

GREATER PHILADELPHIA NEWS

Editor: Dina Amberle

JULY '93

NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS...I GUESS

In this constantly changing world where national boundaries change with shocking rapidity; where political leaders can go from euphoric victories to dismal approval ratings overnight; and sports teams go from worst to first and back again before you even know who's playing first base...isn't it nice to have some stability?

Well, we here at Renaissance's Greater Philadelphia Chapter are happy to report that things are in stasis. In other words, we have nothing earth-shattering to report this month. When we do...you'll see it here first.

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VENDOR'S NIGHT IN SEPTEMBER

Our wildly popular vendor's night which was begun as a summertime diversion is moving to September this year. Michelle [REDACTED], Programs Director, is lining up merchants to visit our meetingplace and offer their goods and services to us. In past years, we've had several merchants in various retail fields from which to shop or consult.

If you know a vendor you think might like to be invited to our September Vendor's Night, contact Michelle [REDACTED] to discuss it.

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'RENNI' AWARD HALF-WAY POINT

In January of this year, we voted for 'Renni' award winners from three categories: Film, Television, and Newsmakers. The announcement of the winners garnered us some publicity in the Inquirer and a couple local radio stations. The award is for being an inspirational feminine image to us as male crossdressers. It's now half-way through '93 and a good time to think about nominees for the awards next January.

Let's just throw some of these names out based on happenings so far this year: Demi Moore for 'Indecent Proposal'; Sharon Stone for 'Sliver'; Meg Ryan for 'Sleepless in Seattle'; Angela Bassett for 'What's Love Got to Do With It?'; Connie Chung for 'CBS Evening News'; Janine Turner for 'Northern Exposure' or 'Cliffhanger'; Holly Robinson for 'Hangin' with Mr. Cooper'; Heather Locklear or Courtney Thorne-Smith for 'Melrose Place'; Attorney-General Janet Reno for lighting a fire under the Branch Davidians; Hillary Clinton for a new hairdo and health plan for America; and perhaps a posthumous notice for Pat Nixon for suffering the trials and tribulations of her husband Richard M...and who knows what the second half of the year may bring?

ALL-SPORTS RADIO STATION PLUGS RENAISSANCE

The Delaware Valley is home to a wide range of broadcast radio - everything from all-news to eclectic public and university programming to hipper-than-thou rock stations. So which radio station has given Renaissance the most publicity? WIP 610 AM. That's right, the home of all-sports talk radio. There are some who would say it ain't as strange as it seems at first glance.

The latest plug came when I sent midday host Jody MacDonald a copy of our June Chapter News where I chided him about doing his show in drag after losing a bet and favoring sneakers rather than high heels with his dress. Along with the News, I sent a letter mentioning Renaissance's six year history, large membership base, and activities for the man who would be Queen. Oh, and I also sent a photo of myself with the offer to help him look a little more together the next time he wanted to dress up.

Jody read the letter and News blurb in their entirety on his Thursday June 24 program, mentioning Renaissance in all the right places. He introduced the bit by saying it was his 'favorite piece of fan mail so far this year.' Jody had fun with it - as it was hoped he would - but didn't take any potshots at the group or make any crass comments about our community.

The show was being broadcast from a 'remote' at the Berlin Circle McDonald's restaurant and Jody had a small crowd of guys in the audience in front of him. Before he revealed the nature of our group, he showed them the photo of Dina in her swimsuit and high heels and asked the guys what they thought. An enthusiastic chorus of catcalls could be heard in the background. When the big secret was revealed, there was some embarrassed laughter and an almost audible bang from some burst macho bubbles.

When all was said and done, Jody admitted that he kept the dress he bought for the occasion and it is hanging in his closet. Because if he was challenged to bet a day in drag again - he'd do it. And if he lost...well, you know where to reach me, Jody.

