



# News & views

Vision • Integrity • Quality

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## GPAC Gets Head Start On Legal Services

[Washington, D.C. - October 1, 1996]

GenderPAC, the national advocacy group dedicated to "gender, affectional, and racial equality" today announced Christopher DiEdoardo as its National Legal Services Coordinator.

"This community already possesses well-considered legal policies on a variety of matters," said GPAC Executive Director Riki Anne Wilchins, "But we lack anything like a Legal Defense and Education Fund to litigate or provide basic advocacy services. This is a small first step in that direction."

One of GenderPAC's first entries into the legal arena was initiated last month with an amicus brief in a case before the Missouri Court of Appeals. At the request of Elizabeth Harris Christmas, Esq., a Brentwood, Mo., attorney representing a post-op transsexual client, GenderPAC's brief focused on the potential harm to the children if visitation with their parent was restricted or eliminated. (In December 1995, *RN&V* reported a case where a cross-dressing father won primary care, custody and control of his six year-old son in a divorce proceeding.)

"This case is exciting because it appears to be the

first time the parental rights of transsexuals have ever been considered by the Missouri Court of Appeals," said DiEdoardo, "It's also important because the Supreme Court of Missouri has a unique history of hearing family law cases on a fairly regular basis. A decision in this case, whether it is disposed of at the Court of Appeals or goes on to the Supreme Court, will have ramifications across the country."

Explained DiEdoardo, "We will begin working on the issues that affect the lives of our community. Being differently-gendered shouldn't mean you lose your rights to your children, fair treatment in the workplace, or equal protection under the law, but it often does. It will be my job to assemble a nationwide team of attorneys, paralegals and other legal personnel to help change that."

DiEdoardo is a paralegal in San Diego whose legal experience ranges from civil rights to family law. Before working in the legal field, he was an investigative reporter for nearly a decade. In addition to his work with GenderPAC, he is a volunteer with the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer's Program.



## Big Blue Gives Domestic Partners Bennies

[Washington, D.C. - Sept. 27, 1996]

IBM flexed its muscle in the diversity department and gave a green light to the gay and lesbian community. The Fortune Top Ten giant recently announced it would extend domestic partnership benefits to its gay and lesbian employees and additionally made a financial contribution to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) for its coalition building efforts.

The announcement that it would extend health-care coverage to the same-sex partners of its employees makes IBM the largest U.S. business to offer domestic partnership (DP) benefits. More than 400 American companies, universities, associations, municipalities and other groups extend DP benefits, including businesses such as Microsoft, Apple, Intel, Xerox and Hewlett-Packard. An IBM spokesperson said the company was announcing the DP policy to remain competitive and attract gay and les-

bian workers, and to continue its "long-standing tradition of providing benefits plans for all employees."

On the heels of that announcement, the NGLTF received an IBM gift of \$3,000. The gift, which came from the Chairman's Fund, will be used as part of NGLTF's *Honoring Our Allies* event which recognizes the work of individuals and groups who champion fairness and equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

"Corporate America is changing fast," said Robert Bray, NGLTF media director and a former IBM employee. "More and more companies are doing what the U.S. Congress and its Defense of Marriage Act won't do: give recognition and benefits to same-sex relationships. When I worked at IBM in the early 80's there were few openly gay employees. Now, more and more gay/lesbian people are coming out in boardrooms and on assembly lines and are creating real change in the American workplace."



# Renaissance

## Chapter & Affiliate Information

### Chapters

#### Delaware

**Wilmington, Delaware:** meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808.

#### Pennsylvania

**Greater Philadelphia:** Write Renaissance GPC, 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, Pa. 19087. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia. Doors open 8 pm all year 'round. Call 610-975-9119 for information.

**Lehigh Valley/Pocono area:** Renaissance Lehigh Valley, PO Box 3624, Allentown, PA 18106. Meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Allentown area. Call for directions and more information, 610-821-2955.

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

### Affiliates

#### California

**Orange County:** Powder Puffs of California, PO Box 1088, Yorba Linda, CA 92686, or email to <ppoc@aol.com>

#### Connecticut

**Bridgeport/New Haven:** connecticutView, c/o Denise Mason, PO Box 2281, Devon, CT 06460. Monthly newsletter and activities.

#### Georgia

**Atlanta:** The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 770-939-0244, or email to <aegis@mindspring.com>. Information resources & referrals.

**Atlanta:** Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 770-939-2128.

#### Illinois

**Chicago:** The Chicago Gender Society, PO Box 578005, Chicago, IL 60657, 708-863-7714.

#### Louisiana

**New Orleans:** The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 56836, New Orleans, LA 70156-6836, 504-833-3046.

#### New Jersey

**N. Central Jersey:** Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Call 908-219-9094. Email: [redacted]@aol.com

**Titusville:** Meetings are 1st Saturday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing. Call Terri [redacted] at 609-[redacted].

#### New York

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

**Long Island:** New York GIRL & Partners, PO Box 456, Centereach, NY 11720, Call 516-732-5115 for info.

**Long Island:** Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE), PO Box 3015, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY 11779-0147. Phone: 516-283-1333

#### Oklahoma

**Central Oklahoma:** Sooner Diversity, part of the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance (COTA). Contact, Rachel [redacted], P.O. Box 575, Norman, OK 73070.

#### Electronic Subscriptions

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## Renaissance News & Views

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Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the transgender community and the general public. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, make your check or M.O., payable to Renaissance and send it to our National office. Your contributions will help us continue our efforts to provide education about transgender issues. Donations can also be made through your local United Way agency.

#### Local Calendar

##### November

- 2 Ren. LSV meeting
- 2 New Jersey Support
- 9 Ren. Lehigh Valley
- 9 Ren. Delaware
- 16 Ren. GPC

##### December

- 7 Ren. LSV
- 7 MOTG - Dr. Stanley Biber
- 14 NJ Support
- 14 Ren. Lehigh Valley
- 14 Ren. Delaware
- 23 Ren. GPC Holiday Party

# News Beat & Reminder



by Angela Gardner

The Winter winds are blowing and soon it'll be time to slip into a skimpy fancy dress for the GPC Holiday Party at the Ship Inn. (That's December 23rd girls.) Why is it that we have to wear the spaghetti strap dresses to formal events in the Winter? Of course we do get to snuggle into a lovely fur (fake, of course) so we can stay warm and toasty. But now, here's the news.

## Weight Watchers Calling Miss Bunny

Last month, **Miss Lady Bunny** brought a crew of queens to the little glamma back water of Philly. The girls pulled into town in a bus from NYC with their traveling *Wigstock* review. Along with the queens, the bus was loaded with club kids from the Apple and it's enough to boggle the brain, just think of the looks they must have gotten on the New Jersey Turnpike. Not to mention the trailing cloud of hair spray and perfume.

The girls were performing at local hot spot, **Egypt**. Thousands, well, at least over a thousand, packed into the place to see the New York girls strut their stuff. Lady Bunny did the opening number and MC chores and she brought along the vocal talents of **Joey Arias** (in a black PVC cat suit, shades of Mrs. Peel), **Raven O** (who appeared with me in the final episode of *Ab Fab*) and a couple of other girls who lip sync'd and didn't make such a big impression on me.

Speaking of big impressions, I happened to be standing in the Ear Candy

room partaking of a lovely cocktail when the ladies and their security men passed by on the way to the stage. I realized they were the performers but I didn't recognize La Bunny at first. It could be a case of too much carrot cake, but whatever the cause, she ain't as slim as she is in photos I've seen. (Check out the *Wigstock* web site.)

Someone call **Richard Simmons**. But, her glamour is still active and I know the folks in the front row could see right up that short, short dress she was wearing. Now that's entertainment. (I didn't recognize Raven 'cause she was trimmed, toned and looking *fierce*.)

The crowd seemed to enjoy the show and applauded widely each time the girls used an expletive. Them New York queens sure do know how to cuss. They could work mother f\*\*\*er into a sentence more ways than I can count. It was a little disappointing cause it reminded me of **Eddie Murphy** using gutter language in his act back in the old days. The jokes weren't that funny without the shock value. These queens have talent. Joey and Raven have fine feminine singing voices and Lady Bunny sings too, and is busting with stage presence, and other things. To have them come out and do potty mouths wasn't too entertaining. So, cut out the foul language, you bitches!

Actually, I think they might have been a little uneasy about how the Philly crowd (Philadelphia is a major hick town in the minds of Manhattanites) would react to the show. It was something of an experi-

ment since Egypt is a firmly hetero venue for an appearance by a *Wigstock* review. All went well, though, and the stage was not trashed by the audience. I saw some interesting looks on the faces of the hets who showed up without a clue. "Hey, it's Thursday, let's go drinkin' at Egypt. Wonder if there's a show?" A *Wigstock* costume contest proceeded after the show and local girls got to strut their stuff.

Coming soon, on Nov. 7th, Egypt presents **RuPaul**, and the show had better be good, girlfriend. They're asking \$20 at the door. Don't worry, I'll be on the guest list. What? Whaddya mean "there is no list, Miss Thing?"

They're trying to do something special every month on a Thursday. Coming in December, **Grace Jones**. You can call for info. The number is 215-922-6500. RuPaul night is a great chance to get out among the general public in a hot outfit. See ya there.

