

The Sweetheart Connection

A Publication of The Society for the Second Self, Inc. 8880 Bellaire, B-2 #104, Houston, TX 77036

Summer, 1997

Volume 5, Issue 3

„,what is
your inter-
nal dream
or myth... ?

Events

Holiday

EnFemme

Cherry Hill, NJ

Nov 12-16

Dignity Cruise

to the Bahamas

January 16-

19, 1998

S.P.I.C.E.

VI

Atlanta, GA

July 15-19

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Information

"I Dreamed there was an Emperor, Antony..." by Niela Miller

So begins a musing by Shakespeare's Cleopatra, who is describing her larger than life vision of a man to a male servant within her hearing. "His face was as the heavens, And therein stuck a sun and moon Which lighted up the little O, the earth." She has not yet seen his human face which can be joyful, miserable, treacherous...

Dear partners of cross-dressers, what is your internal dream or myth of a husband which you have

valiantly tried to fit onto the real man who turns out to be so much more complex than that dream? And when you discover that he has aspects you never dreamed of, does your dream become larger to absorb these discoveries so that dream and reality are in harmony, or is there a terrible discordance so that the real man can never be your dream?

The work of being the wife/partner of a cross-

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Something new was gained and therefore tried the first of this year. Tri-Ess gained its 501(c) (3) rating from the government, an acknowledgment of Tri-Ess to be a tax exempt, non-profit educational organization and therefore qualifying for a Bulk Mail permit.

We looked upon the immense postal savings as an opportunity to expand and amplify the content of the Sweetheart Connection. In that zeal, we believed a self mailer would be acceptable. We were wrong.

With this issue, we return to enclosing the newsletter in an envelope, hoping thereby to restore the privacy so many had expressed as violated. After a long, careful conversation with Minneapolis Mailing Services, we determined our permit application *would* allow that which you requested. WHEW!!

How WAS the Conference?

A total of sixty-eight women and couples gathered in Ontario, California, at the Hilton to attend the Fifth S.P.I.C.E. Some came for the first time anxious and uncertain of what they would find; many came to renew friendships and review goals made at previous conferences, most were there to try to learn something more about the phenomenon that united them, crossdressing men. Almost all, according to an "in house" survey taken by the participants, left with a feeling of enlightenment and enrichment.

That such statements, in varying words, could be made about a series of events taking place across just three days is no minor accolade. Sessions with professional counselors were designed to, and succeeded in, eliciting open and honest sharing of tender and sensitive feelings about equally tender and sensitive subjects. How this was ac-

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Editor's **BLUE PENCIL**

July 29, 1997 ... after
S.P.I.C.E.

Thanks, I needed that... and didn't know it. Meeting but once a year with my "support group" would seem inadequate, stretching one's forbearance thin over so long a time frame. So effective and productive are these conferences programs, I felt I could easily miss a session to pursue the achievement of a goal SET at S.P.I.C.E. II. I failed to credit the beneficial effect of being WITH all these special women. As Mary Jane McCue put it, "I came to get a 'friend fix'."

Walter Bocking, Drs, rescued our arrival at the wrong (Orange County) airport with a rental car. One hour later, Mel Rudd was welcoming us to the Ontario Hilton and lunch in the Catalina Cafe.

All printed registration material sent from Minneapolis had arrived safely via UPS. There were snacks and friends to be found in the Hospitality Suite before adjourning to a Welcome "Luau" in the cafe, complete with leis and flowers brought by Peggy Rudd. An appropriate setting for the "how we met and married" stories shared at dinner.

Thursday brought the nervous opportunity to introduce ourselves and our problems. Walter was gentle and reassuring in manner; we soon were sharing our innermost fears and troubles. Clyde Hilburn was doing the

same with the men. After lunch, the two traded places and we all got to know each other better. Up on the ninth floor, a panel of women led others to understand that, "No, it doesn't get any easier, but it can get better," IF one applies certain fundamental skills of communication and thinking to living problems. Closing with a "feelings" check, we seemed to be staying well grounded, if uncertain of that ground.

