

TWENTY MINUTES

JANUARY 1990

THE XX (Twenty) CLUB

\$2.00

SEX SWAP DOC WANTS TO BE A MAN AGAIN!

By Susan Jimison

Sex swap doc Janis Ashley used to be male, but she became a woman back in 1978. Now she's decided she liked things better the way they were - and she's switching back again!

"I was born male and I was raised male and I feel that's the way I'll feel most content," said the flip-flop doc, who lives in Sedalia, Missouri, "I feel like I can be all of me as a male."

The 38-year-old pediatrician has announced the decision to regain her manhood in the hope that advance warning will spare her young patients shock and confusion. She promises the switch will be a slow one, so the kids she cares for can get used to the idea.

"With my patients I'm going to be direct and honest," the transsexual said in an interview with her hometown newspaper, the *Sedalia Democrat*. "I'll answer their questions and emphasize to them that I'm still the same, but gradually I will begin to look more like their daddy than their mommy. I don't have any easy answers for all the questions. I am who I am. I'm not doing anything quickly. But I have a sense of faith - I just feel like it's right to do it now."

The divorced doc lived as a male until she was 25 years old and even married at one time. But after much soul-searching and a year and a half of hormone treatment and counseling, she underwent surgery to become female. But life as a woman was lonely for Dr. Ashley, whose friends abandoned her when she underwent her change of sex. She wants to be a man again so she can fall in love, marry and have a family.

"If I don't change, I'm faced with life without potential of having a mate," said Dr. Ashley. "I love kids. I want a mate and a family."

Dr. Ashley says she's already begun taking male hormones, but hasn't made plans for an operation yet. She figures it will take six months before she's a he once more in appearance and even longer for her to undergo the full course of surgery. Although the switch back will be a major adjustment for her patients, Dr. Ashley says she doesn't regret having tried life as a female.

"At the time it seemed there was no other way," she said. "I've learned something - albeit at a very high price."

(EDITOR'S NOTE...reprinted from the *Weekly World News*, Nov. 21, 1989 issue.)

The Sunday Society US TOO

The US TOO bulletin board is fully operational. The board is running on Searchlight version 1.30a BBS software and supports ANSI graphics and runs at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud (bps). The simple log-on procedure is as follows:

1. Call the BBS at (312)-486-3125 between 10:00pm and 12:00am Central Standard Time 7 nights a week.
2. Upon connecting, you will see the speed at which your modem is operating. You will be prompted to select YDOR graphics mode, C for color, M for monochrome, or N for none if you are not sure and you'll have no problems.
3. You will then be greeted by the welcome screen and the US TOO logo. You'll be prompted for either your name or the word NEW if you're a new user. Since you will be new to the system, enter the word NEW and you will then be asked to either register with the system or CHAT with the sysop. Select R for register and you will be prompted for your name, location, phone number, type of system you're using and a password that you'll use the next time you log on.

There are presently 4 areas (or "subboards") to which you can jump. These areas are: General interest to the "gender community", TS (M to F), TS (F to M) and IV/CD. There are full help functions all along the way if you get lost. There is already a lot of information posted in the bulletins and in the files section, but be sure to call and UPLOAD all the ASCII text files that would be of interest to our community.

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TWENTY MINUTES

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
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THE XX (Twenty) CLUB, INC.
 PO Box 80690
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THE TRANSEXUAL SUPPORT
 GROUP OF NEW ENGLAND
 AND NEW YORK

THE STAFF

- Editor: *Becky Ann*
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 Advisor: *Rev. Clinton Jones*

CLUB CALENDAR MEETINGS

- Saturday, Jan 13
- Saturday, Jan 27
- Saturday, Feb 10
- Saturday, Feb 24

Regular meetings of the XX Club are held the second and fourth Saturdays of the month at 2 PM sharp to 5 PM.:

Christ Church Cathedral
 45 Church Street
 Hartford, CT

(Located at the corner of Church and Main Streets in the downtown area across from 6. Fox.) If you believe you are gender dysphoric, you are welcome to visit and find out more about our group and talk about yourself and your feelings. The XX Club is a transsexual support group, not a dating service. There is **NO SMOKING** allowed during the meetings, though we do allow smoking during breaks and after the meetings. We attempt to provide peer support and practical information about making the gender transition, as well as information about the Gender Identity Clinic of New England. Parents, siblings, spouses and significant others are also welcome to attend.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance - from November \$1442.24

INCOME:

