



News & views

Vision • Integrity • Quality

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Renaissance

TG Health Action Coalition Formed

The Transgender Health Action Coalition (THAC) has been formed as the first local community-based volunteer organization to address the critical mental and physical health care needs of Delaware Valley transgendered individuals. THAC has its origins in the event, "Bridges to Coalition: A Community Forum on Transgendered Issues," held last June, organized by local transactivist Ben Singer and included the participation of a coalition of transgendered, queer, and other non-trans groups and individuals from the Philadelphia area. The event allowed a diverse group of transpeople — transmen, transwomen, crossdressers, and intersexed individuals from all backgrounds — to collectively define the community's needs, concerns, similarities, and differences.

It became overwhelmingly apparent during the "Bridges" forum that a lack of access to and knowledge about high-quality medical and mental health care poses one of the most serious problems for transgendered people. Local transactivists realized there was a need to establish a community-based peer support program and health care information resource in the Delaware Valley, and worked with representatives from all areas of the transgendered community to develop THAC's agenda.

Over the next year, THAC will implement plans to: collect baseline information about our community through the Delaware Valley Transgender Survey; perform outreach and education through a series of Community Education Programs for medical and mental health practitioners, medical students, local queer organizations, and the transgendered community at large; develop a Network of trans-

friendly Practitioners dedicated to providing safe, non-judgmental medical and therapeutic services for transpeople; and establish a Peer Counseling Support Service and Hotline, operated by and for transgendered individuals, that will offer professionally facilitated support groups, provide peer intervention, and render health care referrals as needed.

Longer-term plans include establishing a specialized transgender clinic in the local area, producing a quarterly newsletter, and offering affordable, group-rate health care to transgendered individuals.

Through its first goal — administering the Delaware Valley Transgender Survey — THAC will capture essential demographic information to dispel common assumptions about transpeople and to demonstrate the community's diversity, reveal our range of mental and medical health care needs, assess the quality and expense of current services, and measure how our community has been affected by HIV/AIDS. The information that emerges from this survey will be made available to all groups in the Philadelphia area, in particular to existing transgender organizations in order to help them increase their own efficacy and impact. The survey will be conducted during the period of November, 1996, through January, 1997. THAC expects to release the results of the survey in April of 1997.

Informed by the needs assessment made possible through the survey THAC will begin implementing its service programs in May of 1997. Through the Network of Transfriendly Practitioners, THAC will create a medical referral service of at least 20 trans-

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IFGE Restructures Waltham Staff

The International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) has announced a realignment of the IFGE office staff. This realignment has taken place because of considerations surrounding the success of IFGE's publications and their Synchronicity walk-in and traveling bookstores.

Separate accounting and management entities will be set up to administer these activities. Jean Marie Stine, Director of Publications, and Vanessa Murray, Sales Manager, will now report directly to

IFGE Executive Director, Alison Laing. Mykael Hawley, Art Director, will report to Ms. Stine. JoAn Hoff has been assigned the position as Membership & Contributions Secretary in addition to her former duties. A new position, Business Manager, will be filled by Nancy Cain.

Yvonne Cook-Riley, Director of Operations, left IFGE on September 30. She will remain on the board and is seeking ways to develop closer ties with the gay/lesbian/bisexual community.



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

You can get RenNews&Views by email every month delivered automatically right to your email box for only \$10 a year. That's half off the regular paper subscription rate. Send your \$10 plus your email address to the Ren national office.

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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. Or use email to <angela@ren.org>. 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. 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

October

- 5 Ren. LSV meeting
- 5 New Jersey Support
- 12 Ren. Lehigh Valley
- 12 Ren. Delaware
- 19 Ren. GPC

November

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

News Beat & Reminder



by Angela Gardner

As the falling leaves gather on my shoulders I give Autumn a glad shout of encouragement for soon TG events will abound and no one will need worry that their makeup will melt into their cleavage. It's also wonderful to not have to shave your legs for every outing. The self tan cream was putting me in the poorhouse. The good stuff ain't cheap and the cheap stuff makes you look like a carrot. A fine vegetable, the carrot, but not something you'd want to impersonate.

Speaking of impersonation, our high holy day, **Hallowe'en**, is coming neigh and our thoughts turn to costumes and such. What will I wear to the Henri David Ball this year? As little as possible. (On no, *more* shaving!) That's the only way to make a real statement anymore, and what a challenge it is when you don't have quite the proper anatomy for pasties and a thong. Keep your eyes open at the Ball and perhaps you'll see, what's the title of that song? All of me? But now...

Chan Reprise

Kalina Isato is the undisputed Queen of the clubs and an exquisite beauty to boot, but she was wrong about the title of the movie in which Jackie Chan dons a lady's suit. She told me it was *Streetfighter*, but I got the correct information from a kind human named Dov Sherman. Dov says that in the film *Cityhunter* Jackie and the bad guys bump into a *Street Fighter* video game machine (Ah ha! The *Street*

Fighter connection) while they are committing mayhem on one another. Some magic ensues and they are all transformed into characters from the game. Jackie spends a short time as **Chun-Li**, the female martial arts character from the game. He even closes the fight with her trademark school girlish victory cry while jumping up and down in glee. She does that when she successfully kicks bad guy butt with her lethal pumps. Dov reports that it isn't a long time for Jackie in drag but it's worth the trip to the video store. While you're there...

Watch For:

The 1993 film in which **George "I gonna be Batman" Clooney** played a "lip-synching transvestite." (**Harvey Fierstein** is in the film, too but it appears he plays a guy.) Miss Rachel from our Oklahoma affiliate cued me into it and I'm grateful. I don't know how I missed it back in '93. I must have had a manicure scheduled when it opened—and closed. I don't think it did what we in the biz call "big box office." Rachel said it's called *The Harvest* but I can't tell you any more. While browsing the *Internet Movie Database* to dig out all the details for my sweet and lovable readers Netscape locked up and I had to restart. My entire column disappeared in a cloud of electrons. Not even Unerase could help. (Don't you dare say "save often.") Oh, the prose you will never know. So if you want more details on

The Harvest you'll have to lock up our own web browser. I am, as the urban girls say, over it.

Rachel asked if George and I had ever met. No hon. I was just an extra way, way in the background on his latest film, with Michelle Pfeiffer, that's slated to come out soon, *One Fine Day*. You won't actually see me. We shot in Central Park and I was far in the back, behind a tree, dressed as a man. (Best place for that sort of thing.) Look for the me in *Stonewall*. I'm much more visible there.

Speaking of Movies

Dave Foley, the **Kid In The Hall** who stars in *News Radio* is starring in a new film with David Higgins from *Ellen* (Hey, she's gonna be a lesbian this season!) and Jennifer Tilly from *Bullets Over Broadway*. While David and the KITH fellas have a tendency to slip into dresses, a lot, this time there's another tg element at work.

The film is called *The Wrong Guy* and it's directed by **David Steinberg**, a wonderful comedian and director who has been around for years. In an interview with **Tom Snyder** Steinberg talked about how he noticed something odd about one of the actresses he cast. He thought she was a little large in the shoulders and her hands were on the big side, too. Later, after the film started shooting, Foley said, "I see you've cast Eleanor. Pretty bold move," or something of that nature. Steinberg asked why that was a bold move and Foley said Eleanor used to be a man. (Now how did he know that?) Well, not only did he cast her, Steinberg said, she did a great job.

Of course, he made a couple of questionable jokes about her gender status during the interview, but you know how insecure these men can get. He got his yucks and Eleanor will get residual checks. Way to go Eleanor.

I'd give you more information on the film, which is being released in the states by Hollywood Films, but I'm not starting that browser again while there's a chance it might lock up and

continued next page

News Beat...

crash before I save this column.

Stranger Than Fiction

You know how life is filled with all these coincidences sometimes? It's called synchronicity and it's a lovely name for the phenomena, and that Sting album. Anyhow, I was stumbling through the Net last month trying to find out about **Wigstock** or the outlaw drag event, **Dragapalooza**, and I found the promoter of the latter event's website <<http://www.hedda.com/>>, home of NYC drag babe Hedda Lettuce. She's a Gen X DQ. I hate her. In her twenties and beautiful. (Her site makes my browser lock up, too. It may be time to buy a registered copy of Netscape.) Well, I never made it to Dragapalooza since my bed was too comfortable and the idea of getting up early to shave and get made up, then endure an hour and a half drive to NYC in a gaff, was not that enticing (ain't it awful when a queen get's old) but I did manage to read part of an interview with Hedda.

OK, this is where the spooky synchronicity comes in. It *seems* that **Jimmy James** famous female impersonator and **Jahna Steele**, transsexual model and performer, went to the same high school in Texas, and... Hedda's uncle (who is not a queen, as far as I know) also graduated from that school. Could it be something in the water? Cue the *Twilight Zone* music and fade to...

The Strange Case of The Con That Couldn't Cope

Gary Bowen, author of *Diary of a Vampire*, which has been nominated for the Bram Stoker Award given by the Horror Writers Association, was denied permission to participate as a panelist at Balticon 96, Maryland's annual science fiction convention. Why you ask? Somehow, I knew you would. Bowen had participated in Balticon in previous years but "informed sources" (I love that kind of talk) stated that when the convention chair discovered

Bowen was a female to male transsexual she blocked his participation saying, "He's too weird," and "I don't want to have to deal with him."