The catered Wine and Cheese party in the lobby enabled a network of acquaintances to bloom into friendships. Here the real value of S.P.I.C.E. was found. Strong connections are made in common bonds of pain and problems shared. It had been a while since Walter and I had talked "one-on-one," comparing notes on how it all came to be, he elicited a passionate recitation from me about my watercolors displayed in the Hospitality Suite. Quietly, he led me to see that I WAS going somewhere with that "bliss."

After dinner, I was deeply complimented to be accorded honor and attention (plus a beautiful silver filigree heart locket) from Peggy and Mel Rudd. "...Gee, ma'am, just doin' m'job, ma'am." And pleased to continue for another year.

Gil Fairfax spoke with slides about myths. The one I will focus on in future was that which stated 78% of wives of CDs try to be un-

derstanding. Up here in Minnie-soda, the guys think only about 10 to 15% try. (Aarrgh!)

Just because the road gets rough, doesn't mean the vehicle will disintegrate.

It was fun, afterwards, modeling jewelry with Ursula for the benefit (20% of sales) of S.P.I.C.E.

Friday, the work opened with a panel of gentlemen answering our wildest questions about what they were doing as crossdressers. (I relaxed to take my "notes": thumbnail drawings of the people there. Again, as at SPICE II, an objection was lodged; this time I had the courage of my conviction: "I don't make words, I make pictures.") GOOD women's lunch; a fascinating conversation with Melody re: dissociation versus role playing and how to tell the difference in this milieu.



Not up to excursion walking, Sarah and I sat neck deep in the pool through Friday afternoon, sharing behavioral horror stories of octogenarian women we have known. Returning to the Hospitality Suite, we heard an

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"up-beat" telling of yet another CD "love story." All these conferences and we are still learning "we are not alone."

After dinner, Richard and Marsha Miller spoke on the process and value of the integrated male/female personality. Their fascinating and entertaining joint talk bears careful consideration; Walter learned some did not find the idea palatable.

The evening ended with more renewals of contacts... Kathy brought couples from her California Pathfinders group; the introductions and note comparisons were joyful.



Sally (bearing a remarkable resemblance to Julia Roberts) spoke Saturday morning of the development of communication from abstract talking down to non-verbal and the wig-wags of bees. Recommending a fair "fighting agreement," she advised, "Never use the word never and always avoid the word always." Ms. demonstrated the difficulty incurred when "The WHY question is overused," and recommended sticking to what, when, where and how. ("Who" being understood as those involved in the conversation.)

Saturday sessions were unfocused for me as I waited for a contact with my sister, driving down from San Francisco and due on FRIday. We spent the afternoon in practice sessions on developing communication skills. That which Freud called the "talking cure" is still valid, but refurbished with new, more effective techniques as guided by Clyde, Walter and Sally, we began to see how we could negotiate workable solutions to family problems and issues.

Finally connected through a third party, my sister and I were reunited JUST as the final dinner was announced. As the whole crowd seemed to know my concern, I introduced her to everyone, apologizing for being agitated all afternoon. When the men retired after dessert to reprise their gracious gifts of a long stemmed red rose and a kiss to every woman there, my sister Lynn was included. Now that's CLASS!

It was time to make closure, farewells... and sales. Several ladies purchased some of my watercolors, my draw/note book went the rounds; even, finally, to Peggy, who had never seen its contents in five years. What a memory that lady has; identifying by name those whom I drew but did not know from two and three years ago.

As usual, I was flyin' high on the endorphins released by attending yet another great conference; I did use the airplane to get home.

See you all in Atlanta for S.P.I.C.E. VI.

From the June issue of *The Southern Belle* (Atlanta)

MY CORNER

by Lauren

I want to thank the members of Sigma Epsilon for their participation in the SPICE 50/50 drawings we hold each month. Since last September we have raised \$445.00 for this program, which is enough to sponsor four wives and, just perhaps, save four marriages.

