



News & views

Vision • Integrity • Quality

Vol. 8, No. 10 • October 1994

Renaissance

A Report from S.P.I.C.E. '94

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter and Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter of Renaissance raised funds to send Phyllis K. to the 1994 S.P.I.C.E. conference in Chicago (Spouses & Partners International Conference for Education, sponsored by Tri-Ess and other community organizations). Here are comments on the event by Linda Williams and her S.O. Phyllis.

Linda's Comments

I would like to thank the GPC And LSV chapters for sponsoring my wife Phyllis' attendance at S.P.I.C.E. '94. I also would like to share a few of the many things I learned about myself and other crossdressers.

I was surprised that some crossdressers did not want their wives to attend, while others encouraged it with the hope that their partners would find solutions to their problems (because, the crossdressers certainly have none).

Among the issues discussed at the conference was the problem of selfishness. The crossdresser can be a very selfish person. He often pushes his partner's boundaries to the limit because he believes he was born special-gendered and his partner should cater to his needs. This portion of the conference was conducted by Deloris Tyler Roy, a licensed social worker.

In Dr. Sandra Cole's discussion she made the

observation that if we could tap into femininity we could use this unique ability to make our partners happy.

Robert Priore, M.D., mentioned that we should take care of ourselves and men should be aware of the possibility of problems, such as prostate cancer.

I must congratulate the gentlemen who coordinated all of the men's activities, Gil Fairfax and Reverend Gary Helms. They did a fantastic job.

Well, there may be nothing wrong with cross-dressing but speaking for myself, there are certainly things wrong with the crossdresser. Things that I had the opportunity to think about in depth at S.P.I.C.E. '94. As some of you know, I've had a struggle relating my religious beliefs and crossdressing. At S.P.I.C.E., I found my answer. The spirit of sharing and helping one another I experienced there cannot be evil.

Also, some of you know that I am presently in counseling for post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) and am a member of a Vietnam Veterans' support group, as well as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I've found this type of therapy, sharing with people who have similar problems, very helpful and feel it would be great if we would have time at Renaissance meetings for group sharing.

In summary, if I could more effectively realize my feminine side to help control my male ego, I feel

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DSM IV: A Step In The Right Direction?

by JoAnn Roberts

Note: For those unfamiliar with psycho-jargon, DSM-IV is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition. It is published by the American Psychiatric Association.

The much awaited DSM-IV has arrived and it comes with a few surprises for transgendered people, most of which should be welcomed.

Over the past several years, some transgendered people complained that the old volume, DSM-III-R, caused them to be oppressed and fostered discrimination against transgendered people because the book contained the terms "transsexualism" and

"transvestic fetishism." The fourth edition addresses these issues in two distinctly different ways, but with much the same result.

Let's start at the beginning which is always the best place to start. It is extremely important in any discussion of the DSM and mental disorders to understand what the APA means by the term mental disorder:

"... a clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual and that is associated with present distress

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Chapter & Affiliate Information

Renaissance News & Views

© 1994, Renaissance Education Association, Inc., 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, Pa. 19087. Phone: 610-630-1437

\$2 per issue, \$16 per year (12 issues). Back issues are available for \$2 per copy plus \$0.52 postage and handling. Send check or M.O. to the above address, attention: Beth Marshall.

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Articles, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor are always welcome. Ideas for articles and opinion pieces should be sent to our editorial office care of Renaissance, PO Box 530, Bensalem, Pa. 19020-0530. Complimentary and irate letters to the editor may be sent to the same address.

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

Chapters

Delaware

Renaissance Delaware Chapter: meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808 or call 302-995-1396.

New Jersey

South Jersey/Shore Area: Write Renaissance SJ, Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee City. Doors open at 7 p.m. Call 609-435-5401 for details.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Write Renaissance GPC, Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020-0530. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia. Doors open 8 p.m. all year 'round. Call 610-630-1437 for information.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122 Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (1578) for location and times.

Affiliates

Georgia

Atlanta: The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 404-939-0244. Information resources.

Atlanta: Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 404-435-4203.

Louisiana

The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 870213, New Orleans, LA 70187-1300. Local support group.

New Jersey

Monmouth/Ocean Trans-Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701 or call 908-219-9094.

New York

Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), write 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, NY 10014, or call 201-794-1665, Ext. 332. Local support group.



Resources



Background Papers:

- Background Papers are \$1.25 each:
1. Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing
 2. Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing
 3. PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others
 4. The Matter of Children
 5. Annotated Bibliography
 6. Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View
 7. AIDS/ HIV Safety and Ethics.
 8. Understanding Transsexualism

Significant Other Support

To network with other partners of transgendered people contact Evelyn Kirkland, PO Box 1242, Newtown, Pa., 18940.

Pen Pal Program:

If you would like to correspond with other people around the country contact Pen Pals, care of Maryann Kirkland, PO Box 1242, Newtown, Pa., 18940. Maryann will put you on the Pen Pal List and give you a copy of that list so you may correspond with as many new friends as you like.

TransParent Forum:

If you are transgendered and have children, that makes you a TransParent. If you'd like to network with other TransParents contact Elsa Larson, PO Box 2122, Harrisburg, Pa., 17105, attention: TransParent.

Events Calendar

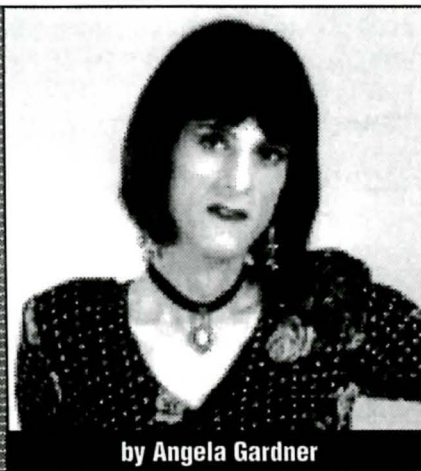
October

- 1 Ren So. Jersey meeting
- 8 Ren LSV meeting
- 8 Ren Delaware meeting
- 15 Ren GPC - Christine Howland, Phila. Museum of Art. Topic: history of lingerie.
- 16-23 20th Anniv. Fantasia Fair
- 31 Henri David's Hallowe'en Ball, Philadelphia Conv'n Center.

November

- 5 Ren. South Jersey
- 5 Ren. LSV- Legal Issues & chapter elections
- 10-13 Holiday En Femme, NYC
- 17-20 Fall Harvest Festival, IA
- 18-20 Erie Sisters Riverside Gala
- 19 Ren. GPC - Henri David

News Beat & Reminder



"Always remember, Grasshopper, persistence, if you wait long enough, can pay off." I open my column this merry month of October with those words, attributed to an ancient wise man, in honor of the transsexual protesters who have been bothering the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival since Nancy Jean Burkholder was thrown out of that event back in 1991. Since that fateful day when the lesbians who run the festival decided they didn't need womyn like Nancy Jean hanging around while they partied, transsexuals from all over the country have descended on the festival and protested. Every August they have been outside the gates in their own space called Camp Trans. It took three years of passing out flyers and making nice with Festival goers who would listen but this year they finally got in.

Great huh? A victory. Well... they were allowed to buy tickets and they did enter the grounds but the festival owners, Lisa Vogel and Barbara Price have still not said that they welcome transsexuals at their event. Their policy has been that the Festival is for "womyn born womyn." Now, I ask you, what's that supposed to mean? We all know there is a vast range of gender expression available to the standard human being. What about the many customized models available? Are the Festival lesbians defining gender only by the genitalia supplied at birth? They seem to be. What about one of the protesters, Kodi Hendrix? He was born with both male and female genitalia. As he said himself, should

"only half of [him] come in."

Lets get down and dirty. If Ms. Vogel and Ms. Price had just said okay, we don't like womyn who used to be men hanging out with us but what the hey... let her stay, then they wouldn't have had this problem and maybe ten or twenty TS music fans would have bothered going. If they had displayed a little tolerance in making their festival policy then they wouldn't have had to put up with three years of protest. Their fault: being intolerant of a minority within a minority. (What do you expect from women so intolerant of men in any form that they spell "women" with a "y"?)

Now, the protesters. They have had a long hard struggle just to get to the point where society will relate to them as women (let alone womyn) and I think that after a fight like that a person might just tend to get a trifle riled up if someone says, "You can't come in here 'cause we think you're just a surgically altered guy." I know I would. Maybe that's what made the Festival such a good target to focus their outrage on.

Fact is, most of the womyn attending the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival didn't give a damn what the transsexuals did or didn't have between their legs. They were happy to welcome them to the Festival, treat them like fellow humyn (thats human to the politically correct) beings and offer them the female bonding that the new womyn were there for. The makers of the anti-TS policy are the owners of the Festival. They hold it on

private land and it ain't no democracy girlfriend. They only let the protesters in after three years of protest. They have *not* decided to alter their policy on the gender of attendees. If the Camp Trans folks are really serious, maybe its time to get Phyllis Randolph Frye on the phone and get that lawsuit started. Of course, something like that might force the Festival people to let everyone in; transsexuals, transvestites, eunuchs, drag queens and maybe even men or... straight women! (So much for a gay women's space.) I mean, I thought discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation was a No-No. Let's forget panties for a while, its time to start working on our briefs.

Transvestites Behind Bars

No, its not a B movie from the fifties. The *Los Angeles Times* ran a story back on June 29 of this year about a man, David Glascock, and the inmates who are kept in "The Witches Castle." It sits on a hill overlooking the Peter J. Pitchess Honor Rancho (that's the county jail) and its where Los Angeles county houses transgendered prisoners. Mr. Glascock is an advocate for "the Girls" and he works for the ACLU as a paid monitor crusading for the rights of all gay prisoners.

