

femme mirror

Reflecting the Feminine



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*Lionel, Mom says you gotta give up
this masquerade and come back home.*

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Wives Talk Back

WITH BERNARDINE



I believe the time has come for us to face our feelings about our appearance squarely in order to understand our unusual men a little better.

From what I have observed, our transvestite is a bit too concerned with such trivialities as make-up, hair styles, fingernail polish, high heels, facial blemishes, jewelry and fancy clothes. Also the desire for adulation, appreciation and compliments is almost disgusting, isn't it? Stop and think!

Where di he ever get the idea that such behavior is feminine? Could he be copying what he has observed? Perish the thought!

Yet, in cold candor, even I must admit that since childhood I have exemplified this provoking behavior, only I hope it was much more subtle. Am I the girl who compared my growing body with my sister, in the privacy of our childhood bedroom? Was I worried that my waist would be too large or my hips too small? Did I look at my knobby 12-year-old knees, and wonder if I would grow up to look like some kind of horse? Am I the teenager who was proud of a changeable-taffeta party dress? Was I mad at my father's old-fashioned ideas about lipstick, mascara, and dress lengths — or about his old-fogey notions regarding midnight curfews?

Yes, we have to face the truth, painful as it is, and then we can sympathize with our better half as he tries to imitate us. I have given quite a lot of thought to this aspect of the phenomenon, most of it negative because I was trying hard to convince myself otherwise, but now I remember all too clearly just how much time and effort I put into achieving what seemed to me a more beautiful and desirable appearance.

And then, how did I feel about my clothes? I have to admit that there have been few changes in my outlook, al-

though I would prefer to pretend that clothes never made much difference to me, that I was beyond such mundane thoughts, and only concerned myself with intellectual ideas. Even yet, I compare one blouse against another, and choose the one I believe is prettier, and then I wear it out completely while the others still hang in my closet. I remember the good feeling that I used to have when I was very young (about 25), and I would be all dressed up to go to a dance — pink organza formal with a very sweeping full skirt, hair freshly curled, eyebrows plucked just so, fingernails delicately polished, silver dancing pumps with ankle straps so I could dance high on my tiptoes without them sliding off, a silver-mesh bag with mad-money, lovely handkerchief with light scene of perfume to pat my face when I perspired. Oh, yes! It was great fun being feminine. The only sad note was the fact that because it was so much what came naturally I didn't realize that I was enjoying my femininity. I was just being a girl, and taking everything for granted. All the pretty extras: hair ribbons, braids, bracelets, earrings, ruffles, sequins, and lace were offered and chosen according to my moods. Even ironing was fun when I was given the privilege of choosing the garments: my little sister's dress with many ruffles, my mother's daintiest lace hankie, and the articles that had been hand-embroidered.

Then came marriage and children. What magnificent opportunities opened up for my feminine soul: nursing my family through small illnesses; cooking simple dishes that tasted so good; decorating our little home in a manner that pleased my sense of comfort and beauty; waxing the linoleum; fixing vases of flowers; teaching little prayers to the babies; buying doll carriages, roller skates, and tricycles; all of it was fun while it lasted — even putting in a lawn by myself.

If we really are honest with ourselves, very few of us considered these house-



wifely chores as drudgery — and no doubt our TV soon realized that Mom was not feeling near as put-upon as she pretended.

And all the while, I still had the pleasure of wearing silk lingerie, Coty face powder, nylons, and pretty clothes. Why have I taken you on this journey through a silly little lifetime? I am hoping that this will re-awaken all of us women who have been chosen to share the journey with a spouse who wants to spend at least a tiny portion of this time trying to experience this thing called femininity.

I am constantly tempted to recall a statement made to me by one of the wives at a Tri-Sig meeting. She said: "I enjoy being a woman so much that I don't blame him for wanting to be a woman, too."



LONG AWAITED TRI-SIGMA SURVEY COMPLETED

Dr. Buhrich compares American and Australian TVs

It has been estimated that the prevalence of transvestism in the adult male population is between one and three percent (Ellis and Arbarbanel, 1961). Kinsey, et. al. (1953) consider the syndrome to be the next most frequent sexual anomaly after homosexuality. Transvestism is thus a not uncommon condition. Nevertheless scientific literature concerned with transvestism is conflicting. Some authors consider it unrelated to homosexuality (Segel, 1962; Allen, 1969; Sim, 1974), and others to fetishism (Stoller, 1968; Baker, 1969). A further area of contention, whether transvestism is a discrete syndrome from transsexualism (Pauly, 1965; Barker, 1966; Stoller, 1973) is important to clarify since the advent of irreversible sex change operations.

In a previous study Buhrich and McConaghy (1977) reported that transvestite subjects could be categorised into two clinically discrete groups. Subjects who were satisfied with cross-dressing significantly showed less intense feminine gender identity and a stronger interest in the heterosexual direction in comparison with those who, in addition to cross-dressing, desired feminisation by hormones and surgery. In that study Buhrich and McConaghy termed the former group of subjects nuclear transvestites and the latter marginal transvestites.

In this study a large sample of Australian and American subjects who were members of clubs established for transvestites were investigated in order to clarify the characteristics of transvestism and to determine whether the categorization of transvestism into two discrete clinical entities could be further supported.

METHODOLOGY

A 132-item questionnaire was constructed by one of the authors with the aim of obtaining information concerning biographical data, gender identity, sexual orientation, characteristics of fetishism and patterns of cross-dressing behaviour. One hundred and thirty members of the Seahorse Club of Australia and 225 members of the Society for the Second Self in America were sent the questionnaire, with a stamped, return-addressed envelope, and requested to complete and return to the Secretaries of the respective clubs. For reasons of confidentiality the questionnaires were to be answered

anonymously.

One hundred and thirty nine American subjects and 97 Australian subjects responded. All were male. Thirteen of the American subjects and 11 of the Australian subjects who reported that they had *not* experienced fetishism to female clothes were excluded from the study. The remaining 86 Australian and 126 American subjects had shown fetishistic arousal to female clothes at some stage of development.

On the basis of their response, the American and Australian subjects were each categorised into two groups. Thirty-one of the Australian (36%) and 50 of the Americans (40%) were satisfied with cross-dressing. They were termed nuclear transvestites.

The remaining 55 Australian (69%) and 75 Americans (60%) desired feminisation by hormone ingestion or by surgical intervention. They were termed marginal transvestites.

With regard to feminisation of the marginal transvestites, 10 of the 55 Australians and 12 of the 75 Americans currently ingested feminising hormones. A further 31 Australians and 46 Americans desired female hormones. In response to the question, "ignoring your situation and responsibility, would you like to have any change of sex operation at present", 21 Australians and 47 Americans desired only breast and/or nose surgery. A further 34 Australians and 28 Americans also desired genital surgery. Eight Australians and 11 Americans had sought medical help with the aim of undergoing surgical feminisation. One had received a nose operation.

