

Renaissance News



Volume 7, No. 7

Vision - Integrity - Quality

July, 1993

Transsexual Discrimination in the Lesbian Community!

by Janis Walworth

During the 1991 annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF), a woman was expelled on suspicion of being transsexual. While waiting at the main gate for a friend arriving on the chartered bus late on the first evening of the festival, Nancy Burkholder, a 9-year-postoperative transsexual woman, was talking with a group of women around a campfire. One member of this group informed a security woman that Nancy had said something that made her suspect Nancy was a transsexual. Nancy was approached by security women, who questioned her about whether she was a man. She answered that she was a woman and showed them her picture ID driver's license. One of them asked if she was a transsexual. Nancy asked why she was being questioned. The woman replied that transsexuals were not permitted at the festival because the festival was for "natural, women-born women" only. Nancy pointed out that nowhere in any festival literature was that policy stated and asked the security woman to verify it. Festival producers Lisa Vogel and Boo Price were called and confirmed that transsexuals were not permitted to attend. They reportedly refused to speak to Nancy, having designated the security woman their spokesperson. Security women asked

Nancy whether she had had a sex-change operation. Nancy replied that her medical history was none of their business but that she was willing to submit to a genital examination to satisfy their concerns about her sex. Security women declined, saying they would not feel comfortable doing that. Nancy asked for proof to substantiate the security women's allegations that she was transsexual. They said they didn't need proof, that they "were empowered to expel anyone from the land for any reason that we feel appropriate." Nancy was told she had to leave the festival at once, was not allowed to return to her campsite to collect her belongings, and once expelled, had to find transportation home at her own expense.

Interestingly, Nancy had attended the 1990 MWMF without incident, participating fully in many events, joining other women in going bare-breasted, and sharing the open-air showers with them. Nancy was not expelled in 1991 for her behavior, or even her looks, but because she said something incriminating—she failed to conceal her transsexualism.

In 1992, the MWMF brochure contained wording meant to exclude transsexual women: "MWMF is a gathering of mothers and daughters for all womyn born womyn." Several transsexual women and I

felt that it was important to challenge this policy. MWMF is the oldest and largest of all the women's music festivals and has become an institution in the lesbian community. Dozens of women's music festivals and other events have been modeled on MWMF. Going there is something many preoperative transsexuals look forward to being able to do after surgery.

We chose to focus on three issues: (1) If MWMF policy is to exclude transsexual women, it should be stated in plain language in all festival brochures and advertisements. (2) We sought to raise gender awareness in the lesbian community, to inform women about transsexualism, and to make it clear that distinctions between men and women are arbitrary and not a precise reflection of nature. (3) We wanted to ascertain how festival participants felt about the exclusion of transsexual women and the reasons for antitranssexual feelings.

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Chapters & Affiliates

New Jersey

South Jersey: Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 435-5401 or write Renaissance SJ, PO Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Chapter leader - Terri Risley; Assistant Leader - Phil Muniz

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia: Meets on third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, PA. Doors open at 8:00 p.m. Write to Renaissance PHL, Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020 or call (215)630-1437. Chapter Leader - Maryann Kirkland

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Meets on the first Saturday of the month at The Greens at Westgate in York, Pa. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105, or call (717) 780-1LSV. Chapter Leader - Yvonne Sullivan

Affiliates

MOTG: Terry M., PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701

American Educational Gender Information Services (AEGIS): Dallas Denny, PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033, (404) 939-0244

Renaissance News

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Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the gender community and the general public.

And, don't forget about...

Articles, opinion pieces and letters to the Editor are always welcome at the Renaissance News. Ideas for articles and opinion pieces should be sent to Renaissance News, P. O. Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020. Complimentary and irate letters to the Editor may be sent to the same address.

Significant Others who have article ideas or opinions they would like to share should send their ideas to Evelyn Kirkland, c/o Maryann Kirdland, P. O. Box 1242, Newtown, PA 18940.

Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics, and 9-Understanding Transsexuality.

Pen Pal Program: If you would like to be a pen pal contact Maryann Kirkland at P. O. Box 1242, Newtown, PA 18940. Attn: Dept. PP.

If you are a transgendered person with children and would like to network with other transparents, contact Elsa Larson at: Transparent, C/O Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

For TS information and peer counseling in South Jersey call Kelly Harris at 609 641-3782.

Events Calendar

Renaissance GP

July 17: Selma Blakker, Hair Styling & Wig Care
Aug. 21: Jenell Ashlie, Electrolysis
Sept. 18: Vendor's night
Oct. 16: Dr. Sheila Kirk
Nov. 20: Mariette Pathy Allen, Photographer
Dec. 4: Christmas Party

Renaissance LSV

July 3: Meeting, 9:00 p.m.
Aug. 7: Meeting 9:00 p.m.
Aug. 14: Board Meeting, 5:00 p.m.
Sept. 4: Meeting, 8:00 p.m.

Chapters wishing to have their programs listed should get them to the Newsletter at least one month in advance. Two is better.

ROGER'S NOTEBOOK (#79)

by Roger E. Peo, Ph. D.

National health care reform has been in the news recently. Many approaches have been proposed. Our present funding of health coverage gets worse every year. The crisis faces not only persons with medical issues but those who want psychotherapeutic support.

For example, the State of Oregon would like to make basic health care available to all their citizens. To control the cost of such care it was necessary to determine what could be covered with the funds available. Their approach was to rank procedures according to cost and effectiveness. At some point the funds would be exhausted. Procedures below that "line" would not be covered by public funding.

