

# Renaissance News



Volume 5, No. 10

Vision - Integrity - Quality

October, 1991

## Amnesty International finally does it!

Sexual minorities now have the protection of Amnesty International. At its meeting held in Japan early last month, the Nobel Prize winning human rights group expanded its mandate to include lesbians and gays. And because of language in the mandate which refers to the way people dress, the mandate will also protect transgendered people who are perceived to be homosexual.

Amnesty International now considers as "prisoners of conscience" people who have been arrested for lesbian and gay rights advocacy, those arrested simply because they are homosexual following police raids on bars or other gathering places even though they have committed no other crime, and people perceived to be homosexual because of the way they dress.

Observers note that while the

expanded mandate does not specifically include transgendered people, transsexuals and transvestites will enjoy "spill over" protection. They cite instances in such places as Singapore where police sweeps against homosexuals also have caught up transsexuals and transvestites. While including transgendered persons in the mandate would have been preferable, they note, it would

*(continued on page 13)*

## At second annual LSV luau, guests end summer in Hawaii

Royalty in the form of a visiting beauty queen added luster to the Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter's second annual luau held in August. Ito, Miss Gay Pennsylvania 1991, was the chapter's special guest for the event.

More than 50 Renaissance members and their friends attended the Hawaiian evening at the Sheraton East Hotel outside Harrisburg. Guests feasted on a Polynesian buffet amid sheltering palms. Later, they were entertained with a variety show presented by the chapter.

The lead-off act was the ever-popular Harrisburg Hula Hula Hipsters: Heather [redacted], Farrah, Richelle, Rose Z. [redacted], and Brenda Davidson. A hirsute Elsa [redacted] led the traditional singing of Monty Python's "Lumberjack Song." Other amateur (but definitely not amateurish) performers were JoAnn Roberts, Farrah, Richelle (with an interesting French number), Gaye (who sang about taking a

walk in her heels), and Pam Westin (whoteamed with a disguised Paula Jordan Sinclair for one of three Cher numbers). Professional impersonator Bridget Nickels presented three exciting numbers and was brought back to the stage for an encore. Davidson, LSV leader, emceed the show with considerable poise.

In recognition of Renaissance's non-profit status and stature in the community, Ito presented a special performance showcasing her considerable talent and beauty.

The show attracted the attention of several "straight" hotel guests who peeked in from an adjoining banquet room. At the conclusion, they mingled with the Renaissance members, posed for photos with Ito, Nickels, Westin, and several other of the more popular entertainers, and collected autographs.

Arrangements for the luau were coordinated by Davidson, Brown, and her significant other, Gypsy. They were assisted by Dawn G., the

chapter treasurer.

Other LSV members involved with the festivities included Michelle [redacted] (who also is program director of the Greater Philadelphia chapter), Parsons, Farrah, Richelle, Markley [redacted], and Allison Lovell.

Last year, the luau had been planned for another hotel — the Harrisburg Sheraton West. But at the last minute, the management of that facility objected to the nature of the clientele. This forced a last-minute move to the Sheraton East.

The staff of the present site could not have been more accommodating to the Renaissance guests. At one point during the evening, several hotel staff members were heard expressing anticipation for next year's luau and asking some of the guests if they were planning on returning.

So mark your calendars; that date is August 29, 1992.

# Chapter information

## New Jersey

**South Jersey: Kelly [redacted], chapter leader.** Write Renaissance SJ, c/o P. O. Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 641-3782.

## Pennsylvania

**Greater Philadelphia area: Dina Amberle, chapter leader.** Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Summer hours: meeting starts at 9:00 p.m. For information, call (215) 946-8887.

## Pennsylvania

**Lower Susquehanna Valley: Brenda Davidson, chapter leader.** Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets the first Saturday of the month. Presently, the chapter lacks a permanent meeting site, so call (717) 780-1578 for latest information and meeting locaton. The June meeting will be at 8:00 p.m.

## Pennsylvania

**Reading: The National Board** has revoked this chapter's charter. If your membership there has not expired, please contact National Secretary Susan [redacted], P.O. Box 552, King of Prussia, PA 19046.

# AFFILIATE INFORMATION...

The board of directors has approved a new policy for the development of chapters and affiliates.

- Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit institution in their home state (except Pa.) before asking for chapter status.

- Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance affiliate will pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlim-

ited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

**Current affiliated organizations are:**

- **Monmouth/Ocean Group,** P.O. Box 1326, Brick, NJ 08723

**For current information about national Renaissance events and activities, call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day.**

# AND, DON'T FORGET ABOUT...

- **Background Papers** are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 7-What Is Renaissance?, and 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics.

- **The Pen Pal Project.** If you

are willing to write letters to pen pals, please inform Maryann Kirkland or write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

- A gift of only \$6 gives a **transgendered inmate** 12 issues of the Renaissance News. Please help provide this needed support to our sisters in prison.

- A few copies of the deluxe edition of Benjamin's **The Transsexual Phenomenon** are still available at \$39.95 postpaid. Make checks payable to Renaissance.

# Renaissance News

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Articles must be submitted for publication one month in advance.

For current information about Renaissance, call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day.

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

# Calendar of Events OCTOBER

5th So. Jersey Chapter

5th Ren. LSV Chapter

19th Gr. Phila. Chapter  
Jacqueline Urana, a universal spirit consultant

31st Henri David's Halloween Ball at the Hotel Atop the Bellevue

# NOVEMBER

2nd So. Jersey Chapter

2nd Ren. LSV Chapter

16th Gr. Phila. Chapter  
Dr. Frank Hajcak on sexual relations

# DECEMBER

7th So. Jersey Chapter

7th Gr. Phila. Holiday Party  
Great Valley Inn

No LSV meeting this month

JoAnn Altman Stringer™  
**SURVIVAL**

In one book I had done years ago, my travels took me across the face of Europe talking with World War II veterans from all walks of life. My interviewees had all been members of all of the forces under Hitler's fallen Third Reich. I talked with members of the Waffen SS, Luftwaffe, Kriegsmarine, Army, Gestapo, and the dreaded black-shirted Allgemeine SS. Some were cooks, while some attained the rank of reich minister such as my good friend, the late Albert Speer. I talked with one effervescent gentleman in Hamburg who had earned the Wound Badge in Gold for the loss of his leg to Stalingrad's freezing winter storms.