The response of nuclear and marginal transvestites both for the American and Australian groups will be recorded separately and together. Discrepancies

between the total number of subjects in each group and the number of responses on each item are due to the fact that some subjects failed to respond to some questions.

RESULTS

Biographical Data

With regard to the 86 Australians, the mean age of the nuclear transvestites was 38 years (range 21-68) and the age of the marginal transvestites was 39 years (range 23-72). Twenty four (77%) nuclear transvestites were married and four (13%) had never married. Thirty nine (71%) marginal transvestites were married and 11 (20%) never married. The remaining subjects were divorced or widowed.

With regard to the 126 Americans, the mean age of the nuclear transvestites was 49 years (range 29 to 71) and of the marginal transvestites was 44 years (range 26-75). Thirty seven (73%) of the nuclear transvestites were married and 7 (14%) had never married. Fifty (67%) of the marginal transvestites were married and 11 (20%) had never married. The remaining subjects were divorced or widowed.

Characteristics of Feminine Gender Identity

Characteristics of feminine gender identity since childhood for subjects are recorded in Table 1.

Subjects were recorded as having been called sissy if between the ages of six and 12 years they recalled having been called sissy on more than two occasions. Playmate preference and preference for girls' games such as "dolls, cooking or sewing" were also recorded for between the ages of six and 12 years. With regard to the

Table 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMININE GENDER IDENTITY

			AMERICANS			AUSTRALIANS		
			Nuclear N=51(%)	Marginal N=75(%)	Total N=126(%)	Nuclear N=55(%)	Marginal N=55(%)	Total N=86(%)
Called sissy			9 (18)	22 (29)	31 (25)	5 (16)	16 (29)	21 (24)
Preferred girls as playmates			7 (14)	9 (12)	16 (13)	8 (26)	17 (31)	25 (29)
Preferred girls' games			1 (2)	5 (7)	6 (5)	2 (6)	11 (20)	13 (15)
Wished to have been a girl often	Between 6 and 12 years		4 (8)	26 (35)**	30 (24)	8 (26)	28 (51)	36 (42)
	Between 13 and 18 years		10 (20)	28 (37)	38 (30)	10 (32)	38 (68)**	48 (56)
	After age 19 years		7 (14)	36 (48)**	43 (35)	8 (26)	36 (65)**	44 (51)
	Dressed as male		3 (6)	20 (26)*	23 (18)	4 (13)	14 (25)	18 (21)
	Nude		3 (6)	15 (20)	18 (14)	5 (16)	18 (33)	23 (27)
	Cross-dressed		34 (67)	69 (92)**	103(82)	22 (71)	48 (87)	70 (81)

* $\chi^2 < .05$, corrected
 ** $\chi^2 < .01$, corrected
 *** $\chi^2 < .001$, corrected

item "wish to have been born a girl," subject's response was recorded as "often" if he was aware of the wish at least once a week. With regard to the item "feel like a woman", subject's response was recorded as "often" if he felt like a woman more than half the time.

Australian compared to American subjects significantly more frequently preferred girls as playmates ($X^2 < .05$, corrected) and wished to have been born a girl between the ages of six and 12 years ($X^2 < .05$, corrected) and between the ages of 13 and 18 years ($X^2 < .01$, corrected).

In both groups the trend for marginal transvestites compared to nuclear transvestites to report more items characteristic of a feminine gender identity reached significance ($P .05$ Sign Test). There was a significant difference between the nuclear and the marginal transvestite groups on six of the individual items (indicated by an asterisk in Table 1).

Characteristics of Cross-dressing

Characteristics of cross-dressing behaviour for subjects is given in Table 2. Fully cross-dressed was defined as "wearing dress, underwear, shoes, make-up and a wig or to dress in such a way so as to be able to pass in public."

There was no significant difference between the Americans and Australians with regard to cross-dressing behaviour.

Within the American group, marginal transvestites significantly more frequently cross-dressed compared to nuclear transvestites. There are no significant differences between the nuclear and marginal transvestite groups on the remaining items in Table 2.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation based on subjects' reported fantasies and activities is given in Table 3. Subjects' sexual orientation when in male clothes and when in female clothes are tabulated separately. Subjects were categorised as being exclusively heterosexual if they reported a sexual preference for women, if they had never experienced homosexual contact to orgasm and if they never fantasised sexual contact with a male. Seven subjects reported no sexual interest in either sex.

When in male clothes significantly more Australians reported interest in the homosexual direction compared to the Americans ($X^2 < .05$, Yates corrected, cutting point nearest the mean). There was no significant difference between the groups with regard to sexual orientation when in female clothes (cutting point nearest the mean).

The trend for nuclear transvestites to report a significantly stronger heterosexual interest compared to marginal transvestites when dressed as male and when cross-dressed reached significance for the American transvestites when cross-dressed ($X^2 < .05$, uncorrected).

Characteristics of Fetishism and Bondage

Characteristics of fetishism for female clothes and of bondage reported by subjects in both groups is given in Table 4. Spontaneous ejaculation is defined as ejaculation without manual stimulation while putting on or wearing female clothes. With regard to bondage, subjects were asked whether they ever had fantasies of being tied up or of tying somebody else up. Four American subjects and three Australian subjects first experi-



enced fetishism after age 40 years.

There was no significant difference between the Australian and American groups on the five items recorded in Table 4. Within the Australian group, significantly more marginal transvestites compared to nuclear transvestites denied current fetishism. There was no significant difference between the nuclear and marginal transvestites in the American group.

DISCUSSION

There was a remarkable similarity in the characteristics reported by members of the Australian and the American transvestite clubs. No significant difference between the two groups was found with regard to marital status, to the proportion who desired physical feminisation, to all seven of the items investigating characteristics of cross-dressing or to all five of the items characterising bondage and fetishism.

The significantly less heterosexual interest while dressed in male clothes reported by the Australians compared to the Americans may be a chance finding, particularly since subjects in both groups, when cross-dressed, reported similar intensity of interest in the homosexual direction. Concerning sexual orientation, Benjamin (1967) commented on the increased homosexual interest reported by transvestites while cross-dressed.

A significant shift of interest in the homosexual direction by subjects when cross-dressed was recorded in this study. However it should be noted that well over three quarters of the subjects maintain an orientation which is predominantly or exclusively heterosexual.