Approximately 750 procedures were included in this evaluation. Using current funding projections it appeared that the cut-off point would be at about 568. I have only seen an abbreviated listing in the Mental Health Weekly for March 29, 1993. In the that list, no psychological condition is lower than 141 and many are above the cut point. It appears that most serious psychological disorders are cov-

ered. Clearly identified gender issues all fall below the cut point. That is, persons seeking coverage for things such as gender identity disorders and transsexualism would not be covered by this plan. In fact, it appears that most issues dealing with sexuality and gender are not covered.

Will such a mechanism come into being? I suspect that it will. The specific procedures covered will probably vary from state to state. What is reasonably certain is that professional coverage will be limited or non-existent for most sexual issues.

I am enough of a realist to know that it will never be possible to have insurance coverage for every situation. Oregon's approach started me thinking about professional support for transgendered persons. Today most insurance plans do not cover most transgendered conditions. The reasons are many and varied but seem to come down to the belief that such approaches are either not effective or are "experimental".

Is such a situation fair? It depends. If the fundamental purpose

is to make sure that everyone has basic health care then such a policy can be considered equitable since most situations that benefit from treatment will be covered for everyone. If, however, your premise is that there is the potential for giving someone a better life through a known technique then lack of coverage is unfair.

There are many ethical and moral aspects of this approach that are not addressed. Perhaps in the end it can only be an economic decision. Just as in our personal budgets we can not afford everything we would like, so it is with governments. Taxpayers can not afford to provide universal coverage for all the ills that humans are heir to, so some people will be left without public support. This does not mean that they can not get help but simply that they have to pay for it - not unlike the situation of today.



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This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter if Dr. Peo's name and address appear in the reprinted version. Others must obtain written approval from Dr. Peo. A copy of such a reprint should be sent to Dr. Peo.



New from CDS

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CONFESSIONS OF A MALE W.I.M.S.

(Woman In Military Service)

by Jessica Charlene Brandon

Unless you've been on Vulcan studying for the kohlinahr (JoAnn Roberts can tell you all about it!) for the last several months, then you know about the fiery controversy regarding gays in the military. On one side, you have President Clinton trying to do the politically correct thing by integrating homosexuals into the Armed Forces as part of a campaign promise, and on the other you have conservative politicians and top ranking officers such as Colin Powell with their panties in a royal bunch over the issue, wanting gays kept out at any cost. This fight has been raging ever since Clinton took office and shows no sign whatsoever of easing.

I've been following this controversy with a great deal of interest ever since it first became public because, as you know, I happen to serve in the Navy and I strongly believe the final outcome of this emotionally charged issue would have a tremendous effect on my being a crossdresser. As you well know, the majority of uninformed people believe that crossdressing is synonymous with homosexuality which of course is light years away

from reality, but to a closed minded, perhaps homophobic person who doesn't know any better and refuses to learn and/or accept the truth, I'm considered every bit as unacceptable as a homosexual and should be immediately booted out, no questions asked.

Being in the military entails a great many hardships, chief among them being away from your loved ones for extended periods of time. In my case as a sailor, I've been underway from various homeports anywhere between two weeks for training cruises to six or seven months at a time for major deployments overseas. Having discovered the joys of crossdressing in the early seventies, I was traumatized when I went to Japan in 1978 and I couldn't dress for a whole year! This really played havoc on my mind and worse, I couldn't "supplement" my hobby by wearing lingerie under my uniform since ships have cramped, always crowded berthing compartments where privacy was flat out impossible.

The only time I could dress was when I was on leave from my ship, but only for two weeks. I wasn't able to resume dressing on a long term

basis until 1980 when I received orders for shore duty here for two years. The experience was not unlike a purge, only I didn't dump my wardrobe, I was merely separated from it. In the years to follow, I would go from ship to ship, dressing only at home when time permitted, but I encountered others like me. Once, as a compartment cleaner on one of my past ships, I found a pair of frilly lace panties under a shipmate's bunk. My initial thought was that this was a prize after a sexual conquest, but they were quite large, as was the shipmate, so I figured he was a CD. I never told on him.

Even early on in my military career which is now at seventeen years and counting, I knew better than to reveal my little secret to anyone, not even my closest friends because I had once served on a ship with not one, but two gay sailors, one of whom worked in my division. It was in 1982, I happened to stumble across them one day in the storeroom I was in charge of, when I entered the space, it was darkened and as I was about to flick on the lights, I saw my co-worker, stand-

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ing six foot four in an embrace and passionately kissing a guy from the ship's administration office who was just over five feet. The size differential alone was weird enough. This was the first time I had seen gays "in action" and I was floored.

Instead of interrupting them, I quietly left, deciding what they did was their own business. However, several weeks later, both those men had been found badly beaten while out on liberty and were hospitalized. It was later learned in an inquiry that those poor guys had been assaulted by seven guys from our ship who discovered they were gay and decided to "beat the crap" out of them because they hated homosexuals. Once the truth was out, both men were quickly and quietly discharged for "conduct unbecoming the service" while the thugs were punished, but allowed to stay in the Navy. Watching that drama unfold, I thought, *If gays were treated so cruelly, what would happen to crossdressers like me?*

That was eleven years ago, and gays in the military are still the victims of violence as evident from the murder of a sailor by one of his shipmates in Japan. And let's not forget the single minded, witch hunt style persecution as well, for when a gay sailor, soldier or airman is uncovered, they can expect no jus-

tice, save for a swift discharge, even if they are exemplary individuals. And I believe crossdressers in the service face the same sort of perils because the public callously crowds them in the same boat (pardon the pun) as homosexuals. I know military CD's are out there, I met one, a Naval officer no less at a Renaissance meeting and I'm sure they also worry about being unfairly persecuted because of their lifestyle.

