

Renaissance News



Volume 3, No.1

P.O. Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA, 19406

January, 1989

Board adopts policy against discrimination

The last official act of the 1988 Board of Directors was to unanimously approve a policy statement that defines the position of Renaissance with regards to organizations that practice discrimination.

The policy, reprinted in this issue of the newsletter, declares the opposition of Renaissance to discriminatory practices, and urges other groups to adopt a similar policy.

"It was necessary for us to make absolutely clear our position on this issue," said JoAnn Roberts, Managing Director. "As a publicly supported organization for transgendered people, we have an obligation to set an example. If the public is ever to respect our right to be different from the mainstream, we must actively overcome discrimination within our own community first. Public groups that discriminate, like Tri-Ess for example, must realize that their actions diminish us, not enhance us," she said. (Tri-Ess, the Society for the Second Self, admits only heterosexual, male crossdressers.)

The policy is a guideline for official participation in activities with other support groups. It is recognized that a group which focuses on a particular segment of the transgender community does not necessarily discriminate as long as they are open "to all persons who have a legitimate interest in transgender matters."

Renaissance urges other support groups to take a public stand against discrimination.

Therése Aigner named 1989 "Woman of the Year"

Others receive Meritorious Service awards

Among the last actions taken by the Board in 1988 was the approval and citation of several members and friends of Renaissance for achievement awards, the highest of which is the Renaissance Woman of the Year.

The Board unanimously choose Therése Aigner as the first recipient of the Woman of the Year award for her personal contributions to Renaissance and the community in general.

JoAnn Roberts, outgoing Managing Director, read the following introduction at the Renaissance Holiday Party:

"The recipient of the final award this evening, we believe, is very special. She has come to us through a long and arduous path. She has seen death and destruction in her life, so terrible, that most of us cannot even begin to imagine what it must have been like. She survived it all and literally stumbled upon us a little over a year ago. She saw in us something that she finally admitted existed in herself and she decided, then, to do something about her life. She joined us and immediately became our most active member outside the Board. She has since taken others under her wing and guided them to their own path of self-discovery. She was my inspiration for the 'Heroes' piece in the November newsletter. Her chosen path is still filled with pitfalls and dangers, but we have every confidence that she will survive it as strong as ever."

JoAnn then continued with this Citation from the Board:

"She has been a constant and contributing member of Renaissance. She has made a commitment to further the goals and purposes of Renaissance. She has accepted the responsibility for the development and well-being of her sisters. She has demonstrated her commitment and contribution by her personal actions. She embodies the true spirit of a Renaissance person and thus is a worthy role model for us all.

Be it hereby resolved this 27th day of November, 1988, that Therése Aigner shall be honored as the 1989 Renaissance Woman of the Year."

Additional awards were given out for "Meritorious Service to Renaissance and the Gender Community." The recipients were: Dr. Bill Stayton for the gracious use of his office space; Susan and Judy [redacted] for providing food at the meetings and being the newsletter "go-fer"; Beth and Rachel M. for their support of the newsletter mailings; Joanne [redacted] for her work with the PCHA Food Bank; Donna Miller for being there every time we needed her; Joeline [redacted] for her incalculable effort in printing the newsletter; Michelle [redacted] for meeting support and try to start a chapter in Vermont single-handed; and finally to Paula Keiser for her continued support of Renaissance through the JSS Gender Forum.

God bless you all.

December holiday party notes

We must be doing something right for over 90 people were in attendance at the Holiday Party held on December 18th.

Alison Laing, aided and abetted by a bevy of helpers, gave us a wonderful evening of games, prizes and entertainment, not to mention the good food laid out by the staff of the Great Valley Inne.

Donna [redacted] our resident DJ provided us with great dance and Christmas music downstairs, while Roberta B. serenaded the folks upstairs with her guitar.

Alison made the prize and contest presentations before turning the microphone over to JoAnn Roberts who presented the Merito-

rious Service awards and the special Renaissance Woman of the Year award.

The outgoing Board of Directors was thanked for all their great work on behalf of the group and the new National Board was introduced. The King of Prussia Chapter Board was also presented to the members present.

The evening wound down with the exchange of Pollyanna gifts, more music and more dancing.

Our deepest appreciation goes to Alison Laing, Sister Judy, Dot-tie, Dawn G., Linda [redacted] Susan [redacted] et al. who made the evening so wonderful.

Special thanks to Missy of GVI.