Collections - meetings	.00
Newsletter subscriptions	175.00
Brochure sales	30.00
IFSE sales	25.00
CDS sales	.00
J2CP sales	10.00
BF sales	.00
Donations	37.50
Savings interest	6.66
Total Income	\$284.16

EXPENSES:

PO Box Rental	36.00
Refreshments	95.83
Donation to Christ Church	100.00
Newsletter & brochures	124.95
Postage	40.00
Supplies	30.92
Bank Fee	.00
Total Expenses	\$427.70

Net Loss for December \$-143.54

Balance - end of December \$1298.70

Christmas Party

Thanks to all those who attended the party for making this a wonderful event. Special thanks goes to V.P. Vicki who brought a video tape of the SRS. It was most educational. Also special thanks to Veronica for doing the shopping for the food and drinks and all the setting up at her fairwell meeting. Many thanks to those who brought their own tasty treats to share with others. Have I said thanks enough times? To those who could not attend, see you next year (decade)!

Donation to Christ Church

Dear Stephen H. Gushee, Dean,

We, as members of the Twenty Club, again express our appreciation and sincere thanks to Christ Church Cathedral for your hospitality in allowing our support group to meet in the Cathedral House. Enclosed is a donation of one hundred dollars. While this amount isn't much, we hope it can be used to defray Church expenses or perhaps be put towards the building renovation fund.

Sincerely,
 Becky
 XX Club Treasurer

NANCY



All the news that's print to fit.

This newsletter is funded entirely through subscriptions and the sales of educational materials. Parts of this newsletter may be reproduced if source credit is given.

HI !

My name's Becky Ann and I'm five years old. I'm the new editor of *Twenty Minutes*. I get to type in all the words on the computer and I can even use all ten fingers on the keyboard. My dog Buster helps, he gets to lick the envelopes and the stamps!

My mommy says I don't have to write anything for the newsletter if I don't want to. And you know what? I don't want to and THAT'S the truth! Phthipst!

(With apologies to Lilly Tomlin.)

DAFFYNITIONS

- HETEROSEXUAL** - Person who has an opposite sex.
- ASEXUAL** - Person who has no opposite sex.
- BISEXUAL** - Person where everyone is the opposite sex.
- HOMOSEXUAL** - Person who doesn't want an opposite sex.
- TRANSSEXUAL** - Person who is their opposite sex.

And just when you thought it was safe to open your mail, I'm ba-a-a-ack. It's a new year, folks. It's the Gay Nineties. Safe sex is definitely in. So why in hell do we see blurbs in TV newsletters making a big thing about their being straight, heterosexual crossdressers? Just what do these CDing homophobics have against the NON-heterosexual crossdresser? Do they honestly think if they disclaim being gay, that Mr. and Mrs. Mainstream America will really give a damn? We're all lumped in together with the rest of the perverts, thanks to the recent passage of Senate Bill 933 with the nefarious amendment 722 attached. Besides, if it weren't for the F.I.'s or drag queens, there'd be no good looking CDs at all! (What? Didn't we get rid of the bitch yet?) Nope, 'fraid not.

In all actuality, we here at Twenty Minutes had thought the newsletter was going to sink into blissful oblivion, with the soft, hissing sounds of December's burning pages sinking forever beneath the sea of gender anonymity. So I wrote these fiery, three page kiss off editorials, or as one of the newly elected Twenty Club officers recently put it to me, "I loved your swan songs, Veronica." So, I gets this call from a five year old snöt nosed girl by the name of Becky Ann, I think. I dunno, her voice wasn't all that clear over the phone. I suspect some nefarious American Customs agent must have been squeezing the telephone lines as Becky Ann's tiny voice traversed across the St. Lawrence River into the Great White North.

And speaking of nefarious U.S. Customs Agents, do I have a bone to pick with those guys. Some of you may recall a couple of years ago when a neat article by Micheline Johnson of Ottawa appeared in a well known TV/ token TS publication. She lamented being held up by U.S. Customs. Well, if you kinda sort of look like one gender and you have all the I.D. of the opposite gender, naturally our good old boys in upper New York state are gonna suspect you of being a drug smuggler, or worse, one of them perverted crossdressing persons of ill repute that they must forever protect the American shores from.

