

The Tri-Ess

The Femme Mirror



Femme Mirror

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Summer 1996

The Femme Mirror

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Brandi Ann [REDACTED] until last November went by the name Teri Denise [REDACTED]. It was in Calgary at the Holiday En Femme that she decided a new chapter in her life would begin upon her return home. Having been shoe-horned into the Treasurer's position at Tau Chi Chapter the previous August, she returned to Texas looking forward to being Facilitator. As Facilitator she has a monthly column in the Femme Forum and regularly goes out with or without other sisters in Houston. She starred in a video class project for a Houston photographer and would like to try modeling!

Brandi was a charter member of Tau Chi Chapter way back in the early 80's, then dropped out for almost 13 years to raise two kids and try to be a good husband. Well, one out of two isn't bad, as Brandi and spouse parted ways in 1994. This gave her time to let her femme self grow and develop. Last February she got to be a bridesmaid in Sara and Billie's wedding at the Texas T Party. (Ed. Note: See "Bridesmaid Brandi Shops For her Gown" in the Spring issue.)

It was at the T Party that Leslie (Judy Daniels' Significant Other) christened Brandi a Social Caterpillar, because of the way she hovered from table to table. Brandi says, "I still don't know what it's all about, but life's too short to worry about it, and I want to get out and meet new friends and have fun!"

Dating is very hard on a crossdresser, so Brandi decided to just have fun and maybe find an understanding female who liked having Brandi around. Well, that turned into a bonanza, as she met her fiancée's Vanessa 4 or 5 times as Brandi befro Vanessa met Tim!

Brandi thanks her god friend, Judy Daniels, for getting her back in Tri-Ess at a time when her life was falling apart. "Tri-Ess and Judy have really helped me grasp what I was born with, and taught me to reach out and help others," Brandi states.

Brandi is an aircraft mechanic for a major airline and cannot wait to travel with her new spouse. She adds, "I love my job and have fun doing it. I love getting out and kicking up my heels and having a good time." Brandi loves Native American lore, and was given the title "Indian Princess" by Judy for wearing a brown leather fringed dress on the Holiday En Femme Banff tour!

Brandi closes with this thought: "Whatever you do, be true to yourself" - words of wisdom from an ex airline captain.

**PLEASE! IF YOU ARE MOVING
YOU MUST NOTIFY**

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DON'T RISK LOSING A MIRROR!!!

Executive Director's Page

by Carol Beecroft

Greetings! Lots of activity going along out here. I'm planning to go to Chicago to attend the Board of Directors Meeting. I'm driving all the way, so it could be full of experiences. I also received a phone call from a television executive in England regarding getting some information about crossdressing. We had a nice conversation, and the gentleman indicated the planned television show would be aired in four segments over in England. I might go to Los Angeles after the Board of Directors Meeting to help out with the production.

I still get an occasional call to do a radio talk, and just recently I did such a talk over station WEDJ in Charlotte, NC. And thanks to Sue Wylie, of station WVLK, Lexington, KY. This was one of the best shows that I have worked with. The show was one hour long. I am sure that many people have been enlightened about crossdressing.

Do you remember that I asked for assistance from those who are aviators? Joyce in California is an aviator and would like to form some sort of an organization for aviators who are also crossdressers. Do contact me so that I can put you in touch with my aviator friend.

A nice letter was received recently, from Cape St. Claire near Annapolis. Priscilla and Jacqueline, a nice crossdressing couple, have opened Sophia's Bed and Breakfast facility. This nice service is for the transgendered community. Call 410-██████ for information.

You know, I once indicated my deep interest in having Mariette Pathy Allen's pictures of crossdressers presented here on the west coast. Well, I spent almost two days in San Francisco several years ago and was rather unsuccessful, although I did manage to find one museum who expressed some interest in her work. Several weeks ago, Marlene (Director of Chapter Development) and I went to Fresno State and spoke to several people there about a

presentation in one of their galleries. The people with whom we spoke were quite receptive, but it seems that the area they had in mind was not very large. So we were given the names of several others who were responsible for some of the larger galleries at the university. We will be going back there soon. I will report on any successful contacts.

I received a rather sad letter from a sister in New Jersey, who is going through a rather disquieting experience with her crossdressing. Things got so bad that she ended up with a nervous breakdown. She is going to try to give up crossdressing because of her family problems involving crossdressing. She does not want to lose her family and her grandchildren. Things had gone from bad to worse, and she now wants to rebuild her relationship she once had with her wife. She formerly wrote a column in the Mirror (Tri-Ess Shoe Talk). She asks that those who had written to her previously not send her any more letters. Her femme name is Jackie (NJ-3793-L). She mentions that she had opened a Pandora's Box full of complete pleasure and enjoyment that she had found in crossdressing. Personally, I do not think she will be able to keep from crossdressing in the future. But on the other hand, we must recognize how great of a problem she has with her family life.

I received a nice letter, along with newspaper clippings, from Lori in Oregon. She had contacted a local newspaper, the Mail Tribune, and arranged to give an interview with two other Tri-Ess sisters. She had earlier been given our press release material. The interview with the reporter and the three girls lasted three hours, and the phptp session still another hour. The reporter put together a splendid story about what a crossdresser's life is all about. They are counting on the article with the picture to help find others like them. The article was one of the best I have read. The picture was well presented

and very large. And, our Tulare address was also included with the article.

Lori says she has been a risk-taker all her life, but, so far, no one has identified her male self with the picture in the newspaper. She says they have received a million dollars worth of publicity from the article. Lori has also been in contact with Southern Oregon College in Ashland, with the hope of speaking to the Psychology Department. She is scheduled to speak to three classes. Lori hopes to get a chapter started in that area. She mentions Vicki as one of her Tri-Ess friends who has helped in so many ways. Lori concludes by saying that all this activity has given her a lot of emotional highs. She is glad to have sisters to turn to, because they can understand her problems.

A note here from your Executive Director is that many of our sisters have used our press release information, and have gained interviews with local newspapers. The resulting publicity in the newspapers was well worth the effort. May I suggest that more of you get hold of the press release and contact your local newspapers. The article and sub-article about crossdressing and Lori was, indeed, a wonderful example of what good reporters can do on a local interest basis.

Brenda, wife of Rosalind in Northern California, has recently done some type-setting for the Couples magazine. It should be larger than the last issue. We still have more typesetting to do. In addition, I am getting to work on the next issue of the Clarion, for leaders.

I forgot to mention that Marlene and I will be going to Los Angeles soon to contact art galleries there in an effort to show Mariette Pathy Allen's lovely pictures of crossdressers and their wives. We will report our success (if any) in a future Femme Mirror. As you can see, life here can be hectic around here, but we know that we are helping others, and that is great. See you next time.

Editorial Expressions

by Brenda Thomas

More on Deuteronomy 22:5

I, by nature, am not an overly religious person. I mean, I do go to church, I do believe in God, but I don't run around quoting scripture and verse. There are a couple of verses that I am familiar with, but that is all.

I was raised a Catholic, but in the last several years I have been attending a Presbyterian church. So I am at least familiar with the Bible, but I have never done any real studying or preaching of it. So I wondered a long time about whether to I was qualified to write this article. Then I decided it was too important to question my own qualifications.

The one verse that we are all familiar with in the Bible, the one which has been tossed in our face by all of the bible thumping religious fanatics, is of course, Deuteronomy: 22.5. We all by now should know what that verse says. For those who don't know I will quote it for you: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God." (King James version).

So where does this leave us? One more guilt trip. We all know we don't have enough of those. How does one cope with this passage if he truly believes in God? One sister I know has struggled with this passage for years. Never receiving a clear message from her prayers of asking for forgiveness, she has come to the conclusion that "forgiveness is not necessary for that which is not a sin." That belief, while valid, still does not answer the question. So what do the rest of us do? I decided to look a little deeper, and pulled out my Bible and read Deuteronomy.

When I was being raised in the Catholic church we were taught religion, whether we wanted it or not, and certain things remain in my memory bank. One point I remember being emphasized was the division of the Bible into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament,

as I recalled, was the teachings of the prophets, and also the law of the land at the time. The New Testament, concerning Christ, was the word of God, God's law to be obeyed. The Old Testament was people's prophecies and subject to change. The New Testament was etched in stone - these are the things you WILL DO.

Guess what? Deuteronomy is in the Old Testament. It is important at this point to remember that women were not even allowed inside of the church at that time. It was written, during that time, "BETTER TO BURN THE TORAH, THAN TO TEACH IT TO A WOMAN." (Proof of early prejudice) So I decided to read some more of Deuteronomy.

After reading I would ask these questions: How many of us wear clothing made of two different materials? (22.11) How many of you have stoned your children? (21.21) How many of us have two wives? (21.15) Why is it right to practice usury with a stranger and not with a brother? (23.20) How many of us have taken off the first year of our marriage to stay home, not work, so we can cheer up our wife? (24.5) How many of you have guard rails around the roof of your home to protect others from falling off? (22.8). I know these seem like stupid laws, and they are in this age and time. In the days when they were written they were not. Also in my research I was wondering how they differentiated between "that which pertaineth to a man, and that which pertaineth to a woman?" All of the garments I have seen, dated in that era, make it awfully difficult to differentiate between the sexes.

Years later it was decided that some of the laws dating from that era be changed. Today, women may not only go into churches and study religion, but may also be ordained ministers. So, where does that leave us with Deuteronomy?



The second verse that I am familiar with on a regular basis is Matthew 22.36-40. Again, for those unfamiliar I would like to quote it: "'Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.'"

So my question to those who cast stones ("Judge not lest ye be judged.") is this: How in the world can you condemn someone for what would seem like a violation of a law of the land of thousands of years old, a law of the land that has been changed, altered, modified, etc. etc. etc., and yet claim to believe in the Bible, when you are violating God's greatest and second greatest commandments. The very commandments that God says ON THESE TWO HANG ALL THE LAW AND PROPHETS?

What I am really asking is; what is more important? That we condemn because of the ancient law of the land of Israel? Or that we accept others for being different because of God's law that we love our neighbor as ourselves?

Points to ponder until next time: REMEMBER TO BE THE BEST THAT YOU CAN BE.

Summer 1996

Letters to the Editor

Dear Brenda,

We all know that being a cross dresser is not easy. Being a man when you have to be, and looking like a woman when you need to be, does not make for an easy life. For most of us it is very easy to be afraid of the world between your dreams and reality. I believe that if you can dream something, you can make it so, just so long as the dream is not too far fetched.

I also believe it is never too late to be what you might have been if you had not let fear stop you. Fear is a powerful force that can block our view of the real world and slow our quest for true knowledge and self worth.

As a group, we are full of questions, more questions than answers. Maybe, as a group, we should strive just to understand the questions and not worry about the answers, accepting our differences and loving the way God made us.

If you were to ask me how I deal with cross dressing my answer would be this: to pick the battles big enough to matter but small enough to win. We all must battle for our place in this life, and our cross dressing is an important part of our life. It is my hope that all my sisters win their battle, but only time will tell for sure.

Enclosed are some details of my battle to be understood by my co-workers. I think I am winning this battle but only time will tell for sure.

I would like to thank you for printing my last letter in the Winter issue of the MIRROR; it made me feel important.



- Sherri
NC-3723-C

Sherri,

Amazing that you picked on the fear aspect. I am not sure how many people realize that FEAR and PAIN are the two strongest motivators in the human psyche. More people are motivated by fear and pain than by any other feelings.

Choosing your battles is one of the most important lessons we can ever learn, not only for dealing with our crossdressing but also in dealing with every day trials and tribulations. As the saying goes: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

- Brenda

Dear Brenda,

This is to respond to your fine Editorial Expressions in the Winter 1996 Issue.

We all "wear many hats" or play many roles, as you point out you do. I didn't know you identified yourself as a transsexual though non-practicing. I don't suppose you want to discuss it with me. I am trying to understand transsexuals' sexual preference. The part of my mind that is logical (a small part, I admit) says that a heterosexual male who has SRS and becomes female would become lesbian. A male with gay or bi-sexual preferences would be attracted to men or both. I don't believe surgery can change one's sexual preference. Correct me if I'm wrong. I've had this discussion with one or two others.

But I am not writing just to be nosey. I'm writing you to congratulate you on "coming out" with your status. I'm also glad that Angela could say it and tell about the other members who felt that way. I am not making a judgement on TS's in Tri-Ess. If other groups won't accept then maybe we

should. If their sexual preference is for women and they are still physically or genetically males there should be no problem with Tri-Ess's rule that the organization is for heterosexual cross dressers.