Now I may just be a silly old Diva but isn't the concept of a science fiction fan in charge of a convention of science fiction fans being that uptight over a TS a bit bizarre? I mean, if science fiction fans can't be tolerant of difference, hell, downright strangeness, what are we supposed to do? The body switching and gender changing in the genre has brought me hours of reading pleasure. (*Stranger In A Strange Land* played a role in my first sexual pleasure, but that's another story. Thank you, Mister Heinlein.) Have you ever read a Jack Chalker book? He's got one where the bad guys end up as female strippers in Las Vegas. (*The Identity Matrix*, I think.) I guess the convention chair is probably one of those fans of romantic sword and sorcery stuff where the hero doesn't grow breasts and the heroine waits in her tower to be rescued, and definitely doesn't do any transforming into a hero to save herself.

Anyhow, I talked to Gary and he said he's pretty sure he'll be back on the convention scene in the future, as soon as his arch nemesis has her evil schemes thwarted by some transgendered heroes, who may happen to be gender changers. If that doesn't happen I'd give the old *Wizard of Oz* bucket of water approach a try. It usually works with creatures of her ilk. (Oh boy, I used the word "ilk.")

From Ilk to Iek

Here's one I hate to mention, but it's so dumb I just gotta tell ya. A 55 year old elementary school principal was arrested in drag on prostitution charges. I'm not giving out the poor guy's name (it's already been in the papers for all to see) and I won't even tell you where it is, but I feel I have to mention the incident (talk about a *High Incidence*) cause it's something you should do your very best to avoid.

If it were a Perry Mason novel it would be called *The Case of the Unprincipled Principal*. Since it's real life we'll call it *stupid*. I can only guess he

was caught up in the glamour of street walking. Come on girls, admit it, you've all thought about what it might be like to do that hooker fantasy. That's fine if that's all it is; a fantasy. To actually head out to the red light district is another story. It's bad enough doing that kind of work when you have to do it to survive. To do it for kicks when you have a good job, working with children and are established as a pillar of the community is just plain nuts. See how carried away (dare I say obsessed) you can get when fantasy starts to creep into your reality? It wouldn't surprise me to learn that this guy hadn't had all that much experience with crossdressing, and I'll bet he wasn't attending any transgender group meetings. I've found that fantasy can seem better and better the less reality you have to balance it out. Someone at a Renaissance meeting would have talked some sense into him.

Anyhow, it's a good thing he got arrested. If it hadn't been a cop instead of a regular john, the female hooker he was arrested with would have probably made some painful modifications to his anatomy. He had just offered to undercut her price for sexual favors. He can pay the \$550 fine and maybe he'll be able to move to another town, change his name and get a principal job again, but messing with a hooker's livelihood is likely to take you places you don't want to go. OK now, as they used to say on *Hill Street Blues*, "Let's be careful out there."

I Gotta Say Her Name Just Once

Jessica Brandon reports that she who is to be worshipped will begin hosting her own weekly talk show on VH1. No, not Bette Midler. I'm talking about **RuPaul**. The show debuts on October 12th so check your schedule for the time and tune in. Jessica also informed me there is a 1997 RuPaul calendar on the market. I guess that'll have to do till we get the Angela Gardner Swimsuit Calendars done.

Tidbits

Charles Busch brings his crossdressing cabaret act to town this month. He'll be appearing as part of the

American Music Theater Festival's Cabaret Series at the Bellvue Hotel. Shows are October 30, November second and November 6th through 9th. Call the Upstages box office for ticket information at 215-893-1145.

The Burlington County Gay & Lesbian Alliance will host a Halloween costume contest and masquerade ball on October 25th. The gay ghosties and ghoulies will cavort at the Moorestown Community House, 16 East Main Street in Moorestown, New Jersey. Tickets will be \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. They are giving a \$200 grand prize for the best costume. Call 609-239-3100 for more information.

If you're less spooky and more spiritual perhaps you'd enjoy the Rainbow Spirit Convergence. It's happening November 8th through 10th outside of Asheville, North Carolina in a suitably pastoral space. They're going to work on "transcending queer identities to create sacred space for discovery, empowerment and celebration." If you'd like more information project your thoughts to organizer Holly Boswell, or perhaps a phone call to her at 704- [REDACTED] would work faster.

Back in the old I-wanna-wear my-fancy-dress-and-dance-my pumps-off type activities we have a couple of parties coming up. Tri-Ess is holding their Holiday En Femme in Chicago November 6th thorough 10th. They'll be fun and frolic for "all Tri-Ess members, potential members, spouses, partners and friends..." Guess that covers all the bases for information on how you can get in on the frock wear-

ing fun call the Chi Chapter hotline between 7PM and 9:30PM (Central Time). 630-262-8707 is the number. Along with the fun and frolic there'll be workshops and self improvement stuff, too.

The ladies of the Long Island Femme Expression, one of our affiliates on Long Island, are celebrating their 11th Anniversary. (Heck, Renaissance is only gonna be ten next year. We have a big party planned. Stay tuned for details.) LIFE will be at the Plain View Plaza in Plain View, New York on November 16th. Cocktails, a buffet dinner and music by TGIF will all be provided for \$50 per person and \$90 per couple. Call LIFE at 516-471-6037 for all the necessary info. They'll have a hospitality room available for those who wish to change at the hotel.

Speaking of changing... if you're planning a trip to Belgium for sex reassignment surgery here's an alternative to an expensive hotel or a cheap flop house. [REDACTED] Jessica (that's how she did it in letter) sent us a note offering accommodations in a house located in a small village outside of Brussels. She is a post op TS and will come and visit you in the hospital, provide public transportation info and give you three meals a day while you're recovering. No smoking and they (she and a friend who is also a post op) can't stay with you all day cause they have to work. They're charging for this but it is reasonable at \$40 a day. You can contact her by writing: [REDACTED] Jessica, [REDACTED] - Wuustwezel, Belgium. If you want to

try the phone number [REDACTED] you may want to get the international operator to help cause I'm not sure how you would go about dialing a /. I'll bet, no matter how she wrote it, you should probably ask for Jessica. [REDACTED] just doesn't look like a first name to me.

Welcome New Chapter!

I have good news and bad news. The bad news is — we're losing an affiliate. The good news is comes in two parts — we've got a new Chapter and we don't have to remember what NEPTGA stands for anymore. The former affiliate in the Lehigh Valley has been accepted as an official Renaissance Chapter. Congratulations, girls and welcome aboard!

And, that's it for another month. See ya in November.



CLASSIFIEDS

Classified Ads are \$3.00 for 3 lines for 3 months.

FO SALE: Assorted dresses and two piece outfits in Plus Sizes. Shoes, womens size 12W. Contact Randi Schwarz at 609-983-8294. Leave a message.

Apartment for rent. Private home in country setting. Credit and personal references required. Owner is Ren. member. Call 610-287-5989

Glamour photos for CDs by a CD. Makeup help available. Call 610-701-7613 for info. Ask for Don.

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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Stop The Madness — Now!

Vanessa and Linda Kaye

It seems apparent to us recently that the gender community, as a whole, is becoming less open to contrasting viewpoints, and that there is major growth in separatism and segregation of diverse people. There is an obvious lack of tolerance and purposely hurtful attacks from all segments of the community. At a time when we should all be growing closer, we are growing further apart and less of a community in the sense of cooperating and supporting one another.

No one is more guilty of contributing to this strife than we are. The ongoing fray between ourselves and Tri-Ess has reached a conclusion. Basically, we have agreed to disagree and to respect one another's viewpoints. In addition, we have begun a new dialogue which provides a means of communicating new ideas. This dialogue is two-way, and that is as it should be.

Despite claims in the TG press about conferences for cooperation between groups, there is still the human tendency to want to be the "-est" of the community. By this we mean, the oldest, biggest, bestest, openest, strongest and the list goes on and on. What is missing here, is the realization that no one group can adequately satisfy the needs of the TG community at large. This is the lesson we learned more than two years ago in Okla-

homa City. As a result of our experiences, we formed an alliance of groups. The groups have their own special area of focus, yet we all cooperate as a whole. There is mutual respect between the diverse groups, we share ideas, we have a common treasury, we produce a joint newsletter and we have unity events.

Recently, Linda spoke with a major leader within the community, who stated that many in her support group, which is primarily heterosexual crossdressers, had come to the conclusion that all transsexuals were fruitloops. This statement is indicative of the intolerance of diversity, as well as guilty of lumping all transsexuals into a category, rather than looking at them as individuals. How *very* cruel.

Perhaps more frightening is the trend of backbiting anyone who dares to express in writing an opposing viewpoint. Rather than respect the right of free speech from others, many within the community take any opposition as a personal attack on themselves or the organizations they may belong to or lead. What happened to the rights given us by our forefathers (and foremothers) who sacrificed much to give us the *Bill of Rights*, which includes the right of free speech? What happened to open-mindedness when constructive criticism is offered? What ever happened to common decency and respect for each other? Has

courtesy disappeared from our TG community? The more leaders in this community that we come in contact with, the more we are convinced there is no single organization or person that has all the answers. The true leaders know this and welcome ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Vanessa's grandfather used to say, There are two kinds of people in this world. Those who think there are two kinds of people, and those who don't. Within the TG community, there are a myriad of people. Can they all be divided into three general areas as we have done in Oklahoma City? Perhaps. But, we need to start somewhere. If the three groups who take the lead are AEGIS, Renaissance and Tri-Ess, so be it. What's interesting about COTA, is that there is no sense of competition amongst the three sister interest groups. Rather, what we have experienced is a tremendous network of cooperation and referral.

Those within this entire community have endured so much pain and harassment, both individually and as a whole. There has been individual and societal rejection and condemnation of something that is a natural part of a transgendered person's personality and humanity.

