they would have a same sex marriage. That's why Tula left Merry Olde a few years back. We'll keep an eye on plot development and let you know how it all turns out. That could take a bit. You know how those soap plots can go on and on.

Former NASCAR driver **Terri O'Connell** used to be a good old guy named J.T. Ms. O'Connell appeared on 20/20 last month and told the world that she wants to race again. It

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was all handled pretty well by 20/20 and in the interview O'Connell's old race car owner, who's a real good old boy, said that if Terri can prove herself again as a driver he'd let her drive his car. Good luck, Terri. As they say, you go girl.

If you don't get the cable channel A&E, and you thought you'd never see the show they ran on transgen-derism, fear not! **Phyllis Frye** tells us that the TG video can be ordered from A&E, for \$19.95, by calling 800-423-1212. Just in time for the holi-days. It makes a wonderful stocking stuffer.

More Work For The Wicked

It seems that way sometimes. This

month we are going to be working on the December newsletter, and prepar- ing for the January debut issue of our new magazine. Making the newsletter into a magazine will entail more work on the graphics end than we have pre- viously had to do. In the newsletter format it was enough to layout the text of each column or article. In a magazine you have to add some bells and whistles in the form of photos and graphics.

We're sending all of the columnists (ok, we're asking them) to get a fresh new photo and we're creating a whole new look for the magazine format. Like any new look, it may take some primping and a little extra makeup here and there. When it hits the newsstands we're hoping it makes a big splash and provides the much- needed monthly magazine for the TG

community. When you get your copy (in its discreet brown envelope) please look it over and let us know how you like it.

Transgender Community News will be out there to let the CD who thinks he's the only guy in town who wants to wear women's' clothes, and the TS who needs resources and support, know about the entire community that is available to assist them. Many of you, our current readers have already been there, done that. If you think we should add something or modify something about the new magazine, don't be afraid to share your comments with us.

That does it for another month. As always, don't take any wooden wigs, and we'll see you next month.



Ruby Rims & Friends Perform for Teddycare

by **Babs and Carol**

For the second year in a row, a remarkable drag queen, Ruby Rims, normally the weekend host at The Oaks Restaurant and piano bar on Grove Street, assembled a stellar cast of the hottest cabaret performers, not only in town but across the ocean, to donate their talent for Teddycare, the Christmas Teddy Bear Drive for Hospitalized Children. For 4 nights in December (eight performances) she has moved her act a couple of blocks away to the upstairs Cabaret room at Eighty Eights piano bar in the West Village. Because of her deed, New

York City TV Channel 1 named her "New Yorker of the Month." Like a great dessert, one saves the best for last, and the final show has most of the best performers, and the most drag performers!

Ruby, whose AIDS symptoms have been in remission, is personally very humble in direct contrast to her per- forming style, and at the Teddycare show she sings a powerful rendition of what has become her signature song, "This Is the Moment," from the Broadway musical, Jekyll and Hyde. Last year many of the local drag per- formers and female illusionists of New

York appeared in the show. After that show, the performers were downstairs in the main room meeting and greet- ing each other as well as the guests. Besides our friend Ruby, we found that Charles Busch and Julie Wilson were especially warm to us and genu- inely interested in transgendered people.

Most performances last year fea- tured different entertainers, primarily because of availability and personal scheduling, so each show is unique and different. Because of their respect

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Hate Crimes Bill...

islaters seemed uncomfortable with just hearing the word 'transgender.' This time around they publicly championed on our behalf." Kolakowski attributes the bill's passage to the work of a coalition of public safety advocates, hate crimes experts, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community organizations, but gave

Kuehl and other gay and lesbian leaders the bulk of the credit for the changing attitudes. "Most of that transformation was due to the leadership of Sheila Kuehl, her marvelous staff, and the support of gay and lesbian groups such as the now-defunct LIFE Lobby, Community United Against Violence (CUAV) out of San Francisco and the Lambda Letters Project of Sacramento."

AB 1999 received wide bipartisan

support throughout the legislative process, partly due to the early endorsement of the bill by Attorney General Dan Lungren, the GOP candidate for governor.

For additional information about the bill, contact Senior Consultant Jennifer Richard at Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl's office, (916) 319-2041.



Transsexuals in Prison

By Jessica Maria [REDACTED]

There is no doubt that transsexualism is a very serious condition. It is a problem that can make friends and families abandon or forsake their loved ones. It causes discrimination in the work place. We get harassed by most of society and often enough, sadly, beaten or murdered ... simply because of what we are.

And, sometimes those of us who can't handle the problems this condition brings, psychologically or emotionally, commit suicide. There is great pain and an abundance of tragedy in the wake of transsexualism. But, what most people in our society fail to realize is that there are some of us, also transsexual, who have it far worse. Surely, those of us who suffer the most are the transsexuals who are in prison.

I am a transsexual and I am in prison. However, this article is not about me. I am merely the voice, speaking out on behalf of all of my fellow brothers and sisters who are both transsexual, and in prison. The suffering is horrible and must be stopped, but before anything can be done, people outside these cold walls need to know the extent of the problem.

To begin with, the biggest problem transsexuals face when they come to prison is the very real threat of assault and rape. Some transsexuals are young and frail and they would be at great risk in a prison population. Most, however, aren't necessarily little girls in appearance, but simply

women. We all know to what lengths we will go to create that passable image of femininity.

We feel we ARE women, and wish to present ourselves so others can see the image of ourselves as we see it in our own minds. This need is so thoroughly embedded in our lives that there is little that will make us stop, regardless of the risk. We know that by going to work crossdressed we will be fired yet will still go in, trying to look our very best ... as the gender we identify with. And of course almost all the time we get fired. Well darlings, in prison we will not be merely or shunned or cast out of the group we call our peers. Prison will kill you, plain and simple.

The best way to survive in a prison is anonymity. A male who presents himself as a female in a men's prison is by no mean anonymous. You couldn't be more noticed if you had dipped your entire body in Dayglo yellow paint. And considering that the majority of prisoners have been locked away for a number of years and denied access to sexual activity with females, they will come to you for sexual release, and not all will ask politely. I apologize for the profanity but there is a saying often heard in this environment: "Blood on my knife or shit on my dick." And in this environment, it isn't hard to figure out the meaning.

There is little recourse for a problem like this. The majority of guards and prison staff see us the same as most prisoners see us; as homosexuals

who want sex. They think that we are men who dress and live as women simply because we are gay and want to look sexually appealing to other men. Thus, in prison, presenting yourself as a female is taken as an invitation for sex. Trying to explain gender dysphoria to a six foot, 250 pound Neanderthal who is in prison for murder is silly, to say the least.

If you have problems, you could bring it to the attention of the prison guards or other staff but this will often give you the label "snitch" or rat, and these are mostly one of the lowest forms of prison life. It is like betraying your own kind. The rule is, simply, never tell on another inmate or you will be in dire trouble. One can also request to be placed in a protective unit but this doesn't offer much more safety than in the prison's general population. You are still exposed to the same risks, only on a slightly smaller scale.