In some ways, crossdressing in the military is like running a gauntlet if you're discovered. There's no such thing as getting a pink slip and being shown the door like in civilian life; in the Navy, you go through the degrading process of a Captain's Mast where you stand before the Commanding Officer of your ship who, in the role of judge, jury and executioner ruthlessly hands down a punishing sentence. Worst of all, it's not swept under the rug, the results of your sentence, and the reasons for your going to mast are made painfully public to the crew. And therein lies the hazard because of mindless prejudice that could result in total humiliation by your shipmates, or erupt in senseless violence against you.

The Navy has been very good to me for the last seventeen years, hell, it's the steady paycheck that's allowed me to buy and maintain my

femme wardrobe in the first place. Talk about irony! Still, every time I go on an outing, I worry myself sick over something going wrong that would end up in my being found out which in turn would ruin my career. But if alternate lifestyles were to be rendered criminal in the eyes of the Pentagon brass, and, in those same eyes, there can be absolutely no compromise, then crossdressers, like homosexuals will have to continue keeping their secrets, dressing far away from their ships and posts and praying they don't face the prejudice and violence that gays do.

(Discrimination: continued from page 1)

A team of four women (one a transsexual) went to the festival in 1992. We posted gender information in the portable toilets every morning and evening. We set up a literature table where we handed out information and talked to women for several hours every day about Nancy's expulsion and the issue of transsexuals in the lesbian community. We and two other women offered workshops on transsexualism and the festival policy. The transsexual member of our team came out as transsexual in two of these workshops. We posted information in the medical and emotional support areas. We handed out buttons in support of transsexual

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inclusion to anyone who would wear them. We talked to security workers about how they had been instructed to deal with transsexuals. We surveyed 633 festival participants about whether they thought transsexual women should be welcome at the festival: 73% said yes, 23% said no.

After the festival, we sent press releases and photos of our activities to over 150 gay and lesbian publications, we wrote letters in response to article feedback in several newspapers, and we sent survey results to MWMF producers. There has been no response from festival staff concerning our survey. The 1993 festival brochure came out in April, and it contains the same gibberish meant to exclude transsexuals.

We are planning to go back and continue our work at the August 1993 festival. This year, we would like to have a larger group of women there to work with us. We are planning to circulate a petition asking MWMF producers to change their policy. We are updating our literature and adding to it. We are planning workshops and discussion groups. We have purchased a buttonmaking machine and are busy making a much wider range of buttons than we had last year. We hope to have a group camped outside the

front gate to talk to women as they enter the festival.

Last year, a few individuals contributed many hours and about \$2000, which was used for transportation for members of our group who couldn't afford to get to Michigan, tickets to get our team into the festival, photographic and recording equipment, buttons, printing our literature, and a rental car to provide transportation in case any of us was thrown out and a safe place to keep literature and completed surveys.

This year, we hope to raise \$5000, which will allow us to enlarge our working group and our activities at the festival. How much we can do in 1993 depends on how much support we receive. We are seeking donations of money, poetry and personal writings of transsexual women, transportation to Michigan in August, volunteers to help out at the festival, local contacts in the area of Hart (north of Grand Rapids, Michigan), camping equipment to borrow, reprints of articles to use as handouts, etc. If your organization or individual members would like to help, please contact me at P. O. Box 52, Ashby, MA 01431.

MEETING OF THE GARDEN STATE GENDER COALITION

by Stephanie Elisibeth, S.N.R.

On May 29, 1993 the Garden State Gender Coalition held its second meeting. The meeting was hosted by the Sigma Nu Rho Chapter of Tri-Ess. Present were ten sisters representing the following groups: Philadelphia and South Jersey Renaissance, MOTG, Metropolitan Gender Network, Transit, and Tri-Ess through the Sigma Nu Rho Chapter.

Each representative gave a report on the status of their group along with future plans. Each group was proud to report growth in membership and some interesting future events. I encourage you to contact each individual group for a calendar of events. And plan to attend.

Primary reports were given on the recent Coming Together Convention which was held in Philadelphia in March and on the March on Washington DC for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi-Sexual equal rights. Terry M. from MOTG played a tape of the poignant speech given at the

(continued on page 16)

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by Angela Gardner

Ok, we know when we're beaten. Maybe it wasn't such a good idea to offer service ads in the newsletter. Looks like no one is interested in offering their professional services to other members of our so called transgender community.

Seemed like a good idea at the time. A transvestite up on your roof fixing that hole that had been letting rain get into your closet and all over your pretty frocks. How about a transgendered plumber? No need to take all your feminine items out of the bathroom before your sister, the plumber arrives to fix that drip. Heck, how about a transgendered builder to bid on building your new house? Just think of the closet space you could include! It could all be possible if a few of you folks would take out an ad offering your services to the News readers.

But that's just a dream at the moment. We've mentioned the idea in every issue for the past few months and not one person has taken out an ad. Are we beaten? Yes. Do we give up? No, that would be the sensible thing to do. Not only are we going to continue to offer ads, we're going to expand the categories to include "Wanter to Buy" and "For Sale." The same great rate, three dollars for three lines for three months still applies. Come on girls,

let's do business with our own kind.

It still might not work. It has occurred to us that maybe, just maybe people are afraid to publish a phone number or address. What about the ever useful PO Box? Put that in the ad to make initial contacts and screen out potential trouble makers like your ex-wife, axe murders and the IRS. If we ever get rich doing this support group thing maybe we might someday be able to offer a voice mail box rental for totally anonymous contact. Till then we'll do the best we can and hope that eventually someone takes advantage of the networking possibilities we offer.