Did you have a White Christmas? Good old Irving Berlin. The dogma of Christianity through the ages has equated whiteness with goodness, Jesus Christ with a pure white light. Remember the old westerns when all the good guys wore white hats and drove white horses? The pure, goodness of white skinned people in this country, thanks to our Christian ancestors, has been held far above the heads of non-white people everywhere. Black is evil, indeed, images of the devil, another Christian invention, was often portrayed as being black skinned. No wonder white guys didn't think twice about scooping up thousands of blackskinned Africans from their home shores.

Case in point. I'm in line some weeks ago at the American border. I'm watching the line of white inhabited cars go through the check point after numerous questions are asked. The car directly ahead of me has Ontario plates and the two male occupants are non-whites, possibly Indian or Pakistani. And guess who has to get out of their car and open the trunk? You've got it. The non-white guys.

They always said, if you're going to Canada, all you need is a birth certificate. Heck, the Canadian customs agents are down right cordial to Americans. "Welcome to Canada," and they smile. It's the Americans you have to watch out for. Back in February, I drove a Canadian friend to Ontario where we had dinner, and two hours later, I drove back into the U.S. The American agent asked how long I'd been in Canada, so being a naive and a bloody fool, I told him the truth. Two hours. He kept my driver's license and told me to pull over to the inspection bay. I had no luggage and nothing to declare and I was kept there for fifteen minutes while two agents asked all kinds of questions. When I finally produced my passport, one of them punched it into their computer in the back room, came back smiling and said pleasantly, "You can go now, Miss Brown."

When I went to Brussels in 1985, going through Belgian passport control was a breeze. This bored European type stamped my passport at random. I smiled at the handsome hunks by the customs inspection tables and they smiled back and waved me on through. Coming back to Newark was a different story, however. While Becky and I retrieved our luggage from the carousel, this rumpiled McCarthy era type in a vest, (and his suit needed a pressing) comes over and asks a few simple questions in the most intimidating way. Welcome to Amerika. Checkpoint Charlie, my foot.

At 5 PM the other night, I departed from Toronto on a Gray Coach bus. Fourteen hours and fifty-seven stops later, I arrived in Springfield, Massachusetts. There were six of us who had to run the gauntlet through American Customs and Immigration. So I thought, Aha! I'll use my new, generic brand birth certificate. (See the previous episode for details). After all, it only cost me a trip to Albany and New York City all in the same day, plus a three hundred dollar letter from my shrink stating I was of sound mind, etc. I gave all the papers to the nice official at the Department of Health, Vital Records Division, Borough of Manhattan, City of New York. And yes, she remained understanding even after I told her I was transsexual. Thanks to the work of Sister Mary Elizabeth and J2CP, I knew the best I could hope for was a new birth certificate without a sex code. Did that mean they left it blank? Paranoia! Neuter? More paranoia! Like I was undecided, incomplete or something? No. The form they use for post-operative transsexuals is a special one. It has no space for the sex code at all! I had become a non-person.

I smiled at the Immigrations agent and pushed the sparkling document at him. He scrutinized it for 45 seconds. I thought he was about to reach for the electron microscope to examine the water mark on the paper when he said suddenly, "Do you have anything else that proves you are Veronica Brown?" I gave him my newly renewed Massachusetts photo driver's license. The new photo taken a month ago showed shoulder length hair and was before my cut and perm. Mistake! Oh yes, the state of Massachusetts, for some obscure reason, does not put a sex code on the license.

The gentleman grilled medium well before me was also an American, but he had dark skin and I remembered the five minute hassle the agent gave him. He was told to empty his wallet, turn out his pockets, all the while the agent scrutinized every piece of personal I.D. the unfortunate non-white man had.

Was this agent of the United States government considering asking me out for a drink after work? Was he attempting in his silly way to verify my gender? Was my paranoia working overtime? Should I show him the tiny scars?

No. I reached into my shapeless denim purse and pulled out the magic passport. He smiled and said, "That's all the I.D. you need, you know."

The guy at the customs counter took the passport and punched the number into the computer. The screen was angled flat so that only the person standing directly in front of the keyboard could read the data. I waited for the little red "transsexual" sign to drop down with the duck, or bells and whistles to go off. No such luck. He handed me my passport and asked a couple of questions. I stood there after he turned away. Another man said, "Yes?" I said, "Aren't you going to search my luggage?" "Nope," he said.

Of the five other people, the non-white skinned American had everything of his searched. The Chinese guy also had everything searched. The dyke in the nicely tailored leather jacket, the blackman and the little old lady who protested everything, all had their luggage searched.