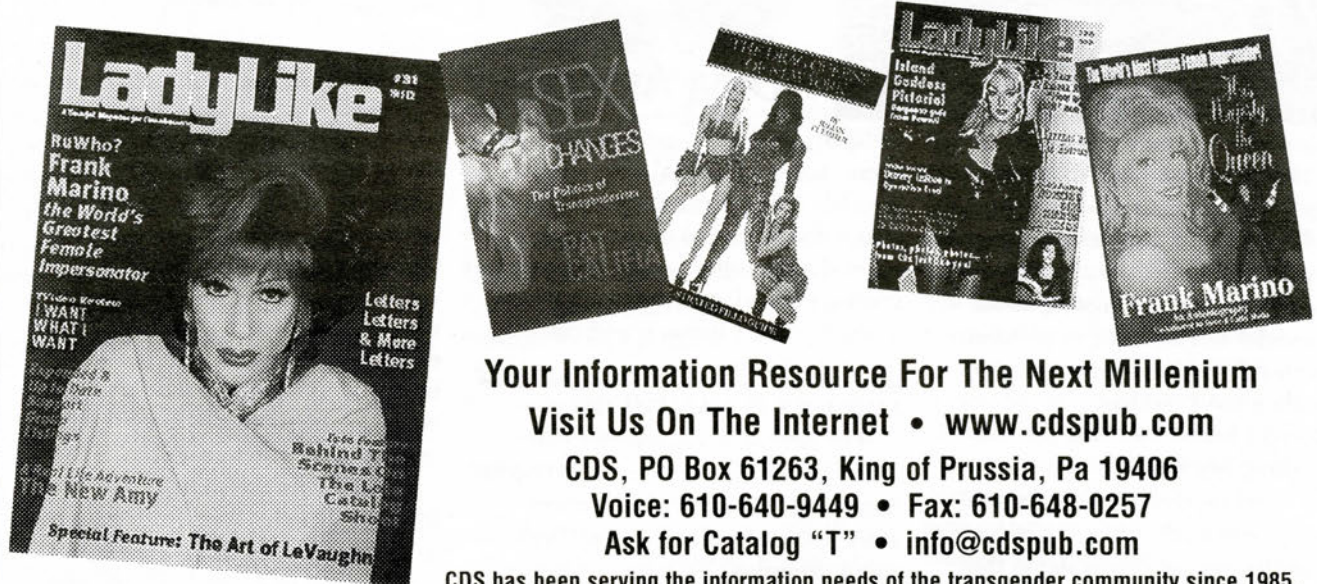
Another serious problem for transsexual prisoners is medical treatment. We have several medical needs ranging from hormonal therapy to electrolysis, psychotherapy to actual sex reassignment surgery. In our community we have often been ached with certain obstacles. Unknowledgeable or indifferent medical practitioners, and in certain respects, even the Standards of Care have been an obstacle in obtaining treatment.

However, this is nothing compared

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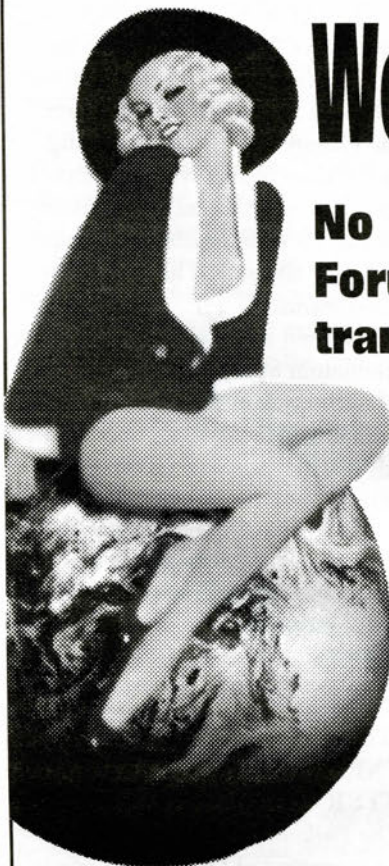
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This has been quite a year in politics. The Clinton-Lewinsky story broke in early January and now in mid October, we have impeachment hearings pending. In between, we spent those ten months speculating about the scandal and listening to partisans on both sides either condemning or defending the President.

When I wasn't watching the endless talking-heads shows covering every breaking development or non-development in the story, I was occasionally tuning into some shows that looked back at other major events in the history of the past thirty years or so. There was an excellent documentary about the Cold War; a very entertaining TV movie about the relationship of Nixon and Kissinger, the release of some of President Johnson's taped conversations during the Vietnam conflict; a documentary about the Iran-Contra affair; and another one about the Gulf War. Those were interesting times, dominated by interesting men with real political concerns, intrigues, and strategy played out on a grand scale.

I can't help but wonder if the Lewinsky-gate saga would have gotten any of the attention from our elected leaders if we had had any real substantive national issues on the plate as we did as recently as seven years ago. The economy's solid and our national deficit is now a surplus, nobody really wants to deal with the mess in the Balkans, and we have no over-riding concerns as we did during the Cold War. Other than the annual budget squabble (which is akin to two adolescents wanting to take their ball and go home with it), we have almost no

national concerns to get fired up about. So we glommed onto a sex scandal — which even most of the citizenry doesn't give a damn about, other than as water cooler gossipmongering. Looked at in that light, you could say that Clinton is a victim of his own success.

MURDER IN SAN DIEGO

The *Reflections* newsletter published by the Neutral Corner group in San Diego, California had a cover story written by Caroline Joy [redacted] titled "Transgender Tragedy Claims Two Souls" on its July issue. The article detailed the murder of a gender therapist, Rita Powers, by one of her transsexual clients named Julia Morgan.

Julia Morgan was a twenty-seven year old transsexual in transition, hoping to get her therapist's approval for sex reassignment surgery. The therapist, Ms. Powers, apparently did not believe that Julia was ready for that step. Faced with this obstacle, Julia shot and killed Rita Powers and then turned the gun on herself. Caroline [redacted] was a friend of both Julia and Rita and wrote a sympathetic account of how Julia turned to this violent end. The subtitle of her article was "Rita and Julia were Victims of an Out-of-Control Standards of Care."

As reported here and elsewhere in transgender literature, the Benjamin Standards of Care has recently taken a harder stance towards approval of SRS. The expansion of the real life test is the most controversial aspect of the new standards. And it is this topic and the necessary delay before SRS that pushed Julia Morgan to take her therapist's life.

The brief details about Julia that were provided in the story makes the therapist's insistence on a full RLT before approving SRS seem more than understandable. Julia was a foster child without a solid family structure, she was shy and found it hard to make friends. Julia was storing her clothes in a friend's house because her roommates did not understand her transsexuality.

The author of the piece, Caroline [redacted], perhaps because she was personally acquainted with Julia, saw someone who needed to transition in order to actualize herself. But as an outsider reading objective facts it is easy to sympathize with the therapist who probably saw a person who needed to come to terms with herself before jumping into a new gender role that she was embarrassed about in front of her own friends.

A few years ago here in the Philadelphia area we witnessed a tragic double murder and shootout involving a transsexual who later claimed that she should not have been allowed to undergo SRS because she wasn't able to handle it. So these things can cut both ways. Very little was written in the TG community literature about the TG who murdered out of regret for the change. But I have a feeling, given the tone of this Neutral Corner article, that we will hear much more about the TS who murdered because she was not allowed to have SRS on her own terms.

I have seen some articles criticizing the Benjamin Standards because they stand in the way of people doing what they want to do, equating SRS with simply another form of elective surgery. Now, without actually condoning this murder, the standards are being accused of causing it. If that becomes the rallying cry of the transsexual community, it could be another tragedy that grows out of this most unfortunate incident.

IN THIS AGE OF FITNESS...WE'RE GETTING FATTER

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* supplement magazine of October 11 carried

an article by Clare Fleishman titled, "They're Gaining on Us." The article dealt with the national trend towards obesity in children and teens. Ms. Fleishman writes "Twice as many kids are overweight as 20 years ago."

I found the article and its statistics somewhat surprising given the national interest in fitness and the amount of money spent on athletic gear. Yet, the truth is that "every other one of us (adults) weighs too much, and the kids aren't trailing by much. Nearly one in three [children] are overweight." To drive the point home, she quotes a Tulane University study that reported a 100 percent increase of overweight children in a generation's time. "If twice as many kids were lighting up cigarettes or downing liquor, the nation would be on alert."

And there is an 80 percent likelihood that overweight children will carry their extra pounds into adulthood if there is at least one overweight parent in the household. The reasons for this increase in child obesity are almost too obvious: the surfeit of junk food snacks and fast food restaurants combined with an increase in sedentary forms of entertainment, such as television viewing and electronic or computer games. Latchkey kids in two-parent-working households are often instructed to stay indoors because they are unsupervised outside the house. Even when the kids participate in sports nowadays, parents drive them to and fro so that the only time spent exercising is at the game itself, while the child is actually on the field.