Australian subjects reported a significantly stronger feminine gender identity during their formative years com-

Table 2
CHARACTERISTICS OF CROSS-DRESSING

		AMERICANS			AUSTRALIANS		
		Nuclear N=51(%)	Marginal N=75(%)	Total N=126(%)	Nuclear N=55(%)	Marginal N=55(%)	Total N=110(%)
Age in years when first cross dressed	Under 11	22 (44)	41 (55)	63 (50)	12 (39)	27 (49)	39 (45)
	11-19	22 (44)	28 (37)	50 (40)	17 (55)	25 (45)	42 (49)
	Over 19	7 (15)	6 (8)	15 (12)	2 (6)	3 (5)	5 (6)
Partially cross-dressed at first cross-dressing		35 (69)	64 (85)	99 (79)	27 (87)	49 (89)	75 (87)
Wear female items when dressed as male		27 (54)	57 (76)	84 (59)	20 (65)	40 (73)	60 (70)
Longest continuous period fully cross-dressed	Hours	29 (57)	21 (28)	50 (40)	15 (48)	26 (47)	41 (48)
	Days	15 (29)	41 (55)	66 (52)	10 (32)	20 (36)	30 (35)
	More than 1 week	6 (12)	11 (15)	17 (13)	3 (10)	7 (13)	15 (17)
Has appeared fully cross-dressed in public		34 (67)	59 (79)	93 (74)	17 (55)	34 (62)	51 (59)
Frequency of cross-dressing when tense	Diminished	3 (6)	4 (5)	7 (6)	4 (13)	7 (13)	11 (13)
	Same	12 (24)	16 (21)	28 (22)	7 (23)	11 (20)	18 (21)
	Increased	19 (38)	19 (25)	38 (30)	13 (42)	22 (40)	35 (41)
	Varies	17 (34)	36 (48)	53 (42)	10 (32)	15 (27)	22 (26)
Currently cross-dressing more often than weekly		8 (16)	37 (49)**	45 (36)	13 (42)	18 (33)	31 (36)

** $X^2 < .01$, corrected

Table 3
SEXUAL ORIENTATION

		Exclusively Heterosexual	Predominantly Heterosexual	Equally Homo- heterosexual	Predominantly Homosexual	Exclusively Homosexual
When dressed as male	AMERICANS	Nuclear N=51(%)	47 (92)	4 (8)	—	—
		Marginal N=75(%)	62 (83)	8 (11)	2 (3)	1 (1)
		Total	109 (87)	12 (10)	2 (2)	1 (1)
	AUSTRALIANS	Nuclear N=31(%)	27 (87)	4 (13)	—	—
		Marginal N=55(%)	35 (64)	14 (25)	1 (2)	4 (7)
		Total	62 (72)	18 (21)	1 (1)	4 (5)
When cross- dressed	AMERICANS	Nuclear N=51(%)	34 (67)	13 (26)	2 (4)	—
		Marginal N=75(%)	32 (43)	23 (31)	9 (12)	3 (4)
		Total	66 (52)	36 (29)	11 (9)	3 (2)
	AUSTRALIANS	Nuclear N=31(%)	20 (65)	6 (19)	1 (3)	1 (3)
		Marginal N=55(%)	28 (51)	15 (27)	5 (9)	3 (5)
		Total	48 (56)	21 (24)	6 (7)	3 (3)

pared to American subjects. The differences between the two groups were not significant when subjects reported on items indicating feminine gender identity in adulthood.

The older mean age of Americans compared to Australians does not appear to influence the characteristics recorded. This may be due to the fact that the large majority of subjects had begun cross-dressing by late adolescence and consequently their pattern of transvestite behaviour was well established by the time the questionnaire was completed.

Transvestism, as defined in this article, is invariably associated at some stage of development with fetishism. However, the conclusion cannot be made that fetishism is always the primary motivating factor for transvestites to cross-dress as some authors have suggested (Randell, 1959; Stoller, 1968; Bancroft, 1972). In this study almost 50 percent of subjects reported that they cross-dressed prior to their first fetishistic

experience and over 20 percent continued to cross-dress despite the fact that fetishism has ceased. Little emphasis on fetishism is evident in the literature written for transvestite consumption (Buhrich and McConaghy, 1976) and that written by transvestites (Prince, 1962; Personal Paper 1971). The finding by Prince and Bentler (1972) that only 12 percent of 504 transvestite subjects "looked upon themselves" as fetishists is probably due to the fact that most transvestites preferred not to emphasise and may gain little pleasure from this aspect of behaviour (Buhrich 1978).

The association of bondage and transvestism has been reported previously (Kinsey et. al. 1953; Benjamin, 1966; Taylor-Buckner, 1970). Over a third of all subjects in this study recorded fantasies of bondage, usually of themselves bound while cross-dressed. *Playboy* (1976) reported that 3 percent of 3,700 male college students had practised and enjoyed bondage. Presumably the in-

cidents of 3 percent would have been higher if the authors had included fantasies of bondage. Nevertheless the association of fantasies of bondage with cross-dressing seems likely to be more frequent than would be expected in the general population, as suggested by the college sample.

With regard to the differences between nuclear and marginal transvestite subjects of both groups, it was found that marginal transvestites compared to nuclear transvestites reported a significantly stronger feminine gender identity and a trend, which reached significance for the American subjects while cross-dressed, to show more interest in the homosexual direction.

There was no significant difference between the nuclear and marginal transvestites with regard to cross-dressing characteristics, apart from the finding in the American group that marginal transvestites currently cross-dressed more frequently than nuclear transvestites. There was also very little difference between the nuclear and marginal transvestites with regard to the characteristics of fetishism and of bondage. The one significant difference, namely that Australian marginal compared to nuclear transvestites reported less current fetishism may be attributed to the fact that 10 of the 55 Australian marginal transvestites were currently ingesting female hormones, thereby inhibiting sexual arousal.

The difference between the nuclear and marginal transvestites compared to nuclear transvestites in both the American and Australian groups report a stronger feminine gender identity on all items in Table 1 recording such characteristics during the subjects' formative years. This difference is significant ($P < .05$, Sign Test).

There was no difference between the nuclear and marginal transvestites in the frequency of bondage reported despite the fact that the two groups differed in gender identity and sexual orientation. It would therefore seem that there is an association between fetishism and bondage rather than sexual orientation or gender identity. Since fetishism is reported more frequently by men than by women (Kinsey et. al. 1953) this may be one reason that bondage also is reported to occur more frequently by men than by women.