All of us, tg/spouse/partner have endured enough with our own personal struggles. Let's put this national bickering behind us and get on with the business of helping others. Respect, and not tolerance is the key to our future.



THAC...

friendly health care providers and will make this information available to all local transgendered organizations. Based on the intended audience, the series of Community Education Programs will tackle subjects as broad as "Transgender 101" for practitioners or queer organizations and as specific as highlighting differences and similarities among the needs of transmen and transwomen in order to educate our own community. The Peer Counseling Service and TG Hotline will provide a much-needed point-of-contact for emerging transpeople, particularly for

those who have no access to the community, and will refer them both to our Network of Transfriendly Practitioners for health care services and to local transgendered organizations for support. THAC will provide these services at its office in the William Way Community Center and through the to-be-established TG Hotline.

About the Organization

THAC represents a coalition of committed organizations and individuals dedicated to addressing the lack of quality and affordable health care resources in our area. Along with Co-Directors Jules [REDACTED] and A. "Dee" [REDACTED], THAC's board members and volunteers reflect the diversity in-

herent in our community, and the organization is committed to maintaining full representation of all sexual and gender minorities, people of color, people with disabilities, and people of all ages. Membership in THAC or its coalition of organizations is open to any transgendered or transfriendly individual or group, and we encourage interested parties to contact Jules [REDACTED] (610-[REDACTED]) or Dee [REDACTED] (215-[REDACTED]) for further information. THAC is also actively encouraging transgendered individuals who would like to participate in the Delaware Valley Transgender Survey to get in touch for a copy of the survey.



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TGF Resource Center — Your online starting point for event info, fashion links, fun links, and of course the fabulous TGF Shopping Mall. Check out our unparalleled selection of vendors serving your Clothing and Fashion needs. Look for us at <www.cdspub.com/index2.html>.



The Community Center — Your online source for information about transgender support organizations. If your organization would like to be on the World Wide Web, contact us at the CC web site <www.transgender.org/tg/>.

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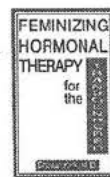
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be smug in thinking 'we' have a terrific group when, in fact, a very small percentage of the members are holding it together." She concludes her essay as one of the less fortunates by saying, "Don't leave us in a corner. We want to be your friends."

The topic of how groups handle newcomers, less experienced cross-dressers, and members who find themselves left out of the "in" group, has been addressed in this column many times before. It is a common newsletter topic appearing in many group publications. It is repeated here as a gentle reminder to leaders everywhere that our groups must make an effort to make everyone feel welcome — and to take a deep look at how the group is perceived by its "silent majority."

BUFF, BRONZED & BEAUTIFUL

When I'm not reading transvestite support group newsletters, I sometimes immerse myself in the classics. Like, for instance, the October issue of *FLEX* magazine, which happened to include their "Hot, Hotter, Hottest Lingerie" pictorial.

FLEX is a magazine for devotees of physical fitness, hardbodies, over-the-counter amino acid supplements, and — at least in this one issue — 28 pages of female bodybuilders just barely dressed in lingerie.

It's fashionable to say that female bodybuilders with rippling masses of quadriceps, deltoids and other parts of the body I never bothered to identify with scientific terminology, are not really appealing. Baloney! The women in this pictorial are gorgeous. And I'm not just saying that because they could probably beat me up. In fact, that's part of their appeal.

There has been a burgeoning trend toward promoting the sex appeal of female bodybuilding. Although the hardcore physique competitions still emphasize muscle mass, the "fitness" competitions and exercise shows are designed to appeal to athletically developed women — and men who enjoy looking at athletically developed women. Televised competitions often have the participants parading around

The front page article of last month's *News & Views* told us that our TG community leaders are meeting to discuss strategy — including public relations strategy — for our cause. After a bit of investigative journalism, I uncovered a secret document outlining the new thrust of the TG community's advertising campaign.

I'm sure you're all familiar with the "Joe Camel" ad character used by Brown & Williamson to promote the Camel brand of cigarettes. Our community task force on public relations is planning to hatch a campaign centered around the character "Joe Transvestite," a hip, youthful, cartoon image that will give us immediate recognition on billboards and in print across the nation.

In the words of one TG community leader who wished to remain anonymous, "If their ridiculous Joe Camel character appeals to the youth market, then our Joe Transvestite character will have every teenage boy diving into their sister's panty drawer. Instead of high school kids sneaking into the boys room for a Camel, they'll now be hiding in the stalls trying out new makeup techniques and exchanging tips on wig styling. And the only reason young guys will go out for the football team is so they can wear those skintight spandex knickers and colorful blouses."

Some might say that it's a better way to go for the youth of America. And you read it here first.

TRES CHIC - OR TRES CLIQUE?

Louise [redacted] wrote an article in the *Diary* newsletter of the CHIC group based in Long Beach, Calif. Her article was titled "CHIC - or Clique?"

and addressed a common problem facing TG support groups.

As support groups evolve with the core membership, there is often a conflict between the needs of the "advanced" members and those less able to take advantage of the growth opportunities offered by the group. And of course there are always new members coming into the group with even less experience, looking for support or guidance. Almost any group with any kind of dynamism finds itself in this conundrum at some point in its life.

Louise finds that CHIC is on the horns of this dilemma right now. "CHIC... has gone through cycles when it has catered primarily to the 'bold and the beautiful' who have the advantages of spousal acceptance and whose livelihood would not be threatened by participation." Louise is a long time associate of CHIC, but like many others has restrictions that do not allow her to participate to the full extent she might like. As contrasted to the more active members, Louise points out that her attendance at CHIC meetings involves careful long-range planning and travel of a great distance just to spend a few hours in the company of friends.

Attending group activities for newcomers or even experienced members with personal restrictions is an "event." If the regular attendees and group leadership allows the group to get "clique-ish," it could hamper the long-term growth of the group by turning off new or irregular members. Louise's article is not intended as a criticism of CHIC but rather a warning to the leadership to remember the needs of all constituents. Louise makes an excellent point when she says, "Let's not

in thong bikinis and skyscraper heels. ESPN's mid-morning lineup of exercise shows feature beautiful women lifting weights in skintight spandex against a backdrop of tropical beaches.

The *FLEX* lingerie spread features supermodel-pretty physique champions like Erica Kern in a barely-there thong-backed bodysuit with platform sandals; Cory Everson spilling out of a plunging neckline lace teddy; Madonna Grimes striking a fetching pose in a purple corset and black lace tights; and Jennifer Goodwin flexing her muscles in a S/M-themed fishnet and vinyl body harness. What's not to like?

Crossdressers are always worrying about how their bodies do not match the soft curves of classic femininity. The women involved in bodybuilding have found a way to redefine the image of classic femininity. They faced a similar type of negative public reaction to their view of femininity but have persisted in their own development - and now have begun to turn the tide, proud of who they are and how they look. We should — perhaps — take a page from their book and work with what we have, what makes us unique, and forge our own new image of beauty, rather than striving after an imitation that, more often than not, will fall far short of the ideal.

ONE PILL MAKES YOU LARGER, AND ONE PILL MAKES YOU SMALL

Rachel [REDACTED] wrote a cover article titled *Patently Irresponsible* for the August *Sooner Belle* newsletter of the COTA group in Oklahoma City. Her article dealt with irresponsible advice about hormones.

A few months ago, Linda Phillips of the Boulton & Park Society in Texas wrote an essay that she intended to be helpful for some self-diagnosed transsexuals. One of her points was that TS's who may be less than 100 percent, sure of their gender should try to live full-time for a good while before going for surgery. She also advised hormone therapy as a "substitute" for complete reassignment surgery.

JoAnn Roberts responded to Linda's hormone recommendation as

ill-advised and harmful insofar as it seemed to condone unsupervised self-medication with hormones.

Not long after this controversy flared, Rachel witnessed another example of irresponsible hormone promotion in an on-line chat room. In this case, the mother of an 18 year old self-diagnosed transsexual was looking for advice on one of the transgender chat services. According to Rachel, what she got was a few people who talked up hormone therapy as a good way for her 18 year old son to start "her" transition. One person suggested that the young person in question might have good results by starting hormones in her youth. Another suggested starting hormones as a way to determine her true gender identity.

Rachel writes in disbelief: "This is how one finds out if they're TS or not? Results? What exactly does one require to be female? Is it a mental state or does one only require breasts and finer skin? Femininity comes from within one's mind and heart, not a little pill." If any of the chat room participants gave advice about counseling therapy or TG support groups as a good starting point for a young, inexperienced person with gender identity questions, it wasn't pointed out in Rachel's article. The immediate jump towards hormones by some people was shocking enough, even if counterbalanced by wiser advice.

Rachel concludes her essay by saying that irresponsible hormone promotion is dangerous when it skirts medical safeguards. "There are standards to be upheld here. I am not writing about the *Standards of Care*, I'm writing about standards of responsibility."

HOW TO GET ARRESTED

In last month's column, I reported on a crossdresser's problem with airport security while trying to fly in drag in her femme name. In the *Ingersoll Message* newsletter of the Ingersoll Gender Center in Seattle, Wash., Marian Beddill wrote a how-to article titled (get ready) "How to Change Gender Between Flights in an Airport Terminal Building So That Nobody Knows."

To the sophomore among us, that title may sound like something the Monty Python boys might have hatched as one of their epic skits. But Marian is serious and even goes so far as to give instruction on how to do the quick-change whether departing or arriving as male or female. After all, what goes up, must come down. Or perhaps not, since she instructs us how to go up as a guy and come down as a girl, and vice versa. Is anyone airsick yet?