The one common thread that tied all of these remarkable men together was the simple factor of courage. Winners of the Knights Cross with Diamonds — which you could liken to winning the Medal of Honor no less than four times — have openly shown a continued courage and disregard for their own life. Charging 18 Soviet tanks or downing 365 enemy aircraft certainly has some heroic fodder. But overall, the highest percentages simmered with a high degree of inner strength. Like my Stalingrad vet whose courage let him merely survive freezing winters, or my friend Speer who openly defied Hitler's last orders that his engineer should blow up all existing Germany. This is quiet courage, and is much different than raw, flagrant courage.

Raw courage in the face of enemy bullets is nothing more than adrenaline glands pumping out tons of artificial stamina allowing a normal person to perform extraordinary acts during extraordinary events. This rush of adrenaline is a short-term thing requiring no forethought. It simply happens spontaneously.

Quiet courage is much different. Rather than a momentary action,

this quiet courage usually strengthens the timbers of the person over a long period of time. It is glued together by their will to survive, to succeed, to live. Quite courage takes thought and preparation. It is something you must want to do at all costs, and somehow within the bowels of your soul you somehow muster this ember that slowly burns. Usually, it is not something seen on the outside. Rather, it is a feeling, a knowing on the inside. This quiet courage can build great works that may last an eternity, while raw courage merely gives you memories, and a medal, for a single lifetime.

To tie both of these thoughts together in one unified example, let me note Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, "The Desert Fox." Rommel was awarded the Diamonds to the Knights Cross by Adolf Hitler for continued bravery in the face of overwhelming odds. Yet, in probably the oddest dichotomy of all, Rommel mustered the quiet courage to become involved in the July 20, 1944, ploy to assassinate Hitler. He knew what the risks were. The plot failed. Gestapo agents forced Rommel to commit suicide by drinking cyanide. His courage gave him the strength to fight against something he didn't believe in, and for it he gave his life. Because of his status and military heroism, he was given a state burial with full honors by the very ruler he tried to kill.

There is a very real connection between quiet courage and the gender community, primarily transsexuals. I hadn't really thought about it until, some five years back, as I was being forced out of the Army due to my gender issue, a woman psychologist made an unusual remark. During my psychoanalytic testing, she said that I was the most courageous person she had ever seen. Noting that years earlier she had counseled returning Viet-

nam vets, I was a little shocked. Certainly I wasn't courageous in the respect of military battle. What then?

Her reference was meant to say that it took a great deal of stamina, planning, and courage to make a quantum leap over the gender fence. Here I was, an Army captain, claiming allegiance to the other side of the gender issue. Could anyone ever be so bold as to attempt this and make it? In all practical terms, I suppose I should have said I was going to become a llama and live in the Peruvian Andes. Makes as much sense.

Any journey into the unknown takes quiet courage. You have to know the odds are against you succeeding up front before you start. Knowing this, you do it anyway. With a lot of planning, luck, determination and courage you may succeed at your task. And you may, only to become a failure. But even in failure there is the dignity that you at least had the courage to try what others would not even attempt. No honor is lost if failure is encountered, only the realization you couldn't make it that time around. Maybe next time, or the time after. That's where the real courage comes into play — attempt something you have already failed at. But you are still determined to get ahead. To succeed.

If you are a pre-op transsexual, even a post-op for that matter, does any of this sound familiar? Did you try transition once and fail? Twice? Thrice? Did you pick yourself up, shake the dust off and head out into another direction towards the same goal? You didn't need the adrenaline rush to charge a machine gun. You simply needed the lonely, steely courage it takes to wait out the long cold winter.

☞ *With this column, JoAnn concludes her "Survival" series in RN. We thank her.* —PAW & PJS

# Various fashion notes from that wacky 'straight' world

If you hear a couple of young men in Philadelphia say they are going "dragin" at the mall, don't expect them to be buying girls' clothes for crossdressing. Instead, they will be talking about the latest style in male teenage fashion — wearing jeans so big that the waist band is down around the hips, exposing a generous amount of underwear, generally boxer shorts.

"Erik B and Rakim and Poor Righteous Teachers wear their jeans like this," one teenage boy said, explaining that the style was inspired by rap stars. "My parents really don't like this style."

If parents really wanted to discourage their sons from "dragin," they could tell them *another* meaning of the term.

•••

This was the hottest summer in years, and a fashion writer for *The*

*New York Times* noted that while men still slogged toward the subways in stifling suits, more and more women were beating the heat in sleeveless shift dresses. Only when they get home do men put on sensible clothes — long tank tops and extra baggy Bermuda shorts that end just above the knee.

"If you squint your eyes and look at this outfit, regarding it purely as a silhouette, it resembles nothing so much as, well, a sleeveless shift dress. Don't tell anyone, but this may be their secret desire."

•••

Jenny Morlan has found a new way to combine traditional masculine ideas with cosmetics (lipstick, eye shadow, mascara, etc.). No, she isn't a revolutionary crossdresser; she is an assistant art professor at DePaul University in Chicago. Instead of using normal artist's

colors for her paintings, she uses makeup.

"Using these materials constitutes a very deliberate attempt to bring attention to the woman's voice — or lack of voice — in male-dominated issues like war and politics and pollution," says Morlan.

Her heavily layered works are permeated with war images and punctuated by the military and media buzz words that describe political conflict.

Women tend to be more enthusiastic about her methods than men, she adds.

•••

A survey of the research conducted by clothing manufacturers, women's fashion magazines, and men's magazines reported in the *Cross Dressers International News* from New York reports what men prefer women

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# Guilt surcharge?

## Michael Salem's mail order customers pay far more, but what do they get?

by Pamela Westin and  
Paula Jordan Sinclair

The advertisements seem to be everywhere: in women's magazines, catalog shopping publications, and even men's magazines. Every once in awhile, *Donahue*, *Geraldo*, or a newspaper will do a piece on the business. Many of these stories are placed by a hired public relations agency. With a publicity machine like this, it's no wonder that since 1969 thousands of crossdressers bought their first item of women's clothing from Michael Salem's Boutique.

While Salem's business provides *entré* into the world of femme and fetish shopping for many transvestites, a look at his catalog (actually, more of a flyer) makes one wonder why people pay his prices, prices which would be more appropriate on Fifth Avenue than at a New York City post office box.

Recently, two transvestites took Salem's catalog and did some comparison shopping at local and mail order businesses, many of which openly accommodate transgendered people. What they found was surprising. In some cases, Salem charges 750 percent more than a retail outlet for comparable merchandise. (See all the comparisons on this page.) These figures suggest that rather than trading in femme and fetish fashions, Salem is actually trading on the guilt that is so prevalent in our community.

•••

In most respects, Cindy is typical of many transvestites. She began to crossdress as a teenager and the activity had heavy erotic overtones.