## What a Coincidence

The girls weren't only performing at Egypt, they were marketing. A bunch of folks in the NYC drag community, including the ladies who made the Philly trip, have gotten together a compact disc they call "The ultimate Drag Queen CD compilation!" They named it *God Shave The Queen* and it contains eleven drag classics from **Pussy Tourette**, **Lilly of The Valley**, **Ebony Jet** and the unforgettable **Varla Jean Merman**. I remember her song about show biz just like it was yesterday. Oh, that's Ethel Merman. Never mind.

It's on the *Swoon* label so wait till your nails dry and call your local record store. Unless you live in New York they probably won't have it, but you can call every day till they order it. If they don't, wear your *Wigstock* wig, five inch heels and micro mini to the store every day and browse through the discs till they are overwhelmed by your beauty and accede to your demands, or whatever.

## Did I Just Mention RuPaul?

I did, ya know, and America's favor-

*continued next page*

## News Beat...

ite six foot five queen has hit the airwaves, OK, the cable wires, with her new talk show on VH1. All I can tell you, since I don't have cable, (signals from space will capture your mental energy in a negative flux state, allowing the domination of the North American land mass by small insectoid creatures from Arcturus 6... or maybe I just can't afford it) is that her first guest was none other than – oh, it's just so perfect. I mean what a couple. Can't you just see their children? Oh, right. Guess she won't be having any kids, but still, they make a lovely couple and she can even look up to him. Who? Sorry, I got wrapped up in match making. Her first guest was **Dennis Rodman** – and – they kissed on the show. Reviewers gave the effort (the show, not the kiss) a B-. Good luck kids. Remember, I first speculated on a love match between Ru and Rodman sometime ago in these pages. With **Madonna** sinking into parenthood and frumpiness, someone's gotta take over in the tabloid press. Of course, with Rodman's proclivities, he'll probably screw it up by wearing Ru's dresses without permission and ripping the seams. If ya give a crossdresser an inch, honey...

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### Beauty Is Only Skin Deep

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I happened to come across a story on Gale Hayman and thought it had a few tips for girls like us. Ms. Hayman is the CEO of a major cosmetics company and appears regularly on QVC. (I had a friend who appeared there regularly, till security caught her and had her locked up.) Anyhow, she's written a book now. (Isn't it a wonder how these wealthy executives have so much time? Do you suppose they hire people to sleep and shower for them? Boy, do I digress.) The book is called *How Do I Look? From Confidence to Cosmetics: The Complete Guide to Inner and Outer Beauty* (Random House, \$24.95) and it promises to teach you

loads of Gales's fashion and beauty tips from the past 25 years. Well, now we know she's been around.

What attracted my eye and gives the whole thing a transgender twist is the publicity quote that says "Beauty is a skill you learn just like tennis and cooking – there isn't one woman who cannot have beautiful eyes and beautiful lips. Take Barbra Streisand, Sophia Loren, Goldie Hawn – they are not conventional beauties, but they have learned the tricks."

It is something you have to learn, and since most of us start with a natural handicap, we're guys, we have to work harder at it, but the results can be just as glamorous. If you substitute the word "crossdresser" for the word "woman" most of this book can apply to you. Yes dear, with a little practice you can be a beauty. Well, some will need a lot of practice, but for us even the practice is fun. Hand me that lip liner, would ya?

Speaking of lip liner, Gale says most women have their lip line wrong. (Are you talkin' to me, punk?) She says you should be sure to round off the top of the lip. I know I always manage to get one side higher and if I don't watch out I get into a vicious cycle where I fix one side, then the other side is low so I fix that, and so on. After a bit I end up with a lip bigger than Mick Jagger's.

Ms. Hayman's most intriguing tip? Crisco is a great makeup remover. And if you're hungry you can use it to fry up the egg whites she recommends for reducing wrinkles.

But seriously folks, it's stuffed with 800 numbers to help you order beauty supplies and it full of color charts and other beauty related stuff. I might even pick up a copy just to prove you can teach an old editor new tricks.

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### Whoopi Goldberg: Gender Bender?

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How about Miss Whoopi Goldberg? She's got a new picture, called *The Associate*, in which she not only changes gender, she changes race. She's done a lot in film, from a psychic to a nun, but this time she becomes an old white

guy. Here's the poop on the plot: Laurel Ayers (the Whoopster) is a top notch financial analyst with more brains than most of the men she works with. She's fed up with playing the corporate game to get ahead, and when she doesn't get a well-deserved promotion, Laurel decides the fairer sex has played fair long enough. She convinces everyone that she's formed a partnership with a powerful financial whiz. Dollar bills begin to multiply like bunnies and the financial world is a twitter over who her enigmatic associate just might be. Of course, all the comedy ensues. Along for the ride are **Dianne Wiest, Tim Daly, Bebe Neuwirth, Lainie Kazan, Austin Pendleton, George Martin** and **Eli Wallach**.

Don't expect to see a lot of Whoopi as a guy, they build up to the big finish, but do expect to see a movie about that old phenomena know as gender roles.

Whoopi is keeping busy these days preparing to take over **Nathan Lane's** role in Broadway's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* from February eleventh to June twenty ninth. They don't even know how they're going to fit her into what was written as a male role but with Nathan's experience as a femme and Whoopi's time as an old guy, they oughta be able to come up with some gender variation that will fit the bill. In any event, it should prove interesting.

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### What A Pest

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At last, some solid dish on the new **John Leguizamo** film *The Pest*. Leguizamo plays Pestario "Pest" Vargas, a Latin scam-artist who is offered a deal he can't refuse. He owes a lot of cash to an unlikely cartel... the Scottish Mafia ... and so Pest accepts a fifty thousand dollar "scholarship" offered from the enigmatic Gustav (Jeffrey Jones). In order to win the "scholarship," Pest has to join Gustav on an island hunt. There he discovers that he's the one being hunted. Oh no, will our hero provide the last human head necessary to complete Gustav's trophy collection? No way! Well, he still could 'cause he's further enticed by an offer



of one million dollars if he successfully manages to survive 24 hours of the hunt. In a race against time and the elements, Pest escapes the island and returns to his home turf of Miami where Gustav continues the hunt which leads to an insane series of events that unfold in Miami's South Beach section. Pest adopts a variety of disguises as he attempts to escape trophydom and pay of the kilted mob. "Feed him a haggis he can't refuse." It's arriving in a theater near you this month.

### My Dinner With Leslie

I just got back from dinner at Lips in the Big Apple with my friend and fellow Renaissance member, Leslie, and I ate Lady Bunny. (Oh stop, it's the name of the dish.) All the menu items at Lips are named for NYC drag artistes, and let me tell you, Miss Bunny was delicious. The place isn't as large as I thought it would be and the staff do lip sync shows right there among the tables. Watch out for flying sequins landing in your food and do try to pay attention to the ladies as they perform. They get annoyed when people continue their dinner chat while the show is on. Since they also have control over the contents of your plate it's a good idea to look attentive.

Also, if you don't like being the center of attention, Lips may not be for you. While we were waiting to be seated there were people outside pressing their curious little noses to the window in an effort to see what was going on. The crowd inside is a de-

lightful mix of gay, straight and cross-dressed. For more info pick up a copy of *LadyLike* #28 from CDS which has a review and color photos of the staff.

### Boise Blossoms

There's a new group out there in genderland. Let's all welcome the Boise Bloomers to the support group list. If you folks in Boise, Idaho, want to stop reading stuff like this about wearing dresses and start getting out of the house in your own dress, these are the folks you should call, or email. Boise Bloomers, c/o Elizabeth P., 582 E. Boise Avenue, Box 153, Boise, Idaho 83706, 208-388-3864, email [redacted]@rmci.net>.

They call themselves a "inclusive transgender social support group for (the) gender gifted." Well, I'll go along with "differently gendered" but this "gender gifted" thing sounds like it comes wrapped with ribbons and colorful paper. However you identify it, if you want some like-minded folks to talk it over with, get out and meet the Bloomers. They get together on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month.

### Turning Japanese

A few months ago Japanese drag journalist Zil Nakamura visited a Renaissance Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting and, oh, I'm trying not to reinforce any stereotypes here but... she took photos.

Then, one day the mail brought us a copy of the Japanese crossdressing magazine *Queen*. There for all to see

were the ladies of Renaissance, including a certain Miss Gardner who looked like she needed a nap. I'd love to say the accompanying article was well written and highly complimentary, (and it probably was), but it's all in Japanese. Zil has promised a translation and when it arrives we'll put it with the magazine so everyone knows what she said.

And so, don't forget to vote, take a veteran to lunch and have a happy Thanksgiving. See ya in December.



### CLASSIFIEDS

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Mi casa es su casa. Need a place to change before the Renaissance GPC meeting? The perfect location awaits you just off exit 33 Rt. 76. Call CDTips 215-878-3383.

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# Even Genetic Girls Get the Blues

by E. [REDACTED]

Pity the poor partner. Not in every case, mind you; some women deal very well with their loved one's crossdressing. But all too often, this unusual pastime puts a strain on even the most solid of relationships. Unfortunately, many women are so uncomfortable, embarrassed, or simply confused about their partner's activities that they don't know how or where to seek help. Ideally, a woman should be able to discuss her problems with others who share them and can offer, if not insights, then at least a measure of sympathy and solidarity. That's where significant-other support groups come in.