"The Girls" are all street queens. They're uneducated teenagers who felt like dressing up and had no way to hide the activity from parents or family. (How can you hide something if the whole family lives in one or two rooms?) Who knows if they are all really homosexual, or transsexual? If you are transgendered and you don't know anyone who feels like you do except the drag queens you see hustling on the street, who do you use as a role model? Where do you go when your parents find you dressed up or in makeup and they call you a faggot as they kick you out? You join the queens on the street and then, to make a living, you fall into prostitution. Crossdresser fiction uses this scenario a lot. It's portrayed as hot and sexy. It's not as sexy as it's pathetic.

When the girls are arrested they are sent to the jail and David Glascock

continued next page

News Beat...

along with Senior Deputy, Ken Irwin must decide if they will be housed in The Witches Castle. The only inmates allowed into the Castle are the queens. Glascock and Irwin must play detective to sort out those who are presented for entry. Why? Neo-Nazis, gang members and other tough guys have tried to pass themselves off as gay to get into the environment where they could push people around. These are the people who get grilled by Glascock with questions about the gay bars they've been to and the men they have had sex with. Glascock is gay. He manages to sort out the pretenders.

Not all of the queens want to go to the Castle. They will try to convince Glascock they are just gay, not queens. Why? They want to get a boyfriend while they're in jail. That wouldn't be possible if they are kept with the other queens. That's why transgendered prisoners go to the Castle. If they are placed in with the other gay prisoners, man-trouble starts.

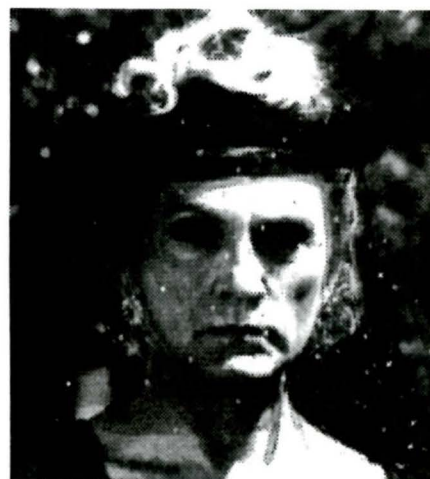
But, there's trouble in the Witches Castle anyway. The rules don't allow the girls to have makeup. Girls with breast implants are not allowed to go topless. No one is allowed to wear jewelry. That doesn't stop them. The queens make mascara by burning the black telephone receiver and mixing the melted plastic with toothpaste. They use the foil tops of orange juice containers to create earrings and they mix soap with their morning oatmeal to

make beauty masks. The attitude of jail officials toward this creative feminine activity is summed up by Glascock as, "Dammit, these are men and they're going to be treated like men." He adds, "Well, they're not men. Nobody would choose this lifestyle unless they had something burning inside them." No, Mr. Glascock, no one would.

David Glascock tries to help all the gay prisoners and he works to help the transgendered prisoners. He wasn't successful in getting them the right to wear makeup, but he did get them part time use of a classroom where they can study for high school equivalency tests. With his intercession they have been allowed to put on talent shows and hold a mock wedding. He is the only friend most of them have outside the jail and he is the only one doing this job. A job he is paid \$930 a month to do. His time has been cut from 100 hundred hours a month to 62. He is 56 years old and he is HIV positive. How much longer will he be there for the girls? What will they do without him? Time will tell.

Tits Anyone?

On a lighter note... sheesh, darn leaky eyes. My mascara is smeared. I better start using a different brand of toothpaste. OK, what's the header? Ah yes, tits. Have you seen *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* yet? It's a hoot and in the press package the distributor sent us free passes to a special screening. Around eleven Renaissance girls showed up on a Tuesday night and Alison Laing won the big Priscilla Prize which included a



Ms. Stamp, the "old boot," says, "Don't squeeze me. I'll pop!"

princess sash. Along with the press kit were the instructions on how to make fake boobs for *Priscilla* star Terence Stamp. The title of this inventive (almost as inventive as the girls in The Castle) bit of instruction is, "Instructions for Preparing Terence Stamp's Boobs" as directed by Lizzy Gardiner (Costume Designer) and Cassie Hanion (Make-up Artist). [Note: That Ms. Gardiner is no relation to this Ms. Gardner.]

For those of you wishing to have breasts that look like Bernadette's as she trekked through the outback, I reproduce the directions here:

- 6 Party Balloons in White
- 6 Bulldog Clips

- Fill all six balloons full of water.

Fill so they are stretched, then put a bulldog clip over the top and leave in a kitchen or bathroom overnight. They will probably leak a little.

- Next day, empty balloons until

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they are small and saggy and fit easily into the palm of your hand. Tie a knot in the top of the balloon (still with water inside). They should have a strange texture, not unlike an old ladies boobs.

- Terence will choose which balloons are the best and will fit them in his bra.

- Terence's Bra: Ideally you need either an 18B or 16B bra (Ed. Note: English sizes?) (18 is better, but it is difficult to find a B Cup Bra) with long shoulder straps. Let the straps down as far as they will go, otherwise the breasts will be too high like the spring chickens! Try to get a bra without any seams over the breast area.

- Good luck. No one is to hug Mr. Stamp when he has his bra on as it will burst. This is highly amusing, but not the look you're after.

Mr. Stamp Speaks...

Terence Stamp, coming from films like *Superman*, *The Hit*, *Legal Eagles*, *Young Guns*, *Wall Street* and *The Real McCoy* was terrified about playing Bernadette, an aging transsexual show-girl. Stamp said he had to stop and think about what it was that terrified him. It turns out it was his "fear of the ego," and a weakness that manifested itself in "an obsession to look perfect." I know a few crossdressers like that.

Anywho, by embracing the role, one which he thought made him look like "an old boot," he broke out of that obsessive perfectionism and is now just a rich actor living in the Hamptons. Hooray Terence! Terence has also said *Priscilla* was the "most fun I ever had."

Art Film? I Got Yer Art Film!

Priscilla and *Just like A Woman* are considered "art" films and, as such, they are only playing in small theaters in selected markets. Now here's a film about a transgendered character that is almost underground. It's called *I Am My Own Woman* and while its subject, Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, might be mistaken for any other hefty farm woman, Charlotte started out in this world answering to the name Lothar. Mahlsdorf lives in the former East Germany and not only survived being persecuted as a gay transvestite but managed to establish the only private museum in that country and keep it going for over thirty years. As the film opens she is receiving the Federal Order of Merit Cross from the German government in recognition of her achievement with the museum. They have yet to give her a medal for living through Communism and turning her museum home into a refuge for East Germany's homosexual and transgendered community.

Charlotte's recollections of days gone by are dramatized, with three different actors portraying her at various stages of her life. The actor portraying the middle-aged Charlotte is named Ichgola Androgyn. Gotta be a stage name, don't ya think?

The film is directed by lesbian filmmaker Rosa von Pruanheim and while it probably won't be appearing in a theater near you, it would be worth watching for it in the video store or maybe the Shocking Gray catalog.

More Show Biz Notes

According to Andre Previn's autobiography, *No Minor Chords*, Previn did the music for the 1954 flick, *It's Always Fair Weather* starring Gene Kelly, Dan Dailey and Michael Kidd. MGM decided to throw a big press screening in the studio's projection room and they invited everybody from *The New York Times* to *Newsweek*. To escape the crush of attendees and get a breath of fresh air Previn went upstairs to the steps of the Thalberg Building. A cab pulled up and a tall woman in a white dress got out, paid her fare and made her way unsteadily up the steps. As she got closer, Previn realized that this was no lady, it was Dan Dailey, drunk and in drag. Tasteful drag that included short white gloves and a large green garden-party-type hat.

Previn was stunned as "the woman in white" said, "Hi, going down to the screening, are we?" Andre had a choice at this point. He could escort the lady down to the room full of waiting media or he could try to save Dan's career. He had heard rumors of Dailey's "odd predilection, which evidently had absolutely no basis in homosexuality," so he wasn't too surprised. Doing a bit of quick thinking he told Dailey he had been sent up to intercept him and take him to an office for a private interview. Previn found the head of publicity and they got Dailey out of the dress, into a cold shower and a suit from wardrobe. After a couple cups of coffee Dan was

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S.P.I.C.E. '94

I would be a better husband, father, Christian and Renaissance member.

As you can see in these few lines, I've learned a lot and I encourage you to send your partner to S.P.I.C.E. '95. Even better, why not accompany her?

Phyllis' Comments

I would like to thank the GP and LSV chapters of Renaissance for sponsoring my trip to S.P.I.C.E. '94.

I learned a lot about myself and how to deal with my husband's crossdressing. I also found a lot of other women that are dealing with the same situation. Linda Peacock did an excellent job of organizing all of the

programs as well as helping where she could to comfort all who needed it.

I hope that in the future, other women will receive sponsorship to S.P.I.C.E. conferences so they too can have an opportunity to share in the fact that they are not alone.

S.P.I.C.E. '95 will be held in Memphis, Tennessee from July 26 to 30. I hope to see Linda Peacock and all of you there.



DSM IV...

or a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom." -pg. xxi, Introduction

Just as important is the definition of what is not a mental disorder. Page xxii of the Introduction to DSM-IV states: "Neither deviant behavior (e.g., religious, political, or sexual) nor conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict is a symptom of a dysfunction in the individual, as described above."

Another important note is that the DSM does not classify people, it classifies disorders that people might have. You will not find terms like "transvestite" or "transsexual."

Turning to our areas of interest, what our community calls transgendered behavior. (While we have taken this term "transgendered" as our own, the professionals have not adopted it.)

Community critics of the DSM have argued that the inclusion of "transvestism" or "fetishistic transvestism" is a source of discrimination. Neither the DSM-III-R, nor the new DSM-IV contain either of these terms. What is included under the heading of Paraphilias is Transvestic Fetishism. A paraphilia is a recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasy, sexual urge, or behavior generally involving (1) nonhuman objects, (2) the suffering or humiliation of oneself or one's partner, or (3) children or other nonconsenting persons..."

At first, this is distressing. The description of the behavior is even

more disturbing: "Transvestic phenomena range from occasional solitary wearing of female clothes to *extensive involvement in a transvestic subculture.*" [italics mine] (Virginia Prince would argue that clothing is sexless, thus, there is no such thing as female clothing and I would agree.)