When she got out on her own, she decided to begin her own collection of women's clothing, mostly lingerie. Although she is petite and could purchase attractive items in any of

a dozen stores, passing them off as gifts for girlfriends, guilt, and fear of disclosure led her to Salem. Over the years, she bought several hundreds of dollars worth of merchandise, all items that are available in stores or through mail order for a fraction of what she paid Salem.

Cindy regrets another of Salem's guilt surcharges—his shipping fees. The first item purchased has a "shipping and handling" fee of \$19; additional items cost \$9 each. Other mail order businesses base their

fees on the amount of the purchase. For example, Frederick's of Hollywood charges a minimum of \$3.95 and a maximum of \$10.95. Lane Bryant's shipping and handling fees range from \$4.50 to a maximum of \$10.50. In a hurry? Lane Bryant will Federal Express your order for an additional \$7.50. Salem charges \$79.99 for "overnight express shipment" within the U.S. and \$275 for overseas express delivery. The shipping fee for Cindy's last Salem

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What would it cost if you started from scratch and bought the basics for a complete femme outfit from Michael Salem versus a business catering to regular folks? The answers may be surprising...

Item	Salem price	Regular price most anywhere else
Gaff; black satin	\$99.99	\$12.95; Fashion Fantasy, Woodbridge, VA.
Hipster panties	19.99	6.50; John Wanamaker or 6.00; Lane Bryant for larger sizes
Padded girdle; removable hip and derriere pads	99.99	35.00; Frederick's of Hollywood
Foam rubber falsies	59.99	7.99/pr.; La Femme, Deptford Mall
Garter belt; lace, hooks in back	29.99	12.00; La Femme, Deptford Mall
Underwire bra	69.99	15.50; John Wanamaker or 20.00; Lane Bryant for larger sizes
Stockings; black lace top	15.99	5.50 (Berkshire); La Femme, Deptford Mall
Full slip	89.99	32.00; John Wanamaker or 31.50; Lane Bryant for larger sizes
Shoes; 3" or 5" heel in black patent	259.99	52.00; Blanquita Peleteria, Hialeah, FL
Makeup sponges	46.50	2.19 for 32; Woolworth's
Fake nails	49.95	2.98; Best Cosmetics
Eye lashes	39.95	4.98; Best Cosmetics
Wig; "Medium Showgirl"	159.99	59.00; Fashion Wig Center, Phila.
Body cover	46.50	10.50; DermaBlend Leg Makeup; Best Cosmetics
Under-makeup toner	65.00	15.30; DermaBlend, plus 10.80; setting powder; Best Cosmetics
Hair remover	15.99	5.99; Pathmark
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,169.79</b>	<b>290.18 to 295.68</b>

THE **NEWSQUEEN**™ *Paula Jordan Sinclair*

Transvestites got a big boost last month from top model Naomi Campbell. The leggy model was profiled in a recent *People* magazine, and revealed how important crossdressers are to her success.

She says she often goes to bars to watch men dressed like women. "I think they are the best runway models ever," she said, adding, "I think transvestites are the ones who understand me best."

♣ ♣ ♣

Actor Bruce Willis could say the same thing after he was quoted in *US* as telling readers just what kind of a woman he would be if he were female.

"If I were a woman, I'd be a whore," he said.

A few weeks later *Spy* magazine obliged and published a cover montage showing Willis looking like a whore, actually like a careless whore. Spoofing the August *Vanity Fair* cover which pictured Demi Moore (Mrs. Willis) nude and pregnant, the funny guys at *Spy* used computers to make Bruce look heavy with child.

♣ ♣ ♣

As you can see in the photo on the right, Morton Downey, Jr. is heavy with something, but it sure isn't a baby. The former talk show demigod is in drag for a movie role — portraying the drag-queen host of a cabaret. The movie, also starring Jessica Hahn, is called *High Heels*.

Readers may recall that we twice appeared on Downey's television show. Evidently, two appearances were not sufficient to infect him with good taste in fashion.

♣ ♣ ♣

November also promises to be a big month for drag with two (count 'em, two) well-known drag queens running for political office.

Declaring her interest in elective office was Joan Jett Blakk of Chicago. Hoping to unseat George Bush, Blakk has been commenting on

several important political issues. Regarding the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court, Blakk declared, "Diana Ross would have been a better choice. She's been a Supreme since 1964, and she looks fabulous in a long black dress." But her platform isn't all frivolous. She has strong stands on hate crimes legislation, reproductive rights, and affirmative action. Blakk recently held a press conference for Chicago high school journalism students, exposing them to her iconoclastic views.

Sister Sadie Sadie the Rabbi Lady, director of the Ministry of Perpetual Indulgence, has less grand election goals. She is running for a seat on the Concord, Calif., city council, albeit under her legal name. Sister Sadie said she is running a legitimate campaign to break ground in a notoriously fundamentalist Christian stronghold.

♣ ♣ ♣

"God is not pleased." No, that's not what the residents of Concord said when they heard about Sister Sadie's campaign. That was the response of Virgin Island church



officials to plans to hold the Miss Gay Virgin Islands pageant in St. Croix last month.

"This is another attack of Satan upon our men, boys, women, and girls," said an ad in the *St. Croix Avis*. "When men try to make themselves look as feminine as possible and others applaud, that tears down masculinity, a creation of God," said the Rev. Vincent Gordon who organized the campaign opposing the pageant. There was no indication if Rev. Gordon had seen the photo of Morton Downey, Jr. in drag.

Reports said the campaign had an effect; ticket sales were brisk.

♣ ♣ ♣

Sometimes men try to look like women, not to tear down masculinity, but to line their pockets. Here are three recent examples...

Police in Cheyenne, Wyo., arrested Dennis Koopman, 30, on charges that he kidnapped a nine-year-old boy from the Washington State home of a wealthy family where he had been employed for over a year as a female nanny to the boy and his two brothers.

"He told us that he'd had a sex change operation," an officer said. "The problem we have with that is he still has his male genitals."

People in Alabama didn't have to get that close to Angela Renne Hendley to know that the supposed movie starlet was really a man. But it took them awhile to figure it out. In the meantime, Hendley swindled them out of nearly \$2,000 in a variety of service charges for such things as limousine rentals and flowers.

Police weren't called in until the unpaid bills began to mount up. Hendley was arrested at his hotel, and could face at least 10 years in prison. Authorities said that Hendley, who posed as a movie star stranded in Alabama, did not work the scam alone. A hairdresser and makeup artist were thought to be accompanying him, for at the time

THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair*  
**NEWSQUEEN**™

of his arrest, his purse contained only a pair of pantyhose and a Madonna tape.