Here is a brief outline of Marian's technique for a person arriving at the airport as masculine wishing to change into feminine: Use the men's room to change into feminine undergarments and hose. Don't, repeat, don't put in your falsies yet. Put on your feminine outer clothing. Cover over this with a baggy unisex outfit. When you are back out in the waiting area, find a seat facing a women's restroom door and study the foot traffic into the ladies' room. When you are sure it is empty, (What airport would this be? Mayberry International?) walk in with casual confidence. Using one of the stalls, strip off the baggy unisex outfit. Now is when you add your falsies, girls, in the ladies' room. Put on an initial application of makeup and your wig. Leave the stall, check yourself briefly for gross errors, and leave that ladies' room. Proceed to a second ladies' room where you can now check yourself a bit closer.

And the procedure can be reversed to change from the feminine to the masculine.

It would help if while you tried this three restroom changing routine the theme music from *Mission: Impossible* was playing in the background. I can just see most of the crossdressers I know toting oversized bags full of unisex stuff, women's stuff, and guy stuff into a women's restroom, slipping in and out of stalls in three different outfits, and then tottering down the airport corridors like nobody's business. The theme music from *Mission: Impossible* might play during the intro but I have a feeling we'd hear the famous closing notes to *Dragnet* before

continued on page 15

Building A Strong Gender Family

by Rachel Miller

Much has been said about the gender community and whether it really exists. We have a variety of people with significantly different views that sometimes leads to bickering and fragmented actions. The best of families bicker, but they also have strong, common bonds that unite them and like any family we share powerful ties.

Society has created a firm but arbitrary connection between sex and gender. That link is the source of many of our problems but it can also be a unifying force. Our greatest common bond is that each of us in our own way is trying to bend, shift, stretch or break that culturally enforced link. That situation ought to provide ample incentive to build our family.

I believe there are three levels at which we benefit from integration rather than separation, and this principle is the core of all my messages:

1. Many of us have split our lives into distinct gender compartments and we would be healthier if we became a complete person.
2. Our community exists outside of the mainstream, and we gain greater freedom to be ourselves if we are an integral part of society.
3. Individuals and organizations often act independently, and we would

achieve more if we cooperated fully on joint issues.

Who am I to say these things? I am a heterosexual, male crossdresser whose feminine side began emerging at age five and has been a significant part of my personality ever since. In addition to a strong desire to wear women's clothing my softer side is also manifested in emotional sensitivity. Society tells me that a man shouldn't indulge in these things and doing so indicates something is wrong. The positive attraction of crossdressing coupled with societal disapproval taught me to hide my true self by creating my feminine alter-ego Rachel.

At first this appeared to be the solution to my dilemma as it enabled me to express my other side but trouble soon returned. Constantly feeling unacceptable caused such stress that I could not continue to live that way.

That trauma finally overcame my fear of self-discovery and lead me on a quest to find answers.

I came to understand the various facets of my sexual and emotional makeup and that society was wrong in labeling men with feminine tendencies as defective. With that discovery came acceptance of myself exactly as I was. In time Richard and Rachel merged, and I found the happiness of being at peace.

While this gave me internal peace it didn't help others. I felt compelled to emerge from my closet, share my story and educate society. My wife Marsha encouraged me to record my thoughts and I wrote a book to share these ideas about change.

Especially today, change is an important aspect of business. One of the primary factors in successfully changing conditions is our perspective or point of view. I design computer systems to improve business processes and would often say, "Boss, we have a PROBLEM!" He insisted that it was an opportunity for improvement. I thought it was a word game until I saw that this view allowed me to concentrate on finding ways to make the situation better. Seeing our tremendous opportunities I decided to focus on solutions.

To heal our pain and suffering and prevent it from entering the lives of the next generation, we must change. None of us can do it alone but each of us can do something. We can all participate because we have common goals that transcend our differences.

Where does the journey of integration for our gender family begin? Here! When does it begin? Now! Who makes it happen? Each of us!

I am only one;
but still I am one.

I cannot do everything,
but still I can do something;
I will not refuse to do the
something I can do.

Helen Keller

Rachel Miller is the author of *The Bliss of Becoming One!*, available from IFGE and PM Publishers. You can contact Rachel and her wife Marsha at Opportunities for Improvement, PO Box 31475, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 935-9594.



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>



GenderReflections

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

Keeping Secrets

What effects do secrets have on family members? Is it always harmful to others to keep a secret from them? When is it time to tell the secret?

Some therapists suggest that *all* secrets are damaging. They believe that even the youngest children sense when a secret is being kept and consequently, they feel excluded, hurt and unloved. Children may even develop feelings of being "bad," giving rise to psychological problems such as insecurity and low self-esteem. With regard to secrets between adult partners, therapists believe that intimacy on any significant level is sure to be lost and with it any meaningful relationship.

Many transgendered individuals, including those who crossdress for erotic satisfaction, relaxation and to achieve gender congruity, keep these behaviors secret. Sometimes a spouse is in collusion about keeping the secret from children; other times the partner is excluded. Is this situation doomed to produce neurotic children? Can a relationship flourish when one partner keeps part of him/herself hidden?

Like so many complex questions, the answer is, "it depends." In general, the major factor affecting the impact of keeping a secret is whether the individual is at peace with his/her own behavior and feelings, irrespective of the nature of the secret. When the secret is shrouded in a veil of shame, others may sense the presence of this emotion, and be puzzled, hurt or angered by the evasiveness and defensiveness that shame often engenders. When a person is comfortable with him/herself, a secret can be maintained healthily as an expression of privacy and an appropriate concern for the differing capacities of children and adults to deal with non-traditional behaviors and needs.

With regard to disclosure to children vs. to a spouse/partner, different factors need to be considered. Affecting the decision to disclose to children are their ages, the quality of their relationship with each parent, the level of support for disclosure by the other parent, and whether the children have indicated awareness of secretive behaviors. In general, the older the child, the more supportive the partner, and prior suggestion of awareness, are factors in favor of disclosure to children.

The decision to come out to a partner will be affected by the quality and permanence of the relationship, the spouse's previously demonstrated ability to accept non-traditional behaviors in others, and most importantly, the level of intimacy desired in the relationship. Withholding an important part of yourself from a significant other has consequences. While keeping a secret may seem to be the ultimate in wisdom at a certain time, one must accept that some breach of intimacy is inevitable. How this balances with your need to maintain the relationship and to project a traditional image is a decision of significance. Questions to be answered are: Am I satisfied with the level of intimacy we experience? What is the worst thing that could happen if I came out? How important a part of myself am I denying? Can I spend the rest of my life this way? Can I be sure my partner will never find out?

The bottom line in this matter is weighing losses against gains. There is no sure disaster on either road — that of secrecy or disclosure. But to minimize the consequences of either option, do your best to assure that you are at peace with yourself. That is the greatest contribution you can make to a relationship.

Vigil At Forte Murder Trial Killer Pleads Guilty

Lawrence, Mass. - September 16, 1996 A dozen members of the Transsexual Menace, GenderPAC and IFGE gathered in a quiet memorial vigil outside the courthouse in suburban Lawrence this morning, commemorating the 1995 slaying of Deborah ("Debbie") Forte.

Ms. Forte, a resident of Haverhill, Mass., was brutally murdered by Michael Thompson on May 15, 1996. He confessed to a co-worker he had taken her home, began "messing around," and — upon discovering she had a penis — killed her.

Activists had sought to focus public attention on Ms. Forte's murder both because it was ignored by mainstream and queer media, and because of its extraordinary violence. Thompson strangled Ms. Forte, beat her severely about her head and shoulders, and then stabbed her multiple times in the chest and breasts.

In a surprising development, activists outside the courthouse learned that Thompson entered a Guilty plea to 2nd Degree Murder, following a negotiated plea bargain. He was immediately sentenced by the presiding judge to life imprisonment, with possibility of parole in 15 years.

Members of Debbie's surviving family emerged from the courthouse appearing shaken but resolute. They declared themselves satisfied with the conviction and sentence. Many then stopped by the demonstrators, thanking them repeatedly for showing up.

The event was well covered by local media, including several gay papers, two regional newspapers, one television news show, and a journalist from the *Boston Globe*, who — in a fortuitous coincidence — happened to be inside the courthouse, and upon encountering the demonstration, called the story in to his editor.



HOT BUZZ

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



"Since the masses are always eager to believe something for their benefit, nothing is so easy to arrange as facts."

— Charles Maurice de Talleyrand

The HOT BUZZ this month is the "restructuring memo" from the **International Foundation for Gender Education**. What I found most interesting was left as almost an afterthought, an "oh, by the way..." **Yvonne Cook-Riley**, Director of IFGE Operations for the last nine years is leaving effective September 30, 1996. Many people considered Cook second only to IFGE founder **Merissa Sherrill Lynn**. My news-net tells me Cook had been on probation for almost a year by the IFGE board of directors. During that period she had certain tasks to perform and tasks to complete. A reliable source said Cook missed almost all of these tasks and the board had no choice but to relieve her of all staff duties. Many people had "run-ins" with Cook in the last several years and the bitter complaints came from customer and vendor alike. Her arbitrary actions seem to have been emboldened by Lynn's departure in 1995. It was almost as if she believed she was immune to censure or review. Knowledgeable insiders place all of IFGE's past financial problems on Cook's plate. Cook's future as a member of the IFGE board and the Executive Committee is unclear.

My good friend **Alison Laing** says that you can tell when a trend has gone mainstream by counting the number of times a word appears in print. Well, if that's the measure then we (the transgendered) have arrived. I was reading an article in the local paper aimed at familiarizing college students with the local scene. As I was perusing the list of "in" clubs in the area, I noticed not one but two clubs with specific mentions of transgendered patrons, such as "...is an after-hours club whose patrons include **cross-dressers** and other hip... people" Kewl, we're hip.