The SPICE Conference was created by wives and loved ones in relationships with transgendered men to help understanding and foster communication, compassion and compromise within their relationships. If this conference can help relationships with understanding, love and compassion, then it is a worthy cause to donate a few dollars each month.

We cannot save every marriage or relationship; some were doomed from their beginning, but many can survive and grow, and SPICE is a vehicle toward this growth!



Lauren, twice President of Atlanta Chapter, Sigma Epsilon, will serve as Registrar for S.P.I.C.E. VI.

from our Director

Dear Friends,

Since returning home from S.P.I.C.E. my mind has been busy processing the conference. I will remember 1997 as the year characterized by warm friendship, challenging educational opportunities, an outstanding professional staff, a wonderful group of participants and an abundance of broccoli and cauliflower! Cooperation was evident when our entire dinner table graciously donated all the vegetables to Mel since he loves them so!

I have finished analyzing your evaluation forms and was pleased to see the ratings for each program and activity reflected your high level of approval. Also you gave very informative input in the comments section which will become the basis for planning S.P.I.C.E. VI in Atlanta. It is not too soon for YOU to begin planning:

1. Put some money aside for your 1998 registration, air fare and hotel. S.P.I.C.E. comes sometime after Christmas, birthdays and income tax, so planning ahead is important.

2. Ask for vacation time that includes July 15-19, 1998.

3. Contact and solicit organizational support.

4. Write your thoughts now while the memory is fresh; submit your articles and accounts to news letters and journals.

5. Campaign for frequent

flyer miles donations. Mel and I donated two such tickets; two more were donated in Minneapolis. This is but the beginning of a potential resource.

6. Spread the word! S.P.I.C.E. is vital for the enrichment of human life, self-concept, friendship and love relationships.

7. Reproduce the information sheet on the 1998 conference; share it with organizations and friends.

8. Tell about your experience with S.P.I.C.E. at any meetings you attend.

9. Keep S.P.I.C.E. on the Internet: spice@tri-ess.com.

S.P.I.C.E. V is such a fond memory. We all share a rare opportunity to contribute support and education to each other. There is nothing more rewarding than reaching out to people with a message directed at the enrichment of human life. The task and responsibilities are challenging, but the end result makes it all worth while. We are a unique and wonderful group with special needs, but mutual understanding is evident. Getting to Know You was a delightful experience. I'll be singing our theme song with a revitalized meaning.

Thank you for joining us in Ontario, California for S.P.I.C.E. V; now on to Atlanta in 1998 where our theme will be STUMBLING BLOCKS TO STEPPING STONES! ☀

With my love and gratitude,
Peggy Rudd, Ed.D
Director of S.P.I.C.E.
Director of Dignity Cruises



**SPOUSES' /
PARTNERS'
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE FOR
EDUCATION**

**JULY 15-19, 1998
ATLANTA, GA**

S.P.I.C.E.© is for couples
and genetic females
in committed
relationships

IMAGES and Vision

A few (not many) people, aware of my responsibility for the design of our current S.P.I.C.E. logo, inquired about its origin and development. The question is an accolade; most designers and artists are convinced nobody is paying ANY attention to the work.

If one thinks about it, the current design is almost self explanatory. As S.P.I.C.E. evolved from Tri-Ess and its efforts to address the concerns of wives and partners into a yearly conference, it was seen that some kind of visual identifier would be helpful. The first three conferences' hard copy incorporated the reverse silhouette of a slender young woman plucking a daisy. "He loves me, he loves me not..." Given the first responses and questions the majority of women have when they initially learn of their husbands' crossdressing, it was a most appropriate selection, if a bit "fussy" and sometimes difficult to incorporate in some printed pieces.