Jail officials in Denver should contact the Cheyenne police for some technical advice. The Denver cops arrested Baroness Maria Thyssen VonHexun (John James Gonzales) on charges of bilking at least two people out of \$2,300, and yet the authorities can't substantiate the baroness' claim to have had a sex change operation.

VonHexun/Gonzales claims to have married a German nobleman, but police say she/he is a con artist who preys on elderly and gullible people.

While police have difficulty in determining her/his gender, they have had no trouble reconstructing her/his past. First arrested on prostitution charges in 1974, in 1985, she/he claimed to be Maria Lexie Girtin VonHexun Onassis, relative of Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. She was ruled incompetent to stand trial on charges relating to that swindle.

♣ ♣ ♣

Then there are the crossdressers who make money the old fashioned way — they turn tricks.

According to a newspaper report, Albuquerque has become the New Mexican Mecca for transvestite prostitutes; five of them at one time shared a single motel room. Well, maybe there isn't much news in Albuquerque. Business seems to be good, one of the motel's clerks told the reporter. The girls often have dates with guys who drive BMWs and Porsches, and the girls have lots of money. "I think to them, it's just all one big party," he said.

The party turned nasty one night when a man showed up outside the motel and called for one of the girls to come out. When she refused, the man pulled a gun and fired it through her window. Police shot the man dead on the spot. The quick

action by the authorities may have something to do with the fact that local sheriff's deputies had been rumored to be accepting bribes and drugs from the same girls.

Who says the Wild West is dead?

♣ ♣ ♣

A transvestite prostitute in South Carolina, likewise, received swift justice when a jury acquitted her of stabbing a john whom she said became angry when he discovered she wasn't really a woman.

Angel Groll (Normanick M. Sulin), 24, admitted that she stabbed Robert Smith, 32, when he became violent following a revealing romantic interlude. Smith said he didn't find out about Groll's actual gender until police told him as he was being treated for his wound. He said Groll had robbed him.

♣ ♣ ♣

A transsexual in Los Angeles is hoping that a jury will look upon her just as favorably. She has filed a \$10 million lawsuit against LAPD Chief Daryl Gates, Los Angeles County Sheriff Sherman Block, and other 200 unnamed law enforcement officers for violating her civil rights.

Rosio (Alfonso) Melgoza, who has not completed her sex change, said that LAPD officers entered her apartment while she was preparing to take a bath and made her stand nude in front of them for 15 minutes before arresting her for stealing "papers" from her employer. Once in the squad car, one of the officers allegedly fondled her and made suggestive comments. She was later turned over to sheriff's deputies who strip searched her in front of 60 male inmates and was put in a cell with men who tried to rape her while other deputies stood by not more than 10 feet away. The attempted rape injured a breast implant and loosened her front teeth.

♣ ♣ ♣

But before you believe transgendered people are now leading a

charmed life, consider the tragic case of the transvestite found fatally stabbed after she was dumped onto an entrance ramp to I-55/70 in East St. Louis, Ill.

Police said that Patrick Calvert, 30, was last seen walking along a street frequented by prostitutes when he got into a car. A motorist later reported seeing a body, later identified as Calvert, being pushed from a similar car. Authorities speculate that Calvert was picked up for sex and killed when the john discovered he wasn't a woman.

♣ ♣ ♣

Now, some cheery notes from the NewsQueen foreign desk...

The First Annual International Drag Races were held in July in the northern German city of Kiel, drawing drag queens from near and far. Events included the tea-bag throw and a 987.35 meter run with vacuum cleaners. Stiffest competition was in the voguing-with-vacuum cleaners contest.

All contestants were required to wear sensible shoes.

♣ ♣ ♣

A female-to-male transsexual in Taiwan had a surprise recently. She was called up for military service.

A government official said all men who graduate from high school and who are under 25 must serve two years in the military. "Like other men, he is no exception and cannot be exempted from military service," the official said of the transsexual.

♣ ♣ ♣

The Japanese have invented a makeup mirror that says "You are the fairest in the land" when the viewer pushes a button.

*Miss Sinclair has been busy peddling the new Japanese makeup mirror to neighboring TV/TS groups as well as at the Paradise in the Poconos. Therefore, she may miss a clipping or two regarding crossdressing. Won't you be like Wendy [redacted], Sharon [redacted], and the folks at the St. Louis Gender Foundation and send those you see to her at the Renaissance office? Please note the name and date of publication.*

The **FORUM** For Ideas

# Don't you people have a proofreader?

To the Poetry Editor:

Congratulations on your appointment...

I know that there are a number of typographical errors in every issue of RN, but when I counted five errors in my poem "Butterflies and Tears" in the August issue, I was shocked. I take my poems seriously; each word, each phrase, each line has

been carefully constructed from the heart... These errors and omissions may or may not seem important to the editorial staff... But they are important to me... Is there a proofreading procedure?

—Laura ██████████  
Willow Grove, PA

☞ Please be assured that the errors are of great concern to us.

Some time ago our proofreader was threatened with castration because of continued sloppiness. But unaccountably, the threat only seemed to cause the errors to increase. A proofreader has been hired starting with this issue.

We are reprinting your poem correctly with our apologies.

—GLM

## Butterflies and Tears

by Laura ██████████

When I see butterflies  
in sunlit flight so brief,  
I see the fragile beauty  
that interrupts our grief.

When I see people cry  
dry tears of discontent,  
I see the silent strength  
for our predicament

In butterflies and tears  
I see the hope of Man  
whose beauty and  
whose strength  
suggest a nobler plan.

## A correction on a source

To the Editor:

I read an article reprinted in RN (June, '91) titled "A husband, not a sister." Since I vaguely recognized the article, I attempted to track down the original source. Unfortunately, I was unable to find it, but I think I found a reference. It was originally printed in an issue of *Tapestry* about 1981 according to a reprinted version of it in the now-defunct TVIC newsletter.

While this does not lessen the ideas presented, I thought you might like to know the original source.

I also want to compliment you on the high quality of RN. Since I receive many newsletters each month, I thought you might like to know that yours is of very professional caliber.

—Roger E. Peo, Ph.D.  
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

☞ We appreciate Dr. Peo's kind words and his setting the record straight.

His letter points out the problem of using published material without permission or without complete credit. As our editor's note pointed out, we first saw the essay in a newsletter published by Australia's Flamingo Association and credited to a book entitled *Drag Show: The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin*. The written permission we received to reprint the column did not mention that the work had appeared elsewhere.

Speaking for other writers in the community, I want to point out that we don't get paid for our efforts—at least writers on the RN staff don't. So is a little recognition too much to ask?