In summary transvestism is a syndrome which is associated with fetishistic arousal to female clothes at some stage of development. It is seen almost, if not, exclusively in males. Almost half the subjects first cross-dressed prepubertally and in the large majority cross-dressing is well established by late adolescence. Intense fetishism is usually experienced during adolescence but wanes in later years and in almost a quarter of cases

Table 4
CHARACTERISTICS OF FETISHISM AND BONDAGE

		AMERICANS			AUSTRALIANS		
		Nuclear N=51(%)	Marginal N=75(%)	Total N=126(%)	Nuclear N=55(%)	Marginal N=55(%)	Total N=110(%)
Age in years at first experience of fetishism	Under 11	8 (16)	12 (16)	20 (16)	4 (13)	10 (18)	14 (17)
	11-19	31 (62)	51 (68)	83 (66)	19 (60)	33 (60)	52 (64)
	Over 19	11 (22)	12 (16)	23 (18)	8 (26)	7 (13)	15 (18)
Spontaneous ejaculation at some stage of development		24 (48)	31 (42)	55 (44)	9 (29)	19 (34)	28 (33)
Has been sexually aroused by reflection of self cross-dressed		30 (60)	49 (66)	79 (62)	24 (77)	41 (74)	65 (76)
Current intensity of fetishism compared to earlier years	None	11 (22)	20 (26)	31 (25)	1 (3)	15 (27)*	16 (19)
	Diminished	17 (34)	33 (45)	50 (40)	13 (42)	24 (43)	37 (43)
	Same	16 (32)	14 (18)	30 (24)	12 (39)	9 (15)	21 (24)
	Increased	5 (10)	9 (12)	14 (11)	5 (16)	7 (13)	12 (14)
Fantasies of bondage usually of self bound while cross-dressed		13 (26)	22 (30)	35 (28)	10 (32)	25 (45)	35 (41)

* $\chi^2 .05$, corrected

ceases although the desire to cross-dress continues. In many subjects transvestism is associated with fantasies of bondage, usually of the subject bound while cross-dressed. Sexual orientation is predominantly heterosexual.

Transvestites appear to fall into two discrete categories. One group termed in this study nuclear transvestites, is satisfied with cross-dressing. The second group, perhaps the majority, termed marginal transvestites, report an awareness of a feminine gender identity, desire physical feminisation and tend to show a stronger interest in the homosexual direction. The differences appear to be present from childhood. No significant differences were found between the nuclear and marginal transvestites with regard to characteristics of fetishism, bondage and cross-dressing, except that in the American group, marginal compared to nuclear transvestites currently cross-dress more frequently.

The *Femme Mirror* is YOUR forum. With few exceptions, the articles, letters and pictures published here were submitted by you members, though the editor reserves the right to edit, correct or reject all material submitted, most of the material received at our office ends up printed in this organ.

We earnestly solicit your letters, articles, pictures, etc. for publication in this forum. Let's hear from you dear sister!

AN ENGLISH TEA

Susan (VA-5-R)

Four years ago, while in London, I was asked by a member of the Beaumont Society if I would care to attend a formal afternoon Tea. I accepted and soon purchased a delightful outfit for the occasion. It was a street length dress of a cream colored satiny like material covered with a very sheer filmy overlay which had flowers printed on it in very soft colors. It was high necked with very full sleeves made of the overlay only. The dress was complemented with a set of pearls that I had borrowed, cream colored shoes, and a tiny pillbox hat with a veil.

Arriving at the Tea I found that one of the girls was acting the part of the "maid", complete with a late-1800s maid's uniform — high necked, floor length black dress with a large white apron fastened about her waist and the traditional white cap trimmed with black ribbon.

I was shown into the parlor to greet my hostess. She was absolutely stunning — dressed in a copper-colored, floor-length dress in satin. It had a scoop neck with "mutton calf" sleeves, gathered at the waist, and it was obvious that she was wearing a proper bustle underneath. Seated in the bay window of the parlor she presented a picture of lovely, gracious elegance.

The Tea itself was lovely — we each had a small plate for our sandwiches, cup and saucer, and a napkin. Our hostess

poured the tea from a beautiful Georgian era teapot. The sandwiches were without crusts, triangular shaped and were made of ham, cucumber, and watercress (no, there wasn't any peanut butter).

The conversation was totally feminine — where we bought our dresses, what type of foundation we liked, the shops that would accommodate us, etc. I asked our hostess about the gown and in particular about the bustle — she explained that while the original bustles had been rather stiff, awkward, and uncomfortable, since they were made of woven wire, she had fashioned her from from rubber, covered by nylon with two straps to fasten it about her waist. I loved the effect the bustle had on her gown when she walked across the room.

The discussion went on to places to go in London, and soon it was decided to go out for a dinner and a show. It seems that there was a club that featured female impersonators, and although a bit expensive, it did welcome TVs. Upon arrival, the manager made quite a fuss over us — taking our wraps, giving each of us a kiss on the cheek, insisting that he would escort us to our table. While we were enjoying our cocktails, the manager again came over, this time with flowers for each of us. Amidst much laughter and giggles he announced that he would decide where each of us was to wear the flower — in our bosom, or in our hair.

The dinner was good, and the show was super. In the last act, the girl did a strip — absolutely fantastic — (she had to be on hormones) — very sensuous, sexual act without being offensive, she ended up with just the pasties on her breasts, and a g-string.

The show ended, and the dance music started. And, quite frankly, so did the activity at our table. Men came to talk to the three girls who were regulars at the club, to be introduced, and then to draw up a chair and join us.

I was asked to dance and quite enjoyed the sensation of being held closely with his arm about my waist. We talked while dancing, and he was a gentleman in that even when he realized that I was not interested in leaving with him, he still asked me for another dance.

Two of the girls in the group were not so reluctant — they soon left on the arm of their date for the evening.

I left about 1:00 a.m. When I arrived at my apartment, my gg was absolutely super. She suggested that I leave my wig and makeup on and get into a nightgown — this I promptly did. Two cups of tea were brought into the bedroom and we both curled up on the bed and chatted about the day's events just like any two girls would.

All I wanted to do is pass...
now I'm in BIG TROUBLE!



← HERE & THERE →

Delta Chapter continues to hold regular meetings in Ann Arbor, Michigan, arranged by Elaine (MI-16-W). The chapter has not as yet scheduled any special events, but members have been able to enjoy their femmeselves in comfort and privacy. Recent guests have included Sharon (MI-4-J), Jackie (MI-20-H), Nanch (MI-22-H), Richs (OH-8-R), Jane (OH-22-M), Ann OH-26-S), Giselle (FCO-7-C) with her wife, Donna, and their one-year-old daughter, Mary Beth, Laurie (CO-11-P0' and Patricia (MI-13-K). In March we were pleased to welcome as a special guest, Ariadne Kane of the Outreach Institute, who provided us with an overview of the Institute's activities. In November, Delta Chapter will hold a joint meeting with Chi Chapter, and all sisters in the area are welcome to attend.

SEMINAR . . .