It was at the final dinner at S.P.I.C.E. II (Chicago) that the then director, Linda

Peacock, recruited me to design a simpler logo for the conference. My initial visualization was along the lines of a Star Trek pin. By S.P.I.C.E. III (Memphis), the design had been narrowed to one of six submitted. With the request for melding an element from another of the six, (the "swan-like" S), the "broken daisy," as new director Peggy Rudd likened it, was adopted.

The daisy was used to establish a bridge from the first symbol, for the allusion was too pertinent to lose. The center of that plucked daisy has the eccentricly rayed sun from the Tri-Ess logo (as seen in the body of the large

2 triangulated by three S's).



It may be an "off-center" activity in which these men of ours engage, but the sun does continue to shine, if erratically, in our lives. We each may continue to pull at the petals of our love, trying to comprehend the phenomenon for which no one prepared us, asking eternally "Does he love me? Or another?" but only the light of education and the pain of experience can bring one to an answer. Daisies may not tell, but ours can lead you to your own resolution. ☀ *Amalee*

NOW AVAILABLE

To wear your own Antiqued Pewter S.P.I.C.E. daisy pin, send \$10.00 together with your name and mailing address to:

SPICE Pin
Box 8591
Minneapolis MN 55408



(actual size)

Allow three to four weeks delivery time. 50% goes to SPICE.

Reflections & responses

July 22, 1997

Marsha and I had an incredible time at SPICE. It was a truly wonderful experience for us. We got a lot out of it and felt good that we could give back from our experience.

It was great to spend some time with you and get to know you MUCH BETTER and let you see more of us too. That added a great deal to the experience. We are already looking forward to the next SPICE.

All our love, Richard and Marsha Miller

Richard Miller is working up an article based on the talk he gave Friday night at SPICE V for the Sweetheart Connection. We hope to have it in time for the Fall issue. Ed.

July 24, 1997

As I am fond of saying, going to S.P.I.C.E. for the first time (Memphis, '95) was the hardest thing I ever did. Also the smartest. I was panic-stricken, and prone to breaking into tears at the slightest provocation. I had never spoken to anyone about my husband's crossdressing before. The meeting was a catharsis and a revelation for me.

As much as my first S.P.I.C.E. will always be special to me, - not only for the special friends I made and the relief it gave me - the most recent meeting in Ontario,

CA, was truly outstanding. The professional staff invited this year were especially sensitive and knowledgeable. Despite misgivings about having a male counselor in a women's only session, Walter Bockting was wonderfully gifted in guiding the discussions and getting to the root of our feelings. I hope he will be able to attend again soon.



July 28, 1997

I am 24 years old and have known about my husband's crossdressing for six years though it took me five years to accept it. I attended SPICE V this past week, my first transgendered conference, and took more home than I can tell about. I do want to tell a small bit of it.

From the first session, I found myself surrounded by folks with a common bond...all our husbands or partners were crossdressers. I felt at ease sharing my thoughts and feelings. As the time flew by, I felt a tremendous emotional,

spiritual and personal growth inside me. By the end of SPICE, I had felt and learned many things. My feelings ranged from happy to sad as I would have to leave the wonderful new friends I had made.

During SPICE I made lifelong, real friends that know everything about you and still care for you. I felt a bonding that can only come from sharing your inner most thoughts and feelings. It is important for wives and partners to come together and be united as we are our best support; only we know how it feels to have a spouse or partner who is a crossdresser. I want to thank all those who shared their lives with me.

I learned many coping skills and different ways of dealing with issues. Most valuable to me are the communication skills I learned at SPICE. Armed with active listening and verbal skills, I tried them out at home. We have now negotiated two issues which, as we continue, I feel will bring my husband and me closer together. I also value the opportunity to try the different ideas for handling our common challenges learned from the other ladies. With this model to follow, I am sure I can find that which will work best for me.

There was, besides all the bonding and learning, the fun Walk of the Stars in Hollywood and Universal Studios City. We sang all the way back to the hotel.