Renaissance News

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For the latest information about events call: (215) 640-9449, 24 hrs.

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

The year (and a half) in review

Happy New Year! For Renaissance, that phrase has special meaning right now. We are entering a new year with a new board and renewed goals. As I turn over the reigns to Alison, let me look back over the last two years.

May of 1987 saw the first Renaissance meeting of 13 people. I remember asking afterward, "Now what?" Well, "what" became our aggressive style of outreach. We were fortunate to find Kate Bornstein and Paula Sinclair. Kate gave purpose to our energy and Paula showed us how to focus that energy where it would do the most good. One year later we were boasting 175 members and a newsletter that set a new standard in the community.

Where are we now? Our mem-

bership has grown to over 230. We are opening chapters throughout the country. We have recognition from the IRS and other public organizations. It wasn't easy and it wasn't always fun, but it was all worth every ounce of energy.

Where are we going? Our newsletter will continue to expand, especially with the chapters in place. We will look for private funding of some special projects. We will look at real office space this year. We will be listed with the United Way as a donor option, and there is a lot more to come.

We can all take pride in these accomplishments and be proud of our organization. Our actions speak for us. Let our progress stand as a model for tomorrow's leaders. Have a safe holiday.

And, don't forget about...

- The PCHA Food Bank: Please bring canned and dried food to the next meeting.

- The Benjamin Book Project with the Outreach Institute. The book is now available. Special member discounts, Regular Edition @ \$28.50, Deluxe @ \$33.50

- Planning meeting for South Jersey Chapter Feb 4th at Rhonda's office.

- Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered.

- Library Project: please donate your books, tapes, videos, etc.

Business Report Thru Dec. 26th

Paid Members: 230

Starting Balance: \$559.81

Income:

Dues & Donations	\$1631.00
Sales of Publications	233.75
Advertising	190.00
Holiday Party	2460.00
<u>Benefit Tix</u>	<u>60.00</u>
Subtotal	\$4574.75

Expenses:

Printing	\$232.48
Nov. Meeting	59.44
Office Operations	282.91
Postage	125.00
Dues Advance, KofP	100.00
<u>Holiday Party</u>	<u>2554.04</u>
Subtotal	\$3353.87

Ending Balance \$1780.69

Coming Events:

January

21st King of Prussia Chapter

February

?? Reading Chapter

4th So. Jersey Chapter

18th King of Prussia Chapter

24th Texas 'T' Party, San Antonio

March

18th King of Prussia Chapter

Opinion - **Forum** - Information

Sex & Love...an anonymous opinion from the JSS Gender Forum

Too often sex and love get confused leading to mixed feelings and actions; many of which we regret later. By natural biologic urge, humans are driven to sex. Even without all of the outward pressure of advertising, TV and fiction (particularly erotic fiction), our basic animal instincts would move us to sex. These drives differ between the sexes (how unfortunate that we use sex when we really mean "gender"). Males have a natural biologically driven urge to procreate - to "mount" the female of the species, if you wish. Females, on the other hand, have an innate drive to create new life and to nurture that life.

These "natural" drives can lead the male to be indiscriminate in the choice of females and can lead the female to be indiscriminate in the acceptance of the provider of the male seed. In animals these periods of indiscriminate acceptability are indicated by "being in heat". We humans don't like to recognize, though masked and supposedly controlled, we share basic animal urges.

Love, on the other hand, is a very different emotion and is really experienced only by humans; perhaps our major differentiation from the rest of the "animal kingdom". Love is not the male sex urge to procreate nor the female urge to create and nurture new life; rather, it is the intangible desire to be with another human, to share life's experiences together - to care, one for the other. While sex is the desire to "get" (mental or physical "pleasure" or release of "tension"), love is a desire to "give". A desire to nurture the other - the loved one.

An underlying emotion or need which causes us to confuse sex with love is the need to be wanted (or in the terms of the sexual conscious society in which we now live,

to be "desired"). When a male seeks out a female for a sexual partner, subconsciously, the female feels wanted and can, easily, confuse that with being loved and can confuse her response to being wanted (her gratitude for being wanted, if you will) with love.

For the male, the reaction is both simpler and more confusing. The male desires to be accepted as a sex partner so as to satisfy the inborn urge. In modern society we abhor the male "taking" and prefer that the male be "invited". As the game is played, the male attempts to get invited. When the need to be wanted is high, the "invitation" becomes "being wanted" and that, in turn, becomes "being loved". Sex can exist without love just as love can exist without sex. Ideally love comes first so that we do not confuse sex with love.