And now the news!

ROYAL SCAM

We got a note from Kuwait the other day. No, not a thank you letter from the Amir. It came from an American crossdresser who now lives and works in Kuwait. Billie is a retired Colonel from the US Army (*Crossdressers In Combat*, tomorrow on Donohue!!!). She wrote to ask what she could do to help Renaissance and let us know that there are definitely native crossdressers in Kuwait. They are called Lady-boys and the quickest way to spot them is to look at any Kuwaiti woman dressed in fashionable Western clothes. It also seems that while many American

crossdressers put their frocks in storage to fight in Desert Storm and liberate the poor down trodden Kuwaiti's at least one member of the Royal family, one of the Amir's sons, was photographed at a very upscale Paris night club. His attire? Very expensive couture.

It only seems fair that the Royal family of Kuwait use a little of their oil money to send crossdressing Desert Storm veterans to Paris for a holiday enfemme. Wouldn't that be a nice feminine gesture?

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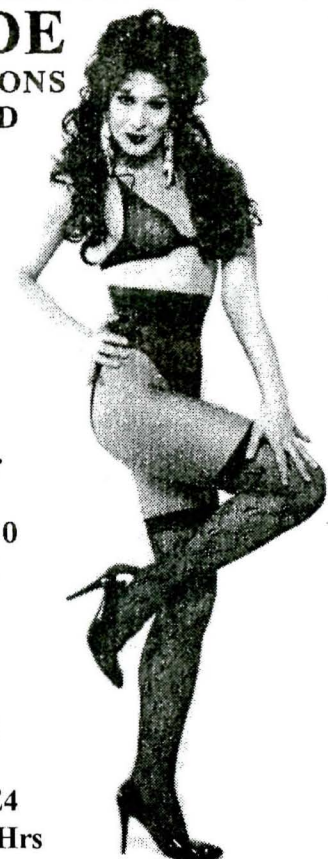
The Human Rights Campaign Fund is looking for a few good crossdressers or actually anybody who would be willing to represent them at lesbian and gay pride events around the country. If you would like to get involved in their Speak Out program and get paid for it give

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them a call at 1-800-777-HRCF. Ask for their National Canvass Manager, Tom Swift. (I swear that's his name. Wonder if he's still got his 3D Telejector?)

The Speak Out program is working to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military and win civil rights. They also work for women's rights and reproductive freedom. If you'd like to get active give them a call.

EDIELWEISS, EDIELWEISS

Since the closing of New York's hottest transie bar, Club Edielweiss, it had been pretty slim pickings for TV's on the prowl. Sure, you could go to one of the big clubs like The Limelight or The Palladium. The Poop parties at the Supper Club on 47th street were fun and the VIP room at Club USA always had a good assortment of our kind of girls on a Saturday night. Sally's on 43rd street was ok, if you like a tiny neighborhood bar type place packed with transvestite hookers and their Johns. No, Edielweiss had class. It had been evolving and getting better. Even Madonna went there. Once. (The management couldn't stop telling you about that.) Then without warning, it was gone.

Well, hold on to your garters. The name is different but the club is back. Club 580 is the newest incarnation of the old Edielweiss staff and management and it's bigger and better than ever. Located at 580 Eleventh Avenue (Coincidence?), it is very convenient for the out-of-towner arriving from the west. Go in through the Lincoln Tunnel. Turn left on 42nd Street and go a block and a half to Eleventh Avenue. Turn right and stay in the right lane. Between 43rd and 44th you will see a diner. Attached to the diner is a small facade with a large 580 painted on it. Just north of 580 is the 580

parking lot. You can park for free. That's right, (unless they decide to charge at some point in the future) free parking in New York! If the lot is full there are parking spots on the street.

When you enter Club 580 you will pay a ten dollar cover if you're enfemme. Men pay more. Not being a man I'm not sure how much their cover is but I think it's \$20.00. After you cough up the cover and before you close your purse a burly security guard will check it for weapons. This is a good thing. Some of the girls do bring a razor when they go out and it's not to touch up their shave. Men are patted down to make sure there are no concealed weapons.

After the security check you're in. The first room is a bar. The bar looks like it may have been converted from a diner counter. There are two transgendered barkeeps to serve you. At the back of the room a few steps up brings you to a back room dance area. Is that all? No, there are stairs leading down from the back room to a passage underground that leads to a bigger dance area under the diner next door. It wasn't open when I visited the club but it should be up and boogieing by the time you read this.

They are supposed to be open seven nights a week with the crowd arriving late. Call them for more info at 212-629-1021. Have a good time and leave your switch blade in the car.

SHOW BIZ

Speaking of transie bars, it seems that to prepare for his role as famous Hollywood TV Ed Wood, famous Hollywood actor, Johnny Depp has been hanging out in LA TV bars making friends with cross-dressers and club kids. Wonder if

anyone has seen him at the Queen Mary? Let us know if you did.

Johnny is also supposed to be practicing wearing nylons and that's an authentic touch. Ed Wood died before they invented pantyhose. (Or he was too old to care?)

Does anyone remember that this isn't the first time Depp has donned drag? Back before "Benny & Joon" and "Edward Scissorhands" little Johnny was in "21 Jump Street" and one episode had him driving out in drag, (cashmere sweater, short skirt and delicate, gold jewelry) to drop off ransom money or something like that. Keep your eyes open for reruns on cable. He was quite a cutie.

Thanks to the ever vigilant Tiffany for the Johnny Depp clipping. Keep up the good work.