Once again, thank you to all who shared, taught and helped, especially Peggy Rudd without whom I would not have been at SPICE this year. I would love to meet all the readers of The Sweetheart Connection, so come on out next year to Atlanta for a wonderful time of learning and bonding. See ya next year!



July 29, 1997

Walter Bockting, Drs., was at SPICE V at my initiative. Well before hand he had stated that he expected he would learn more from the women than they might learn from him. By the end of the first day, Thursday evening, he expressed to me how "impressed" he was with the quality of the programming and the sincerity of the participants. By the end of the conference, Walter spoke of "not just TELLING wives and partners of crossdressing clients ABOUT S.P.I.C.E., but recommending and urging them to attend" for the sessions would do them so much good.

Thanks, Walter, for your

glowing words and generous, kind spirit. We are pleased and happy to call you a good counselor to the participants of S.P.I.C.E. and a friend. Editor



I am writing this on the plane, returning from my third SPICE conference, and the keyword to my reaction this time is: SPEC-TRUM.

The Memphis SPICE left me in awe of the fact that this was a place where I came first. The registration form asked whether I was bringing anyone with me! I was so tired of going to events where my partner brought me, the "S.O." along. At the SPICE in Delaware last year, I was particularly impressed with the warmth, honesty and friendship of the women and couples - several of whom I had met the year before.

This past week in Ontario, CA, I found myself more focused on relationship issues and the fact that there could be very different models of couples who got along extremely well, no matter where the guy was on the transgender spectrum and where his partner/spouse was on the acceptance

spectrum. At one end was presenter Richard Miller, an "integrated" person and his very accepting wife. (He wrote the book, *The Bliss of Becoming One*, with his wife's help.) Apparently getting along just as well were several couples we met where the guys went out cross-dressed alone and the wives/partners had never seen them or anyone else "en femme" (not even a picture).

I see the common thread in both cases as mutual respect, good communication and the kind of understanding of the issues that could come from attending SPICE. Of course, most of us don't have a perfect relationship and everyone (both women who came alone and couples) left with some excellent tools to use in working toward this goal.

To complete the picture of SPICE this year, we had inspiring and insightful presenters, a very comfortable and accommodating hotel, and lots of good talks with old and new friends.

Personal results:

- I got to think about ways to improve myself - maybe July is a good time to start the New Year.

- Bill (not Elaine - remember, this is a non-crossdressing event) and I used our new communication tools and some group input to examine two issues that had been rattling around between us for quite a while.

- Bill got lots of good advice

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Clyde's Perspective



I did it! I went to my first S.P.I.C.E. and it didn't hurt a bit! At Onnalee's request, here I am again, post-conference, with a new perspective to share.

In my Spring Connection article I admitted that D. and I had issues in our otherwise "blissful" relationship. It isn't always hunk-dory for us in Genderland... any more than it is for other fallible people in more mainstream marriages.

One primary difficulty lay in the sexual realm. Therefore, I re-

quested the opportunity to present at S.P.I.C.E. on Sex and Intimacy. I had my moments of doubt, presenting on something that was unresolved in my own relationship.

To prepare for S.P.I.C.E. and not look the fool, I gathered and re-read every book we had on relationship building, sexual expression, personal growth, massage, etc. plus some I had never opened before. This "crash course" opened my eyes and expanded my awareness. Relating all the thoughts and new knowledge I gained on this with D. mounted my excitement daily as I visualized sharing it all with S.P.I.C.E. attendees.

Excited, anticipatory and a little scared, off I went to S.P.I.C.E., still reading and making notes, still in the process of preparing my presentations during the

flight.

The first evening was a breeze - casual introductions in the hospitality suite, renewing the friendship established on the Bermuda Dignity Cruise with Peggy and Mel, re-meeting the Fairfaxes, finally meeting Onnalee after a multitude of letters and phone calls. At dinner, I met a tableful of new and interesting people and heard the touching story of one couple's meeting and his "revelation" of his femme self to his (now) wife. The theme, "Getting to Know You," was right on target!