- Jan

Jan,

First off, thanks for the vote of confidence. Maybe at this point I should clarify a point that possibly got lost in the article. That point being, I am not transsexual in the normal context of saying one is transsexual, but I identify (in my brain) with being transsexual. That realization came from reading all that I could get my hands on regarding transgender, transsexual and cross dressing lifestyles and accounts of same. So many of the same feelings have swelled in my head. When I read Dr Rene Richards' story and Caroline Cossey's story it was a never ending case of "Yes, I know exactly what you are saying".

Regarding your question about sexual preferences, I also do not feel that sexual preference changes just because one has surgery. I did have an interesting discussion with a F to M the other day in which he all of a sudden has found an attraction to males. For her entire life as a female, she was attracted to other women. This person is having a real problem dealing with this at this point in his life. But that is another story.

My primary purpose for writing the story was to let others know that what they FEEL is what they FEEL. It isn't right, wrong, good or bad. It is just the way they feel. What I or others choose to do with that feeling is what could turn out to be right, wrong, good or bad. I hope this clarifies it some what. I do encourage others to share what they feel on this subject with me.

- Brenda

Dear Brenda,

Just received my Winter 1996 copy of the Femme Mirror and must say your article and especially the one written by Angela are the best I have read. Once again, I find that my thoughts and actions are not alone. Someone else is at the spot I am. The subject really hit home for me. I do hate labels, but I have learned that it is just another game I am forced to play. It really does not matter to me what I am called, for I have learned through my growth and experience, not without a great deal of pain, who I really am and have accepted it fully. It is not important to me what I am.

Angela's story brought tears to my eyes and a truth to my soul. I have gone through the pain of accepting myself as a transvestite, then a cross dresser, then a crossgendered person and now yes, I am a transsexual. Stunned, but Yes, I want to be a woman and Yes, those wishes and dreams for most of my life support the fact. Like you and Angela, I am married to a wonderful lady and my love for her prevents me from making the complete transformation. It really seems to be OK where I am. Work and its financial security also play a big part in that decision, but my soul yells "I am woman."

Following my second divorce for having hit the bottom twice, I finally realized who I was and found great joy in that realization. From that point I have strived to combine my masculine and feminine traits into one. It seemed the only way I could survive. I do not know how some folks can keep the two so separate. I feel that I have been successful in combining the two me's for the most part, and it gives me comfort when people mention that I am very sensitive and caring for a man. Is there an Oscar category for those of us that play the male role so perfectly? My confusion comes from the fact that there is some frustration with playing this role, but that does not destroy me. Maybe I am just used to doing what is expected and always attempting to please others. The love and companionship I receive from my wife are very important to me. I need it. To keep those things, I gladly compromise to meet her needs as well as my own.

After five years as a Tri-Ess member, it is gratifying to my feminine side to see the growth and experience I have gained. Angela's article has served as another step to further realize who I am and I rejoice in that fact. I suspect there are many other sisters that share these thought and feelings.

Thank you, and if you would, please thank Angela for sharing with us.

- Peggy

Dear Peggy,

As I read this letter I was reminded of what you have so wonderfully written about - GROWTH. I have always felt that we all need to grow, not only in self realization but also spiritually. Personal peace and growth comes from spiritual growth. Growth does not mean progression, and here is where a multitude of people get confused.

As you state, you have grown to a point of learning who and what you are (as defined by you). You have also realized that this growth does not automatically mean a progression to SRS status. Many of us learn of the options available to us. We must all learn that the path is different for everyone. What works for one may or may not work for someone else. I, like you, enjoy a certain amount of male privileges, but most importantly I enjoy the love of a wonderful woman and a devoted daughter. These are the things that give me spiritual well being and I (not someone else) choose to keep these intact.

I am sure that Angela is reading this and I know that she will be pleased to know that you enjoyed her article.

- Brenda

Dear Brenda,

When I first became acquainted with Tri-Ess I understood it was a sorority (L. soro; sister), a sisterhood. I saw it had chapters around the country which had Greek letter names. Wow, I thought, I know all about that. My wife belongs to one of those (Phi Mu) and I belong to a fraternity (Sigma Chi). I know how that works. That's great. As a crossdresser, the idea of belonging to a national sorority of crossdressing sisters was thrilling for me, and still is. Some of us got so excited about it up

here in Minneapolis we chartered a new chapter so we could be part of it. And we all belong to Tri-Ess National, just as our charter and by-laws require. We think that's essential.

Then I went to the Holiday en Femme and found that most of the chapters had no representative at the convention. We exchange newsletters with most of the other chapters, and I see little about our national organization in them. It seems to me that there isn't a lot of identification with our national organization among our chapters.

Last year Carol Beecroft graciously visited our chapter and helped us understand the role of the national in our affairs. Tri-Ess really does a lot for all of us, and I think sometimes we are not aware of that.

I just wanted to take this opportunity to tell my sisters that Tri-Ess National is our anchor, the oldest and most experienced transgender organization around, and is of great value to us all. This is a call to all of my sisters to think about a closer identification with, and more complete involvement in our national organization.

Let's be sure all our local members belong to the national. Let's have at least one member of each chapter at the national convention. Let's talk about the work the national does at our meetings.

I just love being a sorority girl, let's all really be sisters.

- Sofronia

Sofronia,

Sorry it took me so long to get this into the Mirror, but then you know Ms. Procrastination, don't you (spelled Brenda). The points you bring up here are most valid and I support you for bringing them forward. All too often we fail to realize that we do not stand alone, we stand united. The direction and support offered to each chapter via Tri-Ess International is invaluable. I know that you have done your part in supporting Tri-Ess International and I would hope that through your continued efforts of writing to other sisters and letters for the Mirror that you will continue to stress unity within Tri-Ess.

- Brenda

Summer 1996

Three Ages of a Chapter*

by Jane Ellen Fairfax

One of the loveliest plants in all creation is the sunflower. Arising from an inconspicuous black and off-white seed, it pushes through the earth as a small, vulnerable plant. Insects and parasites can kill it; careless people can tread it underfoot without even knowing it is there. Weeds can choke it off. If, however, it survives, it attains a glorious stage of adulthood. With its yellow-gold petals, a mirror-image of the sun, it follows its namesake through the day, soaking up the invigorating rays. Those who behold it remark upon its loveliness. Its bloom, cradled on a long verdant neck, delights the eye, even from a distance. Finally, the sunflower is mature. Fertile now, it is ready to drop its seeds onto the ground. Some, carried away to nearby soil, recreate its life in new places. And so the sunflower spreads its graceful beauty to its surroundings.



Education (S.P.I.C.E.), the Mirror's no-bashing policy, are all contributions originating in Tri-Ess. Many of these ideas are being adopted throughout the transgendered community.

Because Tri-Ess did the pioneering (and took the heat!), wives of crossdressers are an integral part of our community. The Sweetheart Connection stands alone as a quality newsletter for wives. Bringing crossdressers out of secrecy has always been a skill at which Tri-Ess is adept. New web pages in cyberspace help us reach out to many living in secrecy. That helping hand is reaching even to foreign lands. Thanks to the generous work of member sisters, Tri-Ess information is now available in four languages! Many, many sisters want to be a part of this ongoing love of work and support. That is what Tri-Ess is all about! And that is what you are all about!

So it is with Tri-Ess Chapters. A fervid seed forms in a sister's heart - the desire to plant family-oriented support for crossdressers where she lives. Perceiving the need for a support group focused on heterosexual crossdressers and their families, a group that works with relationship issues, a group committed to achieving social acceptance for crossdressers as ordinary people with a special gender gift, our gardener drops the seed of love into the receptive soil.

Now she gets busy with the fertilizer and water. Her Chapter Formation Kit helps her prepare the ground, and she freely uses the articles, information, and sample ads and bylaws it contains. She looks to Tri-Ess International for outreach materials, brochures, and other articles on crossdressing. Having placed ads into newspapers and written to helping professionals, she replies quickly to resulting inquiries. To her great joy she sees the leaves emerge from the ground!

But her joy is tempered by the fact that her seedling chapter is at its most vulnerable stage of development. Bonding between the chapter and its International is vital. For Tri-Ess is the source of its vision. Can you imagine what a sunflower would be like if only some of its petals turned toward the sun, while others turned away? Not only would it be a rather peculiar looking flower, but it would be in a fight for its life. That is exactly the fate of chapters which do not follow Tri-Ess membership guidelines!

Fortunately, bonding is easy, for Tri-Ess is one of the best bargains in the transgendered community. The Mirror's quality speaks for itself. No magazine in the community provides so rich a panoply of articles for crossdressers. The Membership Directory and Confidential Mail Forwarding Service, the Pen Pal Program, the Big Sister Program, the non-crossdressing program, Boys R Us, the Spouses' and Partners' International Conference for

Firmly rooted, the chapter reaches the height of its glory. Members look forward to many and varied programs on such diverse subjects as the feminine arts, photography, feminine self-defense, sewing, hobbies, psychology, and family issues. Outreach teams regularly visit Crisis Hotlines, police classes and universities to educate the public. At Boys R Us, the members enjoy bowling, miniature golf, movies, athletic events and dinners out. After its program, the chapter sometimes splits up, with some sisters going out shopping, while other socialize.

The newsletter bulges with articles, dressing and makeup tips, and humor submitted by its members. Financial considerations are relegated to one month out of the year, when members pay dues, both local and International. Wives start getting involved with their own social group. The chapter adopts a charity to benefit the community in which it lives. Members place sisterly caring ads in the chapter newsletter.

** (Keynote Speech given at Kappa Beta Chapter's May Banquet)*

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It's an era of good feelings all around, as the chapter reaches toward the sky.

The chief cankerworm in this second stage of development is complacency. He eats away at the roots, encouraging the chapter to lean on one or two leaders until they burn out. Chapter members place more and more work into the hands of that busy sister, Somebody Else. Unfortunately, this lady talks a better game than she plays, and the chapter starts to wither. At this point a controlling personality usually comes forth to save the day. She exterminates that cankerworm called complacency. The flowers are gone, though the plant remains. Her price is total empowerment of her own private agenda. Usually, however, chapters purge controllers before they poison the ground. Although they sometimes suffer drastic pruning, they resume their healthy growth. Again shines the glory.

Finally the chapter reaches the age of maturity. Outreach programs and publications are humming. Screening committees are busily admitting new members. Drawn by all the fun, sisters journey from miles around to participate in this hub of activity. Showcasing itself to the world, the chapter volunteers to hostess the Holiday EnFemme and S.P.I.C.E. Chapter leaders groom successors, grounding them in the folkways of Tri-Ess and of the chapter. Creative leadership is assured for many years to come. Helping professionals regularly visit to give educational programs. The city map is lit up with sympathetic businesses.

By now chapter members have appeared in the local news media. Several are starting to contribute on a national level. The chapter even provides its own news update for the Mirror. National leaders visit to give programs and fan the enthusiasm. No longer does the chapter have to fear for its continued existence. Nothing short of a cataclysm will kill it now. In these heady days the chapter feels really good about itself. Perhaps too good! Although the chapter may not realize it, it is at a crossroads. Two issues lie before it. How the chapter handles these issues may well determine the future of Tri-Ess and of the transgender community in its region.

It is at the height of its glory that the chapter, like the mature sunflower, begins the seeding process. Eventually the chapter becomes so large that it begins to lose that intimate atmosphere that drew people to it in the first place. It becomes difficult to give new, timid sisters the support they need. Like petals without nourishment, they begin to fall out of the chapter. If the chapter does nothing to remedy this situation, it enters a phase of repeated expansion and contraction around a critical number. The loss to the community is incalculable.

How does a chapter seed? Let's use Kappa Beta as an example. Suppose Kappa Beta grows to an average attendance of fifty. Let us say seven members drive over from Raleigh. Seven committed members will usually sustain a chapter if they have an able leader. Perhaps Kappa Beta is willing to meet in Raleigh twice a year. Two or three Kappa Beta leaders drive to Raleigh to support the seedling group. At first the two chapters share a common newsletter. When a qualified editor emerges, the Raleigh chapter has its own newsletter. The seeding process will engender a sisterly relationship, which, if nurtured, will endure as long as both chapters exist.