So, what good is my new birth certificate? To get my passport renewed? You bet'cha. To get married. I doubt it. For proof of age when I retire. I guess so. Oh well. Your American Passport? Don't leave home without it.

LASER VOCAL SURGERY

by Lesley Bernard

(EDITOR'S NOTE - This article originally appeared in the July 1989 issue of *TransNews*, the Newsletter of Transition Support in Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

Recently, I underwent the laser vocal surgery performed by Dr. J. Simon McGrail at the Wellesley Hospital in Toronto. The technical name for this type of surgery is **SUSPENSION MICROLARYNGOSCOPY WITH LASER**. A laser is used to vaporize the top surface cell layer(s) of the vocal cords. This leaves the vocal cords thinner and tighter.

The vocal cords are similar to the strings on a guitar. The smaller and tighter strings play a higher note than the thicker and less tighter strings. Thus the voice now plays at a higher note.

Dr. McGrail has performed this procedure on more than sixty transsexuals. Out of these, he has had only two cases of what he considers failed surgery. He claims fifty have no trouble passing as women with their voices, either in public or on the telephone (often considered the true test of a transsexual's voice). These successes were achieved by surgery alone with little or no voice training or practice.

Dr. McGrail believes voice therapy to be for the most part, unsuccessful in the treatment of transsexuals.

The surgery is done under general anesthesia and usually requires a two day hospital stay. The procedure itself is not very painful and the resulting sore throat is no worse than what you get with a really bad cold, although the healing process is lengthy.

For the first few weeks following surgery, the voice will be very hoarse and uncontrollable in pitch. Care must be taken not to strain the voice, and that includes no shouting or whispering.

What I found personally is that the surgery has not given me a totally brand new feminine voice, but rather the ability to reach a higher pitch without effort. I feel that I will still have to put effort into learning how to speak like a female, by putting the correct intonation and inflections into my speech patterns.

It is important that any transsexual considering this surgery be prepared for an unfamiliar pitch in their voice. After many years of listening to your own familiar voice, it can be a shock to suddenly hear something different.

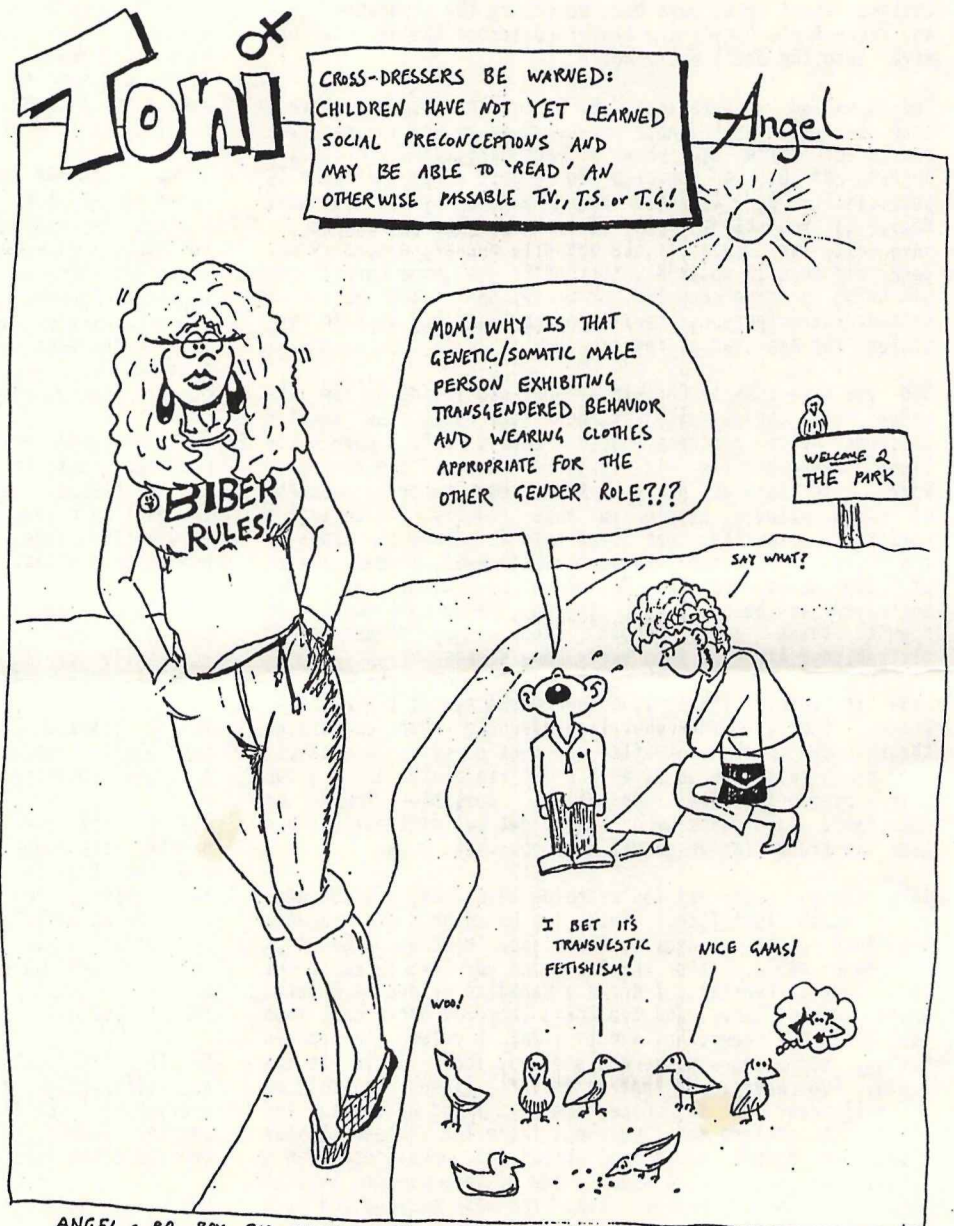
One must be careful not to "undo" the surgery by forcing the voice back to familiar tones. I would not recommend this surgery to anyone not yet living full time in the female role. Anyone who is flipping back and forth between their old male and their new female roles, would have an incentive to attempt to use their old male voice.