Sharon (IL-25-H) advised that there would be a Lifestyle Seminar in Chicago On Sunday, November 4, from 12 noon to midnight at the Best Western Motel at Ohio Street and Lake Shore Drive. Based upon previous attendance, it is expected that approximately 200 people, including many professionals, will participate. Although this is a general seminar, open to all of the various lifestyles, Sharon felt that heterosexual transvestites should be represented to make our views available to those who participate in the seminar. The cost of a booth is \$30, and Rachel, Karen, Ruthann, and Sharon volunteered to "man" the booth throughout the day. Sharon will obtain the necessary details and registration forms, and Donna will contact Carol Beecroft to obtain a supply of Tri-Sigma brochures and hand-outs which we can give to interested persons. This sounds like a good opportunity to let the professional people, and the general community, know that "we are here, too!"

Some sisters might be interested in participating in a television documentary to be done for ABC television on the subject of transvestism.

This came about through my own participation on a documentary on clothing and they wanted a TV to discuss why we wore women's clothing.

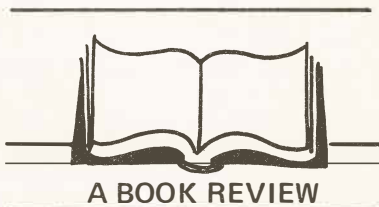
After shooting the interview with me, the camera crew and director and Virginia and your Editor discussed doing a documentary on transvestism. They were interested and will pursue this matter with a hope of doing a documentary.

Those sisters who feel that they can appear on a television program without compromising their security are invited

to take part in the shooting some time next year — in Southern California. It should be a lot of fun and will help get our message over to the nation as nothing else can.

Of course, only Tri-Sigma members are invited and those who are interested should write to me as soon as possible — Carol Beecroft, Box 194, Tulare, CA 93274.

This is an opportunity that we do not often see, so let's make the best of it.



Winning the Age Game

by Gloria Heidi
1976 A & W Visual Library
346 pages, paperback, \$4.95

If ever a book was written unknowingly for TV's, this is it. The authoress contends that as a woman grows older, she begins to forget those aspects of femininity and appearance that once came naturally, and that there is no real reason for that to happen. She explains what it takes to become the "ageless woman." Some excerpts:

. . . the "Middle Aged Matron" wears outfits of colors that haven't been around for years. She has trouble shopping for everything: clothes, shoes, accessories. "They" keep changing styles just to annoy her. She has to hunt and hunt to find the out-of-fashion things she's used to. The Ageless Woman asks "what's new?" She knows the difference between real fashion and fads, and uses both to her advantage. She window shops the latest fads at I. Magnin, then copies them at Penny's for a lot less and looks almost the same. She doesn't care if fad items last forever, so why pay for quality she can't see? She doesn't have to be a dedicated clothes horse to follow the trends. She just reads two magazines a year. The Ageless Woman buys the most expensive fashion she can afford because true fashion changes slowly and predictably. Well tailored slacks, a cashmere sweater, an expensive well-made handbag are all good fashion investments.

Don't leap aboard every fad bandwagon that comes along — chandelier earrings tinkling in time to the clump-clump of your one-inch platform shoes. If designers are looking back to the nostalgic fashions of the 40's and 50's, don't

take a trip down Memory Lane if you've already been there. If you were old enough to wear the original fashions of the 40's, you'll look like a female Rip Van Winkle in a rerun of ankle-strap shoes, deep red nails and lipstick, or crepe dresses with sweetheart necklines. Avoid fads and fashions that a literal translation of clothes from your past. Instead choose a very subtle adaptation of styles from your past. A look inspired by the past, but with a totally current viewpoint, is an excellent choice for the Ageless Woman.

True fashion, together with fad can be used creatively and selectively to express your personality. But if you ignore fashions' dictums, you'll appear to be inflexible, a bystander, a relic of yesterday.

A partial list of fashion winners and losers:

WINNERS (young looks):

Pearls (lots and lots), gold or silver chains, bright definite colors (camel, yellow, orange, coral, bright red, navy, bright green), large glasses, blouses with a pussy-cat bow under the collar, understated evening fabrics, tailored shirt dresses in dramatic colors, abstract prints, dramatic flowers.

LOSERS (old looks):

Jeweled buttons, harlequin or jeweled glasses frames, muted drab colors (royal blue, wine and burgundy, pale pink, pale blue, pale yellow, purple, tailored shirt dresses in tweeds, dark plaid, pastel cottons, anything with 3/4 sleeves, hats, blouses with tucks, lace, polyester double knit in weird prints, itty-bitty checks, pin stripes, "sweet" flowers, small timid prints.

The high point of a youthful bust is midway between the shoulder and elbow. Lower than this midpoint and you'll look dumpy. Higher and you'll look like a pouter pigeon.

Shorten a long waistline with styles that have a wide waistband or belt. Choose blouses and skirts in contrasting colors, which will "cut you in two" and make you appear shorter.

Look through a current fashion magazine for ads that feature large full-face close-ups. (The closer to life size the better). Fold it in half vertically and look in the mirror holding the photo so that it covers half of your face, lining up the features. You aren't trying to look like the model in the picture, only analyzing color, finish, proportion and emphasis of the makeup . . . To place your own eyebrows correctly, powder over them,

and hold a ruler vertically lining it up with the tear duct. With an eyebrow pencil, mark where it crosses your brow line. Now, looking straight ahead, line the ruler up vertically with the outer edge of your iris (not your pupil) and mark on your brow line where it will arch. This will be the highest point of the brow. Finally, place the ruler in a line running from the nostril through the outer corner of the eye to the brow, marking where the brow ends. The second mark should always be higher, and the end should not droop. Look straight ahead into the mirror, and with the ruler measure vertically the width of your eye from top to bottom. It will probably be an inch, more or less. Now, simply check to make sure that the three points are an eye width from your eye. Get the tweezers and remove those slipshod offenders . . .

Only several paragraphs in but two sections have been highlighted. As you can see, there is just too much material to even touch on. There are sections on clothing and accessories, complete make-up, gestures, sitting, standing, walking, posing (yes, posing), body language, what to do with your hands, facial expressions, facelifts, hair and wigs, feminine attitudes, and much, much more. Everything to become the Ageless Woman. About the only chapter you won't commit to memory is on menopause. How many times have you looked at fashion, modeling or makeup books at the library only to find them circa 1950, or written for the unreal world of the debutante? Winning the Age Game is NOW, for today's woman. My spouse has had trouble getting it back from me ever since she bought it. Is my enthusiasm showing? I'll give it an eleven and one half on a scale of one to 10. At all good book stores.

Linda Davis (TX-8-D)

Dee Dee (Ct-7-W) sent in the following:

OBITUARY OF A TRANSVESTITE

Passed away this date. Mr. John Doe, of an undisguised affliction. Besides leaving a wife and a few relatives, he left twenty pairs of very fashionable high heels and a large wardrobe of dresses, skirts and blouses, sizes 24 and 46. Visiting hours will be from 5 to 7 p.m., where the wife will auction off the wardrobe. The body will be encased in concrete and stored away until it can be used as a cornerstone for a new Post Office. We do not know how he succeeded in the straight life but, his taste in female attire was impeccable. The widow wishes to thank Lane Bryant for the beautiful floral piece. He/she will be missed.