In a country that has never had a shortage of food, the USDA found that only 1 percent of children had a diet that met all seven suggested nutritional guidelines. "For nearly half [of all children], the diet met none or only one." Soda consumption by teenage boys is three times what it was 20 years ago. Three fourths of the survey subjects ate one vegetable a day - "a white potato, in the guise of French fries or chips." One interesting anthropological insight into obesity was this: Modern man does not

have to burn calories hunting or foraging for food, but our systems are still telling us to gorge ourselves at any opportunity lest we not be able to find sustenance later. Once fat cells establish themselves they do things that make it more and more difficult to lose the weight.

Although the article was slanted to child obesity, it is obvious that the same problems are at work for adults who always had higher levels of obesity than children. And as crossdressers we know that weight problems are a major reason for not feeling good about how we look and feel.

Ironically, in the same issue of the *Inquirer* magazine supplement, they had a piece about athletic fashions for triathletes. In a nation growing obese children at a doubling clip, you can now tune into ESPN and watch triathletes running, cycling, and swimming for hours. You would think that a nation so interested in sports and sporting fashions would be fitter than ever before in our history. But the statistics mentioned above prove otherwise. Which just goes to show that many of the people who have made Nike one of the biggest companies in America are no more "athletes" than we are... women.

NEW CHOPS FOR THE POPS

On my way back and forth to my crossdressing nightspots, I've been listening to a tape I made of two Mothers of Invention albums, "Live at the Fillmore East" and "Just Another Band from L.A." Both performances were recorded live in the summer of 1971, one at the Fillmore East in New York City, and the other at UCLA's Pauley Pavilion in Los Angeles.

I've written before about my admiration for the music of the late Frank Zappa, the mastermind behind the Mothers in all their many lineups. This particular set of Mothers of Invention included vocalists Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman, previously of the pop group The Turtles. What makes these two albums so interesting is that they are made up largely of long story songs about rock stars and groupies (Fillmore East) and a satirical

allegory about draft evasion and government agents (Just Another Band...). Actually, listening to them today, one is reminded how dated is the scandalous behavior of rock and roll groupies, and for that matter, draft evasion in the late stages of the Vietnam years. So you have to be old enough to remember those things and regrettably...I am old enough.

You may not know much about the Turtles although you probably know their two largest hits, "Happy Together" and "Eleanor." It was quintessential AM radio pop music from the sixties. But the sweet-voiced pop stylings of Kaylan and Volman were transformed into wildly funny, expressive musical theater in the Zappa years. In these live performances, they never really take a break from vocalizing on songs that run for an entire album side. It's sort of a tour de force, really. And the songs were designed to use their voices like instruments as they provided the musical narrative for Zappa's strange and inventive style.

In fact, the payoff of the "Groupie" suite on the Fillmore album comes when they break into a rocking rendition of their old platinum "Happy Together." This lineup also appeared in Zappa's psychedelic rock movie *200 Motels* where they proved themselves to be pretty good comic actors as well as singers. Because of one of those weird contractual things, they were sometimes billed as Flo and Eddie since their own names were under contract to another record company.

Of course, nothing about the foregoing really has anything to do with crossdressing, although Mark Volman did wear a brassiere in one scene from *200 Motels* during the "Penis Dimension" processional march. But without stretching a point too far, their work on these Zappa albums is all about transforming themselves from pop stars to the very weirdest form of "far out" rock icons. That's one of the reasons I became interested in them when I heard these albums for the first time. The

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Gender Reflections

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

Revisiting Passing

This article harks back to one published in August 1998. It was titled "Past Passing" and engendered (no pun intended) more feedback than any other article I have written. Rather than get into issues of "right" and "wrong," I'd rather describe the responses I received and try and understand what might have motivated such intense feelings.

To refresh you, the article dealt with the issue of a transsexual seeking SRS despite being unable to pass successfully. One reader challenged me on my definition of passing. "It depends where and with whom passing is attempted. I can pass in Kansas City but not in San Francisco. This is the hardest city to pass in. People are looking to spot TSs and make no bones about announcing 'a hit.' I also seem to pass adequately in impersonal situations—making purchases, etc., but not under scrutiny—a job interview."

Sandra Brewer's responded in ETV's Channel writing, "...surgery can bring only misery when he is unaccepted by a society turned off by

the sight of a man in a dress. If such a person was suicidal before surgery, he'll probably be even more so after the surgery."

Another reader wrote that self-confidence is all a person needs to succeed in the world. Several felt that being an "out" transsexual was good enough and made passing irrelevant. One person said she'd prefer to pass but she needs to live as a woman.

The variety of responses suggest that while transpeople have a lot in common, the need/desire to pass is not one of them. While no one communicated the preference to be "out" even 'though she can pass, it wouldn't surprise me if she, too is out there.

I think the intensity of feeling around this issue may mirror a human need to assign status to people in a class or group of individuals. I have been struck by the clustering of t-people based on the level of passability they have achieved. The unpassables are sometimes scorned and frequently excluded from public social events, probably because they are seen as

likely to expose their sisters. The almost-passables treat their even less fortunate sisters similarly. With the help of the medico/psychiatric community this elitism has become institutionalized and a rationale formulated to justify the withholding of hormonal therapy and surgery from transsexual men and women.

Consider another paradigm. Might it be reasonable that each transsexual individual, taking into consideration her own attributes, goals, support system, etc., formulate her objectives with regard to passing. As she progresses through transition these may be modified in a more or less ambitious direction so that by the time she has completed a year of cross-living and six months of psychotherapy (as recommended by HBGDA's Standards of Care) she can make an informed decision about electing SRS. If, in spite of an experienced inability to pass, she still wants to live as a woman, with the benefits of SRS, barring mental illness, I think that is her personal choice.

If ever there was an opportunity to support one another rather than splinter and factionalize, it is around the issue of passing. The flukes of nature ought not determine whether an individual realizes her life's dream.

Dr. Anderson is located at 1537 Franklin St, Suite 104, San Francisco, CA 94109, 415-776-0139.



IFGE...

As part of this event, Alison Laing and S. Kristine James are adding two special features. The convention will include a TG Health & Wellness Conference. Ms. James stated that, "To be a happy TG, you need to understand what you need to do to stay healthy." Also, Alison and Kristine are trying to reinstitute the Congress of Transgender Organizations by inviting representatives from all state and local TG organizations to participate in such a gathering at a minimum fee.

Since all work and no play makes for a dry conference, BGB is planning to host several entertaining evening events and tours of local attractions.

The seminars and speeches will feature well-known professional gender specialists, some of whom have not previously been presenters at other national TG events.

Watch the World Wide Web for more details including hotel and registration data at <<http://www.ifge.org>> and <<http://www.transgender.org/tg/bgb/>> or write or call: IFGE Convention, P.O. Box 61, Easton, PA 18044 (610-

759-2347)

For local information, contact: BGB PO Box 20173, Louisville, Ky. 40250 (502-672-8613) pager

If you are interested in presenting a seminar, please forward your questions to Marjorie Demaille at <efduhr1@pop.uky.edu> or the BGB mailing address.



TS's in Prison...

to the often outright denial of all aspects of medical treatment for our transsexualism when we come to prison. In New York State prisons there is a written policy that states basically if a prisoner was receiving hormonal therapy prior to incarceration they will be given a minimal, or "maintenance" level of a similar hormonal regimen, but only if they can also prove that they were taking it prior to incarceration.

This rule completely denies any other type of medical treatment for gender dysphoria and simultaneously denies all treatment to those who have had nothing, or those who have had hormones but cannot prove it. The remainder will have to fight the prison for treatment. In fact, even those who have had hormones before prison and can prove it are also often denied treatment. The prison system is that bad, believe me!

In order to fight for treatment the first step is to complain "denial of necessary medical treatment" in-house, meaning you have to take it up with the medical provider's superior first. If you are still denied, which you will be, you will be required to "exhaust administrative remedies" before you can proceed any further. In New York State there is what is called the Prison Grievance Program, which is for hearing general complaints of and by prisoners. If your grievance is denied you have to appeal to the "superintendent" or prison warden and, if denied again, you have to appeal to the main office that hears grievances in the state capital, Albany.