When I attended an S.O. meeting, I found that it helped immensely to speak to other women who were experiencing some of the same difficulties, fears, and frustrations I was. Although few solutions were offered, it felt good to engage in the age-old sport of complaining about men, albeit with a different twist (e.g., "I hate it when he uses my makeup.") If nothing else, it was comforting to find out I wasn't the only one experiencing certain problems.

I asked veteran support-group activist Ginny Knuth to list the topics which come up most frequently in support groups for S.O.'s of crossdressing. These issues are listed below, along with some of my own solutions for handling them. I realize that every couple is different: a coping strategy that works for me might be completely inappropriate for someone else; an issue that I see as a serious problem might be trivial to other women; and, conversely, a topic that I gloss over – or even omit – might be a burning issue for other couples. I don't claim to be the Dear Abby of the transgendered community. I'm just trying to do whatever I can to help the S.O. cope with the puzzling persona of her other half's other-self.

If you're the crossdresser half of a couple, perhaps the following list will help you gain an insight or two into some of the issues your partner is dealing with. (A word to the wise – many

women, for one reason or another, are very stoic about their emotional suffering; she may be in more pain than you realize.) If you're the partner of a crossdresser, maybe you'll relate to some of these questions and complaints. If any of these ring a bell, perhaps this article can stimulate some discussion between partners.

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## **I don't understand why he does this. Am I not "feminine" enough for him?**

This question nagged at me when I first found out about my husband's crossdressing proclivities. I've been a tomboy from the get-go; my idea of dressing up is to wear my polished cowboy boots rather than my manure-encrusted ones. I thought perhaps I'd failed in the femininity department and my husband felt compelled to make up for it in his own bizarre way. Fortunately, my therapist set me straight. She told me that no one fully understands why men crossdress, but that it is not in any way their partner's fault – crossdressing men are not trying to compensate for a lack of femininity in their household. Female partners of crossdressers run the gamut from ultra-feminine, Laura-Ashley-clad women to cigar-chompin', blue-jeans-wearing tough gals. There is no correlation between a woman's perceived femininity and her partner's desire to dress as a woman.

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## **His crossdressing activities take up time that used to be/could be spent with me. I'm lonely.**

I was feeling decidedly left out as my husband went to countless meetings, conventions, and various social events that I didn't care to attend. I have to hand it to him, though. He came up with an ingenious solution: he bought me a horse. I've wanted to own a horse ever since I was a kid, and finally I had a hobby/obsession that I could immerse myself in as much as he was immersing himself in his new lifestyle. Obviously, I can't prescribe horses for every neglected spouse or

spouse equivalent. But perhaps you can act on some long-submerged dream that you've wanted to pursue, be it a hobby, a career, or a project. Don't just sit around and feel lonesome when he goes out with the "girls." Pursue your own interests and you'll feel a lot better.

Of course, a parallel obsession isn't a very good recipe for a happy relationship. Couples need to do things together, too, or what's the point of being a couple? After mulling it over for some time, we came up with a project we both enjoy: building a garden railroad in our backyard (he lays the track, I do the landscaping). Perhaps you can come up with a fun project you can work on together. If not, make sure you schedule time for activities as a couple, even if it's as simple as going out to dinner and a movie. It helps.

If you're feeling lonely and neglected, tell him. My husband, especially in the first few months of his crossdressing spree, was having such a good time that he didn't even realize how miserable and alone I felt. After a few gentle (and not-so-gentle) reminders that I liked to do things with him, he made a point of spending more time with me.

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## **I miss the presence of men. I'm sick of hearing him giggle on the phone with his "girlfriends."**

I don't know about you, fellow genetic girls, but part of the reason I got married was to have a man around the house. As much as I malign men when I'm with my girlfriends, I like many aspects of the masculine sex. I find that men provide a nice counterpoint to the feminine world; yin and yang and all that. Once my husband "came out," however, he became very involved in the transgendered community; he made new friends and helped out with numerous projects. Not only did I have to watch him prancing around the house in lovely frocks, I had to listen to

*continued on page 16*

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Fame in our society is just a matter of being in the right place at the right time. Like the kid who caught the "home run" in the Yankees-Orioles game. Within twenty-four hours, the kid was booked on four nationally broadcast talk shows. You can't get that kind of exposure if you give Presidential secrets to your call girl mistress. A million dollar book advance, maybe, but four national talk shows? Never.

But imagine how great it would have been for our cause if instead of a nine year old kid, the home run was caught by... a crossdresser. Perhaps trapped right in the basket of her faux cleavage, or permanently stuck in the lacquer of her wig spray. Four talk shows later... but wait, no, I have a feeling the ump would've reversed his call. Fan interference, indeed. It makes me so mad I could just... spit.

#### **PASSING...AWAY**

In the past couple of months as I perused the newsletters we receive from dozens of groups from as far away as Australia and New Zealand, I noticed something I haven't seen in the three years that I've been doing this column: death notices.

There were five or six obituaries for departed members in several support group newsletters from the summer months. The death notices I'm referring to were all resulting from natural causes, not the recent spate of fatal violence against transgendered folk. While obituaries do not make for joyful feelings, their appearances (especially in the multiples in which they showed up recently) do mark an advance of sorts for our community.

Firstly, it speaks to the staying power of the organized crossdressing/transgendered community, which is now thirty something years old. Sadly, perhaps, we are all getting older and members who may have started out at any time during the past three decades are now at the age where natural deaths are taking their toll.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the passing of the deceased members was known to the other members of the groups to which they belonged. Death is a personal thing and there has always been a guarded separateness that many of us maintain between our crossdressing activities and our other lives. That the departed members did not just fade away to be remembered only by their families and "regular" friends, is a testament to the bond developed by members to their groups and vice versa. It should be some small comfort to know that when we shuffle off this mortal coil, we will be remembered by our support group sisters, not merely a question of "whatever happened to good old so and so?"

To our departed members we can wish them eternal happiness - and the highest heels in which only heavenly bodies can walk. And for those of us still breathing, we can congratulate ourselves for maturing to the point that we can now recognize the ultimate "passing."

#### **AN INQUIRING MIND WANTS TO KNOW**

*Fiestal* is the newsletter of the Albuquerque, N.M., chapter of Tri-Ess. One of their faithful is Vicky A. and she is the inquisitive type. You may re-

member that I wrote about another of Vicky's litany of questions in a piece titled "You Got Questions, We Got Answers" some months ago.

Well, her interrogative self is back in *Fiestal's* September issue with questions for one of her New Mexico sisters who recently transitioned to full-time.

There are so many interesting questions one can ask someone who has taken the huge step of living full-time on the road to SRS. Unfortunately, Vicky is not to be mistaken for Edward R. Murrow. Her questions are a bit more — well, let's just take a look...

Vicky sets the tone right at the outset. Her first question to a friend taking the big step is: "What is it like to wear lingerie everyday?" Hey don't laugh. She's plumbing the depths of transsexuality here, looking for answers, and you can be damned sure your therapist won't get that deep on the first interrogation. And any great interviewer will always have tough follow-up questions ready. Vicky makes like Sam Donaldson in the East Room of the White House as she fires away. "Will you get tired of putting on makeup every morning? And will you go to permanent makeup for your eyebrows and lips? How long did the electrolysis take to remove your facial hair? Have you gotten the results that you expected from the hormone therapy? Has your skin softened, have you added inches to your hips, have your breasts enlarged?" Geez, Vicky! Take a breath. I thought for sure her next question was going to be, "What did the President know — and when did he know it?"

Marsha is the name of the person to whom Vicky addressed her barrage of questions, and her response was poised and did not sink to answering such inane queries. Instead, she used the forum to talk about the types of things that anyone contemplating a full-time transition would really be interested in knowing: topics like family, intimate relationships, self-actualization, and the search for wholeness of self. We never do find out what it's like to wear lingerie everyday — but we do get a sensitive and thoughtful essay on one

person's journey to self fulfillment.

We can laugh a little bit at Vicky's insensitive line of questioning, but it also points out the huge gap separating the serious transsexual from the wannabe's — or crossdressers who think that maybe they ought to "become" transsexuals. If the most pressing question you can formulate about living full-time as a woman is "What is it like to wear lingerie everyday?" then you're probably a crossdresser, period. And there's nothing wrong with that, Vicky. Many of us lead fulfilling lives even though, sadly, we do not wear lingerie every day.

### WORKS IN PROGRESS

I count myself as one of the millions of devoted Beatles' fans who believe that no other musical group achieved as much artistic growth in such a relatively short career as those four "lads." And I now have the first two installments of their "Anthology" recordings in my arsenal of Beatle stuff.

As I listened to these old studio "first takes" and unreleased versions of their well-known songs, one thing struck me as none of their released albums ever did: the Beatles could suck and sound as flat as any bar band in their rehearsals. To a true fan, though, the rough texture of their playing as they worked out the songs that everyone would shortly be snapping up by the millions, only makes their magic greater. And the contribution of their producer, George Martin, in whipping the songs into releasable shape becomes incalculable.