However, one must read the actual criteria for a diagnosis of Transvestic Fetishism which must include these two components:

(A) Over a period of at least 6 months, in a heterosexual male, recurrent intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving cross-dressing, and...

(B) The fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. [italics mine]

It is important here to go back to the definition of what is not a mental disorder and compare that to Criteria B. In other words, even if one fits Criteria A exactly, if one's behavior, or urges do not cause clinically significant distress to the point where one cannot function in daily life, one does not have a mental disorder.

Clearly, the APA recognizes that some crossdressers are mentally-healthy individuals who lead well-adjusted lives. Definitions don't cause oppression, ignorance does.

One thing I find extremely interesting is that homosexual males and all females are exempted from Criteria A and cannot, therefore, be diagnosed with Transvestic Fetishism.

Surprisingly, the DSM-IV has deleted all reference to transsexualism. Instead, the book discusses Gender

Identity Disorders in children, adolescents and adults. The criteria are extensive and will not be repeated here, but of interest is the term "cross-gender identification." At least in the clinical setting, "cross-gender" is preferred to "transgendered."

Included in the criteria for diagnosis is the same criterion found in Transvestic Fetishism, i.e., clinically significant distress or impairment, etc. In other words, a person suffering from Gender Identity Disorder must be in significant distress and have severe difficulty functioning in their assigned gender role.

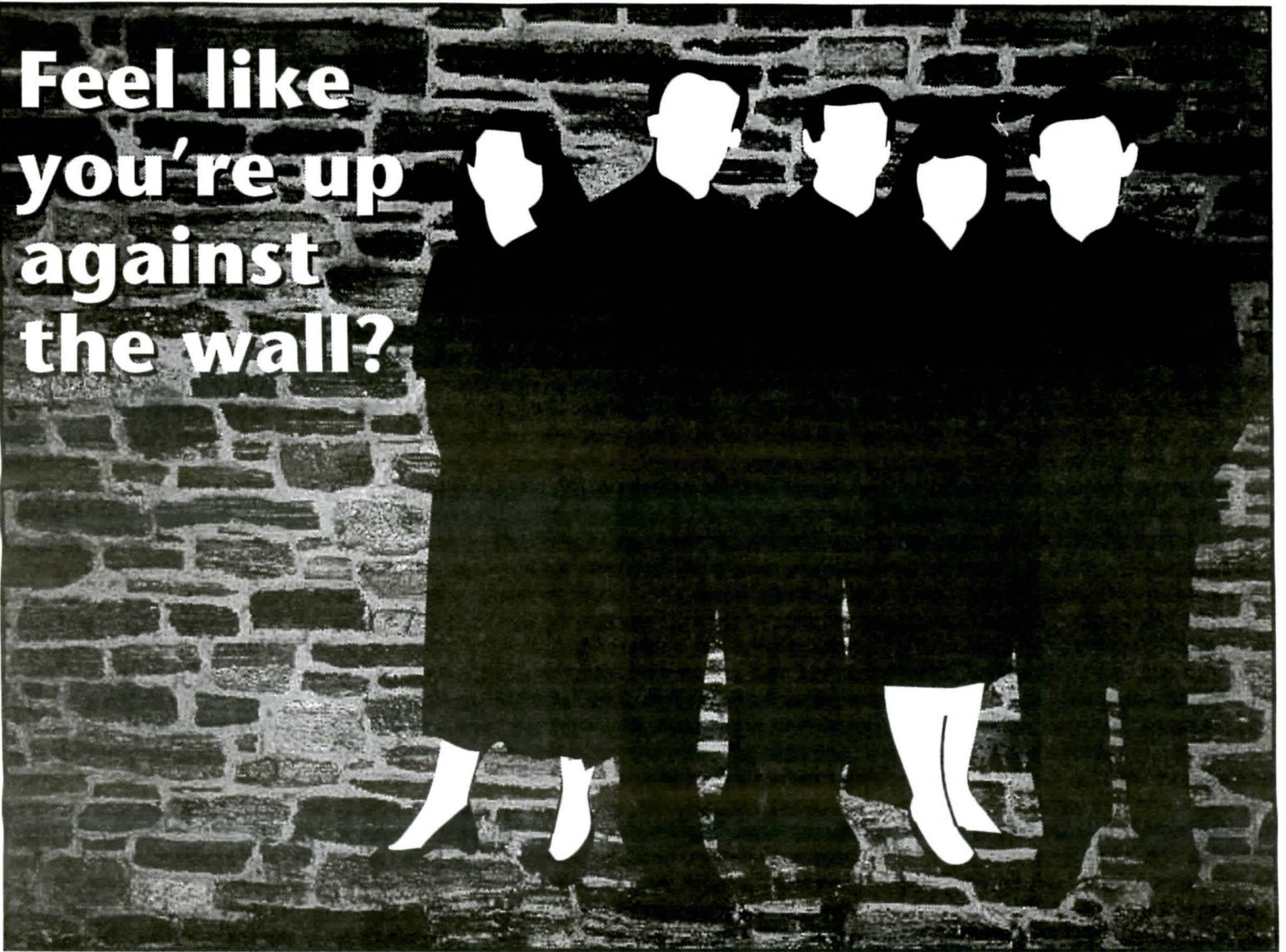
It seems that some got their wish. Transsexualism is no longer a category in the DSM. However, to be diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder one must be in significant clinical distress. If not distressed, one should not be diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder which might lead to genital reconstructive surgery. Catch-22!

Some people in our community want Gender Identity Disorder removed from the DSM altogether and have it classified a strictly physical disorder. Perhaps that is not such a bad idea. Genital reconstructive surgery may be indicated in such cases and would be considered cosmetic surgery, available to anyone who can pay for it. And, there's the rub! No medical plan, to my knowledge, will pay for cosmetic surgery. Catch-22!

DSM-IV is a step forward in understanding cross-gender behavior. It recognizes that crossdressing is not a mental disorder per se, and that Gender Identity Disorder is an issue requiring careful evaluation.



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the wall?**



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"Some scientists believe that the major building block of the universe is hydrogen because it is the most plentiful element but I believe that the universe is made out of stupidity because it is even more plentiful than hydrogen." (Frank Zappa, 1993)

That is a great, if somewhat cynical quote made all the more amazing by the fact that Frank Zappa probably never read a transvestite support group newsletter. If he had, who knows what he might have had to say about stupidity, and the universe it helped to build?

IN YOUR HEART YOU KNOW HE'S RIGHT

Last month, I wrote an item about neo-conservative Cal Thomas and the intolerant gospel he and his fellow travelers preach against anyone who isn't "with" them. *The Flip Side* newsletter from the Gulf Gender Alliance in New Orleans (a Renaissance affiliate) reprinted a piece written by Barry Goldwater (originally in the *Washington Post*) in which he calls for an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Former Senator and presidential candidate, Goldwater is the grandpappy of the modern conservative movement. Ronald Reagan got his start in conservative politics by campaigning for Goldwater in '64. Although at times conservatism seems to be at odds with individualism, its fundamental belief is that government should be limited so individual rights and opportunities are maximized.

Mr. Goldwater's opinion piece had this to say: "It's time America realized that there is a gay exemption in the

right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" in the Declaration of Independence. Job discrimination against gays, or anybody else, is contrary to each of these founding principles." He also says, "The conservative movement is founded on the simple tenet that people have the right to live life as they please as long as they don't hurt anyone else in the process. No one has shown me how being gay or lesbian has ever harmed anyone else." Goldwater goes on to criticize the radical right (he uses that term himself) because they "do not care enough about the Constitution."

Barry Goldwater is a true conservative. In last month's column, I referred to Cal Thomas and his cohorts as "so-called conservatives" because they don't really want to promote individual liberty at all... they want to squash anything they find offensive. Instead of trying to limit governmental power against individual rights (as true conservatives would) they want to use the full force and power of the government to outlaw almost anything that isn't Christian, Caucasian, heterosexual, affluent and English-speaking.

Because of his doomed presidential candidacy and his outspoken nature, Goldwater has an image in some circles as a kooky also-ran. But as this recent opinion piece shows, he is really a strong defender of individual rights and that should never be a losing proposition. Pray it never is.

THE PROSECUTION RESTS-IN A LOVELY FLORAL ENSEMBLE

There's embarrassing... and then there's embarrassing. Broward County Florida Assistant D.A. Mark McHugh

was arrested with a few other guys for dressing up in drag and harassing patrons of a gay bar in Boca Raton. According to a newspaper report, "McHugh was found in a car filled with crossdressers five blocks away" from the nightclub. Assistant D.A. McHugh was identified by a witness who remembered his (her?) smashing black silk mini, polka dot blouse and flowered hat.

Here's where it gets more embarrassing; McHugh tries to explain why he was in drag and wasn't one of the hooligans who trashed the gay bar. He told authorities he was out with his rugby teammates (muy macho) and they played in a golf tournament spoofing the Ladies Professional Golf Association, hence the girlie duds. Hey, it could happen. He stopped short of telling the cops that space aliens had then abducted them and brought them back just a few blocks from the ruckus at the gay bar.

McHugh's attorney explained the positive ID away with this comment; "We're talking about an ID made around midnight in a parking lot where there are other people in women's clothing." Sounds like my kind of parking lot. And I'll bet if the cops around the country would just check it out sometime, they'd find a lot of Assistant D. A.'s in drag with their rugby teammates in parking lots near gay bars.

SELF IMAGES

The Seahorse Magazine is published by the group of the same name in Sydney, Australia. The June issue carried an item by a reader from South Africa named Sandra. She received a phone call one night from a male who somehow knew her femme name and home phone number. While the man on the other end began speaking, Sandra caught herself admiring the way her garters were visible beneath the hem of her skirt. At that exact moment, the man on the line called her a prostitute.