Without exhausting these "remedies" no court of law will hear your case. They will deny and dismiss it based on that reason alone. So, for procedure, that is how it's done. If you are denied all of these remedies and forced to take your complaint to civil court, it is very hard to win. There are several things you have to prove to the court before they will grant what you want or need. Among them, you have

to prove that you are indeed a transsexual, and that it is a recognized "serious medical disorder." You have to prove that the treatment you seek is appropriate, and is considered a medical necessity, and that here is no other type of minimal treatment that would be an adequate alternative to the treatment you seek.

Plus, you have to prove that the treatment won't have a major effect on the security of the prison. For example, if you receive female hormones, most men will grow breast tissue. Most prisons perceive a male who lives as a woman as a risk to the security and general control and good order of a men's prison. Similarly, a male with average to large breasts would be so much more at risk because of the image it creates and the threat of assault and rape. The court could deny your entire civil case simply based on that.

Another problem is certain forms of medical treatment that are considered cosmetic, like breast implants. You would have to prove that, at least in your individual case, the lack of breast tissue is a serious medical problem for you and that other than implants, there is no treatment that will give you breast growth, and implants are a medical necessity for you. Then there is the issue of general discrimination and harassment. We, as transsexuals, suffer this wherever we go or whatever we do. In prison, it is ten times worse. You will be discriminated against in prison programs or jobs, events and special occasions by prison staff or organizations, even certain day to day activities like recreation or meals. It is not impossible for a prisoner to be "forgotten" and left in his cell when chow was cracked out, simply because the guard who was supposed to open the cells for the mess hall was homophobic or simply didn't like that particular prisoner.

And there are always both guards and prisoners who say whatever they feel like saying, no matter how offensive or emotionally painful. You have to experience it in order to know the feeling of sitting with your family dur-

ing a "visit" and having a guard or another prisoner saying profane and abusive things about you loudly and clear enough for everybody to hear.

In short there is a tremendous amount of pain and suffering for a transsexual in prison and very little comfort or safety. After spending a short year in prison, most transsexuals will have forgotten what it means to actually be happy. The need to be comfortable and feel safe is so strong that happiness is all but forgotten. And a year is indeed quite short. In my case, I have almost ten years already in, with still another 28 years to do. I admit that is a lot, and many other transsexuals in prison have less time than I.

However, there are some with even larger sentences. Whatever the case, as the prison system is across the country right now with little change to look forward to, even one day in prison is far too long for a transsexual. I agree with the system as far as punishment. If you commit a crime, you should definitely do the time. When you break the law you should pay. However, the system was originally designed to punish a person proportionate to the crime they committed. You can't sentence a person to 25 to life for stealing a radio from Sears.

Similarly, you can't sentence someone to 3 years in a maximum security for murder. In designing the penal system to mete out punishments to convicted criminals, the courts decided that it was appropriate to consider the amount of punishment suitable for the crime. They also consider not only lengths of sentences, but types of prisons, be it maximum security or minimum, or even work and temporary release programs and parole. In so doing they lightly consider the kinds of suffering that would be found in certain prisons.

But LIGHTLY. And they looked at this as if every convicted criminal, regardless of their crime was the same. Unfortunately they are not. It is outright wrong, and quite immoral to

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Hot•Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



"You begin saving the world by saving one person at a time; all else is grandiose romanticism or politics."

— Unknown

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The most curious thing happened. The **Arts & Entertainment** (A&E) cable channel produced an hour-long **Investigative Report** titled the **Transgender Revolution**. The piece was supposed to document the rising **transgender civil rights** movement. Prior to airing, there was a tremendous amount of hype about the show. The week before the air date, I received at least one email message a day urging me to watch the show. Okay, so I watched the show and... Nothing. There hasn't been a single word about the show on the net or in any of several expected venues. What happened? Well, here's my take. IR Host **Bill Kurtis** did an excellent job of presenting transgender issues in a non-sensational, non-prejudicial manner. The show covered both transgendered and transsexual people, including several FtMs. I thought the section featuring **TOPS** (Transgendered Officers Protect & Serve) founder, **Tony Baretto-Neto** was outstanding. Also, the section featuring **Nancy Nangeroni** was also extremely well-done. Nancy's sister is to be commended for exposing herself to criticism while coming out in support of her transgendered sibling. Overall, the show was very well done as far as it went.

And that is my main criticism; it didn't go far enough. There were no transvestite/crossdressers shown as part of the tg rights movement. That alone was a major tactical error on the part of the activists involved in the preparation of the special. Several very prominent community activists were conspicuous by their absence. They weren't mentioned by the activists on screen leading one to believe those on screen may have started the movement, which is not the case. Ah well, those who led the way did so because it was the right thing to do; not because they expected any glory.

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Last month I mentioned that **Parents, Families and Friends of Gays and Lesbians** (PFLAG) voted overwhelmingly to include transgendered people in the group's mission statement. Here are some follow-up details— PFLAG's Bylaws now read: "The purpose of this Corporation shall be: To promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and **transgendered** persons..." A special interest group within the organization, The **Transgender Special Outreach Network** (TSON), was directly responsible for the trans-inclusion statement. Network members met several years ago at a PFLAG conference. Network Chair Mary Boenke said the group looks forward to helping PFLAG members work toward providing the same kind of critical support on behalf of trans-people that they have always provided for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. "We're pleased and excited. We've been working for this trans-inclusion resolution for 3 years. It's a benchmark of a long process that has just begun. We passed the law; now the work of education begins."

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It's unofficial, but there will be a convention put on by the **International Foundation for Gender Education** (IFGE) despite postings on the Internet to the contrary. While meeting at

Southern Comfort 98, the IFGE Board of Directors responded to many community members urging them not to abandon the annual conference. As a result, the board has allowed BoD members, **Alison Laing** and **S. Kristine James** to take full financial and operational responsibility for a conference to be held in Louisville, Kentucky on March 17–21, 1999. The **Blue Grass Belles** (Ky.), along with the **Tennessee Vals** (Tenn.), **IXE** (Ind.), **Crossport** (Ohio), and local GLB organizations will act as local hosts. The convention will include a **Transgender Health & Wellness conference** and will try to reinstate the **Congress of Transgender Organizations**. The Belles are planning to host several entertaining evening events as well as sponsor several professional gender specialists who have not previously been presenters at other national events. For more information write or call: IFGE Convention, P.O. Box 61, Easton, PA 18044-0061, 610-759-2347. The IFGE web site, as of October 15th, still listed the conference as cancelled.

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The **IFGE-VP Award** controversy continues. **Joan Goodnight** of the **Powder Puffs of California** (PPOC) nominated both Linda and Cynthia Phillips for an IFGE **Trinity Award** as well as the **Virginia Prince Lifetime Achievement Award**. First, Goodnight was asked to reconsider the nomination for the VP award since the Phillips had not received a prior Trinity Award. Ms. Goodnight refused to withdraw the nomination. Subsequently she's now been told the Phillips are **not eligible** for the VP award. They say the VP award is meant for individuals only, and, since the Phillips are a couple, they're automatically disqualified from consideration. Ha! What crap. Nowhere does it state in the eligibility requirements that this is an individual award. This is the kind of arrogant behavior that gets people so riled up

about IFGE and rightly so. Here then is my short list of people who will likely never receive a VP award from IFGE: Joan Goodnight, Linda and Cynthia Phillips, Dallas Denny, Phyllis Frye, me.

The recent murder of **Matthew Shepard** in Wyoming brings sharp focus on the issue of hate crimes. According to one source in New York city, since May at least four, and possibly as many as seven, gay men and trans-people have been killed in Greenwich Village. Of the four confirmed to be bias murders, two of the four people were trans-identified. Trans-activists **Rosalyn Blumenstein** and **Carrie Davis** of the **Gender Identity Project** explained that some people in our community: "...are particularly at risk because they are often homeless, economically marginalized, and sometimes sex workers at a time when [New York City] is waging a 'quality of life' battle against street people." Other activists say the recent rise in hate crimes stems from theocratic, religious-right anti-gay rhetoric. That seems to be the case for Shepard who was beaten and left to die tied to a fence because he was openly gay. We all need to be vigilant and work for protecting ourselves from hate crimes. Don't think because you live in a big city like Chicago, Los Angeles, or New York that it can't happen to you.