CONNIE, WHY DID YOU MARRY MAURY?

Talk show host and husband of Connie Chung, "Mister Hoping to Be A Daddy" Maury Povich, was a guest on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno on June fourth. Since all talk shows have transvestites and transexuals on at one time or another, usually during sweeps week, Jay got the P man talking about his show's transgender policy. Maury told Jay that he made a vow when he started that he would "never have any trans anything" on his show. Jay said, "What about Tula?" and Maury told us that he had to be talked into that one and that he "couldn't see any man there."

Well, sounds like a little insecurity, Mr. Povich. Do the big, bad transvestites scare little Maury? Does the beautiful, sexy, TS distract him from his fears?

I think it's only fair that we tell Maury Povich about our pledge. It's a pledge that all members of the Renaissance Speakers Bureau were

required to sign in black eyeliner. "We solemnly pledge to never appear on any talk show hosted by anyone named Maury. Or Murray." I never liked that man.

ARSENIO AIN'T AFRAID GIRLFRIEND

On his May 28th program Arsenio Hall featured only two guests. First up was comedian and failed game show host Bill Cosby. After cutting up with Bill for the first half of the show Arsenio had his venerable guest hold up the CD of the next guest... Ru Paul. Bill Cosby promoting the appearance of Ru Paul! I never thought I'd see that.

After the spot break Arsenio introduced a piece he and Ru had shot that afternoon. Ru Paul took Arsenio on a tour of my favorite lingerie store in LA, Playmates. During the tour Ru modeled several different lingerie looks and tried to talk Arsenio into a leather G-string. When asked how she managed to wear those really short, tight, spandex hot pants without showing any unsightly bulges Ru replied that it was "an ancient Chinese secret."

After the taped bit Arsenio brought Ru out to large applause from the studio audience and she decorated his couch with her shapely six foot seven bod. When queried about the size of her hair, which was very much like Marie Antoinette's, only larger, she said, "big hair, big heart."

She performed her new single, "Back To My Roots," (a hair pun) and then challenged Arsenio to a one on one basketball match in high heels. Arsenio said he could get with the basketball but he wasn't too eager to try it in heels. He claimed his jump shot was poor enough.

This wasn't Mister Hall's only experience with drag. Remember

that bit in "Coming To America" with Eddie Murphy? If we hear anything about the basketball match we'll give you the news.

FINAL NOTES

If you're in Baltimore at the Hippo keep an eye out for The Unknown Drag Queen. Right, she wears a bag over her head just like her inspiration, The Unknown Comic. What ever happened to that guy? You don't think it could be..? Nah!

Also keep an eye out for the Hoax sisters. Yes, that's their name and conning people is their game. Recently Bertie Hoax was in New England and she needed some cash, clothes and food. She worked the scam she and her sister have pulled before. She went to the police station and told them she was an aban-

doned and homeless twelve year old boy. Actually she is a 23 year old genetic woman. The small town's heart (these scams work best in small towns), went out to the poor little boy and several people offered to adopt "him." We're not sure how Bertie was caught but caught she was and taken away to prison. The women's prison.

That's it for this month, possums. Welcome back Brenda's Vis A Vis! Remember all the things I usually tell you to remember and if you like what we're doing, if you don't like what we're doing or if there's something you think we should be doing don't keep it to yourself. Let me know at PO Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020. Keep those cards and letters coming! Adios amigos.

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Letter ... We Get Letter

Dear Angela:

Yesterday was a historical day and I am filled with a sense of awe. Two members of Renaissance, Jessica Brandon and JoAnn Roberts, did a training that clearly will positively change forever a transgendered person's life who has significant developmental disabilities. (Developmental disabilities are those present before age 22, i.e. cerebral palsy, mental retardation, spina bifida, deafness, etc.) The day the May issue of Renaissance News arrived, with Jessica Brandon's front page article regarding Afro-American experience, I called you to help.

Julius Jackson, Director of Mandella Inc., an agency providing services for persons with significant developmental disabilities and/or mental illness, asked for help in

supporting an Afro-American transgendered person. This included understanding the TV/TS phenomenon and identifying practical suggestions that would contribute to increased mental health.

Jessica's and JoAnn's authenticity, competence, and dignity provided an arena for staff persons to grow in knowledge and commitment regarding supporting transgendered persons with mental retardation/mental illness. This morning I called to say thank you. Jessica volunteered to be a "Big Sister" to this person and to the staff; JoAnn answered, "I only did what I always do." (and quietly donated a Tina Turner wig). Maybe that's the miracle I watched: Mandella asked for support and Jessica and JoAnn replied "Here's how" in a real way!

I feel privileged to be associated with a self advocacy association that has responded so positively every time to these requests - whether reaching out to a transgendered refugee or a person with mental retardation. Most sexual minority organizations have not actively extended themselves to persons with disabilities or ethnic minorities.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Carol A. Cobb-Nettleton, D.S.W.
Clinical Social Worker

P.S. As a gift back to the members of Renaissance, I am enclosing a copy of the theme song "We are Speaking for Ourselves" from the self advocacy organization for persons with disabilities.

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Hot • BUZZ

JoAnn Roberts

"It is difficult to see the picture when you are inside the frame."

OK, OK, OK the bitch is back! Happy Fourth of July and I hope the heat isn't melting your makeup.

Those of you who started the summer season with me in the Poconos were treated to an extraordinary workshop on the use and mis-use of exogenous hormones. This program was put together by my good friend Dr. Delia Van Maris and if you have a chance to hear Delia give this workshop (like at Southern Comfort), by all means sit in. It could save your life. This program is light-years ahead of anything else I've seen.