Compounding the confusion is the question of personal self esteem. Our society is so geared to being "coupled" that when we are not coupled or being pursued it becomes an attack on our self esteem. If our feeling of self worth is low, we leave ourselves open for a sexual relationship and, inadvertently, interpret that as love. When the fervor of sexual attraction declines, "love" disappears and we feel unloved which, again, becomes an attack on our self esteem and we are once again doomed to the same routine.

How, then, to break the destructive pattern? The easy answer is "improve your self esteem". What we are really saying is to convince yourself that you are, in fact, a whole person, a person worthy of being loved for yourself not merely as a convenient sex object. That also means convincing yourself that a partner who seeks your company solely for the sexual gratification to be received isn't

doing you any favor and any temporal sexual pleasure you may receive - no matter how strongly you may feel you need it at that moment - isn't love; it isn't even the basis for a "relationship".

How then love? There's an old saying that when you feel it you'll know it. Not true! The signs are much more subtle. There are the feelings of wanting to share time together for the pleasure merely of being together. There are the feelings of "missing something" - not loneliness - when you are apart and the genuine pleasure at being together again. There are the automatic feelings of wanting to do something for the other, the surprise gift, the unexpected call, the desire to make the other happy. It's a caring and the outflow of tenderness one for the other.

Love is expressed in many ways other than mere words. Words are important. Everyone wants to know they ARE loved; but much more important are the many ways in which love can be expressed without words. And, yes, there are the physical ways; the tender touches, the hand holding, the cuddling, and the sharing of physical pleasure. In the latter case, note that the key word is "sharing". Actually, sharing comes from each striving to make the other happy. It's a giving and not a taking which differentiates love (and physical love) from sex.

It is within each of us to recognize the difference and to bring ourselves to the self-sufficiency, assuredness, and esteem which rejects the confusion of accepting sex as a substitute for love. We must also not make the mistake of keeping our guard up so high we don't let love happen. Yes, it's a narrow, difficult path between the two, but with your eyes open you can walk it, and walk it happily.

Thoughts on open membership...by Trudi Henry

For some time now, there has been controversy in the transgender community regarding open membership within local groups. Some organizations feel that it is proper to restrict their membership to certain elements of the community and exclude others based on type of transgender behavior or sexual preference. Renaissance, among other groups, allows membership to any person with an interest in transgendered behavior, no matter what basis that interest has.

From the time when Renaissance was a nameless idea being discussed by her founders, there was never a question of who we would "allow" to join. We are an organization committed to educating the public, helping professionals, and ourselves in the subject of transgendered behavior. We are not a social organization, although, naturally, members do socialize among themselves. Since our mission is service, we consider our members' social and sex lives

to be their own business.

In the year and a half that Renaissance has been in existence, our membership has grown to over 230. Among them are straight, gay, and bisexual crossdressers, transgenderists, transsexuals, admirers, and a number of people who prefer not to or don't know how to label themselves. We welcome them all because we have found that, while we need to be among our own kind for support, it is the people unlike ourselves who have the most to teach us.

Open membership does not mean "anything goes". I have seen people arrive for a Renaissance meeting expecting some sort of orgy. When they see that what they have found is a business and informational meeting, one of two things happen:

A. They pick up the cues from the others present and behave with proper decorum, or

B. They get bored and leave.

While all are welcome at our meetings, were someone to forget

how to behave as a lady or a gentleman, she or he would promptly be shown the door. It is significant, however, that, after a year and a half of meetings with attendance running between seventy and ninety for the past six months, we have never had to exercise that option. To those organizations that do discriminate based on sexual preference, I can only point to our experience and wonder what frightens them so.

To borrow a phrase from Michael Dukakis' nomination acceptance speech, we have been enriched and enlightened by our diversity. Our organization has benefited greatly from the skills and talents brought by diverse individuals, some of whom would not be welcome in other groups. As individuals, we learn from each other and make good friends among people we probably would never have met otherwise. Open membership has cost us nothing but paid enormous dividends to us individually and collectively.

Newsletter expands pages, coverage and capability again

Just three months after a major expansion, we find it necessary to expand our pages once again. Our advertising campaign was well received. We are especially proud of those professionals who have chosen to use our publication.