Does seeding work? You bet it does! Kappa Beta Chapter itself sprang from seeds sown by Sigma Epsilon, which also seeded Tau Lambda to the Florida Panhandle. Phi Epsilon Mu of Orlando, Florida just sent a tendril to Fort Myers. Not content with this sterling accomplishment, it is now branching out to Jacksonville. It is hard to keep up with these ladies, yet attendance at Phi Epsilon Mu continues very high. As a result of this seeding process, Tri-Ess is expanding rapidly in the Southeast.

Why doesn't every large chapter seed? One reason is egoworm infestation. Seeding is essentially a generous act. The proliferating chapter is willing to accept a slightly smaller size in order that the whole Tri-Ess community can grow. Each chapter is a sunbeam lighting the way out of secrecy. The more sunbeams you have, the more sisters will emerge. More will attend if they don't have to drive long distances.

I dream that some day every major population center in America will have its own Tri-Ess Chapter. Large metropolitan areas will have several.

The accomplishment of this dream in the future depends upon foresight and selflessness now. Every chapter worth its salt longs for a full-service transgender community and is dedicated to the development of that community. In a mature community every transgendered person enjoys a place where he or she is comfortable. History has shown that universal needs are a family-oriented organization, a diverse membership group, a transsexual focused-group, and sometimes a female-to-male organization.

Our chapters are sunflowers, not octopi. They cannot encompass the needs of all gender-gifted people. Folks do not squeeze into groups in which they are uncomfortable; they drop out. Getting them back is no easy task. Their loss is our whole community's loss. If a Tri-Ess Chapter perceives the need for another type of group in its area, it is duty-bound to help that group form up to and including a donation from the chapter treasury. Ladies, territorialism is for tomcats. Surely we have risen above that level. In building a full-service community, you may lose a little money and a few members. Through the years, however, your colleagues will bless you for meeting their needs, and you will bask in the peace that comes with knowing that you have done what is right.

The Tri-Ess work of support is in bloom all across America. These last two months have been the most proliferative in our history. The seed of our outreach is blowing over our borders and across the ocean and taking root in distant lands. You, colleagues of Kappa Beta, are a part of this mighty work. By your kindness you are helping many to victory over solitude, and bringing to many lives a fulfillment they have never before known. The glow of their gratitude warms my heart every time I read "The Pink Slip." Rejoice with them, for their triumph is also yours. Redouble your efforts; so many do not yet know the joys of sisterhood. Follow the sun of your vision, blossom forth in community, and rejoice in who you are.

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Tri-Ess Through My Eyes: A "Swan Song"?

by "Ann Drew"

Three or four months seems like a long wait for another Femme Mirror to come out. It's my main link with the crossdressing community. But I can't complain. I started to write comments on the Fall 95 issue and the Winter 96 issue came out. Then I wanted to comment on the Winter 96 issue, but I wonder if I can do that before the Spring 96 issue comes out. These editors are great, aren't they?

Virginia Prince had some good thoughts in both issues, but I can't agree that sex is entirely below the waist and gender is above the waist. That leaves out at least two (probably 200) erogenous zones. I speak from experience. But I need to accept Tasha's challenge and rebut a couple of her points.

I disagree strongly with her statement that "at one end of the (membership) spectrum are crossdressers who are very much in the closet." Later she says that the barrier to this mythical "closet" (where nobody really lives) is "a lack of self-acceptance." I have to say I strongly resent that.

In all my pen pal correspondence and any letters or articles I've written for the Femme Mirror, I've tried to take some bricks out of the Berlin Wall of terminology. When can we stop talking about people as if they hid or live in a closet? Nobody does. I don't. But my objection goes beyond semantics. The barrier to "coming out" as she thinks everyone MUST do is NOT self-acceptance. I for one, and I'm not alone, know myself and accept who and what I am... and a mirror also helps.

I accept Socrates' statement: "The unexamined life is not worth living." I've completely re-examined my life in every aspect: my gender blend, my religion, my political views and my social views. I didn't simply accept what my parents handed me. Women's
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Lib liberated me, too. I have chosen a lifestyle that fits me, though I regret not having a significant other. "Coming out" in person would certainly do nothing to help me find one.

I wish people in the urban areas with many gender support groups, gay bars and other places where anything goes would wake up. Tune in! Most of this country isn't like that. If you live in a small town, for example, or in a state where hate groups are active, "coming out" would be an invitation to ostracism and ridicule if not harassment or murder.

I would like to see the day when we all have the freedom to live Rachel Miller's dream, when men can wear women's clothes without raising an eyebrow. I understand some men came out recently in dresses and with hairy legs, maybe beards too, in New York's Central Park where it may be accepted. If men want to dress "en femme" in public, even though they still look like men and don't care if they make fools of themselves, let them. Just don't tell me I have to. Don't tell me I lack self-acceptance. I just happen to value my life and want to keep the too-small circle of friends I have.

To offset my criticism, Tasha, I loved your article, "Got the Yin?" I've learned a lot from reading Eastern philosophy. I like your explanation of the yang and yin. While I don't live in women's clothes all the time, at least not in public, I AM in touch with my Anima on a daily basis. It's more than skin deep.

Now, I want to thank Sharon L. for her fine article. It's not only persons of ethnic minorities who are in the minority in Tri-Ess. Income does play a part, as you said. That's just one minority I happen to be in in Tri-Ess.

I almost dropped out of Tri-Ess this year so it was good to read the article by a new member who might more actively take my place. Maybe 1996 will be my last. Private dressers, as someone has more gently referred to us, are in a second minority of our own. One reason for private dressing may be lack of money. Another is an honest look in the mirror. Some of us look in our mirrors realistically and see that nothing we could do would make us pass if we wanted to. This is NOT a lack of self confidence. This is facing facts. Another may be where we live. We just want to dress at home for our own pleasure and self-expression. We don't need the approval of others or the experience of going public to feel we've "graduated" and are now really "there." If you need the approval of others, do you really have "self-acceptance?"

I am not alone either in having no need to justify my crossdressing with quotations from the Bible. Rachel [redacted] expressed this very well in the Winter issue. Apparently God does not judge women for wearing men's clothes. Also, America's founding fathers and mothers were devout Christians. Yet, as Rachel points out, Deuteronomy says in chapter 22, verse 11: "Thou shalt not wear a garment of diverse sorts, as of woolen and linen together" (King James Version). Why, then, was linsey-woolsey (made from these two fibers) a common fabric in Colonial days?

Probably the only reason I stay in Tri-Ess is a few pen pals and the Femme Mirror, even if Tri-Ess is for the well-heeled (double meaning intended) and socially oriented. Not every Tri-Ess pen pal gives evidence of any feminine sensitivity toward her sisters, however. With some the insensitive macho competition still comes through the makeup. But there are a few who are really in touch with the gentle, feminine principle. I enjoy their letters and hope to

"meet" (by mail) more "pen" friends. The Femme Mirror can't achieve all of its potential unless more people write in to interact with the letters and articles. We need dialogue.

It was good to read Jane Ellen's and Frances' frank discussion of how they found harmony. I hope "All Dressed Up And Nowhere To Go" was fact, not fiction. I was glad to read Kymberleigh Richards' excellent article. It's good the term "focused" is being used instead of "closed group." Let's drop that term along with "in the closet."

And then I'm in a **third**, smaller minority. One or two of my Tri-Ess pen pals have mentioned this to me also. I'm not interested in meeting other members "en femme." I guess I'm different in that way. Because I am heterosexual, instead of seeing a soror-

ity as a support group I'd see a lot of men in dresses and be uncomfortable. Please don't try to psychoanalyze or label me.

I think the most exciting news of all is the new revision of the DSM classifications. I hope all of you realize what a breakthrough this is. We all owe our thanks to Dr. George R. Brown and all the groups that helped get this changed. If we can get the counseling professionals to accept crossdressing without regarding it as an illness, we are on the way to getting public acceptance. What would really help would be to have some famous psychiatrists write articles for the general press or appear on television to that effect.

Thanks, too, Jessica, for sharing your experience with gynecomastia, a mixed curse and blessing. I thought I was alone. I think there are only two or

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three of us in Tri-Ess, or at least who admit to it. We are an even tinier (fourth) minority in Tri-Ess. You mentioned 5% of boys. The study I read gave the figure of 40%. I don't know which is right. I feel a little like the sister who has to hide the fact that she is a non-op transsexual in Tri-Ess.

I was glad Brenda could tell of her own feelings. Tri-Ess makes it possible for us to express our feminine side in ways that each of us knows is best for us. Focusing membership primarily on heterosexual crossdressers, and asking members who do come out to do so as ladies of their own age, are two reasonable policies that set us apart from other groups. I hope Tri-Ess will continue to reach all levels of heterosexual crossdressers and that members will try to accept all of us as we are.

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Let's Get Rid of the Word "Gender"

by Virginia Prince, Ph.D.

The word "gender" comes from the Latin *gens* meaning "kind." Not kind in the sense of being thoughtful, but kind as in "sort or type." Since there are two sexes, as initiated and represented by the two gametes, the egg and the sperm, and since the lifestyles of males and females differ in a number of ways that show that the two "kinds" of lifeways were characteristic of the two sexes, they became the "genders" of the two sexes.

While the anatomical/physiological aspects of maleness and femaleness can be incomplete, exaggerated or diminished by abnormalities of fetal development or by physical accidents or illness, such specimens do *not* constitute a third sex. Surgical removal or alteration of sexual tissue does not create a new sex, nor does it transform one sex into the other. It merely modifies the equipment the individual has and makes it more like the external anatomy of the other sex. (As a comparison, think of a man who, because of illness or accident, has his leg amputated and can no longer walk on two legs. This does not change the fact that he is a member of a bipedal species.)

There are, of course, the intersexed, whose chromosomal patterns or whose bodily anatomy is not standard. But they are not a "third" sex either. It took an egg and a sperm to get the individual started, and any accidents or abnormalities that may occur during fetal development do not change that fact.

Sex itself cannot be changed. Although transsexuals talk about a "sex" change operation, it is not truly such because the penis and vaginal structures are simply parts of a delivery system to bring sperms into close contact with eggs. When they meet, the latter can be fertilized by the former, and it begins the long process of development into an adult member of the species, capable of participating in a further reproductive act as the next generation. The structures that make the

gametes, the ovaries and the testicles, do not change in structure or function except in the case of accident, disease or surgery. Sex indicated, but not determined, by external genital anatomy, so altering it gives the visual impression of the other sex, but the basic determinants are not changed.

Gender, however, as the psychological and sociological manifestations of the way males and females carry on their lives, can be varied and changed in a number of ways and degrees. Thus, while there can only be two kinds of gametes to participate in the reproductive process, there can be all manner of differences in the behavior, dress and characteristics of each of these two kinds (genders) of human beings.

Even in animals the lifeways of males and females of the same species differ in various important ways. They do so because the reproductive tasks of the two sexes are different. And in early man it was the same. But while the basic differences remain, as part of our animal heritage, the manifestations of those behaviors can and have varied enormously, particularly over the last 500 or so years. This has been especially intense since the end of World War II, and has nearly come to a point today where, except for special occasions, there is little difference in the "kinds" of lifestyle (the "genders") of the egg makers and the sperm makers. I think one could safely predict that this process will continue more intensely in the next 50 years to eventually reach a point where there remains only the differences basically related to reproductive roles, physical strength and personal choice. Today it is still possible to make a list of the characteristics considered appropriate to one gender and not to the other, but the genders are becoming more and more alike every day.

So it is appropriate to ask: "What are the two basic behavioral characteristics, or styles, or the two fundamental gender differences, between masculin-

ity and femininity?" The answers, as I see it, are aggressiveness on the part of the male, with insecurity lurking behind it. Insecurity is basic because in thinking, self-aware creatures like humans there is always the fear of being unable to carry out the role assigned to you. In the case of the male, the whole reason for his existence, biologically speaking, is to be able to impregnate a female and get his genes into the next generation. To do that he must be able to get an erection, and since the penis is not under direct voluntary control, there is always the question of whether it will work as well tonight as it did last week. While it is the testicles and not the penis that manufacture the sperm, what good are they if there is no means of delivering them to where they can fulfill their purpose? Male animals do not have this problem except as a result of structural abnormalities, physical injuries or illness. When an available, ready-to-ovulate female is within sight (and smell), the male is ready to "do his duty."

There is no equivalent insecurity in females because they have what has been called the "ever ready vagina;" for females the basic and fundamental characteristics are passivity (acceptance of the male sexually), and nurturance, meaning all those behaviors aimed at caring for and rearing the young to adulthood. But even these basic characteristics are now being shared with the opposite sex. We all know of aggressive females, not only socially but also sexually. And we are becoming more familiar with the ideas of househusbands, single fathers and general sharing.