The Hot Buzz in Virginia is Newport News and I ain't talkin' about the fleet. Avon Fashions has changed its name to Newport News but the quality of their clothing hasn't changed any and the prices are still mucho affordable. My pick from the latest catalog is a spandex tank dress with a special inner lining that will mold even the most stubborn figure, all at a modest price of \$45. Call 804-425-4250 from 8:00 AM to Midnight (ET) and request your own catalog.

MSG could be *Accent* (meat tenderizer) but the accent here is on Miranda Sex Garden. (Where do they get these names?) Anyway, MSG is an all-female pop group variously described as *haunting*, *euphoric*, and *divine*. Check out their debut album *Suspiria* on the Mute label.

Renaissance isn't the only organization that is sponsoring the *Make A Wish Foundation*. Recently I saw a set of ads for a group of designers supporting *Make A Wish* which grants wishes to terminally ill children. So, if you buy anything from the following list of designers, you'll be easing a child's last days: Dina Bar-El fashions, 1928 Jewelry Co., and Nikki Originals.

Let's be careful out there, especially when

ordering sexy lingerie or that really hot video. Many mail order companies sell their mailing lists. I've recently learned that both *Fredericks of Hollywood* and *Intimate Treasurers* (the catalog vendor) both sell their lists to anyone willing to pay the charges. So next time you order a *Dream Dresser* or *Spartacus* catalog from a catalog supplier, you should specifically request that your name be excluded from any mailing list. They are required by Federal Law to delete you from any list they might build. As far as I know, **no one** from this community sells their mailing list.

My daddy used to say; "It's what you learn after you think you know it all that really counts." So, here's this month's lesson: everybody, **e•v•e•r•y•b•o•d•y** has both XX and XY chromosomes in their cells. It is the relative ratio of the two (and any other combinations) that determine whether you develop as a male or a female. Additionally, both males and females have both testosterone and estrogen in their systems. Testosterone is responsible for the erotic sex drive in both sexes. And a metabolic by product of testosterone is estradiol which can cause problems in males like breast enlargement (gynocomastia). Ha! Some of us would *not* consider that a problem.

Get a head start on the Fall fashion scene with the latest eye color: Green. Green is one of the few colors that can be either cool (blue-green) or warm (brown-green). Check out Dior's Greenery #300, Origin's Kiwi, Estée Lauder's Rivers or Givenchy's Jade. (Yes, dahlings, you must think at least one season ahead if you want to be a fashion maven like the Queen of Prussia. It's expected.)

There's a new generation of long-lasting lipcolor on the market these days. First there's Ultima II's *Lipsexxxxy* (\$11) that goes on glossy but dries matte in about 60 seconds and wears like iron. Apply carefully or you'll have to scrub it all off to

start over. Then there's Lancôme's Rouge Absolu (\$15) which claims to be the first long-lasting glossy lipstick.

Whoda thunk it? The Clintons' hair is the subject of so much controversy. Billy-boy is gettin' his butt kicked because he let some \$200-an-hour Beverly Hills salon type cut his hair and Hillary is pilloried for her new shorter 'do. At least one wig company, Jacquelyn (my fave) was distraught about the First Lady's trim because they had just released a wig based on HRC's pre-election style. Oh well. Hair today, gone tomorrow!

Out of the mouths of comics: "The penis is now considered a birth defect"

More things you oughta know about takin hormones: if there's a high-incidence of breast cancer among the genetic females in your family, then there's a good chance that you will be at high risk for breast cancer too if you start taking female hormones. But, we're damned if we do and damned if we don't cause the driver for prostate cancer in men is testosterone.

From the IFGE board room: The healing and rebuilding that began in Philadelphia continued in Chicago at the summer board meeting. Those gathered approved for a full board vote a series of By Law amendments that restructure the board and its executive committee removing potential conflicts of interest. The board also acted to eliminate certain debt obligations and you'll be hearing more about that later in a special fund raising letter. We're making it work folks.

Speaking of giving money, be **very careful** about giving any to non-profit organizations. Non-profit is *not* tax-exempt and *only* 501[c][3] exemptions permit you to deduct your donation on your personal income tax. There are **only two national** 501[c][3] organizations at this time, IFGE and Renaissance. You can contribute to either thru the United Way.

Hot • Buzz



Speaking of national organizations, there is a rumor that a Texas-based club wants you to sign up in alliance with them because, they say, there is no national open organization. Well, they must not read this newsletter regularly. To recap — Renaissance was founded in 1987; it began forming tax-exempt chapters in 1989 (we have three); and it began accepting affiliates in 1990 (we have three and a fourth on the way). Thus, we are the only national, member-based, open organization that has a 501[c]3.



Those of you who have followed the various incarnations of this column (yeah, I know, the title changes about as often as I change my hair color) may recall mention of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, a fiction with a transgender plot line. Well, for those who prefer novels served visually rather than on the printed page will have your chance to experience *Orlando* on the silver screen this summer. To recap the plot: Orlando is a young British nobleman serving as Ambassador to Constantinople in the 1700's. One morning he awakens to find himself transformed into a young woman. He/she then lives for 400 years without aging. (Where can I sign up for this treatment?) The title role of Orlando is played by British actress Tilda Swinton while the role of Queen Elizabeth is played by an old queen, Quentin Crisp, who, by the way, hated every moment in high drag.