SHIRLEY'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE LAW

Shirley (OR-7-B)

Many of us are nervous about a possible encounter with the police and thus I would like to relate an incident that happened to me.

In Oregon it is not against the law to be cross-dressed. I had spent an enjoyable day visiting Jennifer and was headed for home at 1:00 a.m. Because I was quite anxious to get home I was driving over the speed limit. Well, you can guess what happened next! A police officer observed my speeding and on came his red and blue lights.

Now, how would you have handled the situation if you were "dressed" and an officer of the law pulled you over for speeding. Well, the officer came over to my car and said "You know why I pulled you over, don't you?" My reply was, "Yes, I was going too fast." He continued and said that he was going to cite me for speeding and asked to see my driver's license and vehicle registration. I hastily proceeded to get the required items and as I handed the things over, I said, "I am 'dressed' and this is my legal identification."

The officer took the license and registration and went back to his car to write the ticket. In a few minutes he returned to my car and handed me the ticket and said, "Take it easy from now on."

Well, that is the story as it happened. I believe that things went smoothly BECAUSE of my mental attitude. It would be summed up as being comfortable in all situations. I was not nervous about being stopped while cross-dressed, since there was nothing illegal about my being that way. The officer could tell from my attitude that I wasn't nervous and wasn't "up to something". In addition, I did not make the mistake of trying the fool the officer into believing that I was a woman.

The relating of the above incident brings to light a very important point. The way to gain respect is to treat others respectfully. Many of us complain about not being able to express our feminine side as we wish. The real reason for this is that society has said that females or males act or do things a certain prescribed way.

Our viewpoint seems to be that the way society says one should act is not right. We feel that we should have the freedom to express ourselves in the way we feel most comfortable. And that is to be cross-dressed.

But it appears that a lot of emphasis is on "passing". Passing is being accepted by society although this same society says that the act of being feminine must be done in a certain way. So it seems to me a sort of paradox when

on the one hand we feel that society is wrong in the way it allows us to be feminine and then on the other hand we judge how feminine we are by those very standards which we condemn.

NO SURGERY FOR TRANSSEXUALS

Transsexuals are people who persistently think of themselves as members of the opposite sex. Thousands of them, like Christine Jorgensen and tennis player Renee Richards, have actually subjected themselves to drastic surgery to assume new sexual identities. Such operations have always been controversial among doctors. And last week, Baltimore's prestigious Johns Hopkins Hospital, one of the first U.S. institutions to perform transsexual surgery, announced that it had found the operations unhelpful to so many patients that it no longer does them.

The Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic has undertaken more than 100 sex-change procedures in the past two decades. The radical operations were justified on the theory that the transsexual could lead a happy life only if permitted to join the opposite sex in body as well as mind.

But a study by Johns Hopkins psychiatrist Jon K. Meyer found that surgery did not improve transsexuals adjustment to life. Meyer and a colleague, Donna J. Reter, evaluated the sexual activity, family relationships and adaptation to daily routine of 50 former clinic patients. The researchers discovered no significant difference in adjustment between those who eventually had surgery and those who didn't.



George, I'm glad you're finally out of the closet, but those falsies are supposed to be worn under the dress.

TRI-SIG ALBUM



MARGE (MS-1-H)



GLORIA (FCO-6-M)



CRYSTAL, N.Y.



CONNIE & MURIEL, N.Y.



LESLIE (MA-19-R)



ELANDA

Trans-Natural

by

BARBARA FRANCES

The following article does not attempt to present an all-encompassing study of Transvestism. It does present some current thinking, and includes comments and conclusions by the author on this very complex and though-provoking subject.

PROLOGUE

Parthenogenesis and other reproductive expressions

Perhaps the most basic of nature's sexual inconsistencies is parthenogenesis with the parthenogenones, true offspring of the so-called "virgin births," being observed in many species. It is the opinion of some specialists, including Dr. Helen Spurway, Eugenics and Biometry, University College, London, that one or two of every million living human females are the product of parthenogenesis. Women in this case can be the only true parthenogenones, because all parthenogenones arise from unfertilized female ova and must, therefore, themselves be females.

The above is one example of the malleability and adaptability of living matter, the facts of which fly in the face of those who have very firm opinions regarding what is natural and more interesting what is unnatural. According to this common wisdom there is only one true, moral natural mode of reproduction and any deviation from heterosexual reproductive intercourse — preferably performed in the "missionary position" is damned as unnatural, immoral and perverted. (Case in point, a chicken cock was burned at the stake in Basel, Switzerland for having had the audacity to lay an egg). It is fortunate for the peace of mind of these good people that they are not aware of the sexual proclivities of the slipper limpit. This opportunistic sea creature can change its sex at will. If there is an excess of males in the vicinity, it can become a female, and vice versa.

Even among humans the dividing line between the sexes is not as cut and dried as many like to believe. The human male for example starts out life as something of an hermaphrodite. At a number of points during his prenatal development the tiny male, his maleness protected only by the smallest of all chromosomes — the Y sex chromosome, is in constant danger of becoming a female. The penis and scrotum may for some time still "degenerate" into the more basic labia and clitoris of the female.

This "fetal malleability" is so pronounced that simple hormone injections

have been able to induce dramatic sexual transformations in a number of embryonic mammals. Prenatal males have been made to change sex entirely, later being born with functioning ovaries and vaginas. In other experiments, "false females" which were in reality males, prenatally transformed by hormone intervention, have been coupled with true males and "false males" with true females. The offspring of these homosexual unions, while physically normal, have resulted in only male offspring when two males mated and in female offspring when females mated. But they did produce offspring.

These facts show that nature is not nearly so dogmatic as some of its most intelligent offspring, humans, when it comes to deciding what is natural — particularly for reproductive expression. Considering both the exotic, unaided variations of sexual and reproductive expression in nature, and how easily nature can be manipulated by scientists if they desire to create other variations, neither transvestism, a sex-gender variant nor transsexualism, a sex variant, can be categorically classified as perverse or unnatural, and those who would so categorize live in ignorance of "the true facts of life."

Some scientists, who are studying sex, gender and reproductive variants (in particular transsexualism and transvestism) have come to the conclusion that gender identify dysphoria, believed by many to be the sole cause of transvestism, is not wholly behavioral, but that sex does play a part. Some believe that it is possible that transvestism is merely a form of incipient transsexualism.