If the surgery is unsuccessful the first time, it can be done again. Dr. McGrail does a minimum the first time allowing for the option of further treatment of the voice. It is better to do too little the first time and have that option, than to do too much and end up sounding like Minnie Mouse.

Dr. McGrail will not perform this procedure on smokers, as he requires the patient to be a non-smoker for at least one year. He also performs laryngical (Adams Apple) shaves and many other cosmetic procedures that may be of interest to transsexuals.

Dr. McGrail can be reached at the Wellesley Hospital in Toronto at (416) 926-7767.

It's better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt



ANGEL • P.O. BOX 302 • PEACEDALE, RI • 02883

Leaving Well Enough Alone or What to Tell...and When

by Charlene

Changing sex is easy. All you need to do is everything right the first time. Nothing to it, right? Right. And Sam Spade was a drag queen.

Someone whom I know very well recently decided to swing full-tilt into her pre-op real life test. (Let's call her Clara to protect her actual identity.) She had a moderate degree of poise, no small amount of guts, and an overpowering determination to succeed in her chosen role. Her electrolysis was pretty well along, she had achieved an A-cup bosom, her wardrobe was mostly lower middle class work clothes, and she felt reasonably certain that she could play her part comfortably well.

So she won (by the skin of her teeth) the support of the management team of a local human service agency. She interviewed (one shot, no retries) and won a position as a "program instructor" in a group home operated by the agency. Her job was instructing a group of four mentally retarded and somewhat emotionally deranged people all the ways that life, the Universe, and Everything really work. Right down to how to use a fork appropriately at dinner.

It was a big drop, going from being a \$35K male technical writer on familiar ground to being a \$16K female caregiver in a different strange field. But it was better than working in telemarketing boiler rooms or attempting to sell sexual favors sans vagina on the streets of Boston. It was far better than not working at all. The benefits were decent, the hours were advantageous, and the clients actually responded well to her presence.

She, for her part, kept her mouth shut and did her job. Oh, she let on that she was "divorced" (mostly true), lived in a "shared residence" herself (quite true), and knew quite a few "special people" outside of work (bull's-eye!). Just enough to create a realistic image of a divorced housewife on her own for the first time in years.

It worked. Being of maybe just a hair less than average intelligence, plus being totally obsessed with food and eating (which is why they are in a group home in the first place), her charges soon related to her as the nice lady with the really wild sense of humor who unlocks the refrigerator and cooks dinner, Sunday through Wednesday. No more, no less.

So far, so good. At first, the house manager and some of the residential staff knew at least the sketchy outline of her story. No problem. She received all the support she needed on the job. But this group home has a particularly heavy turnover among staff. The house manager was injured while restraining one of the more assaultive clients. Suddenly, Clara was running the entire house all by herself, training new victims... er, ah, I mean staff...in the care and feeding of Prader-Willi Syndrome clients on a "best I know how" basis.