A couple of things become clear when listening to the "Anthology" cuts. The Beatles were not virtuosos on their instruments and many individual rock stars have been greater guitarists and drummers than the members of the Beatles. Still, they could come together to create something that was greater than the sum of the parts, especially considering the ancient recording technology of the early to late sixties in which they worked. And individually, they all brought something unique to the mix. John, who had one of the great soulful rock and roll voices

on their early hits, traded that in to write highly personal and inventive songs that remain timeless to this day. George, working practically as a solo act within the confines of the group, did more with his limited allowance than any star of his era. Ringo could surprise a careful listener every so often by laying down a groove that was as inventive and funky as any of the drummers who might have been able to eat his lunch on other days. And Paul, who wrote so many of their greatest hits and gave the group its most visible voice and image over the years, has never equaled his work in the Beatles with anything he's done in the twenty years since they broke up.

What does any of this have to do with crossdressing, you're wondering? Well, as I listen to the rough hewn studio takes, and marvel at how such limited musicians ever became so wildly popular, it occurred to me that many of us — like the Beatles in the studio — are works in progress. We sit at the makeup table in the same way the boys from Liverpool sat at their instruments, with an idea in our heads, a vision of what we'd like to see on completion. We hope that somehow, some way, we will be able to make our hands carry out the grand designs we imagine. Sometimes we carry it off. Other times, we hit a few sour notes and the product isn't quite as good as we had hoped. But always, we keep at it, refining the technique, in the hope that we will work it into something we can release to the public.

One obvious difference between the Beatles and crossdressers is that we don't have a George Martin to guide us in our choices, or edit our mistakes into a thing of beauty. But we do have each other, as well as the innumerable resources of our community, to help us along as we write our individual masterpieces. So take a sad song... and make it better.

### THE INVISIBLE CROSSDRESSERS

The *Help Me, Accept Me* newsletter of Dallas, Texas, reprinted an article by Anne Vitale Ph.D., titled "When

Crossdressing is No Longer Enough."

Dr. Vitale's article deals with the invisible crossdressers in society. These are the men who have long fought their urge to crossdress and have sublimated their desires by denying themselves the chance to crossdress and perhaps have grown facial hair or put on weight as a visible reminder that they cannot be feminine.

They may harbor feelings that their urge to crossdress is perverted. Their spouses may be aware of their desire to crossdress but the individual feels too much shame to act on his desire. The result of the sublimation of such strong desire is depression. Dr. Vitale writes that often she is contacted by a wife who recognizes that her husband's depression stems from his suppressed desire to crossdress.

One very interesting insight mentioned in this article was that the men were afraid that their desire to crossdress was so overwhelming that if they gave themselves an inch... they would take a mile. That is a sentiment with which most of us who do crossdress regularly can identify. Many of us in marriages do need to measure out our crossdressing so as not to disrupt the balance of the relationship. Many of the stories of divorce in our community will acknowledge that the relationship foundered on the shoals of selfishness as the crossdressing partner became too wrapped up in the expression of the feminine side to the detriment of a balanced relationship.

It is also important for those of us in the organized crossdressing community to realize that many of the new faces we see at group meetings, perhaps not crossdressed, or in "half and half" feminine garb, are often struggling with this condition themselves. Too often these visitors are ignored by the regulars and leave with only a reinforcement of their belief that they do not fit in. We know what we ought to do — and I'm as guilty as the next person in this regard — but an effort should be made to make newcomers feel welcome. It's called support and the price can be as little as a smile.

*continued on page 15*



## From The Renaissance Library

"We are our own topic of discussion" seemed to be the basic theme of the second meeting of Discussion Plus, the ongoing discussion group sponsored by the Renaissance Library and conducted by our National Librarian, Dr. Lee Etscovitz. The group, which met on Wednesday, October 2, 1996, spent more of its time on the "plus" aspect of the discussion than on news items in *News & Views*. But that is the purpose of these meetings, namely, to provide participants with an opportunity to talk about their own transgender situations, if they wish, sometimes in terms of the *News & Views* articles, or perhaps in terms of gender-related books, many of which are available in the Renaissance library. With the help of professionally trained facilitators, the discussion can encompass the interests and concerns of a wide variety of participants in a way which involves the whole group.

Assisting Dr. Etscovitz in the future will be another member of Renaissance, Ms. Gloria Vogel, who is also a professionally trained group facilitator. These meetings are scheduled for the first Wednesday of every other month from 8 PM to 9:30 PM. at The Woods, where Greater Philadelphia Chapter meets each month. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 4, 1996. Everyone is welcome, including significant others. There is no charge. As with the monthly chapter meetings, personal appearance is a matter of personal choice.



## Gender Reflections Gender Reflections

by **Barbara F. Anderson**  
**M.S.W., Ph.D.**

### Sisters & Brothers

Jogged by a column in the Diablo Valley Girls newsletter *Devil Woman* (March 1995) I began to think about the question of whether crossdressers experience the bonding in sisterhood that women presumably do. This question embraces female crossdressers and the brotherhood they may seek.

In my experience of working with transgender clients of every stripe, I have observed that the sense of community that some crossdressers experience comes late in life, if at all, and only to the very lucky ones. Even those individuals who accept their transgender inclinations in their youth, rarely are comfortable or knowledgeable enough to seek out others who share their interests and needs. Non-transgendered women and men, on the other hand, learn early that those of their gender have much to teach them and almost instinctively gravitate to those like themselves.

However, male and female crossdressers often can not avail themselves of this experience. They frequently feel inadequate and unacceptable to those of their gender as well as to

those of the opposite. The gender bonding experience may pass them by and they frequently report feelings such as "standing on the outside looking in," or "never belonging anywhere." By the time they learn of a community of individuals like themselves, many have accommodated to a lifestyle of self-sufficiency, independence and even isolation.

But is it too late once in adulthood to find and join a community of "brothers" or "sisters?" Successful gender-oriented organizations such as ETVC, DVG and FTM suggest that all through the life-cycle people yearn to belong, to fit in and to communicate with others like themselves. Whether or not they do so depends on many factors such as an available community, the presence of supportive individuals in the crossdresser's life, his/her social skills and motivation to risk coming out in an unfamiliar environment. Those of you who enjoy the experience of brother/sisterhood are indeed the lucky few — those of you still in the shadows may need more time, more help, and more courage.



## 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. Understanding Transsexualism

### Significant Other Support

To network with other partners of transgendered people contact Evelyn Kirkland, 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, PA 19087.

### Pen Pal Program

If you would like to correspond with other people around the country, contact PenPals, attention Georgia [redacted], PO Box 10723, Midwest City, OK 73140-1723 or email to: [redacted]@compuserve.com>



# Dear Doctor

*Dr. William R. Stayton answers your questions in a regular column.*

*Send questions to PO Box 530, Bensalem, Pa. 19020*

Dear Dr. Bill,

I am a male to female transsexual and preparing to begin my transition. My wife has stood by me through the trying times of self-discovery and exploration that I have gone through.

Now that I have decided to transition we are faced with one more question. Will we have to get divorced? She is willing to stay my spouse (the word we will use instead of "husband" or "wife") and I want her to continue to have all the legal benefits available to any other spouse. What can you tell us concerning the necessity of a divorce?

Judith

Dear Judith,

Different lawyers will give you different advice regarding the answer. Technically, if you are going to have your birth certificate changed, the state may not do it until you have a divorce decree because the government "officially" does not accept the legality of a same-sex marriage. Some surgeons also will not operate until there is a divorce decree because of the fear of being sued later on. I know a number of people in your situation. Some have not divorced and hope it will never become an issue. Others divorce but name their spouse as beneficiary of all their insurance policies. Another option, if your workplace does not now offer domestic partnership benefits, is to influence your employer to provide such benefits. Now that several major corporations, such as Disney and IBM [See the story on IBM this issue - Ed.], have these agreements, it is going to become much more common in the workplace.

I would recommend you seek a legal referral through one of the transgender

organizations so you can get good legal advice from a lawyer who is familiar with this section of the law. Good luck.

Dear Dr. Bill,

As a crossdresser one of my greatest thrills is to be addressed as "Miss," or when out with a female companion, hear a maitre'd say, "This way ladies," as he leads us to our table.

It seems to me that lately I have been hearing the lovely things I like to hear more often. I guess the question I have is, am I hearing this more often because of my greater skills at passing, or are the people I deal with in public becoming more aware and tolerant of tg people?

Elaine

Dear Elaine,

Both of your suggestions could be the correct answer. The more you go out and become comfortable, the more likely you are passing unrecognized. The more expert you become with makeup, the more your mannerisms become feminine, and the more you dress as biological females dress in the same environment you are in, the more difficult it will be to "read" you. The more stereotypical of extreme femininity you dress, with wild hairdos, the more difficult it will be to pass, because the person who sees you will be trying to put you into a box, saying is she a hooker or is she a he? In other words, the less you draw attention to yourself, the more easy it is to "pass."

The other side of the story is that more and more people are hearing about or being exposed to transgendered persons. Many times they do not want to draw attention to the transgendered person so they treat that person as they would any other person.