And then I tripped over a description of **John Berendt's** *New York Times* best-seller **Midnight In The Garden of Good And Evil** which is set in Savannah, Ga., and includes a transgendered person as a major part of this non-fiction story. Thing is, the book's been on the NYT list for 123 weeks. (For those of you mathematically challenged, that's 2 years and 4 months.) How did we miss this? And, even better, the tg person has written her own book. Look for **Hiding My Candy** by **Lady Chablis** and, no, I am not kidding. This book is for real.

If the *New York Times* best-seller list is a little too stuffy for you, then how about more simple fare. **Cracked** magazine pulled off a parody of **Marvel Comics** X-MEN with **EX-MEN**. The Winter 96/97 issue cover caught my eye with what appeared to be several of the Marvel X-MEN in decidedly feminine garb. Okay, so it's a parody, but any press is sometimes better than no press at all.

And while we're on the subject of the press and the *New York Times*, didja see the article about transgender politics in the National Report section of the Sept. 8th Times? It mentioned **Transexual Menace** and **GenderPAC** and had quotes from **Dana Priesing**, **Riki Wilchins**, **James Green**, **Nancy Nangeroni**, and **Alison Laing**. Hey, cool, Alison gets mentioned in an article

about transgendered politics. Does this mean she's mainstream now?

Just about a year ago, if you logged into **Yahoo**, the premiere web index on the net, you would have found any transgender sites listed under **Lifestyles:Gay/Lesbian**. These days, not only do we rate our own category, just within the last month or so we now rate our **own hierarchy**. That, my friends, is progress.

How about mixing politics, advertising and transgender? An ad for **Kenneth Cole** shoes that's making the rounds of fashion mags shows a very 90's high-heeled pump with the following copy, "Mistaking the Right to Choose for the Right to Shoes, a 2004 candidate campaigned wearing only pumps, declaring it was **his** body, **his** decision." [emphasis is mine]. Hey, it works for me.

Last month's announcement of the **GenderPAC Mobilization Meeting** has been met with great enthusiasm from the community. Only one organization has said it won't be sending a representative to this major community meeting which will be held in suburban **Philadelphia** on Saturday, Nov. 2, 1996. Representatives of major gay/lesbian political organizations will also be in attendance to give us the benefit of their past political experience. There is still room for more people to attend, so if you want to be in on the biggest mobilization of transgender activists ever, then contact **Riki Wilchins** at 212-██████████, or send her email at ██████████@pipeline.com>.

Time to move over to fashion news... Need a way to get your makeup from here to there? How about a travel makeup case. There's a neat little item by a company called **Modella** and it's a black bag that unzips to reveal two sides with clear compartments that zip individually. In the middle is a panel with elastic loops to hold brushes. Also, on the back of the center panel is a mesh com-

HOT•BUZZ

partment for things like scissors, tweezers, toothbrush, etc. It's large without being bulky, and it's waterproof. It's also only \$20 and well worth it. Look for this bag at just about any department store.

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One really cool thing about the Fall is... well... it's cool. I mean it's what I call "dressing weather." You can wear almost any outfit in your closet (and I see some people who do). For me, I like the cool weather to wear shorter skirts and tights. (In the U.S. of A., we call opaque pantyhose "tights" as opposed to everyone else in the world calling regular pantyhose "tights.") And this season, it's not just tights but patterned tights that's making the scene. **Donna Karan** has homespun crocheted tights. **Prada** has cashmere argyles. **Anna Sui** showed cable-knit tights. Even fishnets are back. **Hanes** has a whole range of herringbone and ribbed tights. Colors this season are jewel tones and dark muted pastels.

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Lingerie Factoids: Almost 80% of all the money spent on women's lingerie is spent on panties. Female consumers have no definitive preference for expensive panties over cheaper brands. The average Argentinian woman spends the equivalent of a month's salary (about \$400) on lingerie annually while American women spend about \$57. I wonder what American men spend?

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Some people have said that many women's swimsuits are not much more than underwear. Well, now it's been confirmed; underwear is for wearing anywhere you like, including the beach. Following in the footsteps of the **Wonderbra** is the **Beachbra**. This successor to the wildly successful Wonderbra is also a preshaped bra which you can wear either underneath your clothes or on the beach. Versatility is one of the aspects of underwear fashion today. Even the names are cute. I have a slip dress by a company called **Lingerie Worn Out**.

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One of the hottest areas of lingerie marketing is shapewear. It ain't your mother's girdle (even though some of

you wish it was). Best known is **Nancy Ganz's Bodyslimmers** line of Bust Boosters and Belly Buster lingerie. This year the target is the tush. As gravity and age take their toll on bodies, we could all use a little lift now and then. The newest butt-boosters are pantyhose with a U-shaped sling built-in that lifts the cheeks. Take a look at the **Donna Karan** and **Calvin Klein** lines of hosiery. The other area of great interest is the waistline. Smaller, nipped waists are back. (Ohmigawdl, Please not again.) So look for waist cinchers like those little numbers in the **Hanes One Place** catalog, or the high-waisted slimmer slip from **Va Bien**, or a high-waisted brief from **Aubergine** that offers maximum tummy and waist control. For the ultimate hourglass shape, look for the strapless full slip with built-in bra by Smoothie.

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By the time this makes it to "print" (whatever that means these days), **Classic Curves** should be shipping their latest offering **The Diva**, a garment that creates cleavage where there was none before and without glue or tape. No price set yet but preliminary reports say the garment works really well and is very comfortable. **Espy Lopez**, owner of Classic Curves says it wasn't easy creating this garment and some new sewing techniques had to be invented to make it work properly. Contact CC at PO Box 115, Wilmington, CA 90748, 310-549-8787, or <classicurv@aol.com>.

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Can't tell a **Cucci** from a **Cautier**? Looking for **Calvin Klein** and coming up **K-Mart**? Is that what's got you down funky? Well, then listen up, kids. You're gonna get wise to the fashion scene this Fall if you just tune into **Clueless**, the new television show based on the movie. Five of the movie's cast will reprise their roles on the tube, but not **Alicia Silverstone**. Cher will be played by **Rachel Blanchard** but **Amy Heckerling** who produced the movie (and *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*) will produce the show. The focus, of course, is fashion. But not just any fashion... **Beverly Hills** fashion. The show airs on Friday nights at 9 PM on ABC.

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Everybody wants to be an author these

days and it seems as if their all doing beauty books, too. I told you about **Cindy Crawford's** book last month. This month we have the announcement of **Gayle Hayman's How Do I Look**, sort of the *Joy Of Cooking* of the beauty set. This encyclopedic tome covers everything from fixing puffy eyes to dry elbows. Look for it from Random House mid month. If you'd like to reproduce some of the "classic" beauty looks of past decades, then you need **Mary Quant's** new book *The Classic Makeup & Beauty Book* due out this month.

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Color copiers are hot items. That's color as in lipstick. Color was never really associated with a name until **Chanel** came up with **Vamp**. So now colors are ripe for knock-offs. The **Cosmetic Factory**, known for its knock-off designer fragrances, is now doing knock-off colors, like *Ruby Dream* for **Estée Lauder Ruby Fantasy**, or *Suspense* for **Prescriptives Dramatic**. The colors are almost perfectly matched although the texture sin't quite the same and the containers are cheaper, but hey, for a \$1.99 plus tax, it beats \$14.95 anytime.

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I always look forward to the September issue of **Vogue** with all the Fall Fashion news and this year I wasn't disappointed. For my \$3.50 I got 700 pages of the latest fashion news and ideas. You can learn a lot just from looking at the ads. I think the best example of the purple trend for Fall is the **Estée Lauder** ad. But one trends that I'm betting won't catch on is **flapper dresses**. I mean let's not take retro to an extreme here. Next thing you know we'll be doing the **Charleston** at weddings instead of the **Macarena**.

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I noticed a new line called **Barami**. The designs are classic yet fashionable, not dated and the prices seem reasonable. A fitted jacket and slim skirt in a multi-check green/brown was \$240. Call 1-888-4-BARAMI to find an outlet near you

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So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? I think it's best to let the facts stand on their own Comments? Write care of this publication or email them to [redacted]@cdspub.com>.

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Ms. Lee Etseovitz, Ed.D.

Making Sense Of It All

Looking for Home Part 1

Life is precarious, to say the least. We are all born into a world where, from our first breath to our last, we are challenged to find food, shelter, and clothing for our basic survival. In the midst of this basic challenge, we also seek meaning and relationship. We all want a sense of purpose in life, a meaningful existence. At the same time we do not usually choose to seek life's meaning in isolation. Most of us prefer to be with people, to share our lives, to help each other, though not to take away from our private moments. Simply put, we spend our lives attempting to stay meaningfully and socially involved in the midst of our struggle to survive. To be involved in this way is to feel at home in the world.

It is true that food, shelter, and clothing are what a home (in the physical sense) usually represents. But we are talking here about the quality of life, not just its survival aspect. One can be homeless even in the midst of life's necessities. My own life is a personal history of inner and outer homelessness, even in the midst of the necessary food, shelter, and clothing. In the eyes of the world, I was always very fortunate. But in my own eyes I was always very poor. I felt lonely and disconnected from everyone and even questioned my sense of purpose in life. Somehow I did not fit in. I really felt I had no home at all.