Thursday morning, the exploration began. After the 7:30 Yoga offering, I jumped into the "formal" program, with Peggy's introductions, information, sharing, etc. By late morning, it was my turn to lead, meeting with the men and delving into "Getting to

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on a dressing/logistics/neighbors problem.

• I got two interesting ideas about possible meeting places for our club.

After reporting all this positive stuff, I do want to tell you about the biggest negative - and it hits very close to home. That negative has been my inability to send out the magic word which would inspire the wives and partners enough to realize the time

and money spent on attending a SPICE conference would pay untold dividends for their lives, and in many cases for their relationships.

Next July, SPICE will be in Atlanta - a lot closer to New Jersey. My dream is to have all of you thinking about and planning for the 1998 conference, either by yourself or with your spouse. How about contributing to a scholarship fund to help one of

the wives with the cost? ❖



Gloria

e-mail: [redacted]

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Know Your Relationship." (Walter Bocking was with the women: "Getting to Know Yourself.") It was truly exciting - talking, listening, pondering, sharing, opening myself and other explorer's minds and hearts to new ideas and thoughts. Most moving to me was the fact that these 15-or-so men, transgenders all, attended this conference with their partners, to dig into and expand their relationships, knowing full-well that their attire would be strictly male for four+ days. This was impressive and touching to me.

After lunch, Walter and I traded places. The women had a choice of two presentations: a panel discussion, "Will It Ever Be Easy?" or my "Getting to Know Your Relationship." Again I could share, inquire, listen, ponder, wonder and reach-out to others like me. I learned so much... most importantly, that while we all have so much in common, we are all at different stages in our emotionality, our degree of acceptance, our understanding. I rapidly acquired a new level of compassion for those women struggling to establish their footing on this often rocky voyage through "genderland."

Late afternoon brought another choice... A "feelings check" for female partners only or my "couples closure." Again I was touched by the open honesty and inquiry, the desire to delve deeper into the mysteries of the transgender partnership, not so very differ-

ent from other loving alliances.

Social activities filled every evening before each of three lovely dinners where we got to know one another (there's that lovely theme again.) The sharing expanded at each meal with more information, entertainment and even a jewelry show.

No doubt if every attendee responded with articles about S.P.I.C.E., every report would differ widely. My personal past experience includes meeting my husband when he was dressed en femme, and the gifts of an open mind and loving heart. There are a multitude of personal experiences with transgenderism, all in need of expression. My perspective will be unlike that of a wife/partner who has just newly discovered her man's feminine proclivity, or one who has been married several decades (D and I go back

only nine years, married six), or a man who attended, or an unmarried partner... or... or... or!

My message, now that I've attended S.P.I.C.E., mirrors my pre-attendance communication: "Please come to S.P.I.C.E. (next one is July, 1998, Atlanta) to know that you are not alone. Bring your issues, your curiosity, your pain and, perhaps, return home with some new tools for making your marriage or partnership more of what you dream it can be. That's why... (finally)... "I WAS THERE!" ❖

Clyde Hilburn, a WOMAN, is married to a transgendered surgeon in the Boston area. Always open to change, Clyde is in the process of changing her name to reflect her femininity. She will soon be legally known as Leslie, and the name Clyde will be a thing of the past.



DIGNITY CRUISE IX SPECIAL \$329

Sailing on the Royal Caribbean's
SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS
with Peggy Rudd and the Gender Gifted
from Miami to the Bahamas and return

January 16-19, 1998
For reservations call Brenda
1-800-247-7021

Always Asked

(The following article, written by Julie Freeman, was first published in Devil Woman, the newsletter of the Diablo Valley Girls. Julie's e-mail address is [redacted])

I generally attend a meeting for significant others about every three months, usually because they are held at my home. Invariably a wife who is new to cross-dressing attends and without fail two questions are asked. "Is my husband gay?" and "Does he want to be a woman?" These certainly were the first two questions that crossed my mind several years ago when I first became aware of my husband's crossdressing. Why do we think this? Like most of society, for us the only crossdressers we ever saw were drag queens, some of whom are quite open about their homosexuality. Who else dressed like a woman? And we certainly were not aware of the difference between crossdressers and drag queens, a distinction that the gender community keeps trying to make over and over.