## Burlington Rally For CD'ing Teen

[Burlington, VT - October 5, 1996]

As dozens of local supporters sprawled across the lawn, a procession of speakers mounted the front steps of the downtown Unitarian Universalist Church to voice their fervent support and concern for suspended crossdressing teen Matthew Stickney. Posters declaring "Support Our GenderQueer Youth," "Freedom of Gender Expression!" and "Liberty, Freedom, & Pleats" framed the church doors. During the event demonstrators handed out hundreds of fliers to the amused and often supportive local crowds enjoying a warm Saturday afternoon in this quiet New England town.

Stickney, who identifies variously with gay, drag, and crossdressing, was suspended from Burlington High School September 9th when he wore a dress to class. He stated it was his way of showing pride in his identity. But after he was verbally assaulted by other students, the principal said Stickney was "creating a disturbance," and demanded he change his attire. A series of confrontations ensued, which led to Stickney's suspension. The case quickly attracted media attention as one of a growing number of incidents involving transgender and gender-queer youth. Stickney responded by going into hiding. He has not returned to school or appeared in public since, and at the rally it was two of his high school friends who spoke on his behalf and took a black Menace T-shirt for him as a keepsake.

Jane Ellen Fairfax of Tri-Ess, the nation's largest crossdressing organization and a rally sponsor said, "This is not about one high school student, but about *everyone's* basic right to express gender without the fear of harassment, hate-speech, or punishment. Whether you are straight or gay makes no difference: wearing a dress is not grounds for intolerance or bigotry."

The event was organized several Transsexual Menace activists and supported by a spectrum of groups. 

# Hot • Buzz

## JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



*"Nothing changes more constantly than the past; for the past that influences our lives does not consist of what happened, but of what men believe happened." — Gerald W. Johnston*

Every community has its share of rehistorians; those who want to rewrite history after the fact and our community is not spared. Faithful readers saw the announcement last August for the **Second National Transgender Lobby Days** sponsored by **GPAC**. But, floating around the community recently is an announcement by **Phyllis Frye (ICTLEP)** of a "third" national transgender lobby day. The only problem is this "third" event takes place *before* the official **GPAC** event. Ms. Frye has decided that a visit to Washington, D.C., in March 1995 made by herself and two other transgendered people with two spouses constituted a "first" national transgender lobby day. Consequently, the event that took place last October must have been the "second," and an upcoming visit to D.C. by Ms. Frye, therefore, is the "third" and, finally, the **GPAC** sponsored event, since it is last temporally, must be the "fourth" transgender lobby day. Now, I'm all for giving credit where credit is due, but that visit in March 1995 was no more a national event than is a regular meeting of a Renaissance chapter. *RN&V* ran an extensive two-part article by Ms. Frye about

**ICTLEP's** 1995 activities in the January and February 1995 issues. There was no mention of a "national" transgender lobby day. I am reminded of a puzzle: If you consider the tail as a leg, how many legs does a dog have? A: Four: because no matter what you say, a tail is *not* a leg. So, let's be clear. The **Second National Transgender Lobby Days** sponsored by **GPAC** will be held May 5-6, 1997. Any other event can call itself anything it likes, but I know a tail from a leg.

Most people think the staff announcement last month from the **International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE)** was the big news I mentioned in September. That was only the beginning. There are more personnel changes to come in 1997. But looming larger on the horizon is a possible move. The lease on their building, the **Great White Elephant**, is up soon and the **IFGE** board has to decide if it wants to move into new digs or stay put and it's getting later every day. Either way, it's going to cost them more money than they can rightfully afford. The old lease has been the single largest drain on **IFGE's** revenue over the last four years.

We've got two major meetings this month, within a week of each other. First, there is the **GPAC Mobilization** meeting in King of Prussia, Pa., on the 2nd and 3rd of this month. Looks like every major organization is sending a rep. Let's hope they actually get some work done. Following the **GPAC** meeting on the 7th through the 10th is the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's **Creating Change Conference** in Washington, D.C. What's cool about **Creating Change** is that the **NGLTF** has woven the transgendered community seamlessly into its programs.

While **NGLTF** has embraced the transgender community, other gay and lesbian organizations are trying to co-opt transgendered people. I find this an in-

teresting, new way of being exploited. I get lots of email messages over the net and some of them are from gay/lesbian online services that are trying to create web-based communities. Several of these services are targeting transgendered people. So, I go and visit their sites and guess what? There's little of interest to a transgendered person. I mean they don't even have an event calendar. So, why should I bother if they don't take the time to dig up information and resources that would be of interest to me and my sisters? Besides, there's no reason to look anywhere else for tg resource information on the www than at <<http://www.tgfmall.com>> and it's free.

Some of you called to let me know you'd seen me on **Cinemax**. Well, you can imagine how surprised I was. Over two years ago, many Renaissance members cooperated with a pair of film makers from New York, **Ellen Sherman** and **Peter Schwartz**, to help make a documentary on crossdressers. That film, *All Dressed Up And No Place To Go* was released on **Cinemax**, October 17, and will go on to compete in several international film festivals. I don't know if it will be commercially available, but if there's any way to get a copy I'll let you know.

Hey, what's Dec. 7th? Yes, Pearl Harbor Day, but what else? It's the day that **Dr. Stanley Biber** will be giving a seminar on MtF and FtM surgery over in Neptune, New Jersey. Dr. Biber's visit is sponsored by **MOTG**. Tickets are \$15 and include beverages and munchies. A video is being made of the seminar in case you can't make it. For more info contact Vikki at <[vikkimotg@aol.com](mailto:vikkimotg@aol.com)> or call **MOTG** at 908-219-9094.

A new tg-owned business started up in the San Francisco Bay Area last September. **Crossers** is a store for crossdressers and sells clothes, wigs, shoes, jewelry, accessories, makeup, and beauty supplies. **Crossers** is owned and operated by

# HOT•BUZZ

**Angie Fedor** (tg) and her sister **Carla Blair** (gg). Carla is also a cosmetologist who does makeovers, makeup lessons, hair styling, nails, and wig restyling. The store is located at 3110 Impala Drive, in San Jose (near Winchester & Hamilton), Calif. At present, they are open every day except Monday. Their hours may be changing, so it is advised to call ahead: 408-378-1003 or send them email at <crossers@webnexus.com>.

Just when you think all the hype about **RuPaul** is over, it ain't. The SuperQueen has a talk show that premiered on cable's **VH-1** October 12. Guest scheduled so far are **Dennis Rodman** (oh, a fashion fight!), **Whoppi Goldberg**, **Cher** and lots more. This could be interesting.

Closer to home (Phila.), there's a new club in Reading, Pa., called **Excentrix** which features drag shows. It's at 124 N 4th St. Call for details 610-376-4650.

I need some help in locating a resource so I'm appealing to my reading audience. I need to find people who can do **sign language** interpretation for the **Second International Congress on Sex & Gender Issues** in June of 1997. Ideally, I'm looking for volunteers. If you can sign or you know someone who signs, please contact me, immediately.

Okay, onto the good stuff... **Chanel** has taken **Vamp** to the max. They have introduced an entire eponymous (look it up, it's good for your brain) line of makeup based on the blood-red lipstick. You can have it all, lipstick, blush, polish, even mascara. What, no foundation? It would've been great for Hallowe'en. Price range from \$15 to \$45.

For those of you who like the **Hard Candy** nail polishes, you now have lipsticks to match the nail colors. About \$16 each for Scam, Sky, Pussy Cat, Nymph, Gold Digger, and Trailer Trash.

**Prescriptives** made news with its colorprinting technique to match foundation to skin tone. Now they claim to

have a foundation unlike any other on the market. **Virtual Skin** is said to fuse with real skin to give the most natural looking makeup coverage. About \$28.

Sometime ago I mentioned the Curves breast enhancers as a possible alternative to more expensive breastforms. So, now I found an ad for **Silicone Cup-Enhancers** that will add up to 1½ cup sizes to your figure for just less than \$50. I ordered a pair, so I'll give you a report next month. But if you can't wait, you can order your own set from 800-345-6602. Ask for item CE in medium or large.

**Pamela Anderson Lee** inherits the title of best female impersonator in Hollywood from **Marilyn Monroe**, altho Ms. Lee doesn't have the talent of Ms. Monroe. What she does have a lot of is readily apparent in the movie **Barb Wire** now playing on Pay Per View and soon to hit the video stores. The movie is every teenaged boy's wet dream. I also caught part of a movie called **Synapse** with the plot line of a young man's brain (or memory) is transplanted into a female body. If anyone knows what the scoop is on this film, please let me know.

I'm down in the dumps (everybody say, "Awww.") because I'm looking at an ad for **Olga Secret Shapers** and not one of the models needs to wear the stuff. I quit smoking two months ago and gained 12 pounds, just enough to make my clothes not quite fit. But I'm better off not smoking and I got my son to quit too. I'm off on an exercise kick and using my **Nordic Track** for its intended purpose instead of a coat rack. Wish me luck!

What do you do with the last little bit of lipstick that remains in the tube? Makeup artists usually scoop it into a small compartment or tray where they can mix it with other colors. Now you can do the same with a paintbox from **Japonesque**. The boxes come in 6 (\$12) or 12 (\$16) compartment styles and include a brush and spatula. Call 800-955-6662, or write them at PO Box 644, Sausalito, CA 94966. Or, go to your local **General Nutrition Center** and pick up a vitamin box for \$1.99.