The call, of course, turned out to be some crank. But it made Sandra think about her own image and how others perceived her. This is a subject which

intrigues me too. It's very easy for us to get caught up in our own self-image and lose sight of how we may appear to others who aren't on our trip.

The subject of "passing" is directly related to our own self-image, and how we can sometimes deceive ourselves into believing no one else can detect us. Those of us who go out in public often become less self-questioning about what others might think. The most often asked question "regular" people have for crossdressers is, "What's the deal?"

What, indeed, is the deal? Our self-image is that we're women (albeit part-time women), but many see it as a Halloween costume. If you saw a distinguished looking gentleman dressed up as a cowboy on Market Street, you'd probably ask, "what's the deal?" also. And if he told you he was a cowboy trapped in the body of an insurance salesman... what would you *really* think about that answer?

WHAT YOU SEE...

Speaking of "passing"—the St. Louis Gender Foundation's *Gazette* carried an article titled "Virtual Reality." The piece was anonymous, so I can't give the credit the author deserves. The article is one in a series designed to help crossdressers "pass."

I think "passing" is highly overrated and frankly doubt or discount most of the "passing" exploits I hear. [*Ed. note. Really? I "pass" all the time. Usually on the left.*] However, this article from St. Louis touches on one of the key elements of "passing." "When we first encounter someone, visual clues are

used to identify their important characteristics, including gender. Such determinations are usually made without any conscious effort, rapidly (with a glance) and at a considerable distance." It goes on to say, "Once we have categorized someone, we resist changing their "assigned" gender. If the person is unknown or unthreatening, we also tend to simply ignore them." In other words, if it looks like a duck from fifty yards away most people will conclude that it is a duck and not even look twice.

What this also means is that the next time you're gloating about "passing" or hear someone else regale you with how well they "pass" remember this: it isn't so much that you as a crossdresser are remarkably talented as that people are choosing to ignore you. Gee, that kind of takes the excitement out of it, huh?

WHICH IS IT? IN OR OUT?

The *Transgenderist* newsletter from Albany's Trans Gender Independence Club carried an article by Rebecca Ann Peterson in which she questioned the dual messages organized TG groups put out.

Specifically, she detects a bias favoring public crossdressing over staying at home (and perhaps simply attending support group functions). Most of the publications are filled with stories about, and advice for, public crossdressing. Yet, she also sees statements from the groups saying that staying in the closet is OK too.

Rebecca Ann feels if some people aren't ready (emotionally or appear-

ance-wise) to go out in public, this preoccupation with public crossdressing is harmful for the people the groups are trying to serve.

I don't necessarily agree that the groups are speaking out of both sides of their mouths. They must serve two constituencies: those who *do* wish to go out and about and those who either cannot or will not go out. I do think this preoccupation with "passing" sends a message that those who "pass" (and I already believe this is usually bogus) are better than those who can't. And I flat out disagree with that.

This is one of those problems which cannot be "solved." Public crossdressing is not the "goal" for everyone and should not be promoted as such to support group members. But I wouldn't say that groups are harming their less active members by talking about public crossdressing either.

TWO WRONGS MEAN NOBODY'S RIGHT

The Powder Puffs Of California *Girl Talk* newsletter out of Yorba Linda, Calif., has been featured in this column before. Several months ago, I criticized them for their sarcastic negativity toward the IFGE, an organization I have no feelings about, one way or the other.

Well, they're back on the IFGE thing again, but this time they have a valid point. Sort of. It seems the IFGE wants to hold its annual convention in PPOC's backyard in 1997. But they neglected to inform any of the five

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TG Lobby Spins Off ICTLEP

"It's time for the transgender community to take a stand..." Those words are found in the preamble to the *Bill of Gender Rights*, written by JoAnn Roberts in 1991. Taking those words to heart, a group of transgendered individuals, encouraged by political gains achieved in various state and city venues, and simultaneously alarmed by the onslaught of anti-gay, anti-TG propositions in some ten states, have formed the first real political action committee of the transgender community.

Jessica Xavier (Washington, D.C.), Jane Fee (Minneapolis, Minn.) and Karen Kerin (Vermont) are the national co-chairs of "It's Time America" (ITA), a registered lobbying organization for transgender rights. ITA was formed during the recent International Conference on Transgender Law & Employment (ICTLEP) TRANSGEN '94 conference. ITA takes its name from the "It's Time Minnesota" movement. Presently, Minnesota is the only state that protects transgender rights. ITA's mission is to lobby for transgender rights at the local, state and federal levels, as well as encourage individuals to become local activists.

Xavier and Riki Anne Wilchins (New York) will be at the upcoming Southern Comfort event in Atlanta to address the Congress of Transgender Organizations about ITA's goals.

ITA is forming state and city chapters. Locally, Terri McCorkel (New Jersey) has been recruited by ITA, and several Renaissance members have been contacted.

ITA co-chairs, Fee and Kerin, along with ICTLEP directors, Laura Skaer and Phyllis Frye, are presently working on the inclusion of transgender language in SB-2238, "The Employment Non Discrimination Act of 1994" as fol-

continued on page 20



Dr. William R. Stayton answers your questions in a monthly column.

Dear Dr. Bill,
I am a 52 year-old crossdresser who has been enjoying crossdressing for over twenty years. Recently I discovered Renaissance and have attended a few meetings. I don't know if they have that much to offer me. Do you think a support group is necessary for someone like me?

Sincerely, Denise

Dear Denise,
You are the best judge as to whether or not you would like or need a support group. You are one who crossdresses by yourself and have no problems with it and may not feel the need of a support community. You may, however, be able to offer support and affirmation to others who need it.

There are many who crossdress, but have always felt guilty, or had questions about how to address crossdressing with their partner(s), family, and/or children. These men find a support group extremely helpful in working through the best way to find a solution to the above issues.

For example, sometimes it is very helpful to have one's partner meet with another couple who has worked through the same issues. For others, using a strategy used successfully by someone else can be helpful. Talking with others who have had the same feelings of guilt or confusion can also be very reassuring.

Finally, Renaissance can be a way of learning how to crossdress more effectively so that one can pass out in public, which can be a rewarding experience.

Dear Dr. Bill,
I have been crossdressing for sometime now and everyone says I do a good job of passing. I am most comfortable at a support group meeting but I often go out in public as my femme self. I have been everywhere from the grocery store to the symphony. The thing that is bothering me and I am hoping you can give some insight to, is why do I still worry about passing? I am still nervous that someone will catch on to my "little secret."

Nervous Nelly

Dear Nelly,
Because of the consequences of being "read" out in public, it is understandable that you would still be nervous about passing in public. I know someone, who I thought was quite passable, who was read in a public female restroom and was arrested. For someone concerned about the effects of being "read," it could create a lot of anxiety.

For others, there is excitement in going out in public knowing that there is a danger of being "read." These persons often work through a scenario about how they would respond, if discovered, and feel confident about their response.

One of the benefits of going out in public with another or a group of crossdressers is that it provides some safety even if "read." This can be a very important anxiety reducer for a person like yourself.



The Suffering Behind Premarin

Many transsexuals and gender females take Premarin, an estrogen. Many do not know that the name is a composite of the source of the compound: **PRE**gnant **MAR**e's ur**INE**. Those who do know its source, probably don't know HOW it is produced. This report was received from Stacy Novak, TransEssex, U.K.

In 1993 approximately 75,000 pregnant mares were confined in stalls measuring 8 x 3.5 x 5 feet. Virtually all of their foals were killed soon after birth, or sold and sent to slaughter. Some of the fillies were impregnated as soon as possible to follow in their mother's footsteps. Actually, it should be footstep as taking one step forward and one backward is all the mares can do in their stalls.

You're probably wondering what obscure backward country would allow such cruelty... and WHY? I'll answer those questions and spare you the horrendous detailed accounts of buildings full of pregnant mares whose only exercise is weaving back and forth, day in and day out, and of the thousands of young frightened foals crammed into cattle trucks and pens. What I would like to ask, before I go on, is would you be willing to talk to friends, write a letter, or make a phone call to help stop this suffering and slaughter?

This senseless cruelty is occurring right now because of a Canadian based company called Ayerst Organics, Inc. They are the world's only producer of pregnant mare's urine (PMU) from which an estrogen substitute, PREMARIN, is extracted. Although other substitutes are available, doctors are still prescribing this drug to women needing estrogen replacement therapy.

The equine factory farms are located in Canada, particularly in Manitoba, with some also in North Dakota, U.S.A. The mares are either

catheterized or fitted with a cup and hose to collect their urine which is sold at up to £10 (around \$15) per gallon to Ayerst Organics, Inc.

Approximately 8 million women are currently taking PREMARIN. They have possibly been told about the various side-effects such as increased risk of breast cancer and gall bladder disease. However, there is a direct effect that has been well-hidden... cruelty! What women may not know is that there is another choice; 100% plant derived (synthetic) estrogen replacement is just as effective as PREMARIN and the wholesale price is virtually identical. Although prices may vary, there are at least six different alternatives on the market today... ask your doctor.

Women who are sickened to learn about the suffering and the slaughter may also begin questioning the health risks from the impurities associated with putting animal waste into their bodies. In addition, the natural estrogen from plant derived substances contains the same ingredients produced by human females while PREMARIN does not.

If ever there was an example of education directly stopping equine abuse and slaughter, this is it. If women demand this synthetic plant-based estrogen replacement instead of PREMARIN, hundreds of thousands of mares and their foals will be spared.

There is no time to lose. With millions of women entering menopause, the PMU industry is gearing up. Canadian government officials were unavailable to comment when I called about the reported £14 million they are giving to Ayerst Organics, Inc., toward their £70 million planned facility expansion. As we go to press (in August) 1200 more factory farms have applied to produce PMU.

Unless there is an immediate and overwhelming response from the

consumers and the general public, the 150,000 plus mares and foals currently caught up in this nightmare will quickly double and triple. I've been in touch with people working behind the scenes and have offered, on behalf of Redwings and our supporters, to give a safe comfortable home at our Sanctuary in the U.S. to any mares and/or foals that can be rescued. I'll keep you updated but, in the meantime, the horses need our help.