We're expanding our coverage

as well as our pages. We'll be bringing you news of our national activities as well as that of the new chapters. We will also carry more news from other groups (see the new feature NGN). We extract items from their newsletters, but generally this makes for stale

news. We'd like to get more direct input. We can take articles and news items directly from IBM (5 $\frac{1}{4}$ ") and Mac (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ") compatible disks, or downloads from the JSS and Vegas BBSs. Let JoAnn know if you want to participate. Join with us in spreading the word.

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Paula Jordan Sinclair ... The NewsQueen

Other than Valentine's Day, Christmas is possibly the most popular holiday for crossdressers, especially those who have not yet found the courage to shop openly for their other wardrobes. So even though Christmas is passed, it still seems fitting that we lead off this column with two items about shopping, or, more accurately, one item about shopping and one about shoplifting.

It seems that one of the most popular items among the "five-finger discount" crowd in Chicago, and perhaps elsewhere, this holiday season was suede lingerie, specifically designer bras and panties made from animal skins and costing up to \$400 apiece.

"These designer items are 'gotta have but can't afford' things," said Lewis Shealy, vice president for loss prevention at the Windy City's Marshall Field & Co. "It's not uncommon to have a shoplifter stash three or four bras and panties into a large bag at once. That could be a \$1,000 loss."

For the record, shoplifters' total haul last year was \$1.8 billion in merchandise. And you wonder why the price of clothing is always going up. But there are other reasons...



According to fashion industry observers, the prices for fabric and labor are two of the chief culprits for the continued escalation in the price of women's clothes, and there is no end in sight. So if you had your eye on something that Santa didn't bring, buy it yourself now because it will certainly be more expensive next year.

Manufacturers and designers haven't resigned themselves to simply passing their higher costs on to the consumer; they are taking what steps they can to mini-

mize the sticker shock. Some steps are routine, like the clothing factories that have called in engineers to help them work more efficiently. But other steps are revolutionary, at least at the major design houses. One designer who didn't want to be identified for fear that her new practices would be seen as cheapening her famous name, said that she first settles on the ideal retail price for a garment, then designs it to come in at the budgeted figure.

Despite these and other steps to keep costs and selling prices in line, designers and manufacturers are hamstrung by factors they cannot control, such as foreign wage scales, which keep rising, and foreign exchange rates, which keep dropping. The bottom line is that spring fashions will cost more. How much more? It depends. Sources say that American clothes will be at least 10 percent more expensive, with European imports climbing by as much as 40 percent.



It doesn't appear that Philadelphia's Harlow was concerned about the price of fashion (or of anything else for that matter) when her new, ultra-swank supper club opened last month at The Bourse. She reigned over the opening night festivities resplendent in a black creation by Bob Mackie, couturier to the stars.

Philadelphia *Daily News* columnist Stu Bykofsky was one of the 1,800 guests at the inaugural party, and he observed that the city's night life has been poorer (than what he didn't say) since the famed transsexual closed the first Harlow's in 1976. During the past dozen years, Harlow must have been saving every penny, for Bykofsky reports that the new 2-story club cost almost \$2.5 million

to outfit. That's the equivalent of more than 3,000 suede bra and panty sets.



Let's hope that an unidentified woman in China is as successful in her new gender as Harlow is in hers. According to a report just published in the *Journal of Sex Research*, China's first, and perhaps only, sex change operation was performed in 1983.

According to the report written by sex researchers Vern L. Bullough of the State University of New York at Buffalo and Fang-Fu Ruan of the Beijing Medical University, the operation was performed on the 20-year-old son of a prominent Chinese army official. Until the boy was 13, his parents dressed him as a girl in an effort to discourage rough play. Later he joined the army, but had trouble adjusting. He left the army and choose to live as a woman.

The case came to Ruan's attention when the man wrote to Ruan's newspaper column on sexual matters seeking advice about how to handle the romantic interest of his supervisor who believed him to be a real woman. Ruan counseled the man and recommended the sex change. The surgery was performed using the standard technique. The researchers said that since then, no other sex changes have been performed in China.



Although Miss Sinclair claims to read several newspapers each day, she recently has taken a part-time job to help pay for her spring wardrobe and may miss a story or two. If you see an article about crossdressing, clip and send it to her in care of Renaissance.

Chapter news & notes

If no address is given for an organizer, write or call the office.

New Jersey

South Jersey: Tina and Rhonda have teamed to get this group moving. An initial meeting has been set for February 4th. See Tina or Rhonda at the KofP meeting in January or call the office.