My homelessness expressed itself in a variety of ways. I remember how, as a six-year-old child, I used to take solitary walks in the woods, finding more meaning and companionship among the trees and flowers than among my peers. Movies and then television, even books, have all served as an escape from a lonely and meaningless existence. As I grew older, this attitude persisted. Throughout my school years I was very lonely and generally uncomfortable with life. Upon entering the work world, which simultaneously in-

cluded graduate school attendance, I continued to feel this way, all of which had a negative impact upon my work and studies.

I knew that I was troubled, but I could not really explain my inner unrest. I knew that, from the time I was twelve or thirteen years old, I had been having a variety of sexual fantasies, fantasies and behaviors which were becoming a preoccupation, for they helped me to feel more and more comfortable in an increasingly alien world. At the same time I felt a great deal of shame and guilt about my private pleasures, usually involving cross-dressing and masturbation.

My shame and guilt became so great that, shortly after graduating from college, I decided to see a psychiatrist, the first of several. But my therapists all made me feel that having fantasies, especially sexual ones, and especially fulfilled ones, was bad. In fact, I was led to believe that anything I did which was significantly different from some kind of norm in society was an acting out of unproductive and even self-negating impulses. I was told that I was twisting myself out of shape. Of course, who is to say what the correct shape is? But I was not a danger to anyone, not even to myself. I just wanted to be myself, even if that "self" was somehow different from what others thought I should be.

So I kept my fantasies and my feelings of shame and guilt a secret from my therapists, just as I had always kept them a secret from my own parents. Instead, we talked about my mother and my father and about my tendency to intellectualize my feelings, even though the therapeutic process itself seemed to be an intellectualization of my life. I really wanted my therapists to ask me non judgmental questions which would reveal, and therefore unburden me from, my troublesome feelings and inner turmoil. Perhaps even more, I wanted a hug, or at least the

feeling of a human relationship. I wanted what I had never received at home with my parents. Instead, I felt as homeless in the psychiatrist's office as I did everywhere else.

So what does one do in a case like that? I could not even buy the semblance of a home, that is, a human home, not even for an hour at a time. I continued to feel quite alone with my inner struggle and outer isolation. A poem, called *Loneliness*, which I wrote during this period of my life, helps to express my inner and outer homelessness and thus the pain of what I was experiencing:

Loneliness stalks me
in the darkness of my bed,
in the crowdedness of a bar,
and when I walk the fields.

It presses in upon me
when I wish to be alone,
smashing my solitude,
drowning my days,
wrecking weeks,
and punching me

in the stomach of my existence.

(Next time I will talk about my way
out of inner and outer homelessness.)

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Vis A Vis...

this improbable mission was completed. "Sir, could you please come with us?"

I met Marian Beddill years ago and if anyone could pull off this complicated legerdemain, then she probably could. And probably has, which is how she came to write all this down, I'm sure. But I'm a firm believer in the proposition — the women's room I stay out of is the women's room I'm not going to get busted in.

FUNNY 'STRANGE' NOT FUNNY 'HA-HA'

Angela Gardner suggested I comment on an offensive cartoon used in one of the group newsletters we received. Since she's my editor, I thought it was an excellent idea. And, actually, it is an excellent idea because a lot of our group newsletters use inappropriate cartoons in their pages.

The cartoon that Angela pointed out appeared on the front cover of the Sigma Nu Rho *News Briefs* newsletter and showed a raincoat-wearing pervert type in a shoe store asking to see a pair of "Black patent slings with a four-inch heel, size 13WWW, and no smart remarks." Is this the image we want to project on the cover of one of our group newsletters?

Another cartoon appearing in the *Finesse* newsletter of the Central Illinois Gender Association depicted two streetwalkers, one of whom is saying "I know exactly what you mean. My wife

doesn't understand me either." I guess there's no alternative for married crossdressers whose wives just don't understand them but to turn tricks on city streets. Good image.

There are also a lot of cartoons that poke fun at the crossdressing lifestyle without offensive images. One such cartoon showed Mrs. Potato-head catching Mr. Potato-head using their interchangeable pieces to transform himself. That was funny and clever. But each month you can find a couple of offensive cartoons that present us as skulking perverts or prostitutes in our own community newsletters. I'm not the best person to go out on the point about inappropriate crossdressing humor but some of these cartoons are ill-advised to appear in our official publications. Angela is always pointing them out to me. And then I have to go and write a scolding column item about it. So, please, editors of newsletters everywhere, put your thinking caps on when you're considering those cartoons for publication. No more perverts and prostitutes, OK?

MY TWO FAVORITE SUBJECTS: LADIES... AND LATEX

(1) The *Rosebuds* newsletter of the Tiffany Club of New England carried an article by Stephanie [redacted] titled *A Woman's World*. Stephanie believes that there is "a phenomenon sweeping the nation... That is the gracious acceptance of transgenders by the female world." Well, I'm not so sure about that but she does make a point with which I concur.

Stephanie has found that some women will talk more freely to a crossdressed male than to non-crossdressed males, presumably because we are non-threatening and less arrogant in our conversations. For whatever the reason, I have experienced the same phenomenon myself. If the women are at all open-minded about crossdressing, they will generally be very talkative and become much more personal with a crossdresser than they would ever be in so short a period with a non-crossdressed male. They may deny it, but they would never be so chatty and personal in their conversation if we weren't in drag. There is something about the old switcheroo that puts us on a more equal footing with the ladies right from the get-go.

(2) *The Philadelphia Inquirer* printed an article by Caryle Murphy of the *Washington Post* that told of a new disturbing health crisis: Latex Sensitivity Allergy. The increase in use of latex gloves in the health care professions has uncovered a fair amount of workers who have a high allergic sensitivity to latex products. Some of these workers have had to give up their careers because of their sensitivity to latex.

My interest in this disease has nothing to do with gloves. Or condoms, either, wise guy. But I know there are a few of us who enjoy occasionally slipping into a latex dress, skirt, or what have you. If you are one of the sufferers and can no longer wear your beloved latex clothing, send them to me care of this newsletter. Don't just do it for me. Do it for your own health and well-being.



Wigstock Strikes Out

Wigstock, the annual drag festival was canceled due to failure to raise the necessary funds for 1996, compounded by opposition from New York City Council member Antonio Pagan. The event, which drew an estimated 40,000 attendees last year, costs an estimated \$100,000 to produce. No longer wholly funded by grassroots means, the festival has relied increasingly on corporate funds to meet its goal - keeping it, the

only event of its kind in the world, free and open to all. This year corporate support was down, due in large part to the fact that four weeks before the festival no appropriate location had been confirmed.

"It's become impossible to put on a free event of this size without support from the corporate sector," said Festival founder Miss "Lady" Bunny. "We are disappointed that a company such

as Chesebrough-Pond's, the maker of *Aqua Net*, refused to consider a sponsorship given the fact that we use so much of their product."

Organizers held Wig-Not, a benefit for Wigstock 1997 on September 1 at the Palladium from 2:00PM - 9:00PM.

Sadly, Wigstock, was one of the only free events of its kind open to all New Yorkers.



So, You Want To Take Hormones

by A. E. Eyler, MD, MPH

This column will address some of the concerns about hormones expressed by people who do not desire sex reassignment surgery (SRS) but who wish to achieve enough "body modification" that "passing" or living in the desired gender presentation becomes more feasible (or just easier).

The decision to take hormones often involves three aspects:

1. What hormone-induced changes are reasonable to expect?
2. What are the dangers involved in taking hormones?
3. How fast can I achieve the physical developments that I want?

Reasonable expectations

The general rule of hormone supplementation is that, while hormones do many wonderful things, they mostly build on the body you have, rather than undoing the changes that puberty and adult development have already done. Therefore, MtF adults who begin estrogen can expect:

- ◆ breast development
- ◆ some change in body habitus, especially with regard to fat distribution
- ◆ some softening of the skin, and perhaps a subtle change in body odor
- ◆ some softening of the beard
- ◆ slowing of the loss of scalp hair, or modest regrowth. (Estrogen may help to "wake up" scalp hair that is "dormant," but it can't revive the dead.)

Estrogen will NOT:

- ◆ raise the pitch of the voice (because the vocal cords are already "developed," and won't thin from hormonal stimulation)
 - ◆ get rid of belly fat or create a waistline
 - ◆ change the overall body structure (although there are many genetic "big boned gals" - ask k.d.lang.)
- Similarly, FtM adults who take androgens can expect:
- ◆ deepening of the voice
 - ◆ change in body habitus
 - ◆ beard growth
 - ◆ body hair growth
 - ◆ skin "coarsening," and possibly a change in body odor
 - ◆ loss of scalp hair (if this runs in the family)
 - ◆ enlargement of the clitoris.

Androgens will NOT:

- ◆ change the bony structure
- ◆ change the breast contour into a male appearing chest (although there may be some slight breast shrinkage).

Hormonal dangers:

Most of the serious problems which people encounter from taking hormones for either feminization or masculinization) result from either "going too fast - starting with too high a dose, or increasing too rapidly — or using unregulated preparations.

Most adults, by the time they have made the decision to begin hormone therapy, want very much to experience

the desired physical changes as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, our bodies are not designed to accommodate rapid change. Natural puberty takes approximately five years to complete, and although the "second puberty" that adults who take hormones experience can proceed faster than this, it can't safely accommodate transformation over a matter of months. (Nor is the fast track really desirable. Young girls who finish sixth grade as little girls and return in the fall as little women often experience the consequences of such rapid growth, such as breast pain and stretch marks. Young men who mature rapidly also have more than their share of acne and stretch marks.)