Dictionaries define a transvestite as one who receives erotic satisfaction by wearing the clothing of the opposite sex, while the transsexual is defined as one genetically of one sex with a psychological urge to belong to the other sex. This desire of the transsexual may be carried to the point of undergoing surgery to modify the sex organs to mimic those of the other sex. This delineation of the transsexual, while not complete, is basically sound; however, the definition of the transvestite should read that the transvestite is an individual, genetically of one sex (preponderantly male), who has a compulsion to wear clothing ascribed to the other gender.

Thus one of the primary differences between the transvestite and the transsexual is that when the male transsexual wears feminine clothing, he considers it merely a relaxing, normal characteristic of the female. However, when the transvestite wears these garments he experiences an exceedingly high degree of eroticism.

Not until later gender development, not time mind you but all development, does the satisfaction found in cross-dressing by the transvestite approximate

the feeling of the transsexual when cross-dressed. This tends to substantiate the claim that the transvestite desires to live as a woman while the transsexual desires to live as a female. For example, the transvestite's sexual identity is male, sex objects choice females and self, social and professional life as a male, has little if any interest in estrogen therapy, and no interest in surgical conversion. His dressing habits are masculine by necessity and feminine by choice. However, as the transvestite's gender development progresses, even though his heterosexuality remains in force, his gender preferences become markedly feminine, e.g., dressing habits and social life; his interest in estrogen therapy increases, but he still evinces no particular urge for sexual reassignment. His classification as a heterosexual remains, primarily because he still views sex with a male with revulsion, not because of any overwhelming desire for sex with a female. Thus under close scrutiny the classic picture of the transvestite becomes blurred as it begins to identify more closely with the picture of the transsexual. The point, not necessarily in time, rather in gender development, when this begins to occur varies with the individual. The actual age of the transvestite when this occurs is not relative to the development.

Past and recent studies have shown that all transvestites are as alike and as dissimilar as snowflakes. Their problem, which establishes them as transvestites, is gender identification, but not entirely because of how and in what environment they were reared. This fact is most im-

portant to note because the dissimilarities are legion. For example: some come from broken homes, some from stable ones; some from families with but a single child, others from families where there were siblings (all the same sex, all opposite sex, and mixed). They are every color and from every socioeconomic level. Some had strong fathers and some had weak ones.

Relative to the strong or weak father syndrome: it would be much more accurate to describe this as a strong or weak paternal influence. Some very strong-minded and/or physically strong men either do not have the desire to or in other ways are unable to exert a normal paternal influence. After all, the father has not carried this body within his own for nine months and therefore cannot have the "love" for it that its mother normally has — nor should this be expected. However, the male does have a significant part to play in the development of the male child, both by presenting and by instructing the masculine gender role. As a classic example a woman with an extremely strong material instinct (drive) may take over from a disinterested husband, either by his default or her purpose, and assert the paternal influence he should normally exercise. In the case of a fatherless household if the mother does not attempt to also assume the masculine gender role, the probabilities are that the male infant will not ascribe maleness to femininity and will be able to find his normal gender role from other sources. So much for the dissimilarities.

MAYBE SOMEDAY:



"Yes, you'll all be able to interview the president — as soon as he changes his dress and fixes his makeup."

Now the only apparent true point of similarity must be considered. Each transvestite has been, during his infancy and early gender formative years, subjected to a very strong feminine orientation by his mother. This accounts for one of the basic prerequisites necessary for one to become a transvestite. However, there are many men, exposed to a strong-willed mother, who have not taken this route; therefore, there must be at least one other factor contributing to this maladjustment. There is.

Remember that little Y sex chromosome which had to struggle so hard to retail the maleness of his host body? Well, let us say that he did not develop as fully in some bodies as in others — enough to maintain sexual identity as a male but not quite enough to carry out fully the true male desire to dominate. Let us call this a Y chromosome deficiency. This tiny flaw in the cellular makeup, coupled with a strong pre- and post-natal feminine influence, could alter the gender habits of the male by blurring or confusing accepted gender roles. From birth, feminine influence on a boy child is almost overwhelming, and if there is a mother, as mentioned above, albeit one who does not necessarily desire to feminize her son and indeed even attempts to present to him an alluring picture of masculinity, he will be a dull child if he does not attempt to emulate the gender of the person enunciating these virtues. Therefore, unless the Y chromosome is able to exert all its normal strength and influence, all the time, some masculine traits will be subordinated to feminine ones. Not male to female, necessarily, but masculine to feminine. Given this premise it seems not unreasonable that the male infant should begin to believe that his true gender is feminine not masculine.

As the boy grows older he finds that for some reason most people, his mother included, erroneously believe that a little boy's true gender is masculine, not feminine as he knows it to be. Under pressure he accepts this, to a greater or lesser extent by each individual, and outwardly assumes the stereotyped boy's role. In most cases (dissimilar snowflakes again) he excels in this mummery, and assumes the role of a boy's boy so well that his family, relatives, friends and acquaintances of both sexes and all ages would be astounded if he were to announce his true gender preference. This state of affairs will continue all his life, sometimes waxing sometimes waning sometimes lying almost dormant for years. But it is always present and at times will manifest itself at the most inopportune moments. These manifestations cause the male to reassert forcefully the gender role prescribed for him by society; he has no need to reassert his maleness.

This maleness has seldom if ever been suspect to him, as his transformation to a female has been a seldom experienced

fantasy only. This fantasy occurs more often in the non-transvestite than in the transvestite. He enjoys sex with females, probably almost as much as they enjoy it with him. He is an accomplished lover, seeming to know instinctively when either force or gentleness is desired by his companion. He is indefatigable and perhaps too promiscuous, but it is difficult not to accept that which is so freely offered. In most cases he marries, has children and outwardly projects the image of an exemplary husband and provider. The women, whose husbands maintain the facade of masculinity are indeed most fortunate, those whose husbands are not able to continue in this most difficult role less so.