Many thanks to PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine for supplying facts and figures for this article.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Inform your doctor of the facts and ask him/her to consider prescribing a cruelty-free alternative to patients requiring estrogen.

2. Write a letter to your newspaper or women's magazine explaining how mare's urine is acquired and that there are effective synthetic alternatives available.

3. Write to the Manitoba Government — The Honorable Marianne Cerilli, Room 234, Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 0V8 Canada

4. Write to the company that produces PREMARIN — Robt. Essner, Pres., Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories, PO Box 8299, Phila. PA 19101 USA

NOTE — This article was written by Bonnie Stoehn and originally appeared in the "Redwings Horse Sanctuary Summer Newsletter." It has been reproduced with permission from Redwings Horse Sanctuary. If you are interested in the work of the Sanctuary, please ring 011-44-0603-737432. This is an international call to the U.K.



Hot Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • Queen of Prussia



*Veritas numquam perit —
Truth never perishes.*

Dina Amberle commented in the September issue that some folks don't like the idea of commentary on their newsletters from outside the organization. My response to that has always been—then don't put controversial stuff in your newsletters. If you publish it, we have every right to our opinion, and every right to express that opinion. It's called Freedom of the Press, you know, First Amendment and all that... I get my share of such letters, like the brief note I received from The Phillips, of Texas "T" fame. Cynthia (the one with the cigar) wrote that I must be a very unhappy person and very angry to be so negative. What the Ms. Phillips (plural) take for negativism is my proactive position against hypocrisy and bigotry within our own community. Call me a cynic, but I get really pissed-off when some of our own pretend to work on behalf of the community while putting self-aggrandizement, self-interest, and personal gain ahead of any community motive. Like, what ever happened to that monumental survey the Phillips promised the community they'd get published in a refereed journal? Last I heard, they were hawking the survey results for \$5.00 a copy. If that's what they call community service, I'll pass.

I've been telling you in the last several issues about connecting to the Internet. One of the curious things I found on the net was that most of the postings in the transgender newsgroups made no mention of the organized community we all know and love out here (as opposed to "in there.") So, I posted a message with three survey questions just to see how community-aware the net is. Here are the results of that survey—

The most recognized organizations are Tri-Ess and IFGE (tied), with AEGIS next. In terms of publications, *Tapestry* is the most widely recognized publication with *Chrysalis* coming in second. As for events, the Texas "T" Party is the best know of gender events, followed by *Southern Comfort* and *California Dreamin'*. There were several strong opinions about IFGE and Tri-Ess, which in no way surprises me at all.

QWIK SURVEY RESULTS

Total No. of Respondents = 36

Recognition of Organizations
 IFGE-89% AEGIS-75%
 Tri-Ess-89% REN-47%
 Outreach Inst.-28%

Recognition of Publications
Tapestry (IFGE)-92%
Chrysalis (AEGIS)-64%
FemMirror (Tri-Ess)-31%
LadyLike (CDS)-33%
Cross-Talk-58%
CDQtrly (JMPG)-31%
RenNews&Views-14%
Jrnl of Gender Studies (OI)-19%

Recognition of Activities/Events
 Winslow Street Fund (IFGE)-17%
 Tula Fest (AEGIS)-8%
 Community Film Project (Ren)-6%
 Coming Together Conv. (IFGE)-47%
 Texas "T" Party-69%
Southern Comfort-56%
Calif. Dreamin'-50%
Paradise in the Poconos (CDS)-42%

Everybody is getting into the drag act and just maybe drag is getting a little more respectable, even in the gay community. The Fall Preview Catalog from Shocking Gray has two pages of drag related items for him and her, including a "slim fitting, easy step-in, feather-appointed elastic dress covered in shimmering sequins (\$139.95)" and "a 100% durable cotton marine-style T-shirt" for the more macho of the ladies. There is even a tiara for \$26.95 that comes with the warning "Avoid wearing during electrical storms." Well, it ain't exactly Fredericks of Hollywood or Vernon's Specialties, but their hearts are in the right place. Two items that may be of some real interest are a Camp Calendar featuring notable Female impersonators in and out of drag (Item #40029, \$10.99), and *Pussy Tourette*, a collection of comedy and music by Ms. Tourette (Audio tape Item #41302, \$9.95). Shocking Gray can be reached at 800-788-4729.

Let the community beware! Renaissance received a letter from a group calling themselves "Freedom Associates." The letter purports to help you raise up to \$300,000 in a year by sending them \$30 a month. In reality, this is nothing more than a chain-letter and it is illegal, regardless of the claim to the contrary in the letter. The mail-forwarding service on our letter is Broadview Associates, PO Box 2314, Livonia, MI 48151. If you or your organization receive such a letter, send it off to your state's Attorney General's office. Don't be a sucker.

If you haven't gotten your patent leather fix for Fall, you still have time. Patent leather seems to be the accessory "de-riguer" this season. If you opt for a jacket, make sure it's black, otherwise it won't much go with anything else. Of course, patent shoes are always in style, or a patent purse. One tip: go lightly. Don't gleam for head to toe with patent leather. It looks tacky.

HOT•BUZZ

Want to have some dress-up fun and raise a little money for your group? Why not hold a Worst Bride's Maid Outfit contest and invite the public. I've seen it done locally and it looks like quite a bit of fun. Every woman has at least one really ugly Bride's Maid dress in her closet, so if you can't buy one, you can probably borrow one.



Here are some tips from *Cosmo* to pep up your wardrobe... All you crossdressers with a "thing" for cheerleader outfits will be "in" this Fall. Cheerleader skirts at one HOT item... Narrow, "cigarette-leg" pants are in... Knee-length skirts and dresses... Anything velvet... Black hose (when did they go "out?")... Jeans and slim skirts in leather... Slip dresses and jumpers over knit tops and turtlenecks... Anything silver. Give away, or destroy anything that is grunge or waif. Dump the hiking boots, too. Spikes are hot.



As for hair, blondes are back. Go Golden, not Ash. By the way, the older you get, the lighter your hair should get. Dark hair ages you.



The HOT BUZZ about suits is the length of the skirt. The latest craze is the extra short skirt under the suit jacket. This has been dubbed the Melrose Place suit after the television show of the same name. Looks like the trend was held over for Models, Inc., too. Just be careful if you have to bend over. A sight like that could scare the horses.



Here's an interesting tidbit about David Bowie as told by him to *Cosmo*. "When I first became well-known, I told reporters I was bisexual. For most of the period when I was going through the bisexual thing, my attraction was always to really beautiful transvestites or drag queens. But I was never gay or a transvestite. And it wasn't long before I realized I was truly heterosexual."



As if saying it simply makes it so, *Allure* magazine has declared Drag is Dead. Yep, Drag is on the "Not" side of their "Not & Hot" list. Quelle Domage! We

shall all have to just give it up and find something else to occupy our time. NOT! Don't believe everything you read. What do a bunch of fashion editors know about drag anyway! We've only just seen the tip of the 'berg. Two more movies are due *Ed Wood* starring Johnny Depp as the crossdressing Wood, and *To Wong Foo* with Swazye, Snipes and Leguizamos. Hell, we're jes gettin' started. By the time this drag-wave hits its peak, every kid in the hood will be doin' drag just to be cool.



The HOT BUZZ on hosiery seems to be fishnets. I know I mentioned this before, but perhaps you thought the Queen was off her heels. Just about every single fashion ad has shown the models in fishnets. Hey, they're great for clubbing, but get real for daytime. Also, if you don't want a semi-permanent waffle pattern on your legs, wear nude Lycra hose under the fishnets.



My good friend and Reba McEntire impersonator, Kelly Sheriden, let me in on a little secret about M.A.C. cosmetics, which I have touted here many times. The Toronto-based company makes a line of theatrical foundations in addition to their regular daytime makeup bases. Kelly says the M.A.C. stuff is the greatest, but the only hitch is that the theatrical stuff is only available in two locations, the M.A.C. store in NYC and the one in Los Angeles. At either place, if you hold a S.A.G. card or can prove you're a bona-fide drag queen, they'll give you a professional discount. Now, that's courtesy!



Oh, yeah, before I forget. Lady Di from Vernon's Specialties sent me some samples of large-sized, hinged bracelets. They come in enameled color finishes as well as goldtone and silvertone. All are hinged and some have a safety chain and they're just darling. If you're looking for that perfect bracelet to complete an outfit, get in touch with Vernon's by calling 800-227-0605. Prices start at about \$15.



Quote of the month: "The best high-heeled shoes should never be used for walking." Ann Magnuson in *Allure*.



I told you about the fracas over holding part of the Summer Olympics in Cobb County, Georgia, where the county commissioner passed an anti-gay statement. Well, the gay community seems to have won out. First, one of the daughters of the head of the county commission came out as a lesbian. Then the backlash of gay/lesbian protests and the threat of an economic boycott, led Olympic officials to move the volleyball contests to another venue. Alternative Lifestyles-1, Rednecks-0.



Among the many fads for Fall that are HOT right now, there's one that will be dear to the hearts of many TVs—corsolettes. Yes, those waist-nipping, bust-building, boned body builders are showing up everywhere and sometimes on the outside of the clothing. Look for new styles in colors like peach and sand, in addition to old stand-by black.



Shameless plug (why else do you think I write this column?) I haven't been sleeping all summer. CDS is planning to release several revised publications and at least one new one... Alison Laing has been hard at work on the Second Edition of *Speaking As A Woman*, which should be available around Christmas. Alison has revamped the only book on feminine speech based on her experience teaching her techniques at seminars all over the country. While she doesn't promise you'll sound like just like a female, you *can* develop a more feminine voice... The 1995 *Who's Who & Resource Guide to the Transgender Community* will be along in November, still only \$10. The '95 edition has a greatly expanded Care-Giver section. I did a mailing to over 1000 professionals and the response was overwhelming. The number of counseling resources in this edition is staggering. There are also a number of additions to the *Who's Who* section... Finally, the long-awaited monograph *The Straight Dope On Hormones* by Delia Van Maris, M.D., will be available in November.