The **Millennium March on Washington** (MMOW) continues to create problems for its proponents. An ad was placed in the September 18th issue of the **Washington Blade**. The two page centerfold ad was signed by nearly 300 individuals, including many well-known GLB organizers, artists and activists. The ad was placed by the **Ad Hoc Committee for an Open Process**, a group of veteran organizers that formed in March '98 in response to the "top-down" process of the **Human Rights Campaign** and the **Universal Fellowship of the Metropolitan Community Church** as they announced plans for a March on Washington, DC in the year 2000. Members of the Committee for an Open Process include many of the central organizers of the three previous national marches on

Washington. The ad text says in part: "They say it's a March on Washington. We say it's trampling on our movement.... We believe in inclusion, respect for our diverse communities, justice and democracy. And equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. But the first step toward equality should always begin in our own communities.... when the Human Rights Campaign and the Metropolitan Community Church initiated their call for an event in the year 2000, there has been a disregard for our movement's history of grassroots empowerment. Closed door meetings. Back room dealings. Last-minute invitations after the table had long been set and the main course served... This is about reclaiming the heart and soul of our fight for equality, justice, freedom. This is about power and how it is wielded, manipulated and abused. Who sits at the table and who decides how the table is set.... Claims to diversity mean nothing if... no genuine effort is made to include the perspectives and leadership of lgbt's from different races, classes, sexualities and genders. Help us organize community meetings, let the national organizations know what you think, write letters and columns for the press, and join our Thursday, Nov. 12th meeting in Pittsburgh and attend our workshops at the **Creating Change Conference**. Contact us today and make your voice heard. To sign on send your name and address to: Leslie Cagan <lcagan@people-link.com>." I'm going to try and get to Creating Change in Pittsburgh this year. If you are within 6 hours drive time of Pittsburgh and reading this, I urge you to attend as well.

I've heard from **Dr. Stephen Whittle** that the **Third International Congress on Sex & Gender** (ICSG) was a smashing success. As such, I'm looking forward to the **Renaissance Transgender Association** hosting the Fourth Congress here in Philadelphia in 2000. However, I've also been told that the Fifth and Sixth Congresses are in the planning stages. The Fifth Congress will be held in **Australia in 2001** and the Sixth will go back to Manchester, **England, in 2002**. So, it looks like the ICSG will be an annual event.

On to fashion news... technology comes to the rescue. Throw away your **eyelash curler** 'cause now your mascara will do the job instead. After coating the tops of the lashes, they will curl themselves. Maybe not quite as much as with a mechanical curler, but enough. **L'Oréal** was the first with **Le Grand Curl**, but by now all the lines will have one. Try **Maybelline's WonderCurl**. Most stores are having trouble keeping these self-curlers in stock.

Everyone thought that **Laser Hair Removal** was the ultimate answer in depilatories. As it turns out, it's not. It's pretty good, but not permanent by any means. Now comes word of another method using... **microwaves**. Now, don't run off and shove your head in your kitchen unit. The new technique uses special waveguides to direct the energy to the hair, while the skin's surface is chilled with a coolant to keep from being scorched. In animal studies conducted by the **Microwave Medical Corp.**, in Scottsdale, Ariz., hair follicles were nuked in one shot and no hair regrew after several months. Larger studies are required for Food and Drug Administration approval, but the technique looks very promising.

Is the day of the "supermodel" over? Could be. Several of the fashion mags have started using celebrity women on their covers rather than the supermodels we've gotten so used to. **Marie Claire** for the last two months have used non-models on its covers. The October issue featured **Julianna Margulies**, while the November issue features **Sandra Bullock**. Last month, **Top Model** magazine, which featured *only* supermodels, folded after just three years on the street. I've got the issue that featured Cindy Crawford, complete with an untouched photo of her face. Maybe it will become a collectible now that the mag has died.

So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? Comments? Write me care of this publication or send email to the [redacted]@cdspub.com>.

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Vis A Vis...

Turtles? Really?

Like almost anything Zappa recorded, you can enjoy it on more than one level. If you ever hear one of the albums on which they appear, you might want to keep in mind the theme of image transformation. Now that's something we can all identify with.

NOT CROSSING WHEN YOU DRESS

The Travelers Express is a unique group located in Falls Creek, Pennsylvania, in the north central part of the state. The grand poohbah of the group is Dee [REDACTED] and she almost single-handedly writes their quarterly *T.E. News Letter*. I've corresponded with Dee about her unique approach to Dressing, which is how she prefers to call what she does, rather than "cross" dressing. The con-

cept behind Dee's Travelers Express is that Dressing (with a capital D) is not about switching genders but rather in expressing the single self of the person involved. "Passing" is not a priority, in fact pursuing the ability to pass is not something they find worthwhile.

In the Fall 1998 issue of their newsletter, Dee outlines some of the group's beliefs. She calls it the "T" gender concept but the "T" does not stand for transsexual or transgenderist but rather to Transcend. Transgenderists and transsexuals are looking to cross over from one gender role to another, even if only temporarily in the case of crossdressers. The transcending Dresser is rising above the biological gender, or exceeding the limits of that gender in what he or she does. Dee's "transcending" concept draws on the dictionary definition of the verb "transcend" to explain what they are all about.

One important consistency in their position is that a male Dresser

remains male even while dressed as a woman. There is no transference of gender, it is all part of the individual no matter what the clothing may indicate. In other words, they don't think of themselves as women when they may be dressed as such. This is not to say that they purposely act like typical men while dressed. The transcendence of the thing includes carrying aspects of femininity along with the masculine.

Well, I only hope I did justice in this short space to the concept Dee has developed so lengthily in her newsletter article. I feel that I understand it on some intuitive level, but trying to explain it is rather difficult. If you are interested in the idea, you can get their newsletter for the pittance of \$5 a year from Traveler's Express, POB 150, Falls Creek PA 15840.



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HARVEY W. BROOKMAN, M.D.

TS's in Prison...

place a feminine transsexual in the same prison as a man convicted of raping and killing a woman. There is a very strong possibility that the transsexual prisoner will be punished a great deal more than the sentencing court had anticipated. Worse, imagine that same transsexual was in prison for stealing a radio. Scary, but it happens so often that it can be considered common practice.

It is an absolute necessity that changes be made in the placement and care of transsexuals introduced to the prison system. There are only a few ways to achieve this. The most important, and best suggestion is for each individual state to have one prison, smaller than the state's average prisons, and fill it with all of the pris-

oners that are transsexual, transgendered, effeminate homosexuals, or prisoners who appear somewhat feminine and could be vulnerable in most general prison populations.

A good policy would be to segregate such a facility so that no other types of prisoners who would be likely to cause problems for this unique population could be allowed to transfer from the general population prisons to this one. Establish a system within the courts that, upon sentencing, automatically sends that prisoner to the state's special facility if the sentencing judge feels, or becomes aware that the person is a transsexual, or meets the criteria or placement in that facility.

As an additional suggestion, there are an abundance of prison guards and staff that also identify as transsexual, homosexual, or have conditions of

a similar nature. They, too, suffer harassment and discrimination by fellow staff, and often enough from prisoners under their care. Staff the entire prison with those employees and there would be little need for sensitivity training among prison staff.

There are plenty of avenues open for change, providing people are willing to try. But nothing will ever get accomplished until people who can start the process come forward. And before people come forward, society needs to hear and understand just what the problems are. I hope writing this article can be the first step in this process.

For comments, please write to:
Mark L. [REDACTED] - Clinton
C.F. P.O.B. 2001, Dannemora, New
York 12929



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Ms. Lynda

The Slot Queen

by Joan

Ed. Note: The author is a genetic woman who, until learning a close friend's "secret," (mine) had no exposure to transgender issues. Her open mind (and a few Renaissance gatherings) altered the outcome of this story from potentially painful to positively pleasant. M.W.

That's how I refer to myself. I have a real love/hate relationship with the casino. Like most people, I love it when I'm winning; but really hate it when I'm not — and most times I hate it. But I'm still the Queen. These trips with my friend are usually good for laughs at the very least. So late on a recent rainy, boring Friday night I allowed myself to be talked into making a casino run.