Ohio

Columbus: Mikki is looking to start a chapter in the area.

Pennsylvania

King of Prussia: The first official meeting of the KofP chapter will be January 21st. The guest speaker will be Dr. "Bud" Heuer from Temple University. Heuer will speak about developing feminine speech patterns. The February meeting program is still open, but the March program will be on Fashion Sense. These programs will be videotaped for the national library. Visitors and new members will be treated to a new "Orientation" Program that explains the goals and purposes of the group.

Harrisburg/York: There are plenty of folks in this area. Anyone interested in starting a chapter here?

Reading: Susan [redacted] Box 299, Oley, Pa 19547, has her group underway with a planning meeting set for early January. She expects full operation to commence in February.

Vermont

Burlington: Michelle [redacted] has been transferred to Indiana. We regret the loss of her talents to Vermont, but a sister group, IXE, has gained them. There are, however, 26 people in Vermont who now need a leader. Volunteers?

Other

Inquiries have been received from Texas, Connecticut, Nebraska, Virginia, and upstate New York. We will let you know how these progress. If you have any interest in these or other areas, please write to us at the office.

A *Chapter Handbook* containing operating guidelines is in preparation.

New policy statement

The Renaissance Board of directors adopted the following policy by unanimous vote on Dec 12, 1988.

Whereas:

Transgendered individuals are a minority within any society, and exclusionary membership policies do nothing more than exacerbate this minority status.

Whereas:

The Renaissance Education Association, Inc., is open to all individuals who participate in transgendered behavior or who have a legitimate interest in such behavior.

Therefore:

Membership shall not be denied on the basis of biological gender, gender orientation, sexual orientation, age, race, color, national origin, religious affiliation, or physical disability.

Therefore:

It is also the policy of Renaissance to strongly encourage other organizations serving the transgendered community to open their doors to all persons who have a legitimate interest in transgender matters.

Therefore:

Both the anti-discrimination policies and practices of those organizations will be of paramount importance when Renaissance deliberates whether or not to officially cooperate in activities, programs, or any venture with other transgendered organizations.

TS halts Disneyland lawsuit

The case of the "Ejected Crossdresser" has been halted by the injured party herself.

The un-named person, confirmed to be a TS in the Real Life Test, was removed from

Disneyland after she was "discovered" in the Ladies' room there.

The word from ETVC's Ginny Knuth, who was spearheading the Legal Fund from our community, is that the TS in question does not want to draw any attention to herself through this lawsuit.

Dr. Richard Green, noted TS therapist and a lawyer, has offered to represent this person in the suit against Disneyland.

"We'll keep you informed of any changes", says Ginny.

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Recovery support group forming

Several folks have expressed an interest in a Recovery Support group, therefore, a planning session will be held at the January 21st King of Prussia meeting. See Vicki [redacted] at the meeting or call Jeff Van Syckle.

In my opinion...by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Sometimes, seemingly random events converge with poetic symmetry. One of those convergencies happened last month. On the same day that the Renaissance board was concluding its voting on the new anti-discrimination policy (see story on p. X), I received the December *Renaissance News* which contained the letter from Thelma of The Phoenix Society, the South African transgender group. I poured over each line hoping to find a statement that condemned the South African government's immoral policy of apartheid or at least separated Phoenix from that despicable practice. It was not there.

Our justice system assumes that a person is innocent unless proven guilty, and that sort of assumption would normally apply to Phoenix. Apartheid is not normal, and, as far as sexual minori-

ties are concerned, these are not normal times in South Africa.

Some years ago, the leading South African lesbian and gay organization was expelled from the International Gay and Lesbian Association for not condemning apartheid. Two new homosexual groups have now been formed in South Africa; both of them are strongly anti-apartheid. While these groups have more than their hands full fighting for their own rights, they have not turned their backs on their black brothers and sisters. It seems unlikely to me that Phoenix could be unaware of this movement among other minority groups to fight forced separation of the races. Yet they have apparently avoided the subject.

Thelma tells us how special it is that Phoenix exists in a macho and Calvinistic nation like South Africa. I hope she isn't looking for

praise from me, for if she is, she has asked the wrong damn drag queen. Taking a public stand on gender issues is important. But how does it compare to other, more basic human rights issues? What does it matter that 80 men can wear pretty dresses when hundreds of thousands of people are denied all rights of citizens only because of the color of their skin? Let's get our priorities in order.