She wanted to leave and find other work herself, but felt compelled to see the house's transition to new management through to completion. (She herself was by no means qualified to manage that house herself, but had a pretty good "feel" for transition, adversity, and fiery baptisms.) So she dug in her low-wedge heels, trained the staff recruits as best she knew how, stayed in touch with the surviving management team by phone, and prayed that nothing bad would happen to her clients, or to her.

Nothing bad happened, but it almost did. One day, she was training a new staffer (a genetic female). This trainee (call her Maude, not her real name either) was an eager student, but quite verbal in ways that made Clara very uncomfortable. In the middle of the kitchen, in full hearing of three clients, Ms. Maude suddenly (and quite out of context) exclaimed, "Gee, Clara, you sure are tall!".

Clara deflected the comment with a gentle wisecrack. But Maude was undaunted. Not twenty minutes later, she blurted (again from thin air) "Gee, Clara, you sure have got big hands!" and placed her own dainty paw up to Clara's for comparison. Two clients looked on. Clara chose an appropriate moment, quietly ushered young Maude into the office, and closed the door.

Then's when Clara made her mistake, the one that could easily have plunged her back into the nightmare of freakdom and unemployability from which she had so recently emerged by winning her present job. You see, she assumed that she was still "readable", and that Maude had read her. So she cast her fate to the wind (trusting the dust to settle it) and revealed herself to Maude. To Maude she said, "There's one thing you may need to know about me. You see, I was born male, and I cannot allow my past to be known to my clients. Their learning of this matter could destroy our working relationship."

Maude's hands flew to her mouth. She paled and gasped audibly. When she had recovered herself, her first words were, "Oh, my God, Clara, I'm so sorry! I had no idea!".

Her reaction was so thoroughly spontaneous that Clara knew the truth in an instant. Maude's perception of Clara was (up to that moment, at least) of another (albeit larger than usual) genetic woman. That is, until Clara blew her own cover. Clara realized in that instant that she could leave all her nightmares of exposure behind forever, if only she could somehow survive this one last encounter.

Clara knew at that moment that she had committed a potentially fatal blunder, one from which she had been spared the worst consequences by none other than the Great Mother Herself. She took a deep breath and stilled her beating heart. Quietly, she explained to Maude the exact repercussions that any further discussion of gender issues under that roof carried.

Maude (unlike some straight women and most straight men) took Clara's request for silence to heart. You see, it turns out that Maude has a friend who knows another (far less passable) male-to-female direct-care worker at another human service facility. Not knowing this, Maude sought her friend's counsel. (What a coincidence!) Together, Maude and her friend decided to allow Clara her due measure of confidentiality. So Clara and Maude still share Wednesday shifts with clients Joey, Marianne, Anita, and Bobbi.

There is now a new house manager, after months of intensive searching and recruitment. The man is highly qualified, and appears to be totally naive regarding issues of gender and sexual identity. (Most human service workers are that.) All the guy knows is that Clara does the work that others won't touch - and cheerfully at that.

Clara's mighty busy at the residence these days. She's just doing her job, making herself indispensable in a thousand ways both great and small, and keeping her new supervisor satisfied by every appropriate means. To Clara, her most important task in life right now is learning how best to satisfy a good man. To her, it's yet another of the Great Mother's wonders how her core need is again met.

Clara's seeing to it that the new manager never has cause to question her gender. If ever questions should arise, she says, she'll simply tell the guy (who is, after all, a compassionate sort, assholes don't last long in human services) that questions like those make her feel very uncomfortable and create needless difficulties for her in paying full attention to her clients' needs. None of the newest crop of staff know a thing, except that they all like Clara very much for her wit, common sense, and gentle ways. If Clara's as competent as she appears to be lucky, she'll never have to say another word. Things are working out, and Clara's keeping it that way.

So all's well that ends well. But from that fateful day, Clara took a solemn vow to say nothing about herself that doesn't absolutely need saying. She and Maude are fast friends as well as good work partners. So far Maude hasn't breathed a word to a soul. Clara simply trusts that she never will.

CHRISTIAN REBUTTAL

By Sarah

(A few rejoinders to the recent editorial by Veronica Brown.)