It was a slow night by casino standards and I had no trouble finding "the" machine on an empty aisle. As my friend hurried off to make her fortune I picked out my machine, fed it \$20 and proceeded to play. Several little "hits" later, a woman sat down at the machine right next to me. If you knew me, you would know that I find this very irritating; all these empty machines and she has to sit next to me! I knew she was there, but I didn't acknowledge her. The old "talking to strangers" mentality at its finest, plus someone sitting right next to me is a major jinx.

However, Lady Luck smiled on me and I hit the jackpot! As the bells and music started, my neighbor said "Congratulations, Honey, that's a nice

win!" in a very husky voice. Hmmm, this definitely warranted a closer look. I turned, and faced her: impeccable make-up, drop dead outfit, perfectly coordinated middle-aged woman, unlike myself; ... you know ... broken nail, thrown together outfit, wild hair from getting caught in a rainstorm. Oh yeah, this works for me — I'm sitting next to a decked out crossdresser while I look like something the proverbial cat dragged in!

I thanked her graciously and from there we struck up a conversation. She introduced herself and told me she was on vacation from Virginia. Love that southern drawl! I "knew" — she knew I knew, but it didn't matter. She told me she loved my sweater. I continued to play the slot machine, chatting away thinking that this was somewhat surreal. Here I am having a pleasant conversation with someone I don't know — and a crossdresser to boot! We chatted for a while about her vacation, type of work she did, clothes (well she did compliment me on my sweater, after all).

I realized it was time to head for home since I could see my friend heading my way. When she sat down, I introduced them and gave her the thumbnail of who "she" was — name, here from Virginia on vacation, etc. I cashed out the machines and bid her good luck and happy vacation.

As we made our way out of the casino, I sensed what was coming from my friend. I was right. She said "You know, you do attract some different people. I think that woman you

were yakking with was a MAN!!!!" Since I was feeling rather enlightened, I replied "No way, she just had one of those great, deep southern voices." Well anyway, my girlfriend did think that "she" had on a great pair of sandals and wanted me to go back and find out where "she" bought them. I didn't of course, but I sure would have loved a pair for myself.

All the next day, I thought about this encounter. A lot of things went through my mind: did she really want to talk to me, did I make her feel uncomfortable, offend her in any way? Since playing the devil's advocate by yourself is somewhat tedious, I called my favorite "expert" on these types of things who assured me that my actions were not offensive and in fact probably "made her day."

We all want and need acceptance on every level — we are by no means "perfect beings." In reality I feel that she placed her own self-esteem in jeopardy by initiating a dialog with me. She didn't know me or how I would react to her. Did she decide to risk it all for the thrill of reaction? I don't know, I never will. I do know that sometimes disclosure, however impersonal the setting, can be painful. I don't believe I caused her any. I didn't judge her and find her "guilty" of crossdressing.

Years ago, I may have been less than willing to engage in conversation with someone whose preferences or lifestyle were not in sync with my own. I'm making progress...



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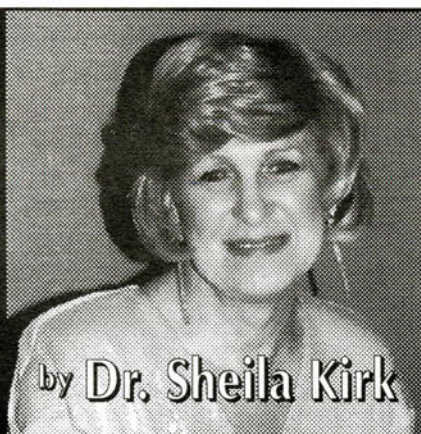
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Trans Health Matters



by Dr. Sheila Kirk

One Stage MTF GRS: The Value of this Genital Reconstruction Surgical Procedure in the Male to Female Transsexual

In the past a one-stage MTF genital reconstruction surgery known also as SRS was a commonplace surgical procedure, particularly in the hands of European surgeons. In recent years, the Genital Surgery operation is most often performed in 2 stages. The first stage is for removal of the penis and the testes and then the creation of the clitoris and vagina. The second stage is reserved for the cosmetic or aesthetic effect to create as close to the appearance of a genetic woman's external genitalia as possible.

In questioning patients directly and with surveys returned by over 600 MTF post-op individuals whose surgeries were performed by various surgeons using the two-stage method, it has become very clear that slightly over 40% of patients do not seek the second stage as now done to improve the cosmetic appearance of their geni-

talita.* There is in addition, no doubt, that many who do decide to be re-operated to provide them with an exterior appearance much more like a genetic woman's also have some corrective procedures done i.e. changes in the urethral direction or clitoral surgery. Those requesting surgical correction may be as notable as 20% in some reports.

With that in mind one wonders what percentage of this 20% would seek the cosmetic surgery if a corrective need was not present? However, if we reflect on the fact that 4 out of 10, almost half, never bother to be re-operated or delay it a significantly long period of time, what thoughts can we consider about the 2 stage procedure currently done by many surgeons in the United States? Also, is there value to considering a one-stage procedure because of the significant number who never seek more cosmetic refinement through the second-stage procedure?

The surgeons of TSMC favor the one stage procedure in Vaginoplasty

or GRS for a number of reasons. Foremost is the fact that we recognize the significance of the 40% statistic quoted in this article. If such a large number rely on the first stage as sufficient then shouldn't they deserve to have results that achieve for them the most realistic appearance, function and sensation as is possible?

The one -stage procedure that we at TSMC have perfected goes a considerably longer distance than the Stage 1 of a 2-stage operation. It creates labia majora (external vaginal lips) that are united at the upper aspect of the new vulva and united so as to hood the newly created clitoris. This is extremely authentic in appearance, notably like that of the genetic female, and distinctly different from labia that point in opposite directions as seen in post-ops who have had only the 1st stage of the two-stage GRS procedure.

For that 4 out of 10 not choosing to have the second operation, this one stage procedure offers a much better result than what is currently being created for them in the 1st of a two-stage procedure. TSMC's procedure goes a long way toward creating female genitalia with a realistic appearance without the extra cost of the two-stage operation, additional time loss and travel expense that is required to return for the second stage. These reasons alone are often a consideration for many since the Stage Two procedure averages about \$3,000. (all fees included) and for

continued on page 20



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Making Sense of It All

by Lee Etscovitz, Ed.D.

My True Self

When I began my gender change about eight years ago, I was hoping that I had found the key to happiness. I hoped that by acting at last on hidden feelings and wishes I would be clearing the way for greater self-fulfillment. In a way I was right, for I am definitely a happier person. At the same time, however, my happiness has been tempered by certain complications, such as rejection by family members. There are also legal, economic, and medical complications to handle.

But what has really become an eye-opener for me is the fact that nothing has really changed in terms of life itself. I still have to live day to day and find the courage and means to face the various problems which continually emerge. I now simply face these problems as a woman rather than as a man. I suppose I should not be surprised by any of this, and in a way I am not. But what amazes me most is what I have begun to learn about myself, especially about my past. For example, I am beginning to understand the loneliness I experienced for so many years and the feeling of being different. Most of all, I am beginning to see how my life has evolved to its present point. The following poem, called "I Disappeared," is an attempt to express briefly but comprehensively the struggle I have experienced in my search for my true self:

I disappeared before my eyes
the day that I was born.
I had my share of mother's milk,
and blankets kept me warm,
but cold and hunger swept my soul

till I became invisible
and lost my human form.

I learned to read my parents' lips
but never read my own,
until at last I lost my voice
and learned to dream alone.

And then as if to complicate
the world behind my eyes,
I soon began to feel that I
belonged among the girls,
who seemed to be the favored ones
with carefree curves and curls.

In secret shame I hid my heart
behind a blend of boyish acts,
but all the bikes and trains and trucks
could not erase the inner facts.

The emptiness within my soul
was filled for years with school and
work, but nothing seemed to last,
for though I tried to fill the void,
I could not form a past.

And so I died a double death
by disappearing twice,
until I learned the painful truth:
my deaths would not suffice.

I had to reach beyond the shell
that I had safely made,
beyond the safety of my dreams,
beyond my long charade.