We wives are also aware that there are gay men who do marry for a variety of reasons and even raise children. Some may never reveal their preference to their wives; others may leave the relationship after several years realizing that they cannot change and hope to find a satisfactory lifestyle elsewhere. So it is certainly not exceptional to ask this question. There is the fear of being left for the gay lifestyle, the fear of not

really being loved, and the fear of not being significant enough for the crossdressers in our lives.

Those of us who have come to understand crossdressing better can reassure wives and significant others somewhat. We know of the studies that have found that there is a greater percentage of gays among the "straight" population than among the crossdressing population, gays who for whatever reason have chosen to remain closeted. We have learned that crossdressers mainly crossdress for "gender" reasons, not "sexual" reasons.

So it is likely that a wife or partner's husband is heterosexual, who now wishes to include her in this part of his life. Certainly he is not telling her this hoping she will file for divorce although unfortunately not all couples are able to cope with crossdressing and sometimes break ups are inevitable.

The second most asked question is harder to answer. There are many crossdressers who believe they are transsexual, may always have been so, and now want to journey down that path and are informing their partners of this desire. For these wives, there are no easy answers. Some may wish to remain in the relationship, particularly if the husband states that he still loves her, that he has no desire to start a new relationship. Others may leave because the husband openly states that after surgery he will be looking for a man to have a relationship with.

Only through continued dis-

cussions with their husbands can these wives and partners find out what their choices will be. We can only counsel both to keep the lines of communication open, to get guidance from helping professionals, to read the appropriate literature, and not make any sudden, rash decisions which may result in unnecessary heartache and despair. ☼

Contacts for Events:

Holiday

EnFemme

Cherry Hill, NJ

Nov 12-16

Carol Ann [redacted]

1092 St Georges Ave. Ste. 234

Rahway, NJ 07065

Voice/Fax

(908) [redacted]

Dignity Cruise

to the Bahamas

January 16-19,

1998

For Reservations, call
Brenda 1-800-247-7021

S.P.I.C.E. VI

Atlanta, GA

July 15-19

Diana (Pacific)

(510) [redacted]

Mary Jane (Central)

(918) [redacted]

Evelyn (Easter)

(215) [redacted]

Peggy (National)

Voice/Fax

(713) [redacted]

I Dreamed There was an Emperor...

(Continued from page 1)

dresser is not to try to change him but to try to address that internal myth which has given rise to beliefs, feelings, body sensations, imagery in relation to that person. The question is: Are you capable of embracing a new dream, becoming larger, letting him be larger than you ever imagined? If you don't want to do this work, so be it. This may not be the arena to which you are committed. Perhaps you will both have to move on and apart. But what a lost opportunity!

I believe that every experience and person with whom we come into contact in our lives holds valuable lessons for our own growth, both personal and spiritual. What might some of the lessons be for you in this kind of partnership?

- Learning how to love another human being despite his fem appearance, his mistakes in judgment, his unintentional hurting of you, his intense feelings about something else besides you, his desire to bring experiences into your marriage for which you never asked, his vulnerability which sometimes takes the form of not being able to tell even you his deepest feelings.

- Learning what your limits are, what you believe and value, what you really want from life and a partnership, what you are capable of, what about you is rigid and what flexible

- Learning what your feelings are about your own sexuality, your femininity, your womanhood, your women friends, your mother, your daughter, your sister. What is your unfinished business with each female in your life?