—PJS

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## TVs on TV

# Putting a man in a dress was a common plot device last year

by Mark Perigard

The aged mafioso waits impatiently in bed for his girlfriend to join him. He leers as she steps out of the bathroom. Lust melts into fear as she opens up her bathrobe — and reveals that she is a man. The hit man in drag then shoves a needle into the don's chest, killing him.

This was a scene from Fox Television's late, unlamented *DEA*, a cop show that resorted to this past season's most tired cliché, the use of crossdressers to spice stale plots. As gays characters were shoved back into the prime time closet during the 1990-91 television season, crossdressers were taken for a walk around the block — right to the video dumpster.

Need more proof?

On CBS' *Broken Badges*, a transvestite bludgeoned her blind date even as he begged for love. In USA's *Red Wind*, one psycho seduced Lisa Hartman as a man, and then, as a woman, tried stuffing her in a wood chipper.

And as often as they killed, crossdressers were killed.

In the best moment of ABC's unnecessary remake of *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*, Vanessa Redgrave came face to face with herself: a drag queen impersonator who then got fatally shafted by Redgrave's demented sister. Were the producers striking back at all the bad drag the original had inspired?

Both NBC's *Golden Girls* and Fox's *Good Grief* played the funerals of crossdressers for yuks. Other series like *WIOU*, *Sisters*, *Lenny* and *Family Matters* simply used transvestites as sad jokes. Only one

series out of a score had the courage to feature a crossdresser with any sort of dignity. A transvestite FBI agent visiting *Twin Peaks* saved agent Cooper — and wasn't martyred in the process.

(Only two instances of female-to-male crossdressing were to be found on the tube last season, and in both cases, it was a question of survival, not lifestyle. On the daytime sudser, *The Bold and the Beautiful*, character Sally Spectra dressed like a man to sneak into a competitor's office.

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### Many television shows had cross-dressed characters during the 1990-91 season.

### Was this acceptance or (s)exploitation? Whichever, expect more this season.

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*Twin Peaks'* Catherine Martell masqueraded as a Japanese businessman for several episodes to thwart a conspiracy against her.)

Why all this fascination with crossdressing this past season? Is this sudden visibility a sign that America has suddenly taken transvestism to heart? Hardly. It's more proof of how the commercial networks have caved into a conservative minority. Two years ago, ABC

lost nearly \$2 million in advertising revenues over a *thirtysomething* episode showing two men in bed together. The public furor led by conservative groups — and the very real hit the network took in the wallet for airing that segment — have had a chilling effect on any network's willingness to feature gay characters in prominent roles. The networks simply don't want to take the flack from gays demanding responsibility and conservatives threatening an advertising boycott (a much more effective club, at least thus far.)

In the middle of this is an audience seeking adult material, at least material purportedly aimed at adults, an audience all too willing to click to cable for alternatives. What is the network response to this dilemma? Put a guy in a dress. Sex sells, and America has always been titillated by deviance. (Consider the popularity of *Saturday Night Live's* Pat, an androgynous blob who causes gender identification confusion in everyone he/she/it comes in contact with.) The networks aren't going to take seriously a few complaints from transvestites. They're comfortable dropping transvestites in any sort of story hole (as either killer or victim) without any qualms about fairness.

☞ *For ten years Mr. Perigard has been studying television's treatment of sexual minorities. He is now finishing a book on the subject. This article first appeared in Bay Windows, a newspaper serving Boston's lesbian and gay community. Reprinted with permission.*

The *For Ideas*  
**FORUM**

# Because TSs, TVs make good mothers,

by Mary Ann [REDACTED]

Caryn Kristen Roberts, executive director of the Ingersoll Gender Center in Seattle, writes of her children:

*"I don't see them much now, they moved back to Tennessee after my SRS and live with their other parent. But we do talk and write. And I send them money and presents and lots of love. They call me "Caryn," and sometimes even "Mom" when their other parent is not around. My 13-year-old son (he was 11 at the time) once asked, "Can I come live with you?"*

*"Kevin," I said, "I'm sorry, but you know the court and your mother won't let you. Why do you want to?"*

*"To see what it is like."*

*"But son, you know what it is like to live with me. You have lived with*

*me all your life."*

*"Yeah, I know," he said. "But I want to know what it is like to live with you now that you are happy."*

*Out of the mouths of babes, huh?*

*Maybe someday he will live with me. Maybe not. But he knows I love him. And they all know that I am happy now and at peace.*

What was that again?

*"I am sorry, but you know the court and your mother won't let you."*

How many times have you heard this? A married couple breaks up, and the father is a TV or TS. The court takes steps to ensure that the mother gets custody, and more often than not the father loses all contact with the child. There is some kind of presumption on the part of the court that exposure to gender issues would be harmful to the child.

I've met a lot of people over the past few years with gender issues. Many of them are divorced. In a society where it is very rare for a "normal male" to have custody of the children, I am amazed to find a large percentage of the divorced crossdressers I know who have custody of their children.

But on second thought, why should this be so amazing? After all, why is it that most often custody goes to the mother? Why do so many men refuse to have anything to do with their children? Why do so many older judges make comments like Judge Stillwell of Logan County, Ohio: "I can't see why any man would want visitation with his young child anyway."

I think it is because so many men are "macho." They see child-rearing

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The *For Ideas*  
**FORUM**

# they should fight for child custody

as "woman's work" and refuse to "lower" themselves to that level. After all, they earn the money, they rule the roost, and they would rather sit on the couch, get drunk and watch football, and let their wives take care of messy little details like changing diapers. Getting married in the first place may not have been their idea, and if they can get out of the marriage with their wallet intact, they may be able to chase anything in a skirt again in hopes of avoiding the consequences.

Can you imagine such a man with custody of a child? Most such men will not even consider custody, even will seek to avoid child support. Must be testosterone poisoning.

Of course, not all men are like this. Many modern men have been

involved with their children since they assisted in the delivery room, got up for those 3 a.m. feedings, and changed messy diapers. Many of these men would make perfectly good single parents, and many of them want custody when divorce ensues.

You can guess which group TVs and TSs fit into.

Yet when we go to court, we find that if the judge knows about our crossdressing background, we are at an even bigger disadvantage than typical men. Either we are seen as representative of that macho group who wants only to leave town and abandon their wives and children, or we are weird. The game is against us from the start. Caryn no doubt ran into this same thing; I am sure

many of us did.


But what about the 5 percent of the male population who actually manages to get custody of their children? What is so special about them that they can beat out a "normal woman."