I found my way to helping hands,
to hearts that hugged my soul,
and gradually I heard my voice
till life became my goal.

I will not disappear again,
though sometimes I despair,
for self-belief is always more
than curves and curly hair.

The human form will always be
far more than what the eye can see.
To be oneself should not seem strange;
the difficulty is the change.

The first half of this poem describes,
not the fulfillment, but rather the suppression of my sense of self, for it was as if I were being raised to hide my true feelings. Aside from the gender confu-

sion that I began to experience in my teenage years and which, as the poem depicts, I also proceeded to hide, I lived my whole life in an emotional closet. I am reminded of one of those large, oversized walk-in closets which are sometimes the size of a small room and which can seemingly contain tons of things. Similarly, my emotional closet was large and all-encompassing. Into it I packed my feelings about family members, my hopes and dreams, my frustrations and anger, and, of course, my gender confusion. In a very real sense, I packed it all in. Without even realizing it at the time, I was giving up on my true sense of self by going into a closet that contained not just my gender issue but all of me.

A psychiatrist once remarked that I came by my personal difficulties honestly, in that my parents were unwilling, or more likely unable, to attend to my feelings. My mother was somewhat caring, especially when I was very young, but I have no recollection of ever being hugged by her except, perhaps, as a form of greeting. In fact, what started out as at least some measure of attentiveness by her when I was a child turned into emotional oppressiveness by the time I became a teenager. Her own insecurities, anger, and general neediness left very little room for the expression of my own feelings.

My father expressed even less affection than did my mother. But rather than engulf me with his feelings, whatever they were, he kept everything inside and so excluded me completely from his inner life. At the same time he bombarded me with what he felt should be my goals and purposes. He was also punitive, both verbally and physically. The point is that neither my mother nor my father really listened to me, and so I felt invisible as a person. In other words, I disappeared.

Not surprisingly, home was never home for me, at least not in an emotionally satisfying way. I thus developed some interests that served to create an imaginary world in which I could live, at least temporarily, with some degree of sanity. For example, I never wanted to leave movie theaters, for it meant

returning to a place-to a world-where I did not belong. At least in the movie theater I felt alive for two hours at a time. Afterwards I would reluctantly return to a private holocaust where I was a walking dead person. I did what I was told, perhaps hoping that my obedience would be rewarded with love. I also developed an interest in Lionel trains, especially since my first name was Lionel. I thus felt special, if only symbolically, as the trains responded to my commands within a world of my own design and construction. But outside of that little world I was the train with the name "Lionel" obeying someone else's commands on someone else's track at someone else's speed.

My life, as the poem points out, was more of a charade, more of a performance, than a genuine involvement. I was never my true self, though I did not know what that true self entailed. Instead, I always felt like a pretender, like I was simply going through the motions of participating in life but was not really present. I sought psychiatric help for many years but continued to

feel lost and detached, both personally and interpersonally. It was as if my parents had written a script for me which I had been faithfully following since the day I was born but which somehow did not reflect the way I wanted to feel about myself. Actually, I knew less how I wanted to feel and more how I did not want to feel. In other words, I was more familiar with what felt bad than with what felt good.

Even now, though my parents have been dead for several years, their scripts are not easy to bury. I may have forgotten most of what I learned intellectually in school, but what I learned emotionally as a child is not as easily forgotten. It was in terms of an unhappy childhood, complicated by growing gender confusion, that I entered adulthood, but understandably an adulthood that was also unhappy. It was with great relief that I eventually found my way to The Renaissance Transgender Association and to a helpful gender therapist. My gender change has opened the door to a more fulfilling life, but the fact remains that there is more to my life than gen-

der fulfillment. What I have been describing as a troubled upbringing is, as I have indicated, not easy to erase.

There is more to personal growth than a gender change. Halloween may be a crossdresser's holy day, but for me it also represents ghosts from the past that continue to haunt my life in the present. My gender change has assuredly put me closer to my true self, but it is not the final answer. Instead, it has opened the door to the possibility of even greater self-understanding, for it has given me a sense of myself in terms of which I can now deal more effectively with my life as a whole. As the last two stanzas of my poem put it:

I will not disappear again,
though sometimes I despair,
for self-belief is always more
than curves and curly hair.

The human form will always be
far more than what the eye can see.
To be oneself should not seem strange;
the difficulty is the change.



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Dr. Kirk...

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and tissues below retain good vascularization, which insures good nutrition and oxygenation to the areas involved. The labia are joined appropriately and also hood the clitoris as in genetic women. This technique is soon to be reported by the lead writer of this article, J. William Futrell, MD, in the prestigious Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Journal.

TSMC's one stage GRS operation not only achieves realistic appearance but also goes a long way to assure functionality and the potential for proper organ sensation so necessary for satisfying sexual activity. Our refined technique contributes to the success of all three of these desirable results because nerve supply is not as impaired as it is with deeper surgery that is often employed with other procedures.

From a post-operative Male to Female Survey - a longitudinal study - conducted by Sheila Kirk, M.D.. Preliminary reporting on sexual experience in 100 respondents made to

the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association meeting in Vancouver, BC Canada, September 1997.

Sheila Kirk, MD and J. William Futrell, MD are two of the three principal surgeons performing GRS and related Trans surgeries at the first Transgender Surgical & Medical Center (TSMC) developed and directed by a Trans surgeon.

You can receive more information about the TSMC Center located in Pittsburgh, PA or ask Dr. Kirk questions on your treatment and care, by contacting her at TSMC@aol.com, by phone (412) 781-1092, fax: (412) 781-1096 or snail mail: TSMC, P.O. Box 38366, Blawnox, PA 15238.



Do you have something that you'd like to share? **News & Views** is a two way process. If an article or opinion provokes a reaction in you, whether positive or negative, don't go unheard. Send your opinions and comments in a letter to the Editor. Send letters to: Editor, c/o Renaissance, 987 Old Eagle School Road, Suite 719, Wayne, PA 19087, or email to <Editor@ren.org>.



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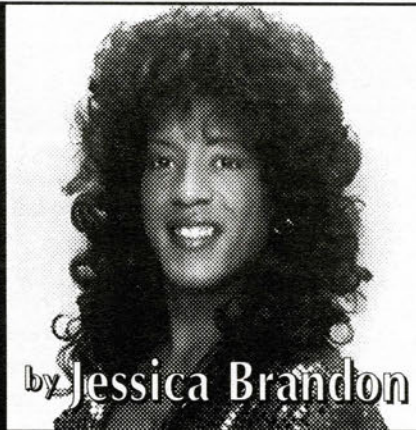
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Shopping With Jessica



Greetings, girlfriends! How has Fall treated you so far? Since News & Views hits the mailboxes in the first week of the month, allow me to wish each and every person reading these words a safe and happy Thanksgiving. It's a wonderful time of year to be with family and to give blessings for health and hearth. But don't overdo it on the turkey! Wouldn't want you to lose that girlish figure you've worked so hard to obtain!

This month, I take a stab at a topical theme which ties in perfectly with Thanksgiving, or rather, what we all just love to do on the day after—SHOP!!! As you all know, the day after Thanksgiving is traditionally known as "Black Friday", and it is, quite literally, THE busiest shopping day of the entire year. Oh, sure, people say the day after Christmas is big, but that's because more people are in the stores returning gifts they got and didn't like rather than looking for bargains.

Now, I have no idea when or where the tradition of Black Friday started, but it has become quite literally a godsend in the retail world as hordes of people from coast to coast descend on stores to take advantage of sales and bargains on anything and everything. And girls, if you're in the market for clothes, shoes, outerwear, lingerie, cosmetics, jewelry, you name it, Black Friday is the day to do it. However, it wouldn't hurt to have a few tips handy to help make your shopping experience a good one.

To begin with, check the newspapers prior to the big day. Normally, the Thanksgiving editions will be Sunday morning thick with circulars

and Black Friday sales being advertised by department stores and the like. Do some thorough research for sales on items you want. Cut out the ads or make notes on stores you want to visit and items you want to buy. By having the necessary intelligence in hand before you hit the stores, it'll make your trip all the more enjoyable.