So the idea behind this article is to suggest that maybe we should begin to do away with the gender terms of masculine and feminine. (We can't do away with the sexual terms male and female because our biology locks them in place.) Since the current concepts of gender are largely based on visual information and the social tendency to

consider some behaviors as characteristic of males and others of females, I think we will have to base any new term or terms on what is visible, and take a sort of "what you see is what you know" position.

I therefore suggest the term "presentation," meaning how one presents him/herself to the world, as the successor to the general term "gender," with the understanding that "presentation" refers to everything about a person that can be observed. Thus while clothing, hair, makeup, decoration, etc., are obviously visible, body carriage, attitudes, behavior towards others, pugnacity, shyness, talkativeness, etc., are also observable and therefore part of presentation. As clothing becomes more and more homogenized, it will be more and more difficult to tell from it alone whether a given individual is probably a male or a female. But if we fall back on the primary characteristics previously mentioned — aggressiveness and nurturance — we would probably characterize the person as being a "social" male or a "social" female.

Note the term "social" in reference to sex. Only if one is desirous of having a physical relationship with another person should it make any difference whether the person has a penis or a vagina; that is, their biological sex. Social sex would only indicate which behavioral type an individual belonged to, and nothing requires that the biological and the social sex be the same. So if we drop the term "gender" and substitute "presentation" we automatically do away with any numerical sense of gender. While we are accustomed to two genders and three, four or more seems awkward, there can be any number of "kinds" of presentations.

What difference does it make what the sex of a United Parcel Service delivery person or a flight attendant is? In the past these two types of employment were considered to be reserved for a man and for a woman respectively. Today strong young women drive trucks and male stewards are on almost every plane. Work and informal clothing is also becoming standardized. It will not be a case of a tradeoff. Pants and heavier shoes are now commonplace

for both sexes and will continue to be so. There will eventually be no great clothing differences to help in the determination. But as I said above, what difference will that make?

When males and females are out cruising for sex and/or marriage partners, they will probably both use the "classic" presentations. The females will want to appear sexy and desirable, and will want to wear fancy, low cut, short-skirted dresses and heels because they are specific to females and appeal to males. (It is difficult to predict what males will wear on such occasions, but to whatever degree is possible they will want to present themselves in ways that will indicate their talent, strength and ability to provide for females and their children. This has been the story throughout evolution and, until such time as the government takes over such responsibilities, it will continue to be.)

As much as we would like to, we can't escape our biological heritage. While males — crossdressers in particular — can and do wear these "classic feminine" items, they will, in the future, come to be regarded as sexual bait or females trolling for a male partner for "fun and games." In a world where there are no longer such gulfs between men and women, as there have been in the past, there would be little inducement to wear such items except at a masquerade party.

If anyone nurtures a forlorn hope that if women wear pants, shirts and boots, men will take over the wearing of blouses, skirts and high heels, get rid of it! It won't happen, because there won't be greener grass on the other side of the fence once the fence has been taken down. It will be one big pasture open to all, bulls and cows alike. Biology will remain as the great divide, but there won't be much of a social divide because there will no longer be need for one.

However, we can still adopt the term "presentation" for the way you show yourself to others, as the prime determiner of whether you belong to the aggressive group or the nurturing one. So even as of today the two do not have to be consistent. Thus a male

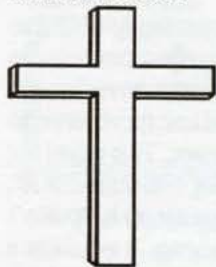
person who is not too happy having to present his aggressive/insecure side can opt for a presentation (whatever it might involve) that would lead the observer to class him as a nurturer. This might not involve any clothing distinctions at all, except perhaps for color, so it wouldn't qualify as crossdressing. It would be a kind of psychic transvestism in which it would not be the clothing of the body that is switched but rather, one might say, the clothing of the spirit.

This recognition on my part that the old bipolar gender classification is essentially passe — and will get more so as time goes on — should please those who have been trying to downgrade me by referring to the "Benjamin = Prince Model." (I don't know why they invented that equation because Dr. Benjamin and I, while very good friends, never proposed any model for anything.)

People of either sex are entitled to live their lives the way they choose, and society should not give them a hard time about it. They should be taken at face value; i.e., if they present like a member of one gender group they should be accepted as a member of that group. Implicit in this is the fact that persons may choose to present themselves in various ways that do not conform exactly to other persons' conceptions of how things ought to be. Thus a person who looks like a male physically, but who chooses to wear a skirt and heels, should have a right to express his androgenous feelings without being hassled for it. Women already do this (appear in men's clothes, haircut, occupation and attitude), and do not attract more than curious stares. So while it does not make good sense to say that there are three, five or nine different "genders," it is clearly fair to say that there are many different "presentations" and they do not have to have any correlations with physical anatomy.

So accept yourself as you are, hold your head up, adopt a positive attitude, use good judgement as to where you go and how you behave, and enjoy yourself.

(Reprinted from *Cross-Talk* #76)
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Religion and Crossdressing: Insights from Kathy Helms

by Melanie Yarbrough CA-4159-Y



At a meeting of the California transgender support group Born Free, Alpha Chapter President Kathy [redacted] spoke on the relationship between Religion and Transgenderism. As President of Neutral Corner, I took notes on the presentation, as it seemed to me an important topic. Kathy herself pointed out that "This is significant because an awful lot of folks in the gender community are religious." Moreover, some on the fringe element of the Christian Right are seen as attacking the transgender community. As the focus of religious ire, we are forced to deal with these issues of religion.

Kathy noted one tragic recent event, cited by IFGE's Merissa Sherrill Lynn at the Spring '95 "Atlanta Action" leadership convention. As it happened, two of the representatives there were coincidentally members of the Christian Coalition and Focus on the Family. The themselves were made the focus of resentment by other gender community members, who vented their frustration on them for past attacks from the Religious Right. This was, Kathy said, the equivalent of drawing a circle around these people and casting stones. What kind of community are we if we vilify and scapegoat our own members?



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Warning to the topic itself, Kathy explained that religions are a way people make sense out of life. They tend to fall into the category of either Monast or Transcendent.

Monast religions see everything as a continuum and interrelated, and aren't surprised at transgendered behavior. Hinduism teaches about reincarnation, so crossdressers may have been female in a previous life. Or Native American Shamanism teaches of the Berdache and Two-Spirit People, an affirmation of the feminine spirit.

Transcendent religions by contrast see things in terms of polarity: Good vs. Evil, Black vs. White, or in our case, Male vs. Female. Christianity, Judaism and Islam are all transcendent religions. To these duality-minded religions, confusion of the sexes is seen as unnatural.

The centerpiece of this argument is the Old Testament verse Deuteronomy 22:5. It says that men shall not wear what pertains to women. Any who do so are detestable in the sight of God. On the surface, this is a pretty damning passage. When we hear someone quote this at us, it's the ultimate rejection; "It's as if your own religion tells you you're trash," as Kathy puts it.

But what does this verse actually mean? Many people who quote it have not done serious biblical study around it. Scholarly research reveals that the actual purpose, the "Framer's Intent," was a reaction by the nation of Israel to pagan polytheistic practices of their neighbors.

Other religions of that time had both gods and goddesses. At certain goddess's temples, some of the male priests would crossdress and offer themselves sexually to congregants as a representation of the goddess herself. "It was this cultic temple prostitution which

was being prohibited," Kathy notes, and not the broader issue of social crossdressing. On that subject, the Old Testament is silent. Any blanket condemnation of transgender behavior stemming from this would be the commentator's own biased interpretation, not the scripture itself.

When asked about the proper response to gender-baiting, Kathy counsels "Don't demonize people who would disagree with you. Refuse to respond in kind." She also recognizes that there are some people so full of anger that they cannot be rationally talked with, and she quotes the passage, "Don't cast your pearls before swine." In other words, dialogue with those who are capable of dialogue.

It's crucial to educate yourself on religion and be able to respond with intelligent, researched arguments. One book recommended for those so inclined is called Is It OK To Call God Mother? by the Rev. Paul Smith. This is available at many religious bookstores. (Ed. Note: The best place to look is the Cokesbury chain. If not in stock, they can order it for you.) In the book, the author does a study of female similes used in describing God. For example, Tertulian says, "God is a Mother who nurtures us at her breasts."

Kathy concludes by saying, "The (traditional) concept is that God is one gender (masculine). But God shows both male and female sides. If God can do this, why can't humans as well?"



SHALOM

CHAPTER NEWS UPDATE

by Jane Ellen Fairfax



Illinois

DATELINE: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Columns by Kiki C. are sometimes humorous, and frequently outrageous, but never dull. In her June "Out of Focus," however, we see a different Kiki - a lady seriously perturbed by media coverage of bizarre people who happen to be crossdressed, and by crossgendered people who grossly misbehave in public.

It wasn't so terribly long ago that it was common to see in crossgendered community newsletters stories about people who committed crimes while disguised as women. That the antics of these criminals had nothing to do with crossdressing was somehow lost. It seemed as if our community was collectively shooting itself in the foot.

Kiki, however, sees exactly the implications of such coverage. She starts her column with an account of Richard Speck, a sociopath who murdered eight nurses in 1966. Sentenced to life in prison, he managed to do a series of interviews about his years in captivity. In the interviews he extolled the fun he had in prison, with the ready availability of drugs and sex and his enjoyment of the free run of the prison. "I can't," he exulted, "believe I could have so much fun behind prison bars."

Eventually a major broadcasting network aired Speck's account on television over the course of an entire week. His appearance was striking, with dyed hair, panties and breasts. What Kiki

saw she describes as "sick, sick, sick." What appeared to her was an extremely ugly, masculine-appearing individual who was anything but transgendered. Kiki was not amused. "I'm sure CBS felt proud of itself for showing this video for a whole week and scooping the other networks. As far as I am concerned, it was a stupid error... All it did was show the depths a person can sink to after twenty-two years in prison with a mind that was sick enough to kill eight innocent nurses in the first place..."

From there, Kiki sailed majestically on to an account of the bizarre pseudofeminine dress of Dennis Rodman. This writer agrees 100% with Kiki that crossgendered people should not take pride in the perverse behavior of notorious people just because they happen to be crossdressed. Their bizarre behavior sends negative shockwaves through the community at large, and ordinary crossdressers and transsexuals suffer undeserved consequences. As Kiki opined, "They all add up."

Self-destructive behavior, however, sometimes insinuates itself into the transgendered community. In Pittsburgh Trans Pit been banned from using the Sheraton North, site of the BeAll Conventions of 1990 and 1994. The hotel had arranged for crossdressers to use a designated ladies' room. Some foolish individual decided this was the time for a confrontation. She used a ladies' room restricted only to women. Result: the whole group suffered. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has now made it illegal for men to use a ladies' room. What it aptly called "defiant criminal trespassing" is now punishable under law.

This is an often-repeated story in our community. It is understandable that crossgendered people desire the freedom to be themselves. Public entities, however, feel a need to accommodate their whole clientele. Since they accommodate our needs, we should

repay them with respect. This is not the place for a confrontation about "our rights." Such behavior is non compos mentis. It accomplishes absolutely nothing except closing doors to crossgendered people. As Kiki pointed out, hotels and other similar facilities have newsletters and magazines for their industry, where they air common problems. "You bet your bippy, problems with our culture in the general public area well covered."

What should crossgendered groups do when they encounter this behavior? First, they should realize that such confrontations represent an extreme form of selfishness. Understanding the obligation to police themselves, crossdressing organizations should crack down severely on these offenders, barring them from their meetings. It is only when our community is willing to take care of its business, that we will get respect from the public. It behooves every crossdresser to take an accommodating attitude and be discreet. Otherwise, as Kiki so aptly argues, "our culture will be thrown back 50 years!"

If your chapter wants to be assured of being covered in this column, it should take up an idea from another chapter. The leadership of Chi has observed the Boys R Us, a very successful program in Houston's Tau Chi Chapter. Members get together en homme and enjoy activities ranging from ball games to bowling to barbecue - boy stuff! It is always wonderful to see our chapters taking ideas from one another and building one another up. Nice going, ladies of Chi! This writer hopes you do adopt this very fun program, and that it will be equally successful at Chi Chapter.