The goal of adult hormonal transformation is to proceed at a rate that the body can safely accommodate, to avoid aesthetic complications, and to allow the person who is taking the hormones time to assess progress and make plans (since most changes are permanent). This will necessarily involve medical visits and blood tests to assess hormone levels in the body. (There is no safe shortcut, or "do it yourself substitute for these services. I wish that there were.)

Complications from taking excessive estrogen doses, or from increasing dosage too rapidly, can include:

- ◆ breast pain and stretch marks (some *mild* tenderness is normal)
- ◆ breast discharge (many people

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Hormones...

like this side effect, but it should be regarded as a warning sign of hormone excess)

- ◆ swelling of feet, ankles and legs
- ◆ varicose veins
- ◆ weight gain
- ◆ **medical emergencies** – such as blood clots in the legs or lungs (i.e. pulmonary emboli)

◆ **growths in the brain** (pituitary adenomae) These are a most always benign, but must be detected and treated. They most often result from taking excessive doses of estrogen over a period of time.

DO NOT take hormones without access to laboratory testing.

Complications from excessive (or too rapid) androgen therapy can include:

- ◆ severe acne
- ◆ excessive scalp hair loss/baldness
- ◆ weight gain
- ◆ **heart disease** (especially among smokers)

Both MtF and FtM Persons who take excessive hormone doses can also experience mood swings or mood changes. If you experience crying spells, depression, excessive fatigue,

angry outbursts, rages, mood swings, aggression, or suicidal thoughts and feelings, **seek medical attention at once**. Emotional upset should **NOT** be regarded as a usual consequence of taking hormones! Normal adolescents, whose bodies are bursting with newly discovered hormones, may normally experience some mild moodiness. However, the emotional symptoms listed above are not normal, and indicate a need for medical attention in both adolescents and adults. (Tip for keeping your job (and your lover): never attempt to excuse bad behavior on the grounds that you just started hormones. People have attempted to use both steroid use and PMS as excuses for nearly everything, but it doesn't work.

How fast can I achieve the physical developments that I want?

The answer to this question involves two aspects: medical adjustment and life circumstances. Medical adjustment must be monitored by a qualified medical practitioner. Many people choose to seek care with an endocrinologist, but a family physician, internist, general practitioner, PA, or nurse practitioner who is experienced in T-medicine can also provide most or all of the needed hormonal care.

Life circumstances can be more

problematic. The general rule is that the pace of transition can't exceed the rate at which you can afford to be "out." In the early stages of hormonal transformation, careful choice of clothing and grooming techniques can camouflage the changes sufficiently for passing at work. However, eventually changes will occur which are impossible to hide. MtFs who develop full, feminine breasts, and FtMs who experience thick beard growth will have to be out to their friends, families, employers, and associates. If you are not ready to reveal your crossdressing or transgendered self to all of these important people, then **GO SLOW** with hormone use until you are. Small breast development, wispy new facial hair, and other more modest changes can be enjoyed privately until the time is right to share them with the world.

If you decide to take hormones, please do it safely and with protection of your personal dignity. Hormonal supplementation can be very destructive, or can be experienced as an act of love for your whole self.

Dr. Eyler is an M.D. affiliated with the U. Michigan Medical Center's Comprehensive Gender Services Program. You may contact the Medical Center by phone at 313-936-7067 or by email: <um-cgsp@umich.edu>.



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Letters to the Editor

Hi,

I found your pages on the net <<http://www.ren.org>>. I found your articles to be most informative and interesting. I am a crossdresser and involved with a very special woman. I hope you don't mind that I printed out the articles to let her read. She is accepting of my behavior but does ask questions about it. I found that through your articles my reasons for doing this are all the same as what is written in these pages. I wasn't sure why I do this and now I am beginning to understand that my reasons are correct. You are right in saying there are a number of reasons and there may be a combination of reasons at any given time. This behavior has recently cost me a marriage which is still in the settlement stage. I wish I found these pages earlier. It might have helped my ex to understand. I'm letting my girlfriend read these articles in the hope that the better she understands, the less likely we might have problems over it. E-Mail me if there are other ways we both can understand this propensity better.

Thanks for the support,
Daven

Dear Editor,

Hello again! I am a 24 year old T.V. and I am in prison. I wrote to you a few

months ago to get information on R.N.&V. and to get some advise on whether I should start hormones or not. Soon after I mailed my letter I got this really nice letter from Ms. Angela Gardner along with my first (and what I thought to be my only) copy of R.N.&V. I loved it! I was so excited about receiving R.N.&V. that I ran around showing it to everyone, stupid me! Two days later it was missing. My beautiful letter and copy of R.N.&V. totally gone. My pride would not allow me to write again and "BEG" for another copy since I am unable to pay for a subscription. I was hurt by my loss but I tried not to think about it.

A few days ago an officer passing out mail handed me a big envelope that said "The Renaissance..." on the front and I screamed. I have read it three times already and it's even better than the last issue. A lot of the time I have low-to-no self esteem. I feel like a nobody here in prison, I feel like no one cares but now I know that you do.

Angela, Jessica, Dina, JoAnn, and Lee, you all are simply the best. It takes special people such as yourselves to do the work that you do. I want to tell you that if it ever seems like no one appreciates your work please (know) that I do as I am sure that there (are) so many others who appreciate it as well, whether they say so or not. R.N.&V. has a calming effect on me. When I read things like Angela's day at Strawbridge & Clothier or Jessica's first trip to the local drug-store for makeup and the results of that trip, I really know I am not alone. Not only do you cover makeup and hair but you also cover laws and life. R.N.&V. is a very important source of information.

I know that I have not met any of you but I consider you all my special friends. So three cheers for R.N.&V. and its staff, and thanks again for all you have done and all you continue to do. Keep doing what- you're doing, it's great and you're touching a lot of lives. Thank you again R.N.&V.!

Ms. Toni

Thank you for your kind comments Ms. Toni. We haven't printed this letter just so we can get a pat on the back. (Although kudos are always appreciated.) The problems of transgendered prisoners are something we have just started to address. We now have a list of prisoners who would like pen pals (which you can get by signing up for the PenPal Program) and I think Toni's letter points out how extremely useful it can be for a transgendered prisoner to get a copy of *News & Views*. Only a few can come up with the money to pay for a subscription. If you would like to sponsor a subscription for Toni, or any other prisoner on the PenPal list, please send their name and address to the national office with a check for twenty-four dollars. If someone else decides to sponsor the same inmate we will assign your support to another individual. Maybe with some help and support they will be able to make better lives for themselves when they join us here on the outside.

Editor:

In a recent issue of *Renaissance News & Views* there was a mention of the 2nd

continued on last page

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Shopping With Jessica

by Jessica Brandon



Greetings, girlfriends! Before I talk shopping, I wanna let you know that it's milestone time! It was one year ago this month that I embarked on my career as a columnist here in *News & Views*. Doing the shopping column has been an absolute blast, I mean, just seeing my mug every thirty days is a continuing testament to how a lowly CD from the mean streets of West Philadelphia can achieve greatness and nationwide recognition. (At least in my mind, anyway.) I want to thank *RN&V* head honcho Angela Gardner for giving me the chance to become a "big wheel" on par with the likes of fellow columnists JoAnn Roberts and Dina Amberle. What a rush!

OK, enough with the mushy stuff, let's get down to the dirt, ladies! To kick off the second year of *Shopping With Jessica*, I wanna rap about pictures. As the old saying goes: "A picture is worth a thousand words." Well, back in August, I had an experience that left me with enough words to fill the Hong Kong white pages! If you remember the photo that accompanied my column every month, (This month it's one of her new shots. — Ed.) it didn't capture me at my best, mainly because I took the picture myself, and it's not all that easy to pose properly and smile in ten seconds. So, I decided to have photos taken professionally.

I went to **Lindelle Hot Looks High Fashion Portraits** which has six locations in the Philadelphia area, in malls, my regular hangouts. I went in the store *en homme* with a photo of Jessica and told the photographer (who doubled as the receptionist) that I

wanted to have photos taken of myself as a woman, showing her the snapshot as a reference. Tracy, the receptionist, was very... receptive, saying my request was not unusual. In fact, she said not more than an hour before she had done a session with another guy made up like a girl. Right away I felt at ease with my decision. After explaining how everything worked in terms of makeup, wardrobe selection and the actual taking of the photos, Tracy made an appointment for me and I was all set.

A week later, I arrived for my session, with a new wig I had bought just for the occasion. Bob did my makeup and he did a fabulous job. Admittedly, I like to think I do a fair job of feminizing my face, but Bob made even my best efforts look tame, and after he shook out and styled my wig, I quite literally became a raving beauty!

Next came the wardrobe selection which consisted of colorful blouses, stylish jackets, feather boas and shimmering wraps which, when, tied correctly gave the appearance of the low cut neckline of an evening gown. With Tracy's help, I did a little of everything, picking out tops in colors that best complimented me before we took the actual photos. This, too, was a fabulous experience as Tracy and Bob brought out the best in me (that I never knew existed) with the use of different colored backgrounds, jewelry, accessories and lighting. The session included fifteen poses, and I pretty well hammed it up.

After the photo session I got to view the proofs. The pictures were recorded both on film and digitally. You get to

see each and every pose taken during your session from a video player. You get to choose which images on the video you want to have made into portraits. The makeup and the photography is free, what you pay for are the photos from the proofs. Sizes range from wallet all the way up to 20" X 24" for anyone vain enough to want a portrait *that large*!