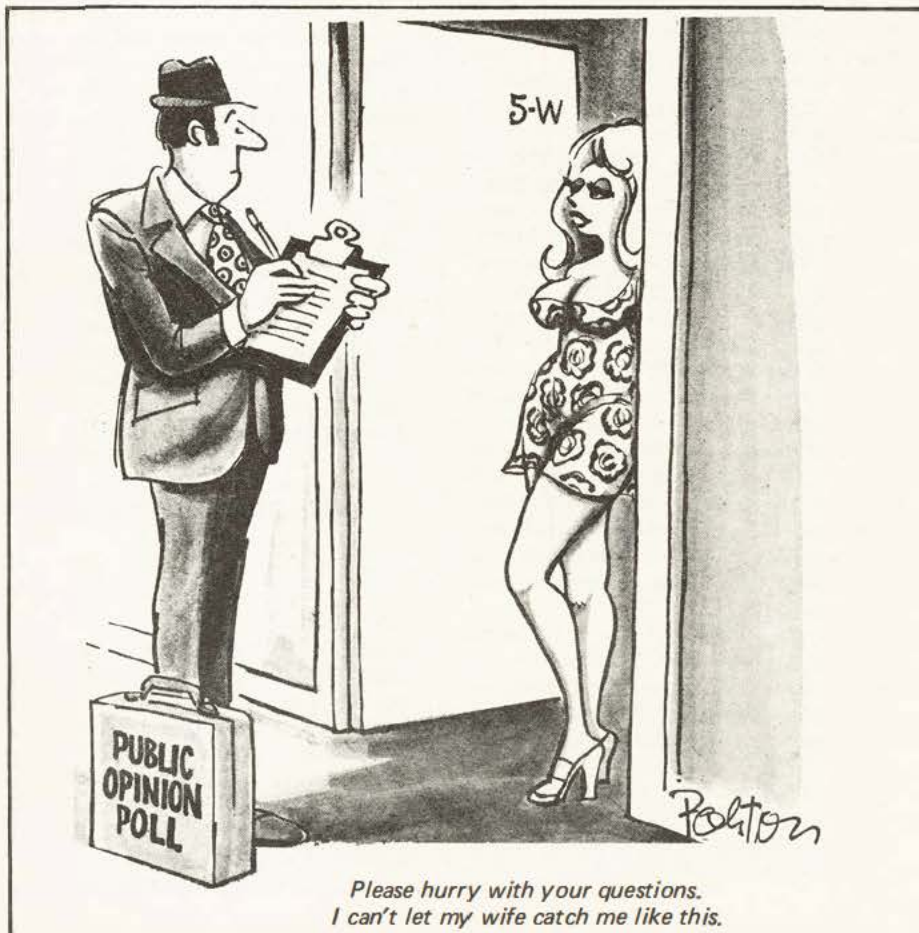
As the male grows older and his virility declines so does his assumed masculinity. His "fetish" of cross-dressing, once so insistently compulsive, becomes insidiously more commonplace; his Y chromosome deficiency and the strong early feminine influence have worked their magic. He desires a gender reassignment. Those feminine garments, which once transported him into ecstasies of eroticism, now become the softly sensuous lingerie and dresses suitable for wear by those of the feminine gender. The dominant male role he has played so successfully slowly deteriorates into an unimaginately heavy burden. Now the gentler feminine pursuits seem to be more and more desirable. If he could he would

completely change gender and live as a woman. Estrogen therapy, now that the male sex drive has diminished, titillates his interest and in an attempt to block out his feelings of gender identify guilt he may begin to experiment with it. Generally there is still no interest in surgical sexual conversion, primarily because he desires to live out his life as a woman — not as a female. He is too tired to enter into that struggle again.

EPILOGUE

Here then are the causes of transvestism, and here are some of the conditions that obtain between birth and death. Each transvestite will experience some if not all these conditions. Each will experience them at different times during their lives — some earlier some later. Some will affect one individual more than others, but all will influence and eventually lead to the final and most enviable state of consciousness for a transvestite — an unselfconscious woman, one beset by no gender problems. It could almost be considered as a state of pre-operational transsexualism.

There are the snowflakes, identical yet dissimilar, with the only common bonds being a weakness in cellular structure due to a Y chromosome deficiency and to the exceptionally strong influence exerted by the mother. It takes two to tango.



The Editor's Mailbag

Dear Carol:

I was very impressed with *Understanding Crossdressing*. I thought that I was well read on Tv items but my eyes have been opened. I appreciate some of the words of caution and intend to proceed slowly but surely. Please send me an application and a million times thank you for being there!

Allen (Idaho)

Dear Carol:

Ideas from Vicki (IL-48-M) and Connie (NY-25-N) and yourself have helped me considerably so I thought possibly I might share what I have gained with some of our readers.

One thing I have learned is the clear identification of various transgender classifications. Summing up, a Tv enjoys wearing feminine clothes and may or may not want to attempt to pass as a woman in public. A transgenderist wants to appear and act as a woman and wants to fill many roles of a woman and often feels like a woman when tressed. This person also enjoys masculine roles. The TS or transexualist is one who wants to change his sex and spend the remainder of his life as a female.

Our organization is organized for the benefit of the first two groups mentioned above and makes no allowance for any one in the third group. Much of the value of our sorority has been the ability to maintain its sense of purpose and direction. There are some who feel that we should open our membership to transsexuals but it seems to me that this open-ended type of membership has been behind the failure of other similar organizations.

I had a hazy idea about the need for and purpose of our organization. It seems that a clear idea about this can help all of us, so we can get behind Carol and others in their tireless efforts to provide a sound organization for the benefit of us all.

One thing that has helped my wife advance from a "D" wife to an "A+" wife has been the apparent quality and integrity of most of the members of Tri-Sigma. And speaking of wives I recognize that wives prefer not to mix socially with transsexuals.

It is very easy to say, "Tri-Sigma should do this or that." But who is Tri-Sigma? It is each of us and what we should all be saying is, "What do I want? What can I do to help bring about the objectives I feel are important?" I feel that we of Tri-Sigma are on the front line of a much needed social change. If we will all work together we can help things change a lot faster than if we individually worked alone.

Lucille (OR-6-A)



SUSAN FINDS A FRIEND

Dear Carol:

Although married I have a female friend (who is also married) with whom I am very close. We've always had a special friendship since she was 18. Her husband, who is very liberal about sex, was bringing her along into his lifestyle. That was when she turned to me for advice about her own emotions. Since then we have been very close. Last Thursday I called and asked if I could come over since her husband had gone off. I put on my feminine underwear and then covered it with my regular male clothing and then went over to visit with her. We talked for a while — just idle chatter, and then she asked what the reason was for my visit. Well, if anyone could accept Susan it was her, so I told her everything and even gave her proof by allowing her to take a glimpse of what I had on underneath my male clothes. After 30 some years of expecting ridicule and laughter, I found that someone liked me as Susan and was willing to help me. I think that she is the exception to the rule and I don't recommend that all Tvs do the same but, nevertheless, I have a very dear friend who is now Susan's friend, too. As a Tri-Sigma member I hope to meet more sisters like myself and make many long-lasting friendships.

Susan Marie (NY-21-Mc)

WIFE IN-"VEST"-IGATES

Dear Carol:

I am interested in obtaining information about Tri-Sigma Sorority. I am enclosing a return envelope for your brochure. My husband wears women's clothing and I am hoping you can provide me with help in explaining why he seems to like doing it and why I enjoy seeing him dressed as a woman. I am very nervous about being "exposed" so I hope that you will understand my not signing my name to this letter.

A Friend in Hanover, N.H.