The typical custodial father is very involved with his children. He spends loads of time with them, nurtures them, changes dirty diapers, kisses boo-boos to make them better, stays home with them when they get sick, several times a day he tells them he loves them, hugs them when they need a hug or when he needs one, and gripes to his friends about all the trouble they get in, but is always there getting them out of trouble. In short, this man is a good

*(continued on page 14)*

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# AEGIS provides protective shield for transsexuals and transvestites

The Atlanta Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS) is a not-for-profit business which disseminates information to persons interested in issues of gender.

AEGIS provides free referrals to support groups and gender clinics as well as free referrals to physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, social agencies and private social workers, ministers, and attorneys to those people not within range of a gender support group. A worldwide data base of helping professionals includes surgeons who perform sex reassignment.

The organization's publications include the *Chrysalis Quarterly*, published four times a year, a series of booklets to aid in gender transition, and other publications in preparation.

AEGIS works actively with others in the community, exchanging newsletters, information, and referrals, and helping to organize cooperative projects and events.

AEGIS supports the "Standards of Care" of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc. and makes referrals contingent upon documentation of adherence to these standards. In addition, AEGIS actively supports the professionalization and standardization of services for transgendered persons, including the nonjudgmental and nondiscriminatory treatment of persons with gender dysphoria. AEGIS also advocates respect for their dignity, their right to treatment, and their right to choose their gender.

AEGIS was founded by and is

managed by Dallas Denny, M.A., a human service professional with knowledge of the professional literature of gender issues and more than a decade of experience in the delivery of psychological services.

The first aegis was the shield or breastplate used by the Greek god Zeus and later by his daughter, Athena. Now, the word "aegis" means variously "shield," "protection," and "sponsorship."

"We will strive to live up to our acronym by at all times maintaining confidentiality and by helping transgendered persons make reasoned and informed decisions about the ways in which they will live their lives," Denny said.

For more information on AEGIS, write to P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033, or call (404) 939-0244.

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# Amnesty International finally does it!

(continued from page 1)

have been all but impossible to win consensus approval from the all of 44 national Amnesty sections which decide policy for the international organization. These sections represent more than 8,000 local Amnesty International chapters working in over 70 nations.

Protection for jailed sexual minorities was first proposed by the Danish section in 1974, and has regularly been put forward by various European and North American sections since then. But strong opposition from Asian, African, and South American sections had always resulted in the proposal's defeat.

Last year while meeting in Canada, the organization's Mandate Review Committee put together a compromise proposal for the protection of sexual minorities that recognized some national sections have a "cultural background" which results in different views of homosexuality around the world. While the expanded mandate contains what some activists called an "escape hatch" to permit nations to adhere to their own cultural backgrounds,

Derrick McGuinness, a spokesman at the Amnesty headquarters in London, said "clearly we now recognize sexual orientation as a fundamental human right to which Amnesty International must respond."

Said one person who had lobbied hard for the change, "Phase One is over. Now on to Phase Two - supplying Amnesty with the names of homosexual prisoners." And pris-

oners who, while transgendered, fell afoul of their country's anti-gay laws.

Amnesty is an international human rights watchdog group which encourages governments around the world to respect certain fundamental human rights and to free "prisoners of conscience" who were arrested for exercising those rights. Violations may be reported to the nearest Amnesty International group.

## Mandate mirrors change to Pa. Hate Crimes Law

The interpretation that the new Amnesty International lesbian and gay mandate provides protection for transgendered people who are perceived to be homosexual mirrors the rationale for Renaissance's support of the amendment to the Pennsylvania Hate Crimes Law proposed by Rep. Babette Josephs (D-Phila.)

Supporters of the amendment, which would add the categories of sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation to the law, note that it would be all but impossible to get conservative state lawmakers to provide specific protections for

transgendered people. But, the supporters note, since discrimination against transgendered people is often because they are perceived as homosexuals, the law will be effective in most cases.

"We should be encouraged that those within Amnesty International finally prevailed after 17 years of work," said Renaissance Managing Director Paula Jordan Sinclair. "If like-minded people in Pennsylvania work together, we can get the Hate Crimes Law changed this year. Please contact your legislator today."

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# Because TSs, TVs make good mothers, they should fight for child custody

(continued from page 11)

mother. He has all of the feminine nurturing qualities that are important in a parent.

Being a crossdresser isn't something we turn off and on with a change of clothing. Whether TS or TV, we are essentially the same person in both masculine or feminine roles. If we have feminine qualities as a woman, we have those as a man. It should be no surprise that a crossdresser is actually a very good candidate to be the best parent for a child. Those nurturing qualities will show through in their male parenting role.

So why is crossdressing such a handicap in the courtroom? Why does the law in some states list transvestism and transsexualism as grounds for divorce? Why can't we wear our dresses proudly into the courtroom and announce to the judge that we are good mothers too?

The courts' logic is nonsensical. Women are better parents than men because they are more nurturing and less macho. Transsexuals and transvestites are not real men, they are different and weird, more like women. Therefore, transsexuals and transvestites are unfit parents.

Pretty warped logic, but it's being used all the time. Not only are TSs

and TVs afraid to ask for custody, but also they are being totally cut off from their children by the embittered mothers who could not handle their husband's gender dysphoria and by conservative judges who do not understand them and who are eager to get home to be served dinner by their faithful wives who have stayed home all day cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children.

Things are changing, but they are changing slowly. Younger judges are being elected to the bench; they are not so wedded to the concept of a male breadwinner and female homemaker. Female judges are becoming more common and are less likely to believe in stereotypes. Laws have been rewritten to be less sexist. The "tender years doctrine," stating that very young children should always be in the care of their mother, has been replaced. There is progress on all of these fronts except one.

The courts still have no idea that TVs and TSs are anything other than freaks. Judges do not realize that we are probably better parents than the average male. They need to be educated.

That education isn't going to happen unless we make it happen. People in academia need to conduct

studies to show that TVs and TSs are good parents, that their gender issues do not impact on parenting ability, and that they are probably better parents than typical men. They need to show that a higher percentage of divorced crossdressers have custody of their children than of the general divorced male population. Does some graduate student need a thesis topic?

Those of us going into a divorce should not blindly concede custody to our spouse. If you want it (and what card-carrying woman wouldn't want her children?), you have to fight for it. Get a psychologist to testify on your behalf. Or fight for lots of visitation. The current thinking is that children benefit from lots of contact from both parents, and joint custody is becoming more and more common. Don't let the courts use your gender dysphoria as an excuse to separate you from your children. Your children need you; fight for them and be there for them!

I hope soon to see the day when being a crossdresser will be seen for what it is: an asset, not a perversion.