The feminist critique of Christianity, stunning as it may sound is in fact old news - very old news in fact. Try reading Martin Luther's *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, for example, or Soren Kurkegaard's *Attack Upon Christianity*, and these were devout Christian believers, much older criticism could be found dating all the way back to St. Paul. The point being that Christianity in spite of the obvious abuses is a religion that carries within it a source of self criticism and reform.

The rather simplistic view of radical feminists such as the one you heard and paraphrased was first articulated by the Romantic Naturalist Jean Rousseau in the 18th century who thought that "man" stripped of corrupt institutions of government and organized religion would be close to nature, good and Noble. These sentiments fueled the French Revolution which as you will recall was opposed to the aristocracy and the Church and exalted the rule of the common man - who turned out to be Napoleon. The same sort of Rousseauian view of the world romanticized the native American as the Noble Savage - overlooking such indelicacies as the Aztec preference for human sacrifice or the feminine skill at torture among the Iroquois just to name a few inconsistencies.

In short, I think the feminists have raised an awareness of the lack of balance in the social role and perspective that our society has traditionally perpetuated as appropriate to men and women. In this they have made a valuable contribution. But as all polemicists are likely to do many of the radical feminists end up overstating their case.

I think that this becomes most apparent in their tendency to see the world along the lines of the Marxist dialectic oppressor and oppressed (another Rousseauian inference) with the bad guys and good guys (or in this case, gals). While I don't dispute the inferior social position of women and the abuses they have suffered for centuries, it is simply not true that women are any less inclined to abuse privilege and power so constitute a saving elect or revolutionary elite in the same way that Marx saw the proletariat.

If you have any doubts ask yourself just how welcome you were likely to have been at that all woman conference had your gender identity were commonly known. My experience has been that radical feminists are as intolerant and exclusivestic as the very ones they accuse of these insensitivities.

They are much too defensive and doctrinaire, much as they think of these qualities as being the sole property of men and the Roman Catholic Church.

Indeed, I wonder if the modern day feminist movement does not owe a special debt of gratitude to Pope John the XXIII who by convening Vatican II gave good Catholic girls permission to rebel without having to face hell fire. One wonders if the defensiveness one sees is not the result of a certain amount of whistling in the dark on the part of those who aren't quite sure even yet! Especially if in addition to being a feminist one is also lesbian. So much for that hang up.

I think that most transsexual people are not inclined to join in with separatist movements - not simply because they may be enamored of a sexual stereotype and wish to conform to it. That may be so, especially at first coming out. But there is a more basic reason having to do with the resolution of gender conflict. In confronting the problem most transsexual people do so because it becomes an unavoidable necessity in order to function and get on with their lives. In order to get the monkey off my back I

decided to face up to my fears and do something about it so I would not have to spend the rest of my life running from it. Having done that, it is a measure of the success of the solution that I am no longer obsessed with the problem of my gender identity. Why scratch if you don't itch? Oh sure, sometimes I do, but not anything like before! And that I count as a good thing.

There is life beyond gender and even beyond sex, and I think the majority of TS people learn that and move on to be a part of the larger world however imperfect rather than defend a separate identity and life-style.

Put in religious terms - reconciliation not separation, grace not sin, is the ultimate end of humanity. Which means that ultimately everyone must confess with Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us." If we aren't willing to meet the enemy who is us, we have no business trying to overcome him in the person of those terrible "men", "Communists", "Christians", "transsexuals", "gays" or whatever bogeyman we find convenient.

That is why I began by pointing out why Christianity is not undone by criticism but instead has always found renewal thru this kind of judgement and repentance.

I do not see that kind of transformation possible in the romanticized notion of the followers of the Goddess. Do I need to mention that the most potent form of religion naturalism in recent history was National Socialism with its mythology of the Aryan Master Race and its reliance on pre-Christian Germanic folklore and religion? Doubtless the cult of the Goddess will never attain that kind of appeal in our society - or any other in the 20th century, but it perhaps is helpful to see what a dead end it really is by disclosing just who it is in bed with.

Well, if you were not convinced by this apologia, I trust you at least were entertained by it.



Dear Veronica and Becky,

I'm back! I had my surgery on November 14th in Brussels and all went very well. In fact, I had done so well, Docteur Seghers let me out of the hospital two days early. That night, a wonderful man, who was one of my nurses, toured me through Antwerpen, Ghent, Bruges, and the Grand Place. The day after, he drove my mother and me to Amsterdam, where we enjoyed a fine Italian dinner.

I made some great friends while over there, from the wonderful staff at St. Joseph's, other girls from the States, to the warm employees of the Derby Hotel. (Special thanks to Rose-Mary) A very special thank you to Lisa and Jessica, who had their surgeries done one week before me.