HAPPENINGS IN HOSIERY...A surprising amount of notice was taken when tennis star Andre Agassi showed off his freshly shaven chest during a preliminary round at London's venerable Wimbledon tournament. And inquiring minds - sportswriters' minds, at that - wanted to know why and how he had shorn his chest hair. Andre played coy and said he did it to be 'more aerodynamic on the court'. Somebody forgot to point out that he wears a shirt over his bare chest so aerodynamism is hardly the reason. He also said he sometimes removes the hair himself but sometimes 'has someone help him'. Maybe Gunilla Knudsen the old 'Take it Off' girl for shaving cream commercials comes out of retirement to lather him up. My own theory on the sudden hair-razing? Andre probably wanted to drop into London's premier drag bar 'Madame JoJo's' in a low cut sequined gown and realized that bare was the only way to go...Not raising quite as much media attention were Michelle [REDACTED], Rachel [REDACTED], Libby [REDACTED], and Michelle [REDACTED], who took a trip to see a truly large lady up close. They visited the Statue of Liberty a weekend or so ago - but not in drag. After all, the inscription may say 'give me your tired, your poor, your downtrodden' - it doesn't say anything about guys in pumps...Our own card-carrying member of the actor's union, Angela Gardner, played a double role in a mystery theater production and one of the parts was done in drag. But as the old 'Master Thespian' might say: she was only 'Acting!'...Lee Etscovitz, our Renaissance librarian, appeared on CNBC's 'Real Personal' show with Dr. Wm. Stayton on July 2. They discussed transgenderism with host Bob Berkowitz...Media exposure of a different sort was in store for Dina as her photos appeared in a few magazines recently. She was pictured in 'Girls Talk', 'F.M.I.' and the kinky 'Reflections'...One of the great, bold outings I heard about recently was one in which Samantha [REDACTED] led some of her friends around Greenwich Village - in broad daylight - to boutiques like 'Trash and Vaudeville'. One of those friends, Helen [REDACTED], also mentioned that they stopped into the bizarre emporium of Constance Enterprises in No. Jersey and Samantha snapped on a pair of elbow-length latex gloves and decided she simply couldn't live without them...She used to say that 'they never bought her dinner' but April [REDACTED] finally enjoyed a dinner date at Wilmington's Air Transport Command restaurant and nightclub with a gentleman friend. Things apparently went well and April was getting compliments on her dress from some young ladies at an adjoining table...The miracle of cable television has brought us one show worth checking out. (Which is about the most you can expect from those extra thirty-five channels). It is 'Talk Soup' on the E! entertainment channel, which is a daily show featuring highlight clips from the day's talk shows. It airs at 9 and 11 PM. Host Greg Kinnear is a pretty funny guy which makes it enjoyable in itself but it's also a good place to see if you've missed any of the transvestic topics on the talk show circuit while you were out earning a living...The Sunday Inquirer Fashion section ran a short piece on bad ideas for men's fashions based on some menswear designers' actual collections this past year. Among the items that were deemed to have missed the mark were: pallazzo pants, shawls, and kilts (also known as skirts!). Well, I don't care what they say: I'm keeping my kilt, uh, I mean, skirt. But if you know anyone who would like to buy a shawl and a pair of pallazzo pants that were only worn once to a meeting with my broker, please see me.....

PLACES TO GO

RENAISSANCE GREATER PHILA. CHAPTER MEETINGS Third Saturday of each month. August meeting on the 21st, speaker Jenell Ashlie, Electrologist, on Electrolysis. September meeting on the 18th, Vendor's Night with guest merchants. Doors open at 8PM. Call 215/630-1437 for further info

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

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

THE PRELUDE Reincarnated nightclub features drag shows on Monday nights, with other entertainment each night of the week. Prelude, 408-A York Road (1/4 mile east of The Cartwheel), New Hope PA. Call 215/862-3600

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

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

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

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IF YOU HAVE NEWS OR GOSSIP - ESPECIALLY GOSSIP - YOU'D LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER, PLEASE SEE ME IN PERSON OR CONTACT ME THROUGH THE GR. PHILA. CHAPTER ADDRESS: P. O. BOX 530, BENSALEM PA 19020