Those fashion wonks are at it again! Haven't they got the message yet? Some of the recent styles displayed by Lagerfeld, Mizrahi, Gaultier, Valentino, and others shouldn't be worn by a manikin, let alone a living person. I mean... chiffon and black leather... sequined bodysuits with trompe l'oeil breasts and pubic hair... see through pants over obvious white panties... what is fashion coming to? Why, it would make a Texas "T" Party maven just faint.



Stick foundations are on the comeback circuit, a la Pan Stick, but unlike that Max Factor standby, these new products are feathery light. Take Revlon's DoublePlay (\$9.50) for example. It glides on creamy and dries to a powdery fine finish. It can be used as foundation, concealer, or lipstick — even bronzer.



Put this in your bag-o-tricks. Gotta go out tonight but there's that huge zit on your face. Get the red out with Visine. Yep, the same blood vessel shrinking action that gets the red out of your eyes will zap that zit and make it nearly invisible.



This month's QwikieQwiz is a challenge to all the Star Trek fans out there. In fact, I think this is such a tough question, I'm giving y'all two months to figure it out. Ready? Here goes: What recurring role does Karen Johnson play on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*? The first correct answer **mailed** to CDS:QQ, PO Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406, will win a FREE CDS video.



Folks at Chicago were buzzin 'bout the

prices for the 1993 Fantasia Fair, sponsored by the Outreach Institute; over \$2100 for a single in the fancy rooms for 10 days. This includes three dinners and five buffet lunches, plus admission to the Follies, Fashion show and Costume party (those last three: \$30 value). I thought haute couture was expensive, but this is outrageous. You can attend two other national events (including roundtrip airfare) for that price. The other buzz is about Dressing For Pleasure, produced by Constance Enterprises. The two-day event costs \$400 for registration plus over \$200 for your room. This fee includes a buffet/Fashion show, Dressing For Pleasure Dinner/Ball, workshops, the vendor area and a DFP video. Workshops include School for Sissy Maids, Bondage, Piercing, Bullwhip, and How to Cope (for the wives of TVs). I almost hurt myself laughing over that last one. I wonder who is giving the workshop, Vlad the Impaler?



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by *Brenda Davidson*

HE AIN'T HEAVY

Scouring the globe for news you should know I found an interesting piece of information right under my nose in the local daily planet. Please Read Carefully because we got trouble right here in River City. Pennsylvania is now one of the leading states in the nation harboring active and recruiting hate groups. Do not flip the page, you of all people need to know this. The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission currently sites 37 which is up from 24 just last year. To put this into perspective, in 1989 PHRC only knew of 12. Making matters worse 10 of the top 16 Ku Klux Klan groups are said to be centering their recruitment efforts in the state.

This is not Brenda Davidson's way of inducing paranoia to a group of professional worry-warts. In fact reading this stuff makes me want to be much more visible than I am. Sooner or later the jokes just don't work and we must use the weapon of education to decide what's good and what's bad. Let us remember that silence is the welcome mat of ignorance. Here's a Who's Who on the primary groups being watched by PHRC:

The Ku Klux Klan and the groups under their umbrella like The Invisible Empire (There's a international foundation publishers clearing house organization who could have used that one.), the White Unity Party, White Christian Knights (I wonder what Jesus thinks of those who hate just for Him?), and the Kuaker Knights (Wow how clever, Quaker with a K). Then we move on to the Keystone Knights of the KKK, the Christian Posse Comitatus, Church of the Creator (more hating for Jesus), Skin Heads, Aryan Nation, Aryan Women's League (No, I didn't make that last one up.), Church of the Identity (Jesus must be beaming), National Demo-

cratic Front (I'm confused, is this one reason George B. lost the election?), and last but not least, New Order (which is not to be confused with the New World Order thing of some years ago).

For every move there's a counter move and here is where one of Renaissance's functions comes in. Being a member of such a support group or alternative lifestyle organization with a public education arm says something about an individual's will not to tolerate prejudice or hatred towards other groups or individuals. There is no need to put your name up in lights or carry a banner or wave a flag. By being someone you are or supporting someone struggling against society's slurs you will have spoken volumes to the misled and ignorant. This, my friends, is the purest form of education but also the hardest to teach.

HE'S MY BROTHER

Let's not fool ourselves or be fooled by others that for a voice commanding respect in society all we need to do is come together and form a community. After my first reading of the above piece it suddenly struck me that the Ku Klux Klan is in fact as much a community as our definition would currently fit. Although by and large a community of bigots and racists, they are nonetheless a networking community. Now before you think I've fallen off my motorcycle again in comparing "we" to "they" let's remember that those of the general public who are not "we" nor "they" currently view "we" only about two clicks above "they." Let's ask ourselves to concentrate more on UNITY in educating society rather than building a COMMUNE to right its wrongs. Always be first to show your value and capability rather than your plight and strife. Human nature is to be suspicious of something new until it has proven its worth.... Let's not prove it worthless.

LIGHT

Found in the Delta Chapter Chatter Denver, CO.

"You explain it! They say NORMAL men think about sex every fifteen minutes. Imagine thinking about crossdressing every five minutes."

What it doesn't say is for how long the thought is held every fifteen and five. What scares me is I've been known to stare at a particular dress or pumps I'm buying for myself for fifteen minutes.

LIGHTER, BUT VERY DEEP

From the CHICDIARY Duarte, CA. The following is the citation and abstract found in the journal.