We could have told them this. According to a recent survey, the city that buys the most **lipstick** and **eyeliner** per capita is... ta dah! **San Francisco**. Other beauty factoids... Region where women are most likely to use hair spray — the South and up to 75% of women use it... Region where women paint their nails most frequently — the South; favorite **Estée Lauder** colors: Red Lips and Earthy Red.

It was bound to happen. When Drag Queens become media Divas and image is everything, **Lawn Makeup** is not all that surprising. Sold by **Global Star Products** of Oklahoma City, Okla., the spray makeup comes in several shades of green. There is no truth to the rumor that the company's CEO is none other than **Rachel Rudnick** of COTA fame.

My fave mag, **Allure**, can always be counted on to give me a chuckle and they did in last month's issue with an article called "In The Line of Beauty," which focused on testing common, everyday beauty items. For a test on false eyelashes, the editors dug up three New York Drag Queens, **Sherry Vine**, **Missstress Formika**, and **Candis Cayne**, for the road test. Well, who else would know better about false lashes? Kryolan B-1s are best. But what really sent me giggling was the road test on lipstick by nine gossip columnists, including **Michael Musto** of the **Village Voice**. **Revlon ColorStay** won top honor. A trick I learned from makeup maven **Jim Bridges** — using baby wipes to remove makeup — was also mentioned.

Maybe they've found the cure for racoon eyes. **Revlon** has announced **ColorStay Lashcolor** mascara. They say it won't migrate from your lashes to your skin no matter how oily your skin is. All of the Revlon ColorStay products deliver performance as advertised.

So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? Those who fail to learn from the past are doomed to repeat it. I know it's not original, but it's true. Comments? Write care of this publication or email them to [redacted]@cdspub.com>. © 1996 by Creative Design Services.

**Ms. Lee Etscovitz, Ed.D.**

# Making Sense Of It All

## Looking for Home (part 2)

As I look back upon those seemingly endless years of secret sadness (which I described in the first part of this two-part discussion), I can now see what it was that I needed, or thought I needed, in order to feel more at home in this world. I wanted someone to hear my silent screams and my inner frustration and to accept me for who I was and not for who I was supposed to be in the eyes of family and society. But, of course, no one could hear me, not even a therapist, especially if my feelings stayed hidden. My sense of inner despair and outer isolation was becoming so great that I increasingly contemplated ending it all in an effort to find my eternal home, where everything would supposedly be okay.

So what saved me? What did I do that I am now alive and well and eager to share my experiences and thoughts with others? How did I finally find my way home? And what is that home like? The answer is that I initially had to take a chance. I had to take it upon myself to do something about my inner and outer misery. I had to quit wallowing in my homelessness and somehow overcome the fear of being labeled "different" by family and friends. And so I started to look for a group or organization which might speak to my concerns and give me support in my quest for personal and social fulfillment.

The first significant stop on my road home was at a meeting of The Renaissance Education Association, a non-profit organization devoted to the support and education of members of the transgendered community. It was at Renaissance meetings that I discovered I was not all alone with my gender confusion. Aside from the particular organization I had joined (for there are many such organizations throughout the United States and the rest of the world, each with different strengths but all concerned about

transgendered people and their welfare), the point is that I had found other people with whom I could share my concerns and among whom I felt affirmed. I began to feel that the world was not as cold as I had imagined it to be. I had discovered a home away from home, or better yet, a home away from homelessness, a place where I felt supported in my gender struggle.

If Renaissance represented for me the possibility of an outer home as well as some measure of inner peace, it was gender therapy which really represented for me the discovery of an inner home. Shortly after joining Renaissance, I met JoAnn Roberts, one of that organization's founders, and mentioned to her that I needed more help in coming to grips with my gender confusion. She said in passing that, when it comes to gender confusion, "you have to name it and claim it." I built on that offhand remark and decided to consult Dr. William R. Stayton, a gender therapist.

One of the first things Dr. Stayton helped me to see was that my problem was not the gender confusion itself but rather my inability to accept it and to incorporate it meaningfully into my life as a whole. I now realize that self-recognition and self-acceptance usually precede social recognition and social acceptance. What amazes me about my search for a happier existence is that the very thing I had kept hidden, both from myself and from my therapists, was the very thing I am now enjoying: my own gender needs. I turned out to be my own answer. I want to mention that, in my therapy sessions, I felt like a real, feeling human being. I felt at home. My therapist actually heard me and did not bury my concerns beneath a mountain of theoretical concepts. My point is that there is therapy available to help, not hinder, the gender confused person and his or her families.

My life has been uphill since joining Renaissance and seeing Dr. Stayton. I find myself better able to deal with the normal precariousness of life, such as I described at the beginning of this two-part discussion. I feel a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life, and I am reaching out to people and participating in such groups as Renaissance as well as groups in society in general.

I do not mean to imply that there are no problems in all of this. Whether one is a transvestite, a transsexual, or some other gender variation, the task of integrating one's life, both personally and socially, is a real challenge. Facing that challenge with one's eyes open and in the company of supportive people can be exciting and fulfilling. It has been said that, "Home is where the heart is." Perhaps it is truer to say that, "Home *is* the heart." And then in the appropriate sharing of our transgendered hearts we may find the key to the larger home we are all seeking.



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## Blues...

his hour-long phone chats – business and social – with his gal pals. (Whether he's dressed up or not, he undergoes a metamorphosis when he talks on the phone to his transgendered friends. His voice goes a few notes higher, he giggles coyly, and tends to talk about girlish topics such as What to Wear. It drives me nuts.) Here are some ways I deal with crossdressing overload:

- I see that he closes the door to his office when he's on the phone, and I move to another part of the house, if necessary, to avoid listening to his half of the phone conversations.

- I speak up when I'm absolutely not in the mood for any thought, word, or deed that smacks of crossdressing. Sometimes I need a break – especially in my own house – and my husband is considerate enough to put away his clothes, makeup, newsletters, and other TV trappings when I need some time off.

- He lets me know in advance if he plans to invite his transgendered friends over to the house, so I can plan other activities if I'm not transgender-friendly that day.

- He recently got a post-office box, which should cut down on the number of Lane Bryant catalogs and other home-delivered reminders.

**I'm scared. I don't know where this is heading, and he's not able to tell me. Is he Bisexual? Gay? Transsexual? What?**

This is a tough issue for many couples, especially in the early "blow-out" stage, soon after the man admits he's a crossdresser. Often, he himself has no idea where his crossdressing will lead. Many men suppress or deny their crossdressing urges for years, so when they do finally allow themselves to partake of this activity, they're inundated with new feelings and emotions. From observing my husband during his early crossdressing days, I know that he was just as confused as I was about the whole phenomenon. Here's how we dealt with it.

- We read books and articles on the subject. These calmed many of my fears, pointing out that the majority of crossdressers are heterosexual men who for some reason derive pleasure from wearing women's clothing. Your mate is not likely to undergo a radical change of sexual orientation.

- We saw a therapist who specializes in crossdressers and people with gender-identity issues. (If you see a therapist, it's important to find one who has experience with this phenomenon, such as those who advertise in transgender organization newsletters.) We saw her as a couple and individually, and she skillfully steered us into talking about issues we had both found uncomfortable discussing at home.

- I attended a significant-others meeting. As mentioned earlier, it can be very helpful to talk to women who are going through the same turmoil.

- I went to a crossdresser support group. If you feel you can handle it, attend a meeting or support group for crossdressers. I've been attending the

monthly "rap sessions" of the Rainbow Gender Association for two years, and I've found that meeting my husband's friends and hearing them discuss their lives has proved quite valuable in helping me understand crossdressing. It takes a lot of nerve – especially at first – to go to one of these meetings, but I found most of the people there to be kind and gentle souls who are simply struggling to find out who they are.

### **I'm embarrassed. What will the neighbors think?**

I still haven't resolved this issue, so I'm in no position to offer advice. Perhaps another S.O. could write to this newsletter and give me some advice. I'd really prefer that the neighbors didn't know about my husband's alter ego – but I suppose they do if they've got eyes in their heads. I know I shouldn't be embarrassed, but that doesn't mean I'm not.

Meanwhile, I've asked my husband to try and exercise a little subtlety, such as not wearing lipstick and earrings when he drives out of the garage.

### **What if my family finds out?**

The strain of having one's parents visit for a week is bad enough without having to worry about mom finding a size 15 high heel under the couch. So far, when my folks have come to visit, the place has been sanitized for their protection. I'm sure they'll find out one of these days, but right now I'm not ready to tell them. My parents are fairly conservative, so I'm not sure

*continued on next page*

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## Blues...

they'd be up to the challenge of a son-in-law in a skirt. Besides, why do they need to know?

It's up to my husband whether he wants to tell his parents about himself. I've lobbied against it, because I fear it might simply hurt and puzzle them, rather than doing anything positive for family relations. Maybe I'm wrong. You're the best judge of your particular family situation.