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Comic Books Feature TG Characters



magical

violent

nihilistic

sexy

groovy

Characters from The Invisibles

by Robyn Dormer

What's up with Vertigo? The "adult fantasy" arm of DC Comics has three different comic book series that feature transgenders as major characters. These are in addition to the Sandman story in issues 8-16, "The Doll's House" which featured Wanda, a pre-op supporting character and issue 19's story, "Midsummer Night's Dream" which featured a Shakespearian acting troupe with boys playing the girl's parts. (Wanda is featured on a card of her own in the recently released SkyBox Sandman trading cards.) Vertigo is a line of comics a girl can get into!

The Doom Patrol, published monthly, is the world's strangest collective of reluctant super heroes.

The team is composed of a disembodied head, a man in a metal body, a "monkey girl" who can conjure up archetypal creatures out of her imagination, two energy creatures wrapped in living bandages and a post-op transsexual named Coagula. *The Doom Patrol* is written by Rachel Pollock, a respected science fiction author who is rumored on the Internet to be a "change."

The Invisibles is another monthly on-going series which debuted in August. It is written by Brant Morrison and will be illustrated by different artists for every story arc. *The Invisibles* is a secret society of occult subversives that has existed for hundreds of years. Their worldwide organization exists simultaneously at all


points of space and time. They are dedicated to subversion in all its forms. There are different "cells" of five members and the members of the cell we are introduced to in issue 1 are King Mob, skilled in the martial arts and psychic disciplines; Ragged Robin, a

neurotic witch; Boy, a New York street girl; Dane, a London punk and Lord Fanny who is described as a "South American transvestite witch."

Fanny was born to a family of witches where the power is passed on to the female children. Fanny was an only child and a boy, so he was brought up as a girl to continue the witchly tradition of his family.

Beginning in November of '94 is *Deathwish*, a four-issue miniseries about a psychotic vigilante who reluctantly agrees to help police detective Marisa Rahm bring in a serial killer who is carving up transvestite call girls. The reason Marisa was assigned this particularly gruesome case? She is a pre-operative transsexual whose lover was the only survivor of the vicious attacks. *Deathwish* is written by Adam Blaustein and illustrated by J.H. Williams III and Jimmy Palmiotti.

This is just the first in a series of articles covering transgendersim in comics. If you have any questions feel free to contact me care of *Renaissance News & Views*. Upcoming articles will feature the many appearances of Jimmy Olsen as a girl, a look at the collected works of Howard Chaykin and a checklist of instances of cross-dressing/transgenderism in the golden and silver ages of comics!



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“Activist” Makes Waves

The following letter appeared in the August 29, 1994 issue of Philadelphia's lesbian, gay and bisexual newspaper, Au Courant. It was featured as a Carbon Copy, which means it had been copied to the newspaper. The original letter was sent to the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association.

“Dear Sirs,

The transsexual community has had a belly full of the controlling multimillion-dollar sex-change monopoly you have created. The Harry Benjamin Association's Standard of Care for transsexualism (SOC) uses an old mental illness term “gender dysphoria” to represent the transsexual phenomena is a poor light. Exaggerating the incidence of suicide to legitimize your policy of mandatory psychiatric diagnosis and endless therapy sessions for the patient now costing from \$80-\$130 per visit, your supporters have wrongfully frightened and misled medical doctors, providing mental health professionals with total decision-making control over the life of transsexuals and a fresh Mercedes-Benz in the driveway.

Just as *Focus On The Family* twisted statistics on homosexual child molestation to raise money, you have twisted the statistics on transsexuals. Dozens of dishonest gender clinics

have now sprung up across the countryside using your standards as their bible. In the transgender community's world population of 10-100 million, very few have ended up in mental institutions, committed suicide, changed their minds after surgery, or sued their doctors. In actuality, most transsexuals who cannot make it in life have originated from gender clinics supporting your Standards of Care.

Many doctors have become aware of your multimillion-dollar sex-change monopoly, disallowing your Standards of Care. Doctors now realize that the patient need only show an ongoing commitment to justify medical treatment and/or surgery.

Sincerely,
Christy Wood
Transgender Community Activist
Colorado Springs, CO”

Ms. Wood's letter is alarming in that she sent it to newspapers across the country which, like *Au Courant*, will print it and it will be read by people who may believe it. Yes, all health care costs too much in this country, but I seriously doubt there is a conspiracy to rip off the millions of transsexuals that Ms. Wood postulates.

What her letter sounds like is less the upstanding work of a “transgender community activist” and more the

bitter ranting of an individual who has been denied SRS due to some psychological problem found while she was being treated according to the SOC. Or, the crack about “fresh Mercedes Benz” might indicate that she is too poor to afford therapy and testing. That is a problem for health care reform and her time would be better spent in sending letters to congress supporting such reform.

Letters like her's do little to help members of the transgender community make their personal journey to enlightenment. What letters like this can do is plant seeds of paranoia in the minds of people who already may distrust “shrinks.” You may have a bad experience with a mental health professional. One of the reasons Renaissance was formed was to provide information to mental health practitioners about transgender issues so they would be able to better deal with their clients problems. It's up to the client to shop around and find the therapist that works best with them.

I fear that somewhere out there a person, who suffers from delusions and paranoia, who is out of touch with reality, may read Ms. Wood's letter and decide that the back alley hormone doctor and the Mexican surgeon are the right people to provide SRS. That's a chilling thought.



Transsexual Sues Surgeon for \$57+ Million

Victoria Heisner, a post-operative transsexual, has filed suit against well-known surgeon Dr. Stanley Beiber and Mt. San Rafael Hospital. Heisner, an insulin-dependent diabetic, alleges that Dr. Beiber misrepresented the results of sex reassignment surgery and also alleges that Dr. Beiber and Mt. San Rafael hospital were negligent in their post-operative care. Heisner is asking for 57.8 million dollars, plus costs in reparations.

Ms. Heisner had reassignment surgery on August 13, 1992 and remained in Mt. San Rafael until

discharged on August 22, 1992. Two days after her discharge, Ms. Heisner presented herself at Memorial Hospital in Modesto, Calif., near her home, for complications she says arose from her SRS. She was hospitalized until Sept. 5, 1992.

According to the complaint, Ms. Heisner suffers constant pain and swelling in the genitals; her neovagina is useless and merely a finger-width wide and a finger-length deep; and has suffered a great deal of scarring due to necrosis of tissue.

The complaint also states that Ms.

Heisner has become “more depressed and more suicidal than she has ever been before in her life.”

Ms. Heisner alleges that Dr. Beiber fraudulently misrepresented the results of sex reassignment surgery, claiming that her neovagina would be “... so natural-looking that a gynecologist wouldn't be able to tell that she had undergone sex reassignment surgery, and that her sexual response and orgasmic ability would be enhanced by the surgery.” The complaint

continued on page 19

News Beat...

ready to meet the press at the screening. Previn ends this anecdote by saying, "None of us ever mentioned the incident again." Its rather ironic that this all happened at the Thalberg Building. Irving was a crossdresser too, ya know. Moral of the story? 1954: actor in drag equals career suicide. 1994: actors in drag are milking the media for all kinds of good publicity.

First there's Pat from *Saturday Night Live* in his/her own movie. While not really drag, Pat is so androgynous that no one knows what she/he is. The film is called *It's Pat* and it stars Julia Sweeney as Pat and David Foley as Pat's gender neutral mate. During the course of the film they do a Fred and Ginger type dance routine but you can't tell who is Fred and who is Ginger. When Sweeney was asked about the origins of Pat she said, "I really wanted to be an altar boy."

Next is John Leguizamos, currently

working on *Wong Foo*. Leguizamos is no stranger to drag, having appeared in HBO specials portraying female and TV characters. He's going to be busy after *Wong Foo* wraps 'cause he's going to be starring in a new show for Fox-TV called *House of Buggin'*. No word on the characters he will play, but if any of them wears a dress we'll let you know.

Did I say new show? I think I did, and another new show for the Fall stars an actor and comedian who has had experience with Renaissance. No, not me. Almost eight years ago Renaissance produced a talent show AIDS benefit called the *Traveling Trash & Talent Tuesday* and one of the acts who appeared was Ralph Harris Jr., a young, black comedian I knew from The Comedy Works in Philadelphia. Now, Mr. Harris is the star of a new fall program called *On Our Own*. He plays the oldest brother of the seven child Jerrico family. They are orphans and social workers are going to send them all to foster homes without a supervisory adult. Since their

mother's wardrobe is still upstairs Ralph's character goes into the closet to save his family and comes out as the long-lost aunt, Mama J. Maybe he got the idea at our talent show.

Entertainment Weekly says in their September 9 issue, "Harris' bizarre female impersonation makes Flip Wilson's Geraldine seem like the height of subtlety." They go on to say, "*On Our Own* says that without parental guidance your older brother could turn into RuPaul."

Well, I knew Ralph way back when and he's no RuPaul. Hey, come to think of it RuPaul isn't RuPaul anymore. Good luck Ralph. Watch the show on ABC, Sunday nights at 7:30. *News & Views* will give you a review as soon as we see the show.

Just Like A Critic

Stella Bamvil sent a review of *Just Like A Woman* from the August 12 edition of *The Washington Post*. Rita Kempley is the critic who wrote the review and it reminds me of those beer commercials where two people talk



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about the same thing and their opinions are completely opposite. She says, for example, "Pasdar, who played a pilot in *Top Gun*, shows no true understanding of this character." I thought he did a great job portraying a crossdresser. She also states, "Nobody seems to notice that the leading man looks more like Mrs Doubtfire than a human female." Now wait a minute lady, them's fightin' words. I though Pasdar was quite fetching as Geraldine. Certainly nothing like the caricature that Robin Williams served up in *Mrs D*.