Next, if you're lucky enough to have Black Friday off, get an early start on your expedition. Part of the tradition is that stores open early on that day. How early, you ask? Try seven a.m. As the old saying goes, "First come, first served". If you want to catch a bargain on something you want before it's snatched up, make like the early bird so you can grab the worm of your choice. You're going to be in heated competition with thousands of other shoppers, so it helps to get the upper hand.

As for shopping dressed on Black Friday, that's up to you. With the stores and malls packed solid, they'll be more people checking you out. If you're not totally comfortable shopping en femme, that could present a problem. Remember my "Three A's" of shopping (especially Appearance) so you don't become a spectacle. Also, I've seen some shoppers get pretty testy, if not downright belligerent, while in search of Black Friday sales, so keep your cool while all around you are losing theirs.

Lastly, don't try to buy out the store at one time. When last I checked, human beings only come with one pair of arms, so don't overload them with bags and parcels. Buy only what you can safely carry without

becoming a hazard to yourself or other shoppers. If need be, make several trips to your car. It can hold a lot more than you can. And don't go wild with your plastic — buy in moderation. Trust me, you'll feel better about that when the bills arrive.

Now, on to a more serious shopping topic. I spend at least a good hour or so every day checking out websites devoted to shopping in general and transgender shopping in particular, and I've noticed something I consider to be a rather disturbing trend that's developed lately. It seems that some websites which cater to the TG community are single minded in their desire to sell mostly, if not only exotic clothing and accessories instead of more sedate and practical wear.

You know what I'm talking about: leather outfits, tight dresses and short skirts, shoes with five, six, even seven inch heels, dominatrix boots, big hair wigs, PVC stuff, you name it. Then there's sites selling imitation vaginas and junk like so-called breast enhancement pills and creams. Hell, there's even one site that offers a book which tells how to buy almost any drug (such as hormones) from overseas sources legally without a prescription, something I find not only irresponsible but dangerous.

Perhaps I'm woefully out of touch since, from day one, I've never had any desire to wear overly provocative clothing. The closest I have to that is a black leather miniskirt, but I've never worn it in broad daylight. I for one find it hard to believe that the demand for such items in the TG world is high enough to the point where there are so many sites selling stuff you'd think would only be found in the pages of a Frederick's of Hollywood catalog, and even then, only worn after dark.

What I'm getting at here is that some of the stuff offered through these sites is simply not for normal day-to-day wear, which fits the pattern for those of us who simply want to present a believable female image while in public. Not every crossdress-

continued on page 23

Organization Listing

• **Transgender Health Action Coalition (T-HAC):** The Transgender Information and Peer Counseling Hotline is now helping to serve the needs of the greater Philadelphia Transgender community. The hotline operates every Monday and Thursday from 6 to 10 p.m. Call: (215) 732-1207. Organizational meetings of the are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month from 8 to 9:30 p.m. on the fourth floor of the Washington West Offices, 1201 Locust St. Phila. PA. All are welcome to attend.

• **ActionAIDS:** Support groups and information for HIV+ people in the Philadelphia area. 215-981-0088 for general information. Sponsor Passages, a support group for gender variant people. Call 215-981-3349 for Passages information.

• **William Way Lesbian, Gay, Bi, TG Community Center:** Many programs and diversions for the LGBT community in Philadelphia. For info on upcoming events call 215-732-2220.

• **Community Alliance of Transsexuals (CATS):** TS support group that meets in Burlington County, New Jersey. 215-536-1209

• **The Attic:** Center for gay, lesbian, bisexual and TG youth ages 12 to 23 in Philadelphia. 215-545-4331.

• **Phila. TS Support Group:** 4 p. m. the first Saturday every month at 1201 Locust Street 215-483-7647.

• **Intersexed Issues:** Raven Kaldera, Amboy Intersexed Liason, Cauldron Farm, 12 Simond Hill Road, Hubbardston, MA, 01452. 978-928-4198, cauldron@net1plus.com

• **FTM and SOFFA Issues (including Intersex):** Gary Bowen, Coordinator-in-chief, P O Box 1118, Elkton, MD, 21922-1118, 410-392-3640, transman@netgsi.com, URL: <http://www.netgsi.com/~listwangler>

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TG Community Calendar

LOCAL RENAISSANCE CHAPTERS/AFFILIATES- NOVEMBER

- 7: Lower Susquehanna Valley, New Jersey Support
- 14: Lehigh Valley, Delaware
- 21: Greater Philadelphia (Halloween Party)
- 28: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender

NOVEMBER 1998

5-8: Paradise in the Poconos. Fantasy getaway weekend. Contact CDS, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406, call 610-640-9449, or email to <poco@cdspub.com>.

5-8: Fall Harvest 1998. Sponsored by City of Lakes Crossgendered Community in Minneapolis, MN at the Sheraton Metro Dome. For info, contact CLCC, P.O. Box 14844, Minneapolis, MN 55414. Call 612- 229-3613 or email to <CLCC@topcity.net>.

7: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)

8-13: Dignity Cruise X and Holiday at Sea II. Miami to Key West and the

Bahamas. Contact Cruises Inc.: Barbara Arendt at (800) 621-6699 or Mike Sinn at (800)818-7830.

11-15: Joint Meeting, The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality and American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Sex Therapists, "Sexuality and the Media: Hooray for Hollywood?", Westin Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles, CA write Joint AASECT/SSSS Meeting P.O. Box 240, Mount Vernon, IA 52314-0240, 319-895-6407, fax: 319-895-6203

19: Diabolique Fetish Masquerade Ball, call 215-829-4986

20-22: Riverside Gala Weekend at The Inn at Franklin on Liberty Street, Franklin, PA. For info, write to Erie Sisters, 1903 West 8th Street, Suite 261, Erie, PA 16505. Email: <rgw98@usachoice.net> or <esc@sonline.net, fax: 814-437-5996.

JANUARY 1999

2: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)

FEBRUARY 1999

6: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)

MARCH 1999

3-16: Dignity Cruise XI on the Marco Polo from Sydney, Australia to Cairns. Contact Cruises Inc.: Barbara Arendt at 800- 621-6699 or Mike Sinn at 800-818-7830.

APRIL 1999

8-10: Pride and prejudice: The 5th Annual Symposium on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues, University of Rhode Island. Inquiries can be made by phone at 401-874-2101, or email at <silvadel@aol.com>.

AUGUST 1999

17-22: Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., London, England. Contact: Bean Robinson, 1300 South 2nd Street, Sst, Suite 180, Minneapolis, MN 55454. Phone: 612-625-1500 (receptionist), 612-624-8078 (voice mail), 612-626-8311 (fax) or email to <robin009@gold.tc.umn.edu>



Shopping...

while in public. Not every crossdresser wants to dress like a hooker, so why then do these sites appear to offer only that kind of clothing? Maybe I'm being a prude, but to me, this smacks of stereotyping crossdressers as fetishists, and that's just not fair.

What's your view on this, girls? Do you think I'm right, or am I way off base. Is what the people want? Why don't you drop me a line and give me an earful. As always, my electronic mailbox is open for your comments, tips and opinions at

██████████@voicenet.com>, or by snail mail to the Renaissance National office on page two. Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart!



Teddycare...

for Ruby and a desire to help a worthy cause, the level of talent is always quite high. A partial list of other well known performers who had appeared in other performances include Victoria Weston, Varla Jean Merman, Judy Kreskin, Jerry Scott (Ring them Bells), Steven Brinberg (Barbra Streisand) and Baby Jane Dexter. Obviously early reservations are a must!

For 1998 the tradition continues at Eighty Eights with two shows every Saturday night in December, at 8 and 11 PM. Starting in November you can make reservations at:

Eighty Eights
(a Gender Friendly place anytime)
228 West 10th Street
Greenwich Village

212-924-0088
(No credit cards)

FYI: The Oaks has closed and is now a jazz club, Ruby is now working at Eighty Eights on Fridays, and Lanette, the Oaks' cheerful Drag Queen hostess, is working at the jazz restaurant Ecco L'Italia on 7th and Bleeker.



Jay Ann

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