I found it ironic that Thelma choose to use the phrase "a nation within nations" to describe the transgender community, and yet seemed blind to the plight of the actual black African nations that exist within the boundaries of South Africa. She really boggled my mind when she made a ringing plea for an end to prejudice against the transgendered, told how Phoenix itself was subjected to censorship, and then remained deafen-

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Every now and then it works for you...Renee Fenner & JSS Gender Forum

What I had feared the most was happening. Through the rear view mirror I could see the flashing lights of a Houston police cruiser. I was returning from a monthly meeting of the Gulf Coast Transvestite Club(GCTVC). Driving down the freeway I had passed an overpass and spotted the cruiser sitting on the median, obviously running a radar trap. I quickly checked my speedometer, noted that it read 55, and relaxed.

To my surprise the flashing lights came on and it pulled up behind me. It was obvious that the officer was going to stop me. I pulled over to the shoulder of the freeway and stopped. The officer got out walked up to the driver's side of my car. I asked him what the problem was and he stated that he had just observed me doing 65 in a 55 mph speed zone. I told him that my speedometer had only indicated 55. He ignored me and asked for my driver's license. Following all of the advice I had read, I handed him my male license and said nothing.

He said to remain in my car, took my license and went to the rear of the car, obviously writing up a citation. A while later he returned to my car and handed me my license and the citation. He stated that I was charged with doing 65 in a 55 mph zone and asked me to sign the citation to acknowledge receiving it. I again stated that I had not been speeding. In a gruff voice he said, "I am not going to argue with you out

here on the freeway, tell it to the judge." I signed the citation. He took it and walked back to his car.

My initial reaction was one of relief. The officer had not hassled me or made any mention of the fact that I had presented a male license when I was obviously dressed as a woman. The Houston Police are well known for their macho and harassing attitude. As time passed I became infuriated. Why had I been stopped when I was not speeding? Was my speedometer out of calibration? A trip to a local speedometer shop convinced me that was not it. I decided not to pay the fine, go to court, plead not guilty and take my chances in front of a judge; despite how I had been dressed.

Municipal court proceedings in Houston are done in two parts. You must first appear and plead not guilty before a court date is scheduled. Because I was going to be out of town on my first scheduled date, I requested a delay and it was granted. Two months passed before I finally went to court.

On the scheduled date I appeared in court in male clothes and waited for my trial to come up. I became a bit worried when I discovered that the judge was a woman. How would she react if the officer made an issue of my being dressed as a woman. Presently my name was called and I went up to the bench along with the officer and the court prosecutor.

The officer and I were sworn in and the prosecutor began to ask the

officer questions. Did he issue a citation to (my male name) on that date and was that person present in the court. To my surprise the officer replied "I don't know." Looking puzzled, the judge asked the officer "Can you not identify the person you issued the citation to as being present in court?" The officer again replied "I don't know."

It suddenly dawned on me that the officer was either having difficulty identifying me or trying to get the judge to ask why so, he could bring out the fact that I was dressed as a woman. I quickly pulled out my drivers license, presented it to the judge and said, "Your honor, here is my driver's license and this is the license I gave the officer on the night he issued the citation." The judge took the license, examined it and handed it to the officer asking, "Is this the license you used to write out the citation?" The officer replied, "Yes this is the license but I cannot identify the person I wrote the citation to as being present." Looking very frustrated the judge said, "In view of the difficulty the officer is having identifying the defendant, I am going to dismiss this case."

Feeling very relieved, I asked if I could leave and was told "Yes". As I walked to my car it came to me that after all of the anguish I had gone through being a crossdresser, the guilt feelings, the fear of being discovered and the gender conflict feelings; something about crossdressing had finally worked for me instead of against me.

Opinion: South Africa

ingly silent on apartheid.

Now that I have vented my spleen, let me offer a suggestion to the members of Phoenix, to the members of other transgendered organizations, and most of all to the members of Renaissance. All of us have a special knowledge that is not shared by the majority of our

fellow citizens. That is the knowledge we have gained from our membership in a group that is continually confronted with ignorance, stereotypes, and prejudice. We are routinely denied opportunities to live our lives as we must. And, indeed, most of us live in fear that we will lose our careers, our friends, even our families if our true nature is revealed. I believe

that this special knowledge, the pain caused by discrimination, also gives us a special obligation to confront and defeat this poison of prejudice at every turn. I say this not solely because of a belief in some abstract principle, but for sound, practical reasons. Simply put, the more hate there is in the world, the more we can expect to come our way.