⇒ *This article originally appeared in the Crystal Chronicle from Ohio. Reprinted with permission.*

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# Salem's customers pay more

(continued from page 5)

order ran to more than \$100.

This seems like a lot of money for Salem's discrete plain wrapper.

...

Guilt, shame, a feeling of belonging to a tiny minority; these all pour money into Salem's bank account. His catalogs promise a service that Salem agrees customers are willing to pay dearly for: acceptance and understanding of their

need to dress in women's clothes and the willingness to help them achieve their goal of feminine appearance. Certainly, this isn't something they would expect to receive at the J.C. Penney store in the nearest mall. Or is it?

Gather more than two transvestites together and you are bound to hear stories about shopping, and most of them won't be horror stories. You will hear how sales people in

the most unlikely businesses—from designer showrooms on Fifth Avenue to a tiny lingerie boutique in a local mall—welcome cross-dressing dollars. You will also hear stories about a wonderful business in some out of the way place that provides terrific values by mailorder. Seldom will you hear that a merchant chased a transvestite from the store or later threatened to blackmail a cross-dresser for buying women's clothes.

Clearly, by doing business with Salem, some crossdressers are looking for love in all the wrong places.

...

But Salem advertises so widely, has such a publicity machine, that he provides an outreach service that is valuable to closeted crossdressers, right? Sometimes, perhaps, but not always. Consider the story of Sabrina.

Another typical crossdresser, Sabrina decided that she had to stop borrowing her mother's and sister's clothes and get some for herself. She knew that she was a transvestite, and, so, as part of her coming out, she decided that she would shop where all her sisters seemed to—at Michael Salem's. She plopped down \$19 for the catalog, saw the prices, and the "sticker shock" almost scared her back into the closet.

"I just can't afford to be a transvestite, I remember thinking after I saw the catalog," she said. "I really believed that you had to be rich to get involved with others like me."

...

Salem is unabashedly unapologetic about his prices.

"We are very high priced because we deal with exclusive customers," he said in a telephone interview. "We don't want every customer. One customer in 50 who spends \$10,000 a year is better than 50 who spend \$50 a year."

To charges that he profits on transvestites' guilt, he responded, "You can take it anyway you want. We want to deal with customers

(continued on page 18)



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THE **ICONOCLAST**™  
JoAnn Roberts

**BROOKLYN, N. Y.** - "Count me in..." Those are the first words of a letter recently received from **Barbara Fortune** of **Girls Night Out** in reference to the **Mid Atlantic Gender Coalition (MAGC)** proposed by **Alison Laing** and myself.

Fortune says she'd been dreaming of just such an alliance for many years. So, apparently, have many other folks up and down the East Coast. The initial response to the MAGC concept has been very favorable. Laing will be planning a first meeting for early 1992.

▼▲▼

**EAGLE BRIDGE, N. Y.** - This is a Medic Alert! Please notify all gullible transgendered people.

They say you can't keep a good man down, but it appears the same holds true for the bad ones as well.

I recently received a letter from one **Susan Katherine** [redacted] touting an "affordable alternative to the U.S. surgical system." And what might that alternative be, you ask? Why, "Tia Juana," Mexico!

Everyone knows not to drink the water in Tijuana; why would you even consider surgery there? Especially once you learn the surgeon is the infamous **Dr. John Brown**.

Brown has been in trouble with the medical authorities and the law in the past for performing botched reassignment operations. As I recall, his medical license was suspended in California after several disfigured transsexuals brought malpractice suits against him. There also was talk of criminal charges. It looks as though he simply moved across the boarder out of range of the U.S. authorities.

Please pass on this important information to your newsletter editors. Don't allow this man to prey on our community any longer, no matter how cheaply he may operate.

▼▲▼

**NEW YORK CITY** - Into the breach

once more...

Many times, people have tried to organize a transgender support group that would serve the New York City community, and many times that effort has not survived.

That does not daunt **Elena Lewis** and **Lynn Walker**. They're willing and able to try again. This time, though, they're going to have the backing of **Renaissance**. Lewis and Walker are planning a Renaissance affiliate that will meet in Manhattan.

Anyone interested in helping to get this new group off the ground is encouraged to contact Lewis at Box 45, 561 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014. A founding meeting is planned for sometime in the fall.

▼▲▼

**HOUSTON, TEX.** - Justice is blind, unless you're a man in a dress...

I met, briefly, **Phyllis Randolph Frye**, in San Antonio last year. Frye is a transgenderist who has been cross-living since 1976 and a practicing lawyer. I was impressed.

Frye has sent out a call for a **National Conference on Transgender Law** for the summer of '92.

An initial planning meeting will be held in November during the **Fantasy Adventure** weekend in Houston. All attorneys, paralegals, law enforcement officers, judges, magistrates, law students and anyone else interested in the law as it applies to transgendered people should contact Frye at [redacted], Houston, TX 77035-5515.

▼▲▼

**MANCHESTER U. K.** - There's an ass for every seat...

Lots of people have heard of **Stephanie Lloyd**, the post-op transsexual, who runs the **Transformations** boutiques in England and the now-defunct **Transformation Hotel**. She is not a popular figure in the transgendered community over there.

Lloyd was recently fined £1,700

and £300 costs by a magistrate for selling pills advertised as **FemGlow Tablets**. This "wonder drug" purportedly fills the taker with a glow and feminine confidence.

Government inspectors found the FemGlow tablets were merely vitamins and Lloyd has no license to sell the pills. Lloyd admitted to illegally procuring the vitamins and a host of other "medicinals" for sale to unwary transvestites and transsexuals. Similar pills are sold in the U.S.

▼▲▼

**NAPA CALIF.** - The sounds of silence...

After a lot of ballyhoo, the folks at the **Gender Alternatives League (GAL)** seem to have quieted down. In fact, it's too quiet.

**Linda Buten**, who leads the **Congress of Reps** for IFGE, wrote me asking if there was any way to combine the *Bill of Gender Rights* with GAL's declaration so the Congress could vote on one document. I told Buten that I wrote to GAL executive director **Cynthia Howard** several times with suggestions for adding the bill to GAL's declaration, but she never replied.

Hmmm! Can this be another case of NIH? Is this the new "umbrella organization" we've been waiting for. I think not. Quel damage.

▼▲▼

**SCARAMENTO, CALIF.** - Another wise guise...

There's a new publication in the community and this one is much to my liking. **Billie Jean Jones** is the editor/publisher of *TV Guise*, a slightly irreverent, but extremely well written monthly newsletter.