As soon as I awoke from my surgery, Lisa and Jessica were in my room. Lisa came over to me and held me and with a tear in her eye and said, "It's over Sis. The deadly game of hide and seek is now over for you. You're alive. YOU HAVE WON! We have won and we will continue to do so as long as we all pull together.

Now that my surgical venture is finished, I can start working "normal" hours and I'll be able to attend meetings. My biggest thanks goes to you two, to the understanding and caring professionals at the Gender Identity Clinic of New England, and to the Reverend Clinton R. Jones for helping to make my life long dream a reality. And I cannot forget to mention my family for their love and support, and Mom, a special thanks for being there when I needed you the most. And one last thank you to my boy friend, who has remained so for nearly two years.

I Love you all,
Reyah, Vershire, VT

Dear Veronica,

As a terminally cynical TS psychologist, I conducted my own research into the reliability of Weekly World News as a worthy source of news articles for Twenty Minutes. In the November letters to the editor section, I questioned your policy of uncritically reprinting the never corroborated WWN article that described the ovary and uterus transplant which enabled former Gunnar Johansson to give birth.

My research quest brought me to a later issue of WWN bearing the headline, "HITLER ALIVE": one hundred year old Nazi dictator found in mountains of Chile. Adolph aging in South America? I doubt it.

Please, please, please Madame Editor, continue combing the pages of obscure magazines, esoteric newspapers and dimly lit caves paintings in France to bring us all the news relevant to our TS sisterhood. But, pretty please, Veronica, use your editorial "Caveat" to protect our less cynical and impressionable younger sisters from rushing to Sweden to pick up ovaries and uteruses. We of all people should doubt and challenge the media when the exploit TSism to sell papers and portray us as freaks. Twenty Minutes is a clarion trumpet ready to alert, educate and rally our sisters to action when our interests are at stake.

With Affection,
Jocelyn, Encino, CA

Dear Jocelyn,

Tabloids such as WWN exist for entertainment, like the daily horoscope you may read with your morning coffee. Some stories are based on truths or semi-truths and are often impossible to corroborate. It doesn't matter. What does matter is this is the way transsexuals are presented in these papers to those who read them. Like it or not, our portrayal to one segment of the reading public is not under our control, but of those who know us naught.

Veronica

Dear Veronica,

I received another phone call from Sister Mary Elizabeth recently and the news was not good. The House of Representatives passed its own version (H.R.2273) of the American Disabilities Act of 1989 with essentially the same language as Senator Armstrong's Amendment No. 722 to S.933 and will exclude TSs from legal protection in matters of discrimination. Unless something is done to change or repeal the act as it currently is written by the same community which allowed it to be written, there may be more of us moving to Canada or other countries.

Our BBS is doing quite well considering the amount of time we're on line each night. IFGE will promote our BBS in Tapestry and we will be included in the IFGE Congress of Representatives. I hope something good comes out of it as a result.

Sorry about the bad tidings in this holiday season. I didn't get much sleep last night thinking about the future of our community (as well as my own). I'll be checking with my local congressional office to learn more about the oppressive legislation and hope to get a copy of the act.

Yours in Sisterhood,
Louise L. Raeder
Chicago, IL

Dear Louise,

In a recent Twenty Club meeting, a discussion of the famed Senate Bill brought a consensus that most of us would not want to be protected by a law that would classify us in any way as physically or mentally handicapped and would prefer to be excluded from any such law. By declaring our transsexuality as a physical or mental handicap would by its nature imply that our condition cannot be cured. This is most damaging to any TS attempting to get insurance companies to cover the SRS as a cure and not merely cosmetic surgery. This issue may become the great debate of 1990.

Becky

Dear Twenty Club,

An update on my story from the newspaper articles this summer to sue Blue Cross. The law suit is for \$30 million. I am still my own attorney. I have sent some incredible paper work to the court. Also I was forced to send nude photos to the court and Blue Cross to expose the position in which my body was left in and what I have to deal with in a daily basis. About 3 weeks ago, Blue Cross made me an offer of \$100,000.00, but they wanted my silence and I wouldn't give them that. No insurance company will ever touch me again and Blue Cross has dropped me.

Thank you,
Sarah Luiz
Portsmouth, NH

(EDITOR'S NOTE...Sarah's story was covered in the June 1989 issue of *Twenty Minutes*.)

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