Kempley doesn't stop with trashing Gerald, she has a few words about Julie Walters too. She writes, "not even she can convince us that she likes sleeping with a guy in a corset." O'contraire. I felt the relationship between the leads was very well done and Walter's characters acceptance of Gerald's hobby was very believable. To sum it up, she thought the picture was "dull and preachy" and the storyline was, "poorly structured." From reading

her review I think we saw different films. Ms. Kempley was just not into this flick. She probably didn't even want to go to the theater let alone write the review. I wonder why. Maybe her father was a crossdresser? Who knows? Try reviewing with an open mind Ms. Kempley.

Just Like A Woman got good reviews in Philadelphia and a lot of positive press. Like I said last month though, it's an art film and its no longer playing here. Keep checking those video stores.

Another show to watch for big yucks and some female to male crossdressing is George Schlater's new show, *SHE-TV*. It's on ABC, Tuesday nights at ten, and its a hoot. I love the woman who does an impersonation of Fabio. Lets hope for more episodes.

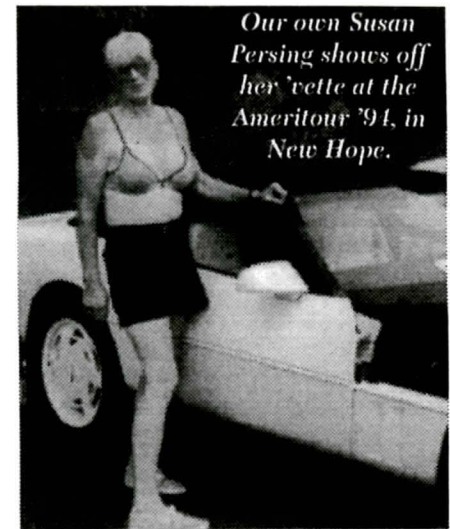
And now, with the end of this column looming large upon the horizon of my word processor, I turn to my incoming mail file to see if anyone sent any crossdresser jokes to replace my closing quotes. Ah, alas,

no. It seems no one thought I was serious in August when I said I's makeup my onw joke (no pun intended). I refuse to be held responsible. You had your chance.

How many TVs does it take to change a lightbulb?

Five. One to change the bulb and four to take the pictures.

Hasta la vista muchachas!



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Letters to the Editor

Dear Angela,

It was early in the new month and I was checking my post office box frequently. The new *Renaissance News & Views* was late and I was getting concerned. I have been a member of Renaissance National for about nine months now and I consider my discovery of Renaissance to be one of the most important things I've ever done.

I have been a crossdresser as long as I can remember, however, I've never known another crossdresser. Of course some neighbor of mine may be and I would never know. Several years ago I got desperate and started trying to find articles about and/or contacts with TVs, TSs and CDs. I didn't know where to look and I checked out magazines that featured articles on these subjects. They were mostly just pornography, which dealt with these subjects in a sensationalist manner, which offered little help and the services they offered were overpriced.

I turned to the talk shows and started recording and watching every show I could. Most of the shows were informative and somewhat helpful. I was always amazed however, that the main things on the audiences' minds were sexual preference and where you went to the bathroom. I do have to credit the Donahue Show with my exposure to Renaissance.

I didn't know what to expect when I wrote to Renaissance for I had written to a few other addresses I'd seen on talk shows and had gotten little or no help. I feel I have gotten to know some very helpful and caring people at your organization. I wish I lived in your area so I could meet you and help with what you are doing. I will do what I can here, including donating to the Film Project. I just want to say thanks. I don't feel as alone as I used to, and keep up the good work.

Pauline Wolf

Dear Ms. Amberle:

I am confused. Your May '94 *Vis-A-Vis* column had a few thoughts about explicit TV-TS magazines, CDs who submit photos to same where their privates are exposed and how these people might differ from more accomplished amateur crossdressers (such as yourself).

In the last few months I've received some product brochures from Executive Imports, a major fetish publishing/distributing company. It seems that pictures of yourself (neatly tucked) appear on the covers of several different TV-TS contact magazines. In light of your *Vis-A-Vis* comments, I don't quite understand why you wanted to associate with such publications.

I realize this is none of my business and that I'm probably misconstruing your writing but I just couldn't resist asking.

Sincerely,

Vera Rae House

P.S. I really enjoy your column. Hope you can keep on with it, even after you trash this letter.

Dina replies:

I wondered if anyone would question me about my own appearances in those "dirty" magazines. The only point I was trying to make is that "exposing" oneself spoils the illusion of femininity. And as you noted, I never exhibit myself that way in my own photos.

Dear Editor;

I have been a member of Renaissance for a year. Scheduling conflicts have precluded me from being an active member, however I have followed your activities through the newsletter and friends who are within Renaissance.

In June we were able to attend the South Jersey Chapter meeting. As first timers we were immediately welcomed and had a delightful time. This positive experience encouraged me to try to attend other Renaissance functions and meetings, schedule permitting. I had the opportunity to attend the July trip to Atlantic City with another member of Renaissance. She enjoyed herself, however, for me it was definitely not one of the top 100 experiences I wish to repeat. If the members who attended this outing are representative of those within

the main organization, then I feel that perhaps Renaissance is not the organization I had been led to believe.

I have been told that Renaissance was one of the better groups in the area, however, from the trend of your newsletter and the social occasion last July, I do not feel that your group is growing in a positive direction for the entire community, only a select few. My renewal is fast approaching and I can honestly say I do not feel that I will be renewing my membership at this time, unless there is some positive input rather than the negative attitude which has become prevalent within the organization.

For the most part I have enjoyed reading your monthly newsletter; finding it enjoyable and thought provoking on a number of issues. I recent issues I have noticed an increasing trend of attacking other organizations within the community. The latest issue, August 1994, had, once again, criticized at least three groups for their fund raising attempts, complaints of non-participation and their general (which I usually find positive) attitude toward the community.

One group in particular, Boulton & Park Society from Texas was censured not only for their recent decision to halt regular meetings, due to non-participation but for their fund raising, primarily for the Texas T Party. I have, on occasion spoken with members of this group and have found them to be generous, not only with their time and advice but in their charity work and financial support of other organizations within the community, nationwide. Their outreach programs, especially for significant others is one of the finest in the country. I also had the opportunity to attend the 1994 Texas T Party and found the members of Boulton and Park to be most receptive to everyone in the gender community, regardless of whatever parameters the individual fell within.

I do hope that Renaissance will redirect its efforts from criticizing other organizations toward encouraging growth and positive awareness within our community. All organizations must work together if this goal is to be attained.

Jann Lienhard

continued page 20

TS Sues Beiber

states that Dr. Beiber withheld information that "... sex reassignment technique which made natural-looking, sexually responsive, and orgasmic outcome uncertain or impossible. Had defendant, STANLEY H. BIBER, M.D., adequately informed plaintiff of the possible consequences and dangers of the proposed care and treatment, plaintiff would not have consented to that care and treatment."

Included in the lawsuit are several additional claims, such as:

- Dr. Beiber did not provide adequate post-operative care;
- Dr. Beiber did not possess the

special knowledge necessary to perform SRS;

—Dr. Beiber performed the SRS for his own financial gain

—Dr. Beiber never examined Ms. Heisner to determine the cause of her complaints of pain in the genital area;

—Dr. Beiber did not attempt to control Ms. Heisner's diabetes;

—Dr. Beiber operated a second time on Ms. Heisner without her permission;

—Dr. Beiber discharged Ms. Heisner from the hospital while she was still in need of medical care without informing her of that need;

—Dr. Beiber caused Ms. Heisner to suffer humiliation, mental anguish,

emotional and physical distress, loss of identity, suicidal ideation and action, medical/surgical phobia, depression, loss of sexuality, and loss of enjoyment of life.

Mt. San Rafael Hospital is named as a co-defendant in the suit and is charged with negligence and oppression. The suit was filed recently in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

(Information for this article was gathered from the Internet. Details of the lawsuit were posted to the net on 27 July 1994 by Ms. Heisner.)





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Letters...

Ms. Gardner replies:

Dear Jann,

I am sorry you did not enjoy the Greater Philadelphia Chapter's Atlantic City trip. I was unable to attend the festivities myself but others reported a good time. Fun is, unfortunately, subjective. One person's fun can be another person's root canal. Some people even *like* root canal.

As for a tendency toward criticism in *News & Views*, it's nothing new. We present news of interest and we express views, popular and unpopular. That's our job and we've been doing it for over seven years. Wherever hypocrisy, greed or stupidity raise their ugly heads, we'll be there to comment on it, along with all the good things in the community. I think criticism and dialog are very useful tools in community building. And, I hope you will continue to participate in the process of community building.

Lobby...

lows: "FINDINGS: The Congress finds that an individual's sexual or gender orientation bears no relationship to the individual's ability to contribute fully to the economic and civic life of society;

"Historically, American society has tended to isolate, stigmatize, and persecute gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons;

"One of the main areas in which gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons face discrimination is employment;

"Employment discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender orientation violates fundamental American values of equality and fairness; The continuing existence of employment discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender orientation often lack recourse under Federal law;

"Gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons have historically been excluded from full participation in the political process, comprise a discrete and insular minority, and have

historically been subjected to purposeful unequal treatment based on characteristics not indicative of their ability to participate in or contribute to society.

"PURPOSES: It is the purpose of this act:

"To provide a comprehensive Federal prohibition of employment discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender orientation;

"To provide meaningful and effective remedies for employment discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender orientation; and

"To invoke congressional powers, including the powers to enforce the 14th Amendment to the Constitution and to regulate commerce, in order to prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual or gender orientation."

For a full copy of the proposed law, please contact "It's Time, America," PO Box 65, Kensington, Md. 20895.

Some of this material was provided by Jessica Xavier ITA national co-chair and some by Sarah, co-chair "It's Time Texas/Houston" via the Internet.