### **I worry when he goes out. Who is he with? What is he doing? I fear for his safety.**

Safety, if you ask me, is a legitimate concern. I'm not sure that most men realize how vigilant women must be when they're out by themselves or with a group of female friends. Attacks on women – or facsimiles thereof – do happen, and many S.O.'s worry about their partner's well-being when he goes out. We also worry about gay-bashing, since your average drunken-yahoo-with-a-baseball-bat type no doubt thinks any man in drag is a

queer, and therefore fair game.

I've talked to my husband about this, and he has assured me that he never walks anywhere in the city alone at night. He carries a whistle and has a phone in his car in case of emergencies. I still worry, but I'm convinced he is aware that there are many unsavory characters out there.

Since he knows I worry when he's out late, we've made an arrangement whereby he tells me what time he expects to be home, and calls me if he's running late. This won't work for everyone (some people don't appreciate calls from drag bars at 2 a.m.), but if you're worried about him you should discuss the matter with him and see what you can come up with to allay some of your fears.

### **Our sex life has suffered. Sorry, but I'm not a lesbian.**

Well, I don't want to go into the gory details here, but I understand this is a common complaint. Although this topic is sometimes brought up in support groups, many women are reluctant to talk about it.

Talk to your partner about your feelings, and let him know if any aspect

of his behavior or appearance makes you uncomfortable. Many men are so thrilled with their newfound "other self" that they forget to take their partner's feelings into account. To compound the problem, some cross-dressing are convinced that their female persona invests them with added sensitivity and insight into the female mind. Perhaps they consider themselves more sensitive lovers when endowed with feminine attributes. Maybe some are, but if I'd wanted a lesbian lover, I would have hooked up with a lesbian (at least she wouldn't have chest-hair stubble!)

In addition to talking to your partner, I'd suggest seeing a therapist if you think it might help (as mentioned earlier, be sure to see someone who specializes in gender issues).

In summary, my advice to any suffering S.O.'s out there would be to talk to somebody about your problems, whether it's a therapist, a relative or close friend, or women in a support group. Most importantly, talk to your partner if any of these issues – or others – are bothering you. He can't help you if he doesn't know you're hurting.



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# Transgendered Doctors Publish in JAMA

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) has published a letter to the Editor entitled *Health Care Needs of Transgendered Patients* in its September 18, 1996 issue. The letter is authored by Anne Lawrence, MD, and co-signed by Joy Shaffer, MD, Wynelle Snow, MD, "Cat" Chase, MD, and Bo Headlam (Medical Student). All of the doctors identify as transgendered or transsexual, and are also members of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA).

In their letter, the doctors comment on the report *Health Care Needs of Gay Men and Lesbians in the United States*, by the AMA Council on Scientific Affairs. They stress the overlap between the issues of gender identity and sexual orientation, and urge the Council to explicitly address the health care needs of the transgendered in future reports. They go on to briefly outline some of the issues transgendered patients face. In a reply, James R. Allen, M.D., Secretary of the Council on Scientific Affairs, responds favorably, and strongly encourages further research concerning the health care needs of sexual minorities.

The text of the letter and reply follow:

## Health Care Needs of Transgendered Patients

To the Editor,

As transgendered members of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), we wish to commend the American Medical Association Council

on Scientific Affairs for its report.<sup>(1)</sup> The Council Report is an excellent resource for physicians who wish to provide effective and respectful care to lesbians and gay men.

When the Council next updates its recommendations for the care of sexual and gender minorities, we hope it will expand its focus to include the needs of a population that overlaps and is frequently associated with the lesbian and gay community – namely, the transgendered.

Transgendered individuals are those who live full – or part-time in the gender role opposite to the one in which they were born. They often seek medical assistance, including hormonal therapy and cosmetic surgery, in order to more completely approximate the appearance of the gender in which they choose to live. This is especially true of transsexuals, who also usually seek genital reassignment surgery.

Transgendered patients appear to share many of the risk factors for sexually transmitted diseases that occur in lesbian and gay patients. They are likewise subject to discrimination from health care professionals based on their gender-deviant physical and social presentations. Indeed, a close reading of a source<sup>(2)</sup> cited in the Council Report suggests that much of the discrimination experienced by lesbians and gay men is based as much by gender-related appearance and behaviors as by explicit clinician knowledge of sexual preference.

In addition, transgendered patients have special health care needs related to their use and occasional abuse of cross-gender hormones. They require periodic surveillance for malignancy in their reconstructed genitalia. An often-neglected aspect of care of the transgendered involves preservation of fertility options (ie, sperm and egg banking) in patients who receive hormonal gonadal suppression or surgical gonadectomy.

Recognizing the difficulty of separating issues of sexual orientation and gender expression, GLMA has welcomed transgendered physicians as members since 1994. By similarly expanding to become "trans-inclusive", future Council Reports could more completely address the health care needs of sexual/gender minorities.

Anne A. Lawrence, M.D., Seattle, Wash.

Joy D. Shaffer, M.D., San Jose, Calif.

Wynelle R. Snow, M.D., Avon, Conn.

C. Chase, M.D., Pittsburgh, Pa.

Bo T. Headlam, M.S., Milwaukee, Wis.

1. Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association. *Health care needs of gay men and lesbians in the United States*. JAMA. 1996; 275: 1354-1359.

2. Schatz B, O'Hanlan K. *Anti-Gay Discrimination in Medicine: Results of a National Survey of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Physicians*. San Francisco, CA: American Association of Physicians for Human Rights; 1994.

continued on page 23

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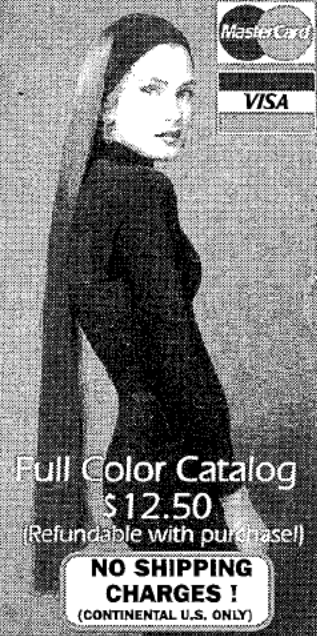
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# Shopping With Jessica

by Jessica Brandon



Greetings, girlfriends! How do you like the new photo that accompanies my column? Way kewl, huh? To say I look positively ravishing is an understatement! (Down, Ego! Down!)

I hope everyone had a ghoulishly good time hobnobbing with hobgoblins and fooling around with things that go bump in the night on Halloween. Any excuse to get dressed up and party on the international holiday for crossdressers is okay by me!

To start things off, let's go undercover, or rather, under-clothes. I'm sure there are a good many of you who so love lingerie that you often wear it under your male clothes when you're out and about playing breadwinner or macho man. I do. In fact, last year when I officially retired from the Navy, my first act as a civilian was to throw away every stitch of male underwear and replaced them with cotton panties. Save for a pair of boxers I keep on hand for check-ups at the doctor, I haven't worn men's underwear for over a year.

The reason I bring this up is that Vera Rae [redacted] from Maryland sent me a most interesting catalog which contains lingerie designed especially **for men**. The company is called *Après Noir* and the lingerie they sell is exactly what one would see sold for women. They have all manner of briefs, panties, g-strings, basques, camisoles, bodysuits, garter belts, even bras, stockings and a babydoll nightie, all in delicious looking satin and lace. And the entire product line is modeled by some of the most virile men you'd ever want to see (provided, of course, you want to see that).

I've ordered a few things from *Après Noir* (satin panties and a bodysuit), and their service is quite good, and the prices refreshingly reasonable. The catalog offers a sizing chart and I was able

to get exactly the size I needed without a hitch. They accept Visa, MasterCard and American Express, as well as checks or money orders, and I was impressed with their customer service. If you're curious about lingerie for men, write to *Après Noir* at P.O. Box 1247, Sonoma, CA 95476-9998, or call 800-203-2181, fax them at 707-935-6597 or even by email at <bdyaware@ix.netcom.com>.

If you prefer traditional female undergarments under your male clothes, may I recommend Jockey For Her, which is my brand of choice for day to day wear. Their cotton panties come in several styles (my fave is the French Cut), four sizes (extra small, small, medium and large) and in virtually every color of the rainbow along with a boatload of floral patterns and three tiger stripe colors which I find to be very sexy. More importantly, they're supremely comfortable and virtually shrinkproof in the wash. Jockey For Her also has tank tops, t-shirts and hosiery, all at very reasonable prices.

Now, I want to talk about what might be the latest rage in cosmetics, foundation and powder combos, which, for the uninformed, is a formula that comes in a compact, goes on like a cream foundation, then dries to a powdery finish. I've been curious about them since they first started coming out several months ago, so I decided to test one brand. As I'm partial to Clinique, I decided to try their f & p combo, City Base. After buying the appropriate shade (from over a dozen), I took it on a test drive prior to a couple of local Renaissance meetings and was suitably impressed.

City Base went on smoothly and dried to a matte finish that looked great in one foolproof step. City Base is oil free (necessary for my complexion), lightweight and afforded me SP-15 sun

block protection, all for around \$20. If you're on the road for a tg event and are packing light, an f & p combo is great as you don't have to pack separate foundation and powder. Other companies with f & p combos are Prescriptives (Instant Face Powder Foundation), Estée Lauder (Impeccable Quick Finish), Chanel (Double Perfection) and Revlon (New Complexion One Step Makeup).