The *Guise* has only been in print a short while and already Jones is in hot water with the politically correct crowd. See, Jones doesn't believe the *DSM* is a bad book. Gee, where did I hear that before? Thus, she's been labeled an "enemy of the gender community."



THE **ICONOCLAST**™  
JoAnn Roberts

Hey, Billie, welcome to the Monkey House. If you want a look at *TV Guise* write to: [REDACTED], Sacramento, CA 95821



SOMEWHERE, U.S.A. - If the shoe fits, you know what to do...

I received no less than four letters from various support groups about the "Somewhere USA" piece I did in the August newsletter. Each one thought that I was talking about their group. Isn't that special?

Actually, my remarks were based on a composite of several groups and conversations that I've had over the past several months. Curiously, I got more mail about that piece than any other I've done this year. Musta hit a nerve, huh?



SPRINGFIELD, MASS. - What will I do without them...

According to the September issue of *Twenty Minutes*, a non-publication of the **Twenty (XX) Club**, it will cease publication with the October '91 issue. The reason? Everybody's moving.

Editor, **Becky Ann**, and hostile Cartoonist **Lila**, are moving to Florida. Assistant Editor **Sonia**, will move to Florida or Toronto or somewhere. (She's not sure.) That leaves no one to pick up the pieces, or does it?

**Veronica Brown** and **Paddy Aldridge** to the rescue! Brown, who originated *Twenty Minutes*, and Aldridge put out the *CDC News*, a publication of the **Toronto Cross-dressers Club**. They've agreed to provide a special *Twenty Minutes* version of the *CDC News* for *TM* subscribers until all current subscriptions run out. *TM* subscribers are urged to renew with the *CDC News*. Write to them at [REDACTED], Toronto, M5A-2A9.



SAN ANTONIO, TEX. - It isn't so lonely in the Lone Star state...

There are two new groups forming

here and that's good news for transgendered Texans. In such a large state there are too few support groups there. It's good to see others picking up the slack.

First up is the **Tri-Plex Gender Association** under the leadership of **Christine [REDACTED]** and **Karalyn [REDACTED]**. TPGA will hold regular meetings on the fourth Saturday of each month. Contact them at P.O. Box 381, Riesel, TX 76682 or call (817) [REDACTED].

The second new group is an offshoot of the **Heart of Texas Gender Association (Northwest Branch)**, complete with their own newsletter. This group has a strong couples orientation. Contact **Marlina Dawn [REDACTED]**, P.O. Box 30413, San Angelo, TX 76903 or call (915) [REDACTED] after 7 p.m. central time.



ARLINGTON, VA. - The yin and yang of spirit...

Are you one of those who believe that there is a spiritual duality on gender, that we all carry male and female energy within ourselves? If so, then you just may be interested in talking with **Jacqueline [REDACTED]**, who describes herself as a Universal Spirit Consultant.

[REDACTED] teaches classes for other universal spirits, both male and female, as well as providing image consulting services for both crossdressers and transsexuals.

[REDACTED] can be reached at P.O. Box 12011, Arlington, VA 22209, or by calling (301) [REDACTED]



NEW YORK, N.Y. - Another bridge built, another ally...

A few months ago, I sent a contribution to the **Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.** The return reply envelope was preaddressed to **Faye Wattleton**, president of PPFA. So, I dropped in a copy of the *Bill of Gender Rights* along with a cover letter.

I never really expected a reply, so

I was really surprised when Wattleton wrote a personal reply:

"Thank you for your courage in challenging discrimination on the basis of gender roles and in campaigning for increased sexual understanding and tolerance for individual choice.

"Planned Parenthood's position regarding the freedom of expression of one's gender role as a fundamental right is clearly stated in our policy: 'Universal Access to Sexuality Education.' It reads: [in part]

"...help individuals understand their sexuality, communicate their sexual feelings and decisions to others, and accept responsibility for their sexual decisions.

"I wish you success in your campaign to increase public awareness about the issue of gender role expression."

What with all the trouble about reproductive rights, I'm sure Wattleton has been extremely busy of late, yet she took the time to personally answer my letter. Why?

I hope it's because she sees how our issues mesh. How freedom of choice for women's health issues is deeply akin to freedom of choice in gender role presentation. Freedom, if it is to work at all, must be all-inclusive and non-discriminatory.

I am pretty hard on the issue of discrimination, have been ever since I was 9 years old and all the neighborhood kids black balled me 'cause I was different. "Wop" and "Dago," they called me. No one would play with me. No one would talk to me. Went on like that for six months. I'll bet that few of you have ever had an experience like that.

"Walk a mile in my shoes," they say. I have, and I despise the idea of discrimination for any reason.



NOTA BENE - The opinions expressed here are mine and mine alone. If you have a comment, positive or negative, write me at P.O. Box 1263, KofP, PA 19406.

# Various fashion notes from that wacky 'straight' world

(continued from page 4)

wear. The findings bear striking similarity to what crossdressers seem to prefer for their wardrobes.

**Panties:** Men like black, white, or pink bikini, thong, French-cut, hi-cut or full-cut panties in silk, nylon, or spandex. Men do not like bloomers, hipsters, petti-pants, or tap pants; or panties in cotton, or in blue, green, lilac or yellow.

**Lingerie:** The single item of lingerie men like most is a garter belt, but then only in black, white, or pink. No red, please. Also on the list was garter panties, corsets, corselettes, waist cinchers, bustiers, and open-bottom girdles that would ride up on the body. Again, the favorite colors are black and white, and pink.

**Stockings:** Seamed or unseamed, it made no difference, but panty-

hose are not favored (what to do with all those garters?). Surprisingly, the report said that men do not like fish-net stockings, along with textured and patterned hose.

**Miscellaneous:** Men like women in sequins, high heels, boots ("the higher the better"), and longnails (in

pink, red, or silver). They also prefer women "to use cosmetics freely." On the miscellaneous dislike list were open-toed shoes (which many people claim *are* sexy) and any item of clothing with polka dots, stripes, and floral prints.

A garage sale, anyone?

## Michael Salem's Customers

(continued from page 15)

who are discreet, very discreet. The main service we offer is confidentiality." He said that his mailing list is strictly confidential and that it is destroyed after three months.

Salem, a graduate of the Wharton School of Business, admits that he fills a very specific niche among transvestites — discreetly selling merchandise to people who will pay almost anything for confidentiality. Locally, he said his customers

are from old Chestnut Hill families or the Main Line and "probably belong to the Merion Cricket Club." "Most people don't understand that we are in a different category," he said. "We are very good to our customers, and, frankly, we don't need more. Some people think that I charge too much, but I don't want the volume. This is the point."

"We have an excellent reputation among people who like us," he said.



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