- Having a passion for something in your life which is at least as great as his passion for cross-dressing but is not connected with him.

- Having a community of friends and a support system which are made up of women and men who are not involved with transgender, in addition to those who are.

- Getting clear about any of YOUR secret feelings, fantasies, white lies, pretenses, unexplored past experiences which foster some of the behavior and the reactions you now have with and to your partner.

- Taking risks in talking about all of it, everything, to him without requiring that he do the same and without complaining about him to him. Is this possible? Can you do it as a spiritual challenge to yourself?

If you are willing to take complete responsibility for your thoughts, feelings, reactions, dreams, beliefs, values, limits, desires, experiences and behavior and work with the plethora of material presented to you by being with this particular partner, you will be amazed at the amount of positive change and growth in you and in your relationship.

If you don't want to do this work, you are still a good and worthwhile person. You still have

the right to want something, someone different. But don't fool yourself into thinking that you have escaped from the work to be done. The Creative Intelligence which is Totally Conscious knows what we need to learn. It will manage to set us up with those conditions, maybe in the next relationship, maybe in the next life..... ☼



Niela Miller has been working with the transgender community for fifteen of her thirty years as a counselor/therapist and is particularly known for her personal development workshops at Fantasia Fair. In her first year there and for many subsequent years, she worked with a group of wives of cross dressers, the first time such a group had been convened. Ms. Miller has presented at several past S.P.I.C.E.s Her book, "Counseling in Genderland", (Different Path Press, Boston, 1996) is the only available guide of its type. Niela uses her background in Gestalt and other humanistic therapies, education, group work and the arts in many venues. She is an amateur musician, a new grandma, and lives and works in Ac- ton, MA.

(Continued from page 1)

How WAS the Conference?

complished can be attributed to the long and careful planning of all aspects of the conference by the board. Who would be the best presenters, how should they relate to the subject and correlate to each other, what is the best way to meet everyone's needs for privacy and honesty at the same time. When should options for women only topics be offered and when the couples sessions. How long should they be. Where should we have lunch available for those women who prefer to stay separate from the men in attendance. What can be offered for relaxed socializing and entertainment. Who can best arrange each of these disparate goals to blend into a total good experience for each person who comes.



Planning, arranging and mounting any gathering that draws from around the nation can be a daunting task. Dr. Peggy Rudd and her well chosen board succeeded admirably. "It was the high degree of communication among all the board members that enabled us to pull it off" said Desiree [REDACTED], newly appointed to

the board to plan for SPICE VI in Atlanta. "E-mail, snail mail, faxes and phone calls," said Evelyn Kirkland. "LOTsa phone calls," added Mary Jane [REDACTED].

Even as the survey results are carefully analyzed for ideas on to how to improve the conference, work has already begun on the Sixth S.P.I.C.E. scheduled for July 15-19, 1998, at the Sheraton Inn Atlanta Airport. One woman, whose husband, at her request, has never attended, was heard to declare that "Thanks to four SPICEs, I am now strong enough to share this event with him. Now I am ready to have him join me at S.P.I.C.E. We both will be in Atlanta next year."

**Visit the Tri-Ess/
S.P.I.C.E. web
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Our guideline for every issue will be that which shapes productive resolution to many problems:

1. What is going on?
2. Who's in charge?
3. What do you want?
4. Where do we go from

here? Each quarterly issue will deal with all four questions but will focus on one question in turn.

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Onnalee Graham
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E-mail to spice@tri-ess.com

Voice mail at (612) [REDACTED]

There is a way to continue the interesting and challenging dialogues begun at S.P.I.C.E. V.

If you have the tools, a very good facilitator is running a secure list/serve forum dedicated to SO's of CD's (NO fee or charge.) If you are interested in joining that forum, e-mail

<LISTSERV@HOME.EASE.LSOFT.COM>

and in message text (not subject) write:

SUBSCRIBE CDSO.

Good stuff, Maybelle! Ed.