Tough Gender Questions

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These tough gender questions and many more can be explored through individual and small group sessions with Dr. Lee Etscovitz, Director of Human Dimensions, an organization specializing in gender education. Dr. Etscovitz is also the Renaissance National Librarian and a former Professor of Human Behavior at Drexel University.

Further information, including fees and scheduling, is available upon request. Write: Human Dimensions, PO Box 471, Willow Grove, PA 19090. Or leave a private message at 215•657•1560.

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Big Changes for GPC Holiday Party '94

It's getting close to the holiday season when a girl's thoughts turn to glittering sequined affairs. Where do you go to find a holiday event that will let you wear your best party dress in a friendly, romantic atmosphere? The Greater Philadelphia Chapter Holiday Party '94, of course!

Last year the GPC party planners hosted 119 guests for dinner at the Sheraton Inn Malvern. That was the second year in a row of cocktails by the pool and then upstairs for dinner. This year they've worked hard to top previous years and there are changes galore. First, the Holiday Party moves back to the vicinity of the very first Holiday Party almost eight years ago. (That event happened onboard the Mishalou, a ship docked at Penns Landing.) This year on Saturday, December tenth they're taking the party to the hotel used by the IFGE for their 1993 convention, The Double Tree Hotel at Broad and Locust streets. This classy, center city

hotel is very transgender friendly, and, it is connected to its own parking garage. You won't even have to walk on the street to get there. To make it simple and easy, the parking fee is included in the ticket price. When you arrive at the ballroom the ladies at the registration desk will stamp your parking ticket. Present it to the attendant on your way out at the end of a glamorous evening and your parking is paid.

The fun starts with cocktails at 9PM. Sip a holiday libation and get in the mood for fun with the absolutely live sounds of the Steven Russo Band. That's right ladies, not a DJ or piped in muzak, you get the cookin' sounds of live music from 9 to 1. Mr. Russo promises a set of mellow music for the cocktail hour and then three sets of dance music, from Motown to rock to disco. While the band is taking a break the party won't stop. Cassette tapes will provide a beat for girls who just can't control their feet, but everyone

will want to take a break for the free door prize drawing.

Don't miss this one ladies; live music, hors d'ouerves and two bars, no waiting. Arrangements are being made with area restaurants to offer discounts on dinner and the hotel will give you a special Renaissance room rate if you're making a long weekend of it. You get all that for thirty five dollars and the planners are still burning up the phone wires to come up with more fun surprises. Who knows what they might come up with?

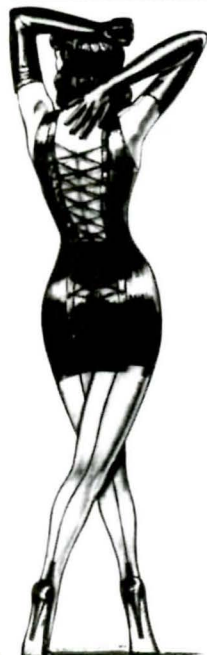
Watch *Renaissance News & Views* for a registration form or send your money now to: Renaissance GPC Holiday Party, PO Box 530, Bensalem, PA. No tickets will be mailed. Your name will be on a list at the door. Any one wishing to help out at the registration desk in return for a free admission should contact Angela Gardner at 610-630-1437. (We only need two.)

See you at the party girls!



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Shopping With Jackie

by Jackie Thomas

Wow... am I red in the face (and its not my blush). After I let go in my last column and got it off my chest, I got a call from our fine editor, Angela Gardner. It seems that Angela had been talking to Elsa Larson, who suggested that my lack of correspondence could be a break down in communication between me and LSV. Well surprise... it was. The person who used to pass my mail to me left the chapter and didn't bother to tell anyone what to do with it. A call to Dawn G. at LSV, a short talk, and guess what... mail!!! Well it wasn't a total loss, because Dawn and I had a great lunch and a lot of girl talk. But to those of you who wrote to me, my thanks and my sincere apologies. But, I meant what I said about contributing to our organization. Take from it all you want, but give a little back for someone else.

Jessica Brandon wrote me again (I love her stationary) with the following shopping information: For our sisters who are six feet or taller, a good place to shop is the J.C. Penney outlet store at Franklin Mills Mall. They have a good selection of clothes for tall at cut rate prices. Syms, also at Franklin Mills, has a huge selection of clothes, most reduced 50%, and there's a Maidenform outlet with "Great Stuff".

Jessica also sends this advice for those of us who are afraid or embarrassed to buy women's clothing while dressed as a male: "It's not as scary as one might think. I myself do it all the time now, just like I did on Sunday. It's all rather simple, know your size, have a fair idea of what you want when you enter the store, then calmly and casually go about your business of choosing whatever you want to buy, be it clothing, shoes, jewelry, cosmetics or lingerie. The key, I believe, is to act perfectly normal, just like any other shopper. Don't feel nervous or uncomfortable or look jittery and no one will give you a second glance. And don't be afraid to ask for help from a salesperson if you need it, they'll be glad to give it as, more often than not, they'll bend over backwards to assist you so you'll spend your money in their store."

Last month's article also brought the following from Barbara Schwarz: "Stop bitching, I have many places to recommend, some of them know I'm transgendered and some do not. But here is a partial list: My favorite place is the "Plus Closet," a consignment store for size 14 and up... ask for Sandy and tell her Barbara sent you. They're located at 602 Haddon Ave, Collingswood, NJ 08108, 609-854-8828. Debra's Closet, another fine store, is

located in the Hargrove Plaza, 2673 Haddonfield Rd, Pennsauken, NJ 08109. See Debra, 609-486-9636.

I have some more places from Barbara, but because of space, I will pass them on later.

I also received a nice letter from Krista H. in Kingston, NY. Krista is not a local member, but subscribes to our newsletter and sends us these catalog sources: Roxanne, 105-17 Metropolitan Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375, 718-263-2526. Great for stockings, slow delivery; Royal Silk, 800-810 31st St, Union City, NJ 07087; Salon Perfect (wigs at moderate prices), PO Box 4067, Hackensack, NJ 07606-4067, 1-800-582-0808; CDL Enterprises, PO Box 40523, Philadelphia, PA 19106, larger sized Lingerie.

We also received a catalog and letter from "The Right Touch," an upscale accessories shop for the larger woman. They have belts from 31" to 50", 19" chokers and 9" bracelets along with earrings, pins, watches, scarves, wraps and handbags. Prices are in the ball park and the items look nice. For a catalog call 1-800- 233-2883.

Angela and I decided that to avoid any possible delay of your mail in the future, you should send your comments, questions and ideas directly to Jackie, c/o Renaissance News & Views, PO Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020-0530. Thanks for your support for this column and until next time... Happy Shopping!



Vis A Vis...

local Southern California groups. Those groups in Southern California have their own annual convention called California Dreamin' at roughly the same time of year as the IFGE Coming Together gathering. PPOC and the others wanted to talk about hosting the convention, as is the usual practice for an IFGE convention. (Renaissance hosted the 1993 convention in Philadelphia.)

The reply from IFGE honcho

Merissa Sherril Lynn gave the Powder Puffs the impression that IFGE did not need to have a hostess organization and would organize it themselves. Apparently without regard to whether it conflicted with the local California Dreamin' event.

So who's right and who's wrong? Do the Powder Puffs deserve any cooperation from IFGE when they trash them publicly in their newsletter? Is it right for IFGE to steam roll a popular local event by blowing into town with their own convention? And

the losers are: the rank and file, members of the groups. You know, the members who pay the dues and maybe would like to attend both events, but not right on top of each other or have to choose sides as to which one to support. It's the grand poobahs who are more interested in sniping at each other who are screwing things up. It's asking a helluva lot, but maybe they can put aside their egos and work things out for the people they are supposed to be serving.



Barbara A. Susinno R.N. CPE.

Jessica Lynn Porter CPE.

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Love, Nancy

Watch Out! Bogus Event

In last month's issue of *Cross-Talk*, Kym Richards reported on a new event called "Fort Lauderdale Freedom," which was posted on the Internet. She has been asked by two group leaders in the Fort Lauderdale area to publish the following retraction. We're helping spread the word.

Dear Kymberleigh:

This is an official notice informing you of a serious misprint in Issue #58 of *Cross-Talk* magazine, and our urgent request for an immediate retraction.

An item in the Newswire and Calendar sections stated that a "new weekend event" called "Fort Lauderdale Freedom" has been planned for the fall by The Eden Society and Serenity here in South Florida.

Nothing could be further from the truth. This so-called "conference" is the doing of one woman, by the name of Tanya Loser. We have fought her at every turn as she attempted to tie our good names to her event (which

appears to be more of a scam than a legitimate conference). She tried something like this last year and failed miserably, so this year she is defrauding the community by using our groups names in conjunction with hers.

Neither Serenity nor The Eden Society have provided input nor interest of any kind in Tanya Loser's "event." We are in no way promoting or endorsing it, or her.

The directors of both organizations are demanding an immediate retraction. We have worked long and hard to establish ourselves within the gender community, and do not want "Tanyas" undermining the work we have done in the community. There is no association whatsoever between our groups and people whose only interest is the exploitation of the community and personal monetary gain.

It is our understanding, via our recent conversation, that you will do everything within the scope of your power to stop the spread of such erroneous information. You called it

"damage control"; we call it a life-saver. We appreciate your diligence in the swift handling of this matter.

For future reference, neither organization, The Eden Society or Serenity, uses an on-line computer system to inform the community about upcoming events. All notification by our groups is done by mail to the appropriate contact person.

The Eden Society is the organizer of the South Florida Gender Symposium (FLaGS) for Medical and Mental Health Professionals on October 8, 1994. A notice regarding this event was released with the signatures of Maxwell Anderson and Jake Taylor. Any and all correspondence from The Eden Society will be from either Jake or Maxwell; no one else has the authority to involve Eden.

Thank you again, Kymberleigh, for your immediate response.

Sincerely,
<signed> Maxwell Anderson, the
Eden Society
<signed> Brenda Johnson, Serenity

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