The much maligned high-heel can actually be good for you. According to the "Bottom Line" newsletter, research shows that wearing high-heel shoes relieves the pain from heel spurs by placing the weight on the ball of the foot. Denise, President of Chi Chapter, offers personal testimony to the pain

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relief she gets in heels - until the time her toes begin to unfold from being crammed together, and the feeling returns!

Chi Chapter is joining the parade of groups who are designating one month to pay both their Tri- Ess International dues and their local chapter dues. Such a policy ensures full participation of the chapter in Tri- Ess. Perhaps even more important, it makes life bearable for the poor chapter treasurer, who no longer has to remember two sets of anniversaries for each individual member of the chapter

The news from Chi ends on a happy note from Gloria W. Gloria achieved a real emotional high with the celebration of diversity at IFGE. For many years, sisters have tried to bring the various crossgender support groups together, but there are times when it appeared impossible. "Well," rejoices Gloria, "it is happening. Tri- Ess still exists, other groups still exist and there are still differences between transsexuals, crossdressers, and straight and gay people. We are finding ways to work together for the common good. What a great world to be in!"



DATELINE: FORT WORTH, TEXAS

The ladies of Nu Epsilon Tau are continuing to accomplish goals in outreach. Their library project has been completed. Texas Women's University has agreed to accept a set of books on crossdressing. The group has made contact with a new professional, Dr. E. Lee Doyle, a counselor in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Dr. Doyle has stated that she will be glad to come to a Nu Epsilon Tau meeting to explain her services and share information on her trip to China with Virginia Prince.

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From Nu Epsilon Tau and the AOL public libraries come some valuable tips for developing your feminine side. The first aim is the feminization of the soul. It is a step toward femininity to be sympathetic to others and listen, carefully seeking to understand. One can use facial expressions to empathize with another person's problems or concerns. Women communicate with the eyes and voice. They are more inter-dependent with others, while men are more independent.

Manicures and pedicures are wonderfully cozy things. Crossdressers can be permanent weekly customers at nail salons. It is advisable to tell the regular manicurist about your feminine side and your desire to keep your nails as long as you can get away with. Since having a manicure is an intensely feminine experience, one can use the opportunity to develop the feminine side in manners and voice. One can practice empathy by expressing concern about the manicurist's life and areas of concern.

A similar feminine exercise can be repeated at the beauty shop. It is usually best to choose a shop across town from one's business or home. Wearing feminine underwear on these occasions will remind one that the feminine side is always present. Advises the article, "When the opportunity presents itself for you to be in the exclusive company of women, discuss subjects of normal female interest." Keep it simple. Diet and weight control, children, and other family interests make excellent topics of conversation.

The trick is to avoid the masculine habit of trying to control the conversation. When you compliment a lady on her dress, tell her why you like it, especially if it complements one of her features. Reading the fashion magazines and talking about dress designers, materials or styles enhances the feminine experience.

You can practice deportment even when using the men's room. Sit down on the seat every time, both at home and at work. Use toilet paper every time to clean yourself. Before leaving the bathroom, check your appearance as women do. Is your hair okay? Are your clothes

okay? It is easy to get away with this, even in the men's room.

It helps if the crossdresser learns to enjoy pampering herself. Moisturizing the face after shaving and adding a touch of men's cologne gets you right in touch with the "woman within."

"When walking," the article advises, "learn to hold yourself and walk as a woman. This can be done by holding yourself more erect. Thrust your chest out and walk with your arms slightly behind your body. Walk from your hips. This is more easily done by pulling in your stomach. Take small steps, with your knees ever so slightly bent and feel your hips rotate as you walk. Watch women walk and practice their walk."

Tweezing the eyebrows weekly will remove rogue hairs and will actually improve the masculine appearance. It is perfectly okay to slightly define the overall shape and thickness of the brows. A beauty shop will be happy to help with this.

Bubble baths are nice, pamper, cozy things, which the crossdresser should relax and enjoy. Luxuriating in the bath is a wonderful time to dream about the feminine self or plan upcoming feminine activities.

Attractive makeup takes practice, practice, practice. Women's magazines often contain makeup tips that open the eye or make the face more striking. Makeup lessons at cosmetic houses may be practical, although you should plan to buy some products. A very light, noncovering makeup base worn to work will not be noticeable. Only you will know you are wearing makeup. The same applies to a light coat of mascara, or even clear mascara for the timid.

Observing women at the mall is an excellent way to learn about feminine deportment. Listen to women speak and hear their voices rise and fall in a slightly singsong fashion. Try to imitate the conversation. Again, practice makes perfect. An excellent place to practice the feminine voice is at a drive in. You know you have done well when the order taker says "Thank you, madame."

A little jewelry worn every day; a gold necklace, a bracelet, a ring, a cross, and/or earrings, all keep the crossdresser in touch with his femininity. If they are not too flamboyant, they will be quite acceptable, even when the rest of the clothing is male.

While shopping, the crossdresser should imagine herself in a particular dress, studying and noticing different clothing styles. Eventually everything will get easier, and the crossdresser becomes more comfortable in the feminine persona. That will lead to happiness and fulfillment, something each of us ladies seeks



New York

DATELINE: NEW YORK CITY

Chi Delta Mu Chapter goes into its summer hiatus with a big head of momentum. Over the coming months, Tri-Ess and its chapters will be working together to build a communicating web of friendship and cooperation. Chi Delta Mu is already off to a head start. Carol Ann Lee, a leader of Sigma Nu Rho Chapter, recently visited Chi Delta Mu and shared an account of her chapter's outing to the Golden Pheasant. The chapter does not want its sisters to be idle during the summer. "Going on vacation?" it asks. "Check ahead for a Tri-Ess group in the area you are visiting...you could end up meeting some new friends." If all our chapters promoted such visits there would be a lot more interchange among our chapters. Nice going, ladies!

From Chi Delta Mu, via Mary Ellen Banacek and Family Circle Magazine, come many Summer beauty tips: For Summer the lighter makeup touch, and a fresh-face look are in! To achieve the look, pat on foundation with a damp sponge to achieve a translucent finish that lets the skin show through. Then

dust the tiniest amount of blush in the center of the cheeks only, just enough to enhance the natural cheek color. Easy does it on the eyes, too! One shadow applied to the lids, creating a gentle blur of tone, enhances the look. For the lashes, one should apply just a single coat of mascara on the top lashes only. For the lips, a sheer stain looks lighter and fresher than a dark, opaque tone. Blot well, smooth on clear gloss, and blot again.

The Heloises among us can have fun creating their own beach footwear to go with the straw hats and bags of summer. All one need do is purchase a plain pair of summery slip-ons, and hot-glue-on buttons, bows and shells for your own delightfully feminine look.

This writer extends her best wishes for a happy vacation to you ladies of Chi Delta Mu. You have had a wonderful year!



Florida

DATELINE: WINTER PARK, FLORIDA

Phi Epsilon Mu Chapter now has its own web page! Thanks to superlative efforts spearheaded by Kelly S., this web page provides links to other chapters and to other national support groups. This display carries an excellent wives' page, facts about crossdressing, a resource list for Tri-Ess, and contact information for people traveling to Florida. All you vacationers at Chi Delta Mu - are you listening? Come down and enjoy Epcot Center, Disney World, Sea World, and, oh yes, the fellowship of your sisters at Phi Epsilon Mu!!!

"STAR AWARDS" were started by the Congress of Transgendered Organizations several months ago to allow groups to recognize local members for their contributions toward the com-

munity. At the May meeting of Phi Epsilon Mu Chapter, Denise presented Alice E. with her "STAR AWARD". It is most richly deserved, as Alice has been a paragon of outreach and support for crossdressers throughout Florida.

Speaking of outreach: This chapter has just completed a project of landmark importance. Phi Epsilon Mu, in cooperation with a manufacturer of educational videos, distributed introductory educational videotapes to law enforcement training programs throughout Florida. As of this writing, they have now supplied these videos to 85% of the law enforcement programs in the state! Police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and emergency room personnel provide an excellent opportunity for educating society about crossdressing. Congratulations, sisters of Phi Epsilon Mu and Kelly, who spearheaded this project! You have made a real difference!



Minnesota

DATELINE: MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

The June issue of "EnFemme" contained a capsule summary of an in-depth study on 1014 crossdressers in the United Kingdom. The findings may best be summarized by an anonymous quotation which begins the study, Men in Dresses:

"The transvestite is a man who has discovered a way of being at peace with himself. Transvestism is a gift, not a curse; we should be grateful for it." This survey is distinguished from some others because it reached a wide variety of crossdressers, including many still in secrecy, as well as those open enough to participate in an organization. Sample size further reinforces the data, which are really quite striking. Coleman discovered that much of the data confirms our notions of crossdressing. For in-

stance, the average age of onset is thirteen. Why do we do it? The feel of the clothes, 77%. Sexual arousal, 59%. Gender relief, 48%. A desire to be like women, 63%. Only 23% of the respondents would change sex if they had the opportunity; 77% would not. How many dressed completely? - 77%. Activities while dressed: 47% leave the house dressed, 23% attend social events with other crossdressers, 21% go shopping while dressed.

We often hear that most crossdressers think they pass better than they do. In this study, however, only 6% believed that they pass as women in public, and 30% believed they would never pass. The average time spent crossdressed was found to be 12 hours per week.

There were, on the other hand, some surprising findings. Only 16% said that crossdressing had ever had a negative impact on their job or a relationship. While 69% feared exposure as a crossdresser, 96% had experienced no problem with the law over their crossdressing. 55% said they had had sexual intercourse while dressed. 74% said that their partner was aware of their crossdressing, and 43% approved of it. The reviewer in "EnFemme" is right on the beam when she sums up the findings: "The study confirms our observations that much of the fear we have is inconsistent with reality. There is much more approval out there than we think. What we are mostly afraid of is ourselves."

In May the chapter pinned flowers on new sisters, Paula B. and her wife Sharon. They also welcomed Lisa, who drove all the way from central Minnesota to be with her sisters. This writer met Paula and Sharon at the IFGE Convention and conceived a deep respect for them. Welcome, both of you, to Tri-Ess!

Sofronia, Onnalee, and the sisters of Beta Gamma have developed a friendship web of crossdressers and wives that extends not only all the way through the state of Minnesota, but into Northwestern Wisconsin as well. Recently Wendy and Sofronia drove up to Wausau for a delightful evening with
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Frances Ann and her partner, Nan. Watching the deer grazing at sunset, enjoying a formal sit-down dinner eaten from Meissen china and Waterford crystal, drinking in an excellent wildlife art show, and an exquisite exhibit of royal Worcester porcelain songbirds of North America - what a wonderful weekend they enjoyed! Right down to the Eggs Benedict by Frances Ann on Sunday morning, and the final visit to the beauty shop for a cut and style.

A quick summation will explain why this chapter is such a success. Karin announced that she had equipment for new photo ID cards en femme. Sian arranged a makeover - glamour photo session. Sisters had their first ladies night out dinner at J.R. Peaches restaurant. Sharon has taken over as editor of "EnFemme." Wives are beginning to come to the meetings. What this shows is involvement, the secret of success for any Tri-Ess chapter. Beta Gamma is a success, indeed. My last quarterly audit of membership showed a 35% increase over the last quarter!

All the activity comes wrapped with a little humor. According to the ladies of Beta Gamma, you know you are really a crossdresser if:

1. Your mother introduced you to someone as her daughter.
2. You were awarded the alimony and child support.
3. You complain when someone leaves the toilet seat up.



California

DATELINE: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Recently Alpha Chapter gave its special Trailblazers Awards. Recipients were Dr. Virginia Prince, and Drs. Vern and Bonnie Bullough. Sadly, Bonnie's award had to be given posthumously as she had passed away after a long illness.

In honor of our founding mother, Kathy [redacted] led a "This Is Your Life, Virginia" presentation. Working feverishly, Kathy gathered taped messages, cross country phone hookups, sky writing, blimp advertising and letters, as colleagues all across the country united to give praise to this wonderful leader who established the basis for our community. In a really feminine touch, Alice E. published her own praise of Virginia in the Phi Epsilon Mu Newsletter.

Guest editorial writer, Stacey M., gives us much food for thought as she asks, "Are crossdressers feminists while crossdressed?" Stacey argues that we might ask our mothers that question. "Women of past generations fought for their right to wear pants, work outside the home, be educated, and vote - all of which were originally male-oriented roles. They might as well have been considered the transgenderists of their time for wanting to be socially treated as males, and yet remain biologically female..."