National Gender News

from around the TV/TS community

IXE (Indiana Crossdressers Society) has joined Justice Inc., a statewide umbrella organization for support and activist groups working in and with the gay/lesbian community. Justice has a full time lobbyist at the state capital. IXE is to be commended for their efforts at networking with other minority/special interest groups.

NGN

Rosebuds, the newsletter of the *Tiffany Club of New England*, has a new (but former) Editor, Diane Dixon. Dixon took over from Siobahn Donovan with the December issue. She plans to "rein" in the scope of the writing to cover mainly TC events with an occasional outside piece from other groups' newsletters, if space permits. TC seems to have lost their "leading edge" image.

NGN

Emerald City's (Seattle) ladies are smarting from a "stink" over TV/TS use of public women's restrooms. A citizen wrote to the city paper asking if she had to tolerate a TV in the Ladies' room. The newspaper sought out counsel who delivered the opinion that the Public Accommodation law did not extend to the "privacy" of the restroom. Looks like the Mayor agrees. (Seattle has a law that prohibits the discrimination against TVs and TSs in Public Accommodations, which includes public bathrooms). Janice Van Cleve is not one to shirk a good fight and she will pursue the issue with the city council and the Human Rights Commission. Personally, I don't find anything "private" in a public restroom. Go get 'em Janice.

NGN

At the same time, Tacoma city council has passed a Public Employment and Housing ordinance that is patterned after the one in Seattle, naming TVs and TSs as

protected groups. Kaylan Ardora (TS) addressed the Tacoma Human Rights Commission on Nov 15th. It is reported it was her testimony that swayed the commission into a unanimous approval of the bill. Wish we had more gutsy people like Kaylan who would stand up for their rights.

NGN

Back on the East Coast, Veronica Jean Brown, Editor of *Twenty Minutes*, the newsletter of *The XX Club* (TS support), takes issue with the Washington state TVs for invading the public ladies rooms. In a scathing rebuttal entitled "Toilet Training", Veronica blasts the Seattle group for "attempting... to legally trespass into a place where they do not belong." The editorial was followed by a request for additional outside comments. This could become the "cause celebre" for 1989.

NGN

When Paula Sinclair and JoAnn Roberts visited Pittsburgh recently, Sheila Kirk, president of *TransPitt*, was generous enough to host them for an evening. Many topics were discussed, one of which was a joint *Renaissance-TransPitt* meeting in 1989. Let's work on that one.

NGN

Tri-Ess held its *Holiday En Femme* in Chicago this past November 16 to 20. (Chicago has had its share of transgender activity this year.) Thirteen chapters were represented by over 100 people. The Saturday afternoon session was titled "Tri-Ess, 1989 and Beyond" and included a discussion topic "Enhanced National Reputation and Image". At least they recognize the problem.

NGN

Meanwhile, some of the Tri-Ess members of *Alpha-Zeta* (AZ) are none too happy with their newsletter editor, Wendi Danielle, who

also happens to be the IFGE Chairman for 1988. The Arizona Tri-Ess chapter shares its pages with *A Rose*, an open group in the same area. Diane Ingram, in the latest issue, calls for the separation of the two newsletters, citing not enough appealing material for the strictly heterosexual TVs. Sounds like Diane just volunteered for newsletter editor.

NGN

The Dixie Belle (Atlanta) carried an article about being discovered by a co-worker while on a business trip. Like most of us, Sherri's worst fears were those she had made up in her own head. Her co-worker responded positively to the discovery and told Sherri that it didn't make any difference. He made his comments based on Sherri's personality, not her mode of dress. Nice story with a happy ending.

NGN

This quote from Rock singer Amy Grant was carried in the *Northwest Gender Alliance* newsletter, "Everyone has their unique path. everyone was born to walk in a unique place, which is something I've realized in the past three years. Call it corny as a snowflake, but it's so wonderful to look back at your life and realize that ...we aren't all supposed to think or dress the same way."

NGN

The *Phoenix Society* (Republic of South Africa) reports in *Fanfare* that a researcher at the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research has found an enlarged mass of cells at the base of the brains of two Male to Female transsexuals. The clusters are about twice the size of those in non-transsexual males. The area controls the biological clock and sexual behavior.

NGN

If you have news of national interest, please send it along.

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