While I'm on the subject of Revlon, back in September I tested their Colorstay foundations and harped that they didn't have one for darker skin. Well, someone must have slipped them a copy of *RN&V* because they just added four new shades to the Colorstay line, tailored specifically for women of color. With the addition of caramel, mahogany, cappuccino and mocha, there are now 16 shades of Colorstay foundation. Even though using drug store cosmetics violates my Sixth Commandment of Shopping, I will experiment with this and let you know what I think of it next month.

Lastly, we turn our attention to hosiery. In my column last November, I told you how I fell in love with Resilience Hosiery from Hanes, who now feature Tina Turner, Goddess of Long Legs as a spokeswoman, and made it the only brand I wear because of its sheer-ness and strength. Don't look now, but the folks at L'Exgs have gotten into the act, putting out a similar brand of pantyhose called Reliance. With magazine ads featuring Jamie Lee Curtis (who's no slouch in the gams department herself), they tout how this brand is just as durable and attractive as Resilience. I'll test drive a pair and give you the lowdown in December's column.

Considering how I've been testing out so much stuff over the last several months, I should sell my services to these companies and get paid for all this fun I have! Yeah, I can see it now: "Jessica Brandon: Fashion Guinea Pig For Hire." What do you think? If you wanna chat with me, and I'm a pretty approachable girl, write to either the Greater Philly address on page two or email me: [redacted]@voicenet.com>.

Oh, and don't forget to think about your waistline when you sit down for Thanksgiving dinner! Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping!



## Dining In Drag With Babs & Carol

# Striking Gold On The Delaware

We like to meet our friends from the Philadelphia area for dinner, but are usually restricted to a couple of predominately "Gay" places off the "touristy" main street in New Hope for security reasons. We've been searching for a secure, friendly place with world-class cuisine, a comfortable cozy ambience and a responsiveness to our dietary needs and preferences.

Yes, Virginia, there is such a place! Michael and Barbara Faure's elegant 1857 fieldstone inn situated between the Delaware River and the Pennsylvania Canal, the Golden Pheasant Inn which offers "A bite of France in

Bucks County!" On our first visit, we met our friend Dyan, who was just dying to dress up while her spouse was away visiting relatives. We were warmly greeted by Barbara and seated in the main dining room. While we were waiting for Dyan, whose watch runs on DT (Drag Time - Bab's watch seems to have the same problem),

We were able to appreciate the ambience of the large open room with exposed beams that exuded a sense of warmth and dignified comfort. Barbara is to be commended on her taste and sense of balance in restoring and decorating the rooms.

At last Dyan made her "grande entrance" and we were able to sample the culinary artistry of Chef Michel, who came out to greet us, enlighten us and ensure our gastronomic happiness. What we sampled was uniformly excellent. For appetizers, we enjoyed the Pheasant paté served with a peach chutney, a delightful smoked trout with a horseradish and sour cream sauce. On a return visit, our party of ten was comfortable in the cozy middle dining room, where we actually tried the veal kidneys sautéed in an interesting sauce of dijon mustard, shallots and cognac. Even the whole grain bread was interesting and tasty! Carol was impressed by the freshness and balanced flavor of the Caesar salad.

*continued on page 23*

## Through Whose Eyes Do We See?

*By Vanessa Kaye*

As we look at a painting or sculpture, do we say that we like or dislike it based upon what we feel or what we have been told? This is a crucial question and one that applies to the broad spectrum of our entire life.

Is it better to teach our children that a particular piece of artwork is beautiful and valuable based upon the artist, or to let them decide for themselves what is to be appreciated? There is a great and poignant difference between the two approaches and this sets the underlying theme for the remainder of a child's life. Should they decide what is beautiful, valuable, or good based on what they have been told, or based on their own experiences?

While we will always wish to protect our children from those experiences which will harm them, it is a near impossibility. What we can do is to give them a foundation upon which to establish their own value judgments.

Often we are asked, "Should we tell our children about the crossdressing?" This is a difficult question to answer. Far more important is what the couple have taught their children about viewing the diversity of our world. Have they used the approach of "This painting was done by Rembrandt, so it is

beautiful and priceless." Or, have they urged their children to seek for themselves what they like? Have they taught acceptance of those with different skin color, religious beliefs, lifestyles and the like? Or, have they instead taught bigotry and hatred?

We have a friend who is a long time crossdresser. She has a supportive wife and together they go out often. Our crossdressing friend seeks only to be treated as the lady she projects herself to be. And, in all honesty, she is a charming and attractive woman when en femme. One day, we were talking about her desire to attend church services while en femme. I asked why she felt she could not do so. Her reply startled me. "Our church is rather conservative. We don't welcome homosexuals, so I don't think that they would welcome me while dressed." So, I asked what was her view of homosexuality. "It's sinful and disgusting, and they shouldn't be allowed in God's house," was the reply.

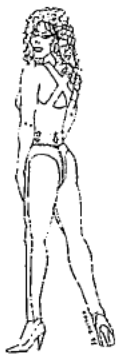
Here is a person whom we would not recommend to tell her children. If she has instilled such an intolerance of others in her own family, it is unlikely that they would welcome her alternate persona. Our friend, while proclaiming that there is nothing wrong or sinful

about her crossdressing, who goes out to gay bars while en femme, and wishes to be accepted for her identity, was herself, intolerant of others.

For those who raise their children to be accepting of the ways of others, it should be of no consequence to tell of their transgendered nature. However, for those who instill a viewpoint of prejudice and intolerance, they can hardly expect to be accepted by their family, and even more importantly, accepted by themselves.

Is it important to tell your friends and family about your transgendered nature? Our answer is simply this: It is far more important that you have displayed an honest acceptance of people different from yourself. Do you see the painting as being beautiful in itself, or because someone has told you that it is beautiful? Do you, your family and friends see the world through their own eyes, or through lenses colored by the opinions of others?

If you wished to be accepted as yourself, you must respect the rights of others to express their own individuality. Just as the colors of the rainbow are far more numerous than those we see, so, too, are the ways of individuals to express themselves. Respect the ways of others, accept first your own.



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## JAMA...

### Dr. Allen Replies:

Dr. Lawrence and colleagues properly view the recent Council on Scientific Affairs report on health care for gay men and lesbians as a work in progress. The health care needs of transgendered patients would be appropriate for consideration by the Council in a future report. Quality research on transgendered persons is lacking. We strongly encourage further research on the relation of health care needs and all sexual orientations.

*James R. Allen, M.D., M.P.H. Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association Chicago, Ill.*



## Carol & Babs...

The crisp roast duck was well enhanced by the multi flavored apricot and ginger sauce. The poached salmon was light and complemented the Bernaise sauce. Besides a varied regular menu, several innovative specials are offered. On a second visit with a larger party, many opted for an interesting Seafood cassiolette. Since Babs was really interested in the seafood varieties featured, but couldn't eat the sauce, Michel prepared an entirely different sauce that was light, "hypo-allergenic," yet remarkably flavorful. Little things, like the taste of rice seasoned with saffron and coriander were welcome surprises to our palates. Desserts were reported to be excellent. As we were preparing for an upcoming vacation - Babs in a bathing suit, trying to pass as woman, not as a whale - it took *all* our will power to resist the desserts. Okay, okay, we

couldnt resist! Peaches, vanilla ice cream, cinnamon, shards of almonds, pound cake and chocolate syrup... together! Grand Marnier cheese-cake! Then the "killer chocolate" birthday cake they served for Dyans' mmmmtieth. Pack the waist cincher.

The wine list was reasonably extensive for Pennsylvania, and seemed fairly priced. The service was also excellent, the waitstaff consisted of their children (daughters and a son), friendly, bright and alert, with infectious smiles and enthusiasm. This was too good to be true.

What is most impressive is the way the entire family act as hosts and the respect they give to their customers. Besides the excellent quality of the food, the originality, the presentation, the friendly service, the pleasant ambience, the Faure family treated us as people with apparent genuine respect and concern, regardless of our method of gender expression.

The menu is a la carte, entrees ranging from \$17-25. Dinner here will make any occasion special. We originally heard about their Sunday Brunch. We're sure it would be lovely in their plant-filled greenhouse room so one might enjoy a view of the canal. The Golden Pheasant Inn has six intimate guest rooms that feature four poster queen sized canopy beds. The rooms are furnished in antiques and offer river or canal views. Dinner is served Tuesday through Sunday from 5:30, Sunday brunch, 11-3 p.m.

### Golden Pheasant Inn

763 River Road-Rt.32 (About 5 miles south of the Frenchtown Bridge, 13 mi north of New Hope) Erwinna, PA 18920. Phone: 610-294-9595. Major credit cards accepted. Reservations suggested.



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Entertainment to be provided by Terri [REDACTED] and her blues band along with a DJ!  
To secure your reservation, send a check or money order ONLY (made payable to  
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Eagle School Road, Suite 719, Wayne, PA 19406 no later than December 16th!  
No tickets will be sent out, but your name will be on a list at the door! So put on  
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