We have these women's struggles as models for success of today's transgendered people. By no means are women on an equal footing now. There is much discrimination to overcome. Their fight showed us, though, that crossdressing is not so far fetched, and that social stereotypes can change, so why should we? The only difference between a Tri-Ess member of today and the suffragette is the acceptance of human potential for bigender expression, for the born male and the born female.

Surgery was not needed for women to be liberated and to be treated socially the same as males. Why should it be required of the male to be liberated in a woman's role? The typical crossdresser or gender-bender may be really different from the transsexual and can fail to understand this, leading to a wrongful path of sexual reassignment. The crossdresser looks at the problem as a social one, while the transsexual should be motivated by correcting a biological error.

Realistically, alternate gender problems are caused by both society and

biology. Social errors can be corrected, as the feminist movement has shown. Then the real issues are whether the biological and sexual areas can ever be corrected to a level where everyone is completely satisfied, and each person should decide for himself what correction to make so as to fit his perception of woman or man."



Nevada

**DATELINE:
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA**

Theta Upsilon Gamma is another rapidly growing chapter of Tri-Ess. This relatively new chapter is now 35 members strong, with very heavy involvement of the wives. The current heroines of Theta Upsilon Gamma are Kathy and Martina, who spoke to the entire Las Vegas Valley on a talk radio show featuring the wife of a husband who is crossdresser. Their calm, sincere, and loving preparation drew much interest and many questions. This writer would like to thank both of you for your courage, and for promoting crossdressers and wives as the ordinary people they are.



Florida

**DATELINE:
FORT MYERS, FLORIDA**

Alycia and Jeanette, the guiding lights of the new Gamma Chi Beta Chapter, have been invited to conduct a class on human sexuality for master level counselors and therapists at the University of South Florida. A panel

consisting of Alice, Michelle, and Kathryn along with Jeanette and Alycia will discuss their personal stories and respond to questions such as "Why I became a crossdresser", "How often I crossdress", "How I feel when dressed", "How I relate in public" and "How I handle being read."

The aim of this seminar is to increase the awareness of the students and obtain feedback for the panel's own edification. The panel hopes that their presentation will spread the truth that crossdressers are discreet individuals and responsible members of society. Alycia and Jeanette are coming to be in demand as speakers at transgendered community events. Recently they were also invited to present a program at the BeAll Convention in Detroit. As hard as these ladies are working, they are still ready to emphasize fun activities at their chapter. That is why it is taking off so well.



Ohio

**DATELINE:
CLEVELAND, OHIO**

On March 30 the ladies and gentlemen of Alpha Omega Chapter had a dinner for the wives. Six couples attended. Karen, the wife who spearheaded the effort, reserved bowling lanes for the evening, and a round of delicious food was followed by a series of three games of bowling. Kathleen was ready to vote for a repeat in the not too distant future: "Every so often we need to make it a point to schedule some heavy duty fun and relaxation with people we care about." Amen, Kathleen! These "between meeting meetings" really draw a chapter together in bonds of friendship.



Georgia

**DATELINE:
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

Spring found the ladies of Sigma Epsilon back at work doing an outreach program at Oglethorpe University. Professor Diana Jones welcomed a panel of Jenel, Annette, Brenda, and Lauren on Thursday evening, April 4. About thirty in number, the class was comprised mostly of juniors and seniors. The group, about evenly mixed between men and women, soaked up Lauren H.'s explanation of terminology and of the differences among various gender support groups. An early poll of the class made it clear that most confused sexual orientation with gender expression, and that they associated crossdressing with a gay lifestyle.

Lauren's friend, Suzanne, attended as an observer. Once, however, she was discovered to be involved with a crossdresser, she found herself the subject of questions. The class seemed surprised to learn that crossdressers, for the most part, are married men with families and stable professional lives.

The panel complemented one another extremely well. Lauren's knowledge was supplemented by Jenel's moving account of her childhood memories and feelings. Jeanette and Brenda impressed the class with their style, grace, openness and honesty. This writer hopes that many sisters in Sigma Epsilon will volunteer to serve on similar panels. If more sisters can be recruited, the veterans can each head up panels. In this way, the chapter will be able to spread the word about crossdressing to colleges of all types throughout at least the northern half of Georgia. Education is the medicine that cures reliance on social stereotypes. Nicely done, ladies!



DATELINE: HOUSTON, TEXAS

Two of the most supportive chapters for S.P.I.C.E. are Sigma Epsilon and Tau Chi. Sigma Epsilon voted to fund up to five scholarships for wives of the chapter to attend the upcoming S.P.I.C.E. Conference. Tau Chi Chapter solicited contributions and supplemented them with a donation from the chapter treasury. What a beautiful way to show our wives how much we appreciate their being involved!

This writer would like to salute a friend who is one of the most dedicated workers Tri- Ess has. Vicki [REDACTED] has written many wonderful articles, some of landmark importance to our community. If there is a job to be done at Tau Chi Chapter, one can depend on

Vicki to take it on and do it well. Recently Vicki took on a monumental effort, arranging the spring awards banquet. It took quite an act of faith because the hotel wanted a commitment of twenty-five in attendance. As Vicki discovered that some "fair weather friends", like Frances and me, would be out of town, her anxiety and blood pressure mounted. Registrations trickled in, then the trickle became a torrent and Vicki and the chapter came out smiling. For all you do for Tri- Ess, Vicki, and all you do for Tau Chi Chapter, thank you so much!

Brandi Ann, Facilitator of Tau Chi Chapter, writes articles rife with humor under the title of "What's Her Name's Thoughts." Old "What's Her Name" came up with some true wisdom in her May column. Perhaps she will get every Mirror reader to think.

"What does Tri- Ess mean to me?" Well, I can boil it down to one word: SUPPORT. Support is the basic core on which all of Tri- Ess is built. International Tri- Ess is supported by local chapters. S.P.I.C.E. is supported by partners. Our single support sisters are supported by other sisters and our Board members support one another. But who or what supports the local chapter? How about local chapter members, that di-

verse group with one common interest, the need to crossdress.

"Crossdressing by itself is simple, but multiply that by many different personalities and you get many different ideas on what to do after you are dressed. How can a chapter cater to all personalities? That is easy to answer, but hard to implement. A chapter is supported by its sisters. Not by just any sister, though. A sister who participates and communicates supports other sisters in finding what Tri- Ess means to them. Kind of like the tiger chasing his tail.

"In other words, we need each other for support. We meet once a month for a few hours. Is that enough support for you? Not for me. Phone calls every day or so keep me going when I can't dress. Wonder what so-and-so is up to? Call or write her and share some support. Dying to get out more? Let your sisters know at the meetings that you are ready to get out. Order some business cards and hand them out. It is a great way for people to remember you. Visit other chapters. I myself need to do this more. The chapter is a the result of the support put into it and support is what you put into it."

Well said, Brandi Ann!

PASSING THOUGHTS

By Linda D



First Day Out With The Birdseed Breasts

Coming Out At Work

by Sherri NC-37234-C

About two years ago I came out to the people I work with. I revealed my crossdressing to them mostly because I was tired of making up excuses as to why I was taking one Friday a month off from work to attend Kappa Beta weekends. I had been working with these people for over 19 years and thought I could tell them with this knowledge.

When I told them, I did not ask them to stay silent or force them to promise not to tell anyone. I only reminded them that my children and my wife's side of the family did not know and if they were told it would hurt them. So far there have been no problems here.

The women I work with have accepted Sherri well. To date I have visited the shop wearing a dress three times and worked crossdressed two other times. I enjoy working crossdressed, but my job is in a factory and I can't wear a dress and work. I just wear jeans and a top, but I pass as a woman employee.

The men I work with are adjusting to Sherri much slower than the women. It has been a long slow process teaching them the truth about heterosexual crossdressers.

The common belief about crossdressers is that they are gay or want to be a woman (transsexual). I told these guys that I only enjoyed looking like a woman and did not want to be one full time or make love to a man. They have a hard time with this.

Let's face it, most men look at women as sex objects. Any man that would dress like a woman and go out in public like that must want to be used like a woman. To hear these guys talk you would think they do all their thinking between their legs.

The first thing I had to do was convince them that I was heterosexual. My wife has helped me here. The fact that we are still married and she has accepted Sherri has amazed these men. They were expecting her to leave me at any time.

One thing that helped a great deal was being able to give these guys information about crossdressing. I let them read some literature from Tri-Ess and a brochure from Kappa Beta. They had no idea there were organized crossdressing groups or that heterosexual crossdressers were the most common type.

I hung an 8X10 picture of Sherri on the wall at my work station to remind these guys as they pass that I am a crossdresser. The picture has started many a good conversation. I have even seen the late owner of the company showing my picture to customers bragging about what a good job I had done crossdressing.

When he first found out about me he told me about the time he and his girlfriend in college went to a Halloween party as each other. He said he had the time of his life at the party dressed as a girl. I am sure he understood how I felt.

The men still try to justify my crossdressing. One of the younger men once asked me what it was like in the ladies' restroom. He thought I was getting my kicks out of seeing the women in some state of undress during my visits. I replied that the women use stalls, so you can't really see anything. Plus, there is a fear of getting read in the restroom, so you can't stand around looking at the other women. I told him I get in and get out as fast as I can. This was not the answer he was looking for.

The first two times I visited the shop most of the men kept their distance from me. Only one of the men came up

to me to make fun of me. This was one of my long time rivals there. We have always made fun of each other and pick at each other all the time. I have really given him something to pick at now.

The last time I was there I was trying to get some of the men to pose with me for a picture. Only one would, and I thanked him for being that brave, but to make him feel better I decided not to have the picture made. One of the shy men did come up and took a picture of me and the girls together. He even talked to me some.

These men are slowly starting to see the reason I crossdress and go out in public that way is because it's a part of my nature and I enjoy it so much. I enjoy having doors held open for me. Sherri gets more smiles and friendly reactions from people she meets. I have had drinks bought for me and been asked out (haven't gone) by men I have met. I enjoy all of this.

I am a bi-gendered person, a crossdresser trapped in a man's body. I am still learning what being myself really is. The main thing I am trying to impress on these people is that I am still the same person they have always known and trusted. They just know more about me now.

Now that I am out to these people I feel better about myself. I have always wanted to be hated for what I am than loved for what I am not. As time goes by, the guys are dealing with it better and they are starting to accept me as a heterosexual man that sometimes looks like a woman.

I don't advise other crossdressers to come out of their closets where they work. All situations are different. Many sisters would lose their jobs by coming out. I just hope I live to see the day when no one cares how one dresses in public.

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My 30-year High School Reunion

by Phyllis R. Frye

I just wanted to send out some encouragement that as bad as things seem to be for the simple rights of lgbt folks (or lesbigrats) things are getting better. Last weekend I went to the first of my two 30 year high school reunions for this summer and had a terrific time. Let me explain.

I grew up in San Antonio, Texas. I lived on the northwest side just inside the loop and went to Arnold Elementary and Whittier Jr. High. Most of those folks that I went to these two schools with went on to Edison High, while myself and a few others went to Jefferson. I went to Jefferson because it had an ROTC program. This was in the early 60's; the draft was still around. My family is Texas A&M both by degree and osmosis. A&M had a large ROTC program, and it was felt that ROTC at Jefferson would be a good step. (It was, as I became Corps Commander in high school with two rifle team letters and obtained a four year ROTC scholarship.) The point of this is that although I went to Jefferson and enjoyed it and did well and have attended several of their reunions (and will its 30th in late July), I wanted to remeetsome of the people that I'd known since the first grade in 1954.

What did I expect going in? Well, I knew that the man who'd arranged it was a long time friend — my spouse and I stay with him and his wife in their home several times each year when we go to San Antonio. Beyond that, I figured that there would be some folks who would be glad to see me, that there would be some who would glare or be ugly, and that the rest would just kind of sit on the fence and do nothing either way while they sorted it out.

What did I actually experience? Not one, not a single, rude remark or ugly look. Not one. I was immersed in good will and hugs and laughter and more good

will. There were a few whose body language told me they were either confused or uncertain, but even these people were polite and of good manner. I was especially happy because about six guys that I'd had bad feelings with in junior high 33 years ago (yes, those memories stick, don't they?) were all, to a person, very nice and very friendly.

What am I saying to you by telling you this? Take a chance. Reach out. Come out. Closets are for clothes, not people. I will never know which of you will be helped because someone at that Edison Reunion will end up in your employment or church or neighborhood or family. Similarly, by your doing the same thing and letting people see us tg folks as people (not as stereotypes) through your presence, other doors will open somewhere for someone.