As I live and breathe, the images I saw of myself were so good, I couldn't make up my mind which ones I wanted. I finally decided on four poses in 8" x 10" and three in wallet size. The final total, before taxes and minus a \$15 sitting fee was around \$312 (8" X 10" and 8 wallet size were \$45 each, and that's the cheapest of the lot). I got the finished portraits back in twelve days along with the proofs and an order form for more. (Dare I suggest you take your proofs to Kinko's and have them make color copies at a fraction of Lindelle's prices?)

The experience of having photos taken at Lindelle's was nothing short of fabulous. Tracy and Bob treated me with the utmost courtesy, respect and professionalism. Heck, I dare say they had as much fun taking the photos as I did sitting for them. To sum it up, if you're tired of taking bad photos with a point & shoot camera and want to get the job done right, I recommend going to a fashion portrait studio in your area like Lindelle's. You won't regret it.

My discussion on portrait studios ran longer than I intended (I swear, I can be such a blabber mouth at times!), so I'm going to save for next month, among other things, a catalog I got in the mail from one of my readers that has lingerie **for men**! As always, if you wanna chat with me (and I warmly encourage anyone and everyone to do so) write me at either the Greater Philly address on page two or email me at voicenet.com. I guarantee all letters, paper and electronic will be answered as I'd **love** to talk with you! Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart. Happy shopping, sisters!





BOOK NOOK

The Blank Point: What Is Transsexualism? A production of the Beijing-San Francisco Film Group, (Color, 58 minutes, Video) 1991. A film review by Lee Etscovitz, Ed.D.

This internationally acclaimed, award-winning film deals with a subject that, at least until recently, has been shrouded in mystery and controversy, namely; transsexualism. But films such as this one help significantly to dispel such mystery and to place any controversy in a truly human context. Moreover, the whole film is not only artistically constructed but also very informative, helping the viewer to understand the transsexual phenomenon in terms of two males becoming fe-

males and one female becoming a male.

The presentation traces the emergence of these three transsexuals on two levels: the physical or outer level and the psychological or inner level. It is the inner aspect of it all which sets this film apart from so many others, an aspect captured, but certainly not overstated, by the title itself: *The Blank Point*. In fact, it is the understated portrayal of all three transsexuals that paradoxically makes such a strong impact on the viewer.

We are led from beginning to end on a journey into the fullness of life as experienced by each of the three transsexuals. That fullness truly emerges for

each of them upon facing a blank point in their lives when, simply put, life has no meaning. That blankness, that despair, is the beginning of a self-realization process which, in essence, is the journey of each of these, and perhaps most, transsexuals. The film's flow of concrete yet creative imagery reveals a poetic sensitivity to this human struggle, a struggle of both body and soul. There is far less mystery, and perhaps far less controversy, when this film ends. Rather, life has been faced head-on, and that life now includes three persons who have helped us to understand the meaning of courage on its deepest and most human level.



She's back with passing tips and advice. Have fun as you sort out the actual practical tips from the tongue in cheek bon mots.

Rachel's Definitive TV Guide to Passing (No Ifs, Ands, or Padded Butts!)

by Rachel [REDACTED]

For you hopeless, hapless, and helpless transies out there without a clue and a prayer, here's some advice you might possibly find worthwhile. There's plenty of suggestions here and plenty more that I haven't even thought of. If you have any suggestions to contribute – please don't!

Whether you actually choose to implement any of mine is totally up to you, but you might want to read carefully before you do!

Last June, while strolling around windy Victoria, British Columbia, I discovered that walking around with my hand placed on top of my head was not conducive to passing well. I've also since learned how to anchor a wig like it's a permanent fixture. After all, chasing a wig down city streets can be lots of fun, but only if you're not the one chasing it. If you do choose to wear a

wig in the Great Outside, both Arrow and Craftsman make great staple guns. Don't get a wimpy girly-man one, get something big, strong, and with enough spring force to drive a staple through armor plate. For those not daring enough to use power tools, you can always secure the wig with a chin strap, commonly available where football helmets are sold.

Because you're transgendered, you'll likely wear makeup, and perhaps even a bit of Bondo and sculpting glaze too. Of course, before applying makeup, you'll need to pick your proper colors. First you must decide whether you are cool or warm. Then you must decide which season you are. This can get complicated because if you're a summer color *here* does that mean you're a winter color in Australia? If your skin is yellowish does that mean you need to wear blue eye-

shadow so it looks green? What about wearing cool colors in the winter if you're vacationing in Hawaii? What if you're on the day side of the Moon where it is 235 degrees Fahrenheit and it's the middle of July? What would *Color Me Beautiful* say?

Wear real shoes of course. Never be tempted to fall into the trap of "practical footwear." Why would anyone dare to wear comfortable flats or sneakers if they could possibly wear strappy five inch heels? The pointier the toe, and the higher the heel, the better for your ego! With shoes, practical is never in, it's style, style, style. So what if at the end of the day your feet look like they've been in a meat grinder? All in the name of beauty, dearies. Remember, if the shoe fits — it's ugly. If you absolutely insist on sensible shoes

continued on page 23



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TV Guide...

though, be sure to complete the ensemble with a flannel shirt and a bill-fold in the back pocket.

You must always choose accessories with the utmost of care. Accessories will make or break a look. If you wear enough gold to make Mr. T cry with envy, then something is definitely amiss. Where has Mr. T been all these years? With earrings, size is in direct correlation to your sex appeal. Your purse should be stylish, functional, large enough to carry only the essentials, and always remember the Boy Scout Motto, "Be Prepared!" Here are some of the essentials: ID cards, lipstick, facial powder, overnight change of clothes, Cleveland phone directory, oxygen and regulator, quart of motor oil, maxi pads, week's worth of C-Rations, Canadian currency, leather snips, and a copy of your high school transcript. (You never know when you

might need a Cleveland phone book.)

One problem many transies have is the way they dress. Dress your age. Not the age you feel but the age you LOOK. If you're seventy, that doesn't mean you need to wear a shawl, but wearing a short pleated skirt might be over doing it. On the other hand, anybody but a cheerleader wearing a short pleated skirt is over doing it. Dress your body dimensions too. There's nothing quite as funny as seeing sleeve cuffs that end halfway down the wearer's forearms. The waist of a dress is not usually supposed to break around the middle of your bust, either. If you can't make your pants reach your shins don't you think they're too short? Don't you want them to complement your insensible shoes? It's a lot better to be commended for your style than condemned.

Hairy body parts are also a prime prickly picky point. If you can't shave it, hide it. If you can't hide it, shave it. If you can't do either, hide yourself. I haven't seen much sexier than thick,

dark arm hair poking out from under a silk blouse. Or that tuft of primal fur sitting in your scoop neck cutout. I'll leave facial hair alone, because that's just hitting below the belt for many of us.

Dress appropriately for the occasion. Running out for pizza in a ball

gown is not appropriate. Likewise, wearing a holey tee shirt and shorts to a transgender conclave is not appropriate either. Wearing a business suit to a leatherfest is unseemly. And wearing leather to church is just plain old repugnant. Unless you go to one of those really progressive churches, that is. Look the part or part with the look. Unless you really want to.

One thing that is often a topic of consternation is curves, natural and unnatural. Some food for thought. . . should anything edible really be used to simulate breasts? Someone who constantly has birds pecking at their boobs will not get many dates. Likewise Jello. It's fun to wrestle in it but REALLY! Anything that is drinkable or has the potential to soak your blouse is out, too. If the substance container is designed to be inflated, or if it squeaks when it's fondled, it's out.

Continuing with the subject of curves, that brings us to hip padding, something most of us do not naturally have. The best way to get the right curves is to not use padding at all. Use your hidden natural resources. First of all, get pants you barely fit into, this will give the appearance of having enough body to fill them out properly. Second, after you've greased your lower body and squirmed your way into the pants, you'll need to put on a belt. Cinch it as tight on the waist as possible, and then go one hole further. If you wanted hips you've now got them and a killer waist to boot. Make sure the oxygen regulator you stuck in

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Letters...

Transgender Lobby Days in Washington, D.C. It mentioned a range of issues GenderPAC is involved in, without giving specifics. It occurred to me that it would be a good idea to know the official policy of the various support groups on various political issues. There has been a more visible political activism in the groups, over the last couple of years. It would be nice to know what official positions members and donors are considered to

support by membership or contributions to the various groups.

Would you please publish a report or listing of the official position of the Renaissance Education Assoc., Inc.?

Thank you.

Jennifer Ann [REDACTED]

The official position of The Renaissance Education Association, Inc. is: We support any effort to advance the human rights of transgender individuals. Whether that advancement comes about as the result of our educational efforts at a grassroots level or through

our support of gender rights activists on a national level, what we are working for is a day when all transgendered people, from transvestites to transsexuals, and everyone else with a gender issue, can say to their straight friends and neighbors, "You know, I'm a (fill in your gender status here)," without any fear.

It won't happen for a while. Probably not in our lifetimes but we have to keep working so the transgendered people of future generations will be able to live openly without suffering from discrimination.



TV Guide...

your purse is working well as you'll need to take an occasional breath. Finally, you should have brought along that pair of leather snips just in case of emergency. (I wasn't kidding when I mentioned the essentials.)

Oh yes. Last, but not least, we come

to bathroom etiquette. This is always an interesting subject to address, because if you can pass the bathroom test, you could pass anywhere in the world. Remember pretty girls, grunting is out; it's just not particularly lady-like. Talking to one's neighbor in the can is out too, unless you want your fellow patrons to wonder why your voice is three octaves lower. Reading is

also out, because for some unfathomable reason very few women seem to read in the can, and what the hell are you doing reading in a public bathroom anyway? Finish the biz and go. Last, certainly not least, and indeed probably most important of all, the feet NEVER, EVER point toward the toilet!!! 'Nuff Said?



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