Ferrando RL; McCorvey E Jr; Simon, WA. Stewart DM. Bizarre behavior following the ingestion of levodesoxyephedrine. Drug Intelligence and Clinical Pharmacy, 1988 Mar, 22(3):2147. (UI: 88211434) Abstract: This is the first reported case of transvestism in a heterosexual male that occurred only after ingestion of the contents of SIX to EIGHT Vicks inhalers. The patient's gender crossdressing was associated with sexual excitement and masturbatory behavior. This case is consistent with other cases of gender crossdressing and sexual excitement following inhaler abuse, but in the previous cases reported the subjects were homosexual men. Levo-desoxyephedrine, also known as levo-methamphetamine, the main active ingredient in Vicks inhalers, is known to have amphetamine-like properties. Stereotypic behavior is consistent with behavior that follows the use of amphetamine. Transvestism has traditionally been thought to be based on a psychodynamic model; however, the authors postulate several biochemical mechanisms whereby levo-desoxyephedrine may play a role in the bizarre behavior exhibited by this 32-year old man. It is suggested that inhalers be placed in a new class of drugs that can be dispensed only by a pharmacist or physician. (Holy vapors, Marcus Welby! and all this time I thought it was genetic.) And again, NO I don't make this stuff up.

LIGHTEST, BUT VERY FRAGRANT

In a recent survey of Roto-Rooters national work force, 204 of its service technicians revealed some secrets of the drain. According to them, here are the most common sources of clogged drains.

Critters: 42 percent found nature's creatures, some dead, but most very much alive. The menagerie included 35 squirrels (you see, someone really does eventually take care of those annoying people), 7 skunks, 5 rabbits, 2 live raccoons and one 16-inch long catfish.

Essentials: 3 glass eyes (question: how could you drop your glass eye down the toilet? answer: while you weren't looking. Baa Dump Bump Bump), 2 beepers, one hearing aid (question: how could you drop your hearing aid down the toilet. answer: That's right! while

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The Gender Journey

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Sessions held Mondays & Wednesdays from 7:30 to 9:30 PM. \$25 per person per two-hour session. Advance registration required. Write: Human Dimensions, PO Box 471, Willow Grove, PA 19090 or call 215-657-1560.

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you weren't looking. Baa Dump Bump Bump). One Social Security card. One toupee. One toupee! Now imagine this guy going in with hair, and coming out with no hair... and a wet arm. And one denture. Nope, won't joke about that one.

Now here is why I wrote this piece.

Bare Essentials: 15 bras, women's briefs (85 pair in one haul); 12 men's underwear, including one size XXXL and one women's silk panties size 62. It doesn't say if XXXL and size 62 were in the same household. I can't believe that a woman would knowingly with the exception of having a bad day flush her bra down the commode. Women are much smarter than that. And to flush 85 pair of women's briefs. Only a man who thinks he has a big problem to deal with would flush over and over until he had 85 pair down the tube. Remember, these were among the items most commonly found clogging the pipes. There are many who will never find us.

Take care of yourself, then pass it on.

(Garden State: continued from page 7)

March by Phyllis Randolph Fry, Attorney from Houston Texas. She was the only transgendered political speaker.

"LISTEN UP!" she said, "I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO TELL YOU! WHY IS IT THAT THE 1ST MARCH AND THE 2ND MARCH AND THIS THE 3RD MARCH DOES NOT HAVE TRANSGENDERED IN THE NAME OF THE MARCH?"* Also featured was a discussion of the 'Minnesota Gay Rights Bill. There is a need to have protection for transgendered persons incorporated into the bill. It's House Bill 431. (Write your member of Congress.)

The Gender Coalition represents a movement to encourage communication between the various Gender relative groups. For this correspondent it was wonderful having all of these sisters in the same room. There was a feeling of love and respect from all in attendance. It is important to understand that while each group represents persons with specific gender issues, the needs of all members will be better served through cooperation. The gender community can only benefit by breaking down barriers, removing prejudice and furthering understanding.

The next meeting will be held on July 31 at the same location in Trenton, New Jersey, for more information call Donna Marie at (609) 586-1351.

(continued on page 18)

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Renaissance Ladies Enjoy A Night of Wine and Roses

by Alison Laing

A dozen or so lovely ladies were sitting on the patio in the gentle spring breeze, sipping a delectable light and fragrant wine. The handsome wine maker opens a bottle of another type of wine; this time a special chardonnay, fruity but more round and full bodied. Many of the ladies were attired in sleeveless floral jumpers with sandals or sensible summer white mid or low heels. One she-devil sported a perfect pedicure, along with her lightly tanned bare legs. It was one of those dreamy nights. Most of those present would love to see this go on forever.

The spell was interrupted with an invitation to tour the winery and to taste samples of the wine from the barrels in the cellar. The ladies followed the path of the grapes from the de-stemmer, all the way to the new \$50,000 bottling, corking and labeling system. The coolness of the lower depth of the winery along with the venous aroma, gave one a special feeling of being in a special place. The wine maker drew samples from one

of the many large French oak barrels. It was exciting to taste a wine in its infancy, knowing that in three or four years, others will be tasting and drinking this wine when it is quite different.

For many of the ladies of Renaissance, this was a second visit to the Chaddsford Winery; for some, it was a first. The wine maker, Mr. Eric Miller, as well as his assistant, were ever so pleasant and at ease, making all of the guests feel so welcome and comfortable. Many of our ladies procured a bottle or two to take home or give as a gift. This is just one example of the special fun that can be had by our community, when we build good relations beyond the community.

Finally, the witching hour came; some of the ladies were off to the Ship Inn; a tradition that started with our first visit to this winery. For others, it was home to bed. But wherever they went, each of the ladies took with them, the memory of a perfect evening of wine and roses.

FOLLOWING ARE THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF THE GROUPS THAT WERE REPRESENTED AT THE GENDER COALITION MEETING

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* The entire text of Ms. Frye's speech was featured in the June News.

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