And one other comment. During the past twelve months, I've begun to wear my TG Menace t-shirt almost everywhere that I go. My bank, the

grocery, RX, moviehouse, Mickey D type fast food and others. (I say "TG" Menace because ICTLEP printed up new shirts that say "Transgender Menace" since "transsexual" does not include the full community.) Not a single adverse reaction. With all of the adverse and obnoxious t-shirts that people wear today, most folks don't even notice. Several have read it and a few have asked me. Their reactions have been positive. So be proud. Get a t-shirt and wear it everywhere. As out as I am, because I pass so very well, I am not in fact out unless people know me. So it isn't a fair test when I go out, and it educates no one when I pass. With a TG Menace shirt on, I AM OUT. People learn. And not a single adverse experience to date. (No guarantees on that, just my personal experience.)

And finally, may I please share with you that Trish and I will celebrate our 23rd (legally married) wedding anniversary this Sunday, the 23rd of June. When we married, she had knowledge of what could happen and had seen me many times crossdressed. I lasted as a man for three more years. We will have been married as women for 20 of those 23.

WHAT IS THE POINT TO ALL OF THIS? It is to encourage you. If I can do what I do, then you can creak open your closet door a lot more, put your toe in the deeper water and experience a lot more freedom. It is 1996, after all. Let's get on with living full and complete lives.

Have fun and I love you all. I am so proud of your growth and evolution as a community.

- Phyllis



Alice Through the Looking Glass by Alice H.

TRY THIS FOR FUN

On February 21, 1996 I was at work. Because I work for myself, sometimes, I can take off a little time during the middle of the day. On this day I was headed for lunch when I passed Sara's Boutique. In the window hung a very pretty evening dress, so after lunch I stopped to look and see what they might have. I intended to stop back later, dressed, to try them on.

As I entered the parking lot I noticed that there weren't any cars, so I decided to go in. The attendant was on the phone and said she would be with me shortly. She paused for second and asked, "Can I help you?" I said, "Yes, I stopped in to look at some dresses." She then said, "We don't sell to men." She hesitated and then added, "Only to men who are buying for their wives."

She then went back to talking on the phone, so I just walked around the shop. She stopped talking long enough to ask to ask, "Why do you want a dress?" So I explained that I needed a dress for a special event and that it was for me. The phone rang again. In the middle of the second call, she stopped and asked, "What are you?" I told her that I was a crossdresser. She returned to her phone call. Only about six or seven minutes had passed since I entered the shop. About this time a lady police officer entered the shop. She walked over to me and started to talk. She walked over to me and started to talk, because the attendant was still on the phone. The lady officer and I talked about the dress in the window. I told her that I was a crossdresser and liked the lace dresses, like the one in the window. She said she liked it too. So far, no problem except that the attendant was still on the phone.

A minute or two later two detectives walked in. That was my first clue that something was wrong. One of the detectives asked me what I was doing in the shop. I told him that I was waiting for the attendant to get off the phone so I could talk to her about buying a dress.

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He said, "Why do you want a dress?" My answer was, "To wear to a party because I'm a crossdresser."

About this time a lieutenant and six to ten more officers came in. The detective asked for my license and to prove to him that I was a crossdresser. This was something new to me to prove, that I was a crossdresser. How do you do this in plumbing clothes? So the questions started: "Are you sure you are?" "Yes." "How long have you been one?" "All of my life." "You don't look like one." "I know." "Are you married?" "Yes." "Does your wife know?" "Yes," I said, "would you like to call her?" "No." "Are you a member of a group?" "Yes, my card is home." At this point, the lady officer I had been talking to before came over and said, "He's a crossdresser, all right." The detective asked, "How do you know?" "He is, believe me." Are you sure?" "Yes, I know he is." "O.K."

After being taken outside and being checked out, I was released. I asked the detective, "What did I do wrong?" His answer was, "Nothing, you didn't do anything to break the law. Everything you did was O.K. You were fine." And then he said, "I am going in to talk to her about this now."

As I got ready to leave, I couldn't help but notice that you couldn't have gotten another police car in that parking lot, anywhere! After leaving, I was shocked, to say the least, that the police treated me so well and with respect, as much as they under the circumstances. I still don't know when the police were called or what I did to get this attendant to treat me like this. Remember, I was in my plumbing work clothes all of his time and the only way anyone could know that I was a crossdresser is by me telling them so. I kind of had to tell the police because I was in a dress shop.

Later on that day, I called the police and thanked them for treating me so well under those conditions. I still

don't know the why's or the wherefore's of all this, but I don't think I will ever be worried about being read again or that anyone knows that I'm a crossdresser, and I mean anyone.

Did this have an effect on me? Yes, but the very next night I got dressed and went to an inn to look at a job and was introduced as Alice, the plumber. At this time, I am filing a report with the New Jersey Department of Consumer Affairs and also with the New Jersey Better Business Bureau.

In closing, I would like to say that no one should be treated this way, regardless of who they are.

Warning: Stay out of Sara's Boutique, or you will have my kind of fun.

Special Note: Since Alice's rather unpleasant experience the wheels, certainly, have been turning. Stacie has put Alice in contact with the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety and they have, in turn, assigned a task force to investigate the incident.

This holds true for any of our sisters. If anyone feels that they have been the victim of discrimination, in any form, whether actual or perceived, get in contact with Stacie and she can get you in contact with the right people. If you do not have Stacie's number, call the Sigma Nu Rho hotline (800) 480-3152, and Carol Ann can get you in contact with Stacie.

Ed. Note: Or get in touch with the ICTLEP office, at (713) 777-8452.

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Die Frau Ohne Haar

by Maryann Kirkland

Chapter Sister Forced To Accept Russian Hospitality (or, The Tale of a Queen Stranded in Queens)

Some of us continually crossdress under our daily male attire with impunity—almost daring the fates to chastise us. One member, Maryann Kirkland, relates how "Jim" faced a humorous shortcoming because of his "underdressing" practices.

Our tale begins on that fateful day—Friday, December 11th, 1992—when the whole Northeast region was pounded by a winter storm. Despite the rain, snow and 60 mph gale winds, our hero was asked by his employer to drive three Russian men to a Sheraton hotel in Queens near the La Guardia Airport. The trip from Newark normally takes 45 minutes in traffic, but it took over 3 hours that day. Some of the highlights of this nightmare included seeing the toll plazas of the Whitestone & Throgs neck bridges under water; cars on the F.D.R. drive submerged under the East River, which was over its banks; and a crawling tour of Manhattan's East side from Harlem south to the Queensboro bridge.

Finally arriving at the Sheraton, my guests were told their reservations could not be located. After much shouting, one room with a king size bed was located. So up we went to Room 803. We opened the door, and found yet another Russian man stretched out on the bed. At this point, we had four Russian-speaking men and one American crossdresser.

Darkness and rush hour descended upon Queens. The television was full of jolly news of flooded roads and closed bridges. The reality that Long Island really is an island is shattering when you can not leave it! My Russian friends knew enough English to realize I was virtually trapped in that hotel. So the party began—with Vodka, fish, sausage, cookies—all homemade from Odessa. When I observed that these men travelled with more food than clothing, it was abundantly clear they could not be crossdressers.

But our hero found it difficult to party as he pondered the discreet removal of bra, pantygirdle and pantyhose. And then, what to sleep in? A quick solution needed to be found as I was getting overheated sitting there with this bulky sweater on, holding onto a bottomless glass of vodka. Pockets! that's it—my overcoat had zippered pockets. Minutes later my coat exited from the bathroom with interesting bulges—one piece of lingerie in each pocket.

A cot was brought in for me to use. My three friends were in the King size bed (no queens, please) and the original Russian occupant of the room was talked into leaving. Thanks to comrade Vodka I was able to fall asleep and put behind me a most bizarre day.

Maryann says, "Don't be afraid to go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is."



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Full Circle

by Elisabeth Ann

Twenty years ago, I lived in Atlanta. On the outside, life seemed very good. I was young, newly married, with a good job and a nice apartment in a thriving city. On the inside, things were different. I struggled, alone, with a sense of self I didn't understand and couldn't express openly. Recently, I returned to Atlanta. By a twist of fate I can only attribute to Divine Providence, I ended up across the street from my old apartment. The circumstances were so different that I could not help but realize that, through a twenty-year journey of learning and self-discovery, I had come full circle.

Atlanta, 1975. It is night and the apartment is dark. Sitting four floors up, on a hillside, it is but one of many, no more than a spot on the backdrop of the world below. It draws scant attention from the neighborhoods and strip malls that spread out below.

I sit alone in that darkened apartment, lights out, curtains drawn. I sit there for a long time, certain the world is watching and I must convince them no one is home. I am dressed, but I am alone, alone with my thoughts, with my confusion, with my fear. I want merely to step outside, onto a darkened porch, to taste the world outside, to feel the evening breeze on my face. But I wait. Courage is fleeting and quickly overwhelmed by the fear that I might be seen. By whom, I do not know, but someone, surely. And so I sit and wait.

After what seems an eternity, I finally have enough of what must pass for courage. With a trembling hand, I pull back the drape, not opening it, just

holding it aside. Fearful of any sound, I gently tug at the sliding glass door, until it is ajar just enough for me to slip outside, just a step, no more. A feeling of euphoria washes over me. The night is cool and refreshing. The wind rustles my dress ever so gently and I feel it move against my body. For a brief moment, I feel certain of who I am and I am content with the thought.

But the thought is fleeting. It is quickly crowded out by an awareness of the world around. Surely someone has seen, someone is watching. Fear again overwhelms me and I quickly retreat behind the door, behind the curtains that were never drawn open. I retreat once again into loneliness, into confusion, into darkness and fear.

Atlanta, 1995. The winter morning is crisp, but bright and sunny, as I arrive in a city grown beyond what I knew before. Though the traffic is heavier than I expected, it moves with a purpose and I join the flow. I have driven, dressed, from my home in North Carolina, and I have an appointment to keep.

My first stop is to see a manicurist I know. I'm going to have my nails done for the weekend ahead. She has given me directions that I know I can follow - they will lead me right to my old neighborhood. Leaving the Interstate, I turn left across a bridge and the sight is what I knew I would see. Ahead, on the right, is a small shopping center; there I will find Laurie. To the left, up the hill, standing unchanged, is my old apartment.

The business of the day flows with ease. I park the car and find Laurie in her shop. Waiting to see me, she greets me by name, with a smile that I expect. For the next couple of hours, we talk rather aimlessly about many things, but mostly, it seems, about the past, the present, and the paths our lives have taken.

As I sit there, my mind drifts up to that old apartment on the hill, gently retracing the years. I am aware that, by returning to this place, I have moved from loneliness to friendship, from confusion to self-acceptance. I have moved from fear and darkness into the light and I am now a whole person. I have come full circle.



Gaby's Gems

by Georgia Ann

CROSSDRESSING IN A CROSSFIRE



The time is August 1968. The place is the "Oasis," an encampment in the Annamese highlands, just outside of Pleiku, South Vietnam.

Because C-rations were so grossly unappealing, we spent many of our off-duty hours in town, often searching for some warm, appetizing food. One day, I got this overwhelming urge that we all do - that is to have something feminine. I spotted this pink and white sarong in a store window. Compulsion overcame me and I went in and bought it, in my size, and took it back to the barracks, for the lack of a better word, where I was sleeping, again, for a lack of a better word, at the time. I used to sleep in it.

Eventually, we were rewarded with some "down time" where we would be

in a fixed place, at a fixed time and we were able to build "hooches," a sort of tent surrounded with sand bags. I had built a light so I could read magazines, or whatever, from a "5-K," which is a generator. This light served a dual purpose as it had a box on it that I used as a hiding place for my precious sarong.

One morning I neglected to stuff it all the way in and went to formation. Someone had wandered into the hooch and spotted the sarong hanging down over the light. Well, I was confronted.

"What the h— is this?"

"It's a sarong," I replied.

"Very good. What's it doing on the top of your light?"

I had to think fast. We had these "mama-sans" who did our laundry and wandered, freely, in and out of our hooches.

"Mama-san must have just laundered and she 'souvenired' me!"

They bought the story. They thought I had slept with the "mama-san" and she had left a token of her esteem.

So there's the story. I was dressed in Vietnam. I wonder if any other sister was.

(Ed.Note: We're willing to bet lots of us were! How about it, sisters? Do you have a "war story" of your own to tell? Write and share it with the rest of us. And thank you, Georgia Ann and News Briefs.)

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(EdNote: We think this article and the one following it (reprinted from News Briefs) provide a nice picture of Tri-Ess sisters "out and about." We hope you enjoy their adventures, and perhaps be inspired to adventures of your own!)

Some Random Thoughts from Stephanie

by Stephanie W.

Recently I was in a jewelry store called "Claire's" which one can find in most malls. If you haven't visited this store—you really should!! There is some very nice jewelry and there is usually even a section of "clip-on" earrings. Well, during one of my visits I found magnetic earrings. These look like studs when worn but are kept in place with a little magnet on the other side of the ear!! Yes, the magnet is pretty strong and it keeps the earring in place. I bought a set of three-leaf clovers for St. Patrick's Day and they never came off my ear, but be careful putting them on and off that you don't drop that tiny magnet!!

I was out to dinner in New York and the "famous" Hoboken police officer who is living full time now as a woman was there. I am happy to report that Janet Aiello was a most pleasant person. She came to join our party for dinner before going to Hoboken for the midnight shift. Janet was happy to answer all our questions concerning her transition and acceptance as Janet. Although she is currently working as a police officer, it still is an up-hill battle. Attitudes are very hard to change in any situation. She said that the female police officers were much more helpful and accepting than the men. (Surprised?)

I had to go to Kansas City for a convention and was interested in going out for an evening while there. So, I picked up Cross Talk and Transgender Tapestry and looked up listings for that area. I found a group called "Friends of Cross-Dressers" located in the Kansas City area. About six weeks before I left I called the hotline number and left a message explaining who I was and that I wished to meet some sisters for a "night out". I got no response. So, I wrote a letter explaining who I was and included a picture and what I would like

to do. Still no response. So, I figured when I got to K.C. I would call and say that I was in town and leave a message of where I was and what I was interested in doing. The announcement on the machine said that there was a meeting that Saturday. I said I was interested in attending and meeting some local sisters, but had no transportation and did not know where the meeting was. I still received no response. However, Stephanie did not go unfulfilled. Saturday came and I got dressed in my nice new outfit which I bought for Easter and went to dinner at the restaurant in the Hotel. I had a most pleasant time at dinner and afterwards in the lounge where they had a band.

This brings me to my next topic.



Sisters, I have had a great time being Stephanie whenever I want to. I try to be Stephanie as least once each weekend and, often, more than once. I have done many "normal" activities like food shopping, going to breakfast, going to the movies or going to the mall. I always dress in an attempt to "blend in" and behave in a most appropriate manner. I have been to dinner at many of the restaurants in the town where I live, some of them several times. After the first two or three times, I am recognized and warmly greeted. I don't know if I am "read" or not, but I can't believe that I am that convincing.

My theory is that if you act and dress appropriately for the situation, most people are so involved with themselves that they don't even notice, or if they do, they don't really care what you do as long as you are not in their "space." A word of caution; I am always aware that danger is lurking and any situation can turn ugly very quickly. I often do many of these things alone, but often long for a companion no matter who it may be.

One last comment and this "motor-mouth" will stop for now. I have had the pleasure of attending most of the "Girl's Nights Out" sponsored by Sigma Nu Rho the Friday prior to our monthly meeting. We go to a different restaurant, usually in the New Hope area, every month. This is a real good opportunity to "get out" and have a great dinner with friends. I strongly suggest to everyone that they should join the "group" and join us for a pleasant dinner and conversation. This is a very pleasant and enjoyable activity which was initiated by Carol Ann and organized monthly by Alice. They do a great job but it would be great to have a bigger gathering. Those from Chi Delta Mu or anyone else who is reading this message should consider this activity - they would be most welcome!!

Running the Gamut of Emotions

by Carol Ann ■

Lacking a soapbox to stand on this time, I thought everyone might enjoy hearing about our recent trip. While we viewed it as a vacation, it was a test run for our weekend in June.

Anyone calling the Sigma Nu Rho hotline a few weekends back was greeted by a message that I and Joyce had decided to take a little vacation up at Alice's weekend home in Pennsylvania. I wanted to take along my word processor, but Joyce wouldn't hear of it. "This is supposed to be a vacation, remember!" Reluctantly, I agreed. With all of my commitments taken care of, we drove to Alice and Judy's home on Friday morning and, almost immediately, we four ladies began our four-hour-plus drive.

About half way we stopped at a Chi-Chi's for lunch. Although I know we were read, no one seemed to care, one way or the other. We were still in an urban area, and I can only assume those people have encountered crossdressers before. By the way, girls, you just have to try that lunch buffet at Chi-Chi's. It's not low-calory, but sometimes you just have to let yourself go. There's something else that can be said about eating out en femme. By taking daintier bites,

you enjoy your food much more than when downing huge bites. Does food taste better in a skirt? You bet it does!!!

We made another stop because Alice had to show us this clock store where she bought the clock that sits in her living room. Beautiful stuff, but too rich for this girl's blood.

We made one more stop on the way. It seems she wanted to pay for the new shed that she wants erected on her property. Would these "good ole boys" have a problem with the way Alice was dressed? We pulled into the muddy lot and eventually one of the workers approached the car. As he got closer his facial expressions started to change, but the biggest change was when Alice handed him the check. His dubious looks were replaced by a huge smile. Alice had proved her point. If you're handing a person a large sum of money, the way you are dressed somehow becomes totally irrelevant. Alice's errand completed, we returned to the road.

We arrived at Towanda, the last town before heading into the hills, and decided to stop at the local supermarket for groceries. The first thing you notice when you enter the parking lot is that

there are no cars in it, just pickup trucks and 4X4's. The very next thing you notice is that no one wears dresses in this town — not even the genetic females. This wasn't much different than putting on your prettiest, beaded cocktail dress and going shopping at the local K-Mart. Alice and I, in our skirts, exited the car and were immediately read like a cheap novel. We entered the store, and I couldn't help but notice that we received a few strange and inquisitive looks on our journey up and down the aisles. No matter. We were treated like ladies at the checkout. Again, money talks. I think it should be noted that these people have seen Alice before, but this time she had a friend. I would give a dollar, never mind a penny, for their thoughts because they probably were all dead wrong.

Back in the car, we traveled the remaining ten or so miles to Alice's home to unload the car and then just sit, relax and talk until dinner.

Dinner time eventually came and we went back down to Towanda and visited the Williston Inn. (Again, Alice had been there before.) We were cordially greeted and shown to our table which just happened to be next to a



The Femme Mirror

crackling fireplace. They must have taken pity on these poor ladies walking around in the cold, in their skirts. We had a fine dinner, and the best part was the bill. This was indeed a fine restaurant, but the bill was reminiscent of a diner. After dinner we returned to Alice's and being road weary, we all got into our nighties. A little more talk over some coffee and a cake that Joyce baked and we were ready to turn in.

As I got into bed I was saying to myself, "This bed is too sof....." In what seemed a split second later, we awoke to the smell of Alice cooking bacon in "her" kitchen. Alice showed her culinary skills with bacon, eggs, pancakes and real maple syrup that came from the trees just outside Alice's windows. I looked out through the Dutch doors and saw the thermometer had just reached 30 degrees.

A quick shower and time to get dressed for our trip up to the Corning, NY area and some shopping. We gassed up the car and took the scenic route to Corning. As far as shopping goes, there wasn't any to speak of. We decided to leave the Corning Museum for June, so we headed towards Elmira. We came upon a wide spot in the road and found the Amot Mall in Horseheads. We decided that this was our first stop.

We gave very little thought to the fact that all the prerequisites were wrong. It was a large mall, in a small town. It was a Saturday afternoon, and no one here wore dresses or skirts either. We were easily read as we cruised the mall.

More than few small groups of teenage girls looked at us and snickered gleefully as we passed from store to store. For the most part it was a very pleasant experience, except for our trip to Sears. As we went through the racks, I couldn't help but notice that a store clerk was following as around and eyeing us, suspiciously, as if we were shoplifters. This is the only time I felt ill at ease.

When it came time to eat, we decided to try the Friendly's in the mall. This was an experience in itself. We entered the restaurant and waited to be seated. One waitress had a real problem controlling herself and even went to tell the kitchen help. They seated us right at the front entrance. We do not know if this was truly the next available table, or if they seated us there because they thought we would balk at the location and leave, or if this was the management's way of making a statement that anyone could eat there. Our waitress came over and I could sense that she felt uncomfortable, at first. Her falsetto voice lowered on each successive trip to our table, so much so, that by the end of the meal she was talking to us in her normal voice and calling us all ladies. We left the mall after about four hours and decided to check out O'Brien's, the restaurant we planned to visit in June.

O'Brien's is built on a sheer cliff overlooking a beautiful valley on the New York-Pennsylvania border. Although Alice had also eaten there before, we decided that discretion was the better part of valor and didn't inspect the place first hand. The date was March 17th, and I don't think I need to say more.

We headed back for Towanda to check out the small mall there. Our reception there was far better than one could expect. All of the stores from Fashion Bug to Payless Shoes to J.C. Penney seemed to have no problem. It seemed like a safe port in a sea of rednecks. Feeling satisfied that we had tested the waters enough for one day, we settled on having dinner at the Williston Inn. Besides, the food is great and the price is right. After dinner we returned to Alice's for another peaceful night's sleep. It's not too difficult for a city girl to get used to a place where in Alice's words, "You can hear the wood breathe."

Sunday we returned in a round-about way through Williamsport and stopped at the Lycoming Mall. I did see a skirt or two in this mall, but it didn't make passing any easier. We had dinner at a familiar spot, The Galley in Wind Gap where our next Girl's Night Out will be held. We made a friend of our waitress, Donna, who asked that we make sure we request her when we return.

Now, why did I entitle this treatise "Running the gamut of emotions?" Certainly not because of myself, Alice, Joyce or Judy. We were perfectly comfortable for our entire stay. The emotions were in the people we came in contact with. They ranged from joyous acceptance, especially those who came in direct contact with us to, sheer horror in a very few of those who didn't. (I noticed one customer shield her young child's eyes as she briskly whisked him out of one of the stores.)

I guess I did find a soapbox after all.



Summer 1996



Kappa Beta Visits UNC- Charlotte Sociology Class

by Elisabeth Ann

Education about crossdressing is one of the most important functions of Tri-Ess. Many chapters regularly give presentations in college and university classes around the country. Kappa Beta in Charlotte has been participating in sociology classes at UNC-Charlotte for several years now.

On June 5, several members again visited the class taught by Dr. Larry Lance. Bobbie Renee, Karen, and Sherri Lynn talked to the group about themselves and their own experiences and answered questions from the students. These ladies gave the students in the class an accurate picture of life for the typical MTF crossdresser in today's society.

Bobbie, Karen, and Sherri comprised a representative group of married crossdressers. While Karen and Sherri have tolerant wives who attend Kappa Beta functions, Bobbie's wife has never seen her dressed. Sherri's

children do not know about her crossdressing, out of respect for her wife's wishes, but Bobbie has supportive children who help her.

Dr. Lance opened the class with a short talk about some of the terms, issues, questions, and misconceptions surrounding crossdressing and presented some relevant study results. The information he gave the class was both accurate and unbiased. He then turned the discussion over to the Tri-Ess members visiting the class.

The discussion conveyed a candid sense of reality. Bobbie spoke openly about being arrested in the 1960s, for using a women's restroom, and the exposure and embarrassment caused by the incident. Karen talked about her first marriage and her expectation that it would "cure" her from a desire to crossdress, and about going through three therapists before finding a realistic one who could help her accept her-

self as she is. Sherri Lynn discussed her family situation, having a wife who is tolerant but does not want the children to know. Bobbie also mentioned that she had never met another crossdresser until the formation of Kappa Beta seven years ago.

It was not, however, a somber occasion. Humorous remarks and laughter at the lighter side of crossdressing occurred frequently throughout the afternoon. Sherri told the group about stopping by where she works before coming to Charlotte that morning. Her employer and coworkers know about "Sherri" and she thought two new employees who were starting that day "had to be broken in." Sherri passed around a picture of herself and the two women who were having a first look at their new boss in a distinctly different light.

Karen mentioned what a high opinion her unknowing mother-in-law has of her male side and "his" willingness



Bobbie and Karen listen as Sherri talks to the class. On the blackboard are crossdressing terms.

The Femme Mirror

to go shopping with her daughter. "Little does she know ...!" added Karen. Later in the class, Karen was talking about several traditional male activities that she enjoys, when Sherri chimed in, "Try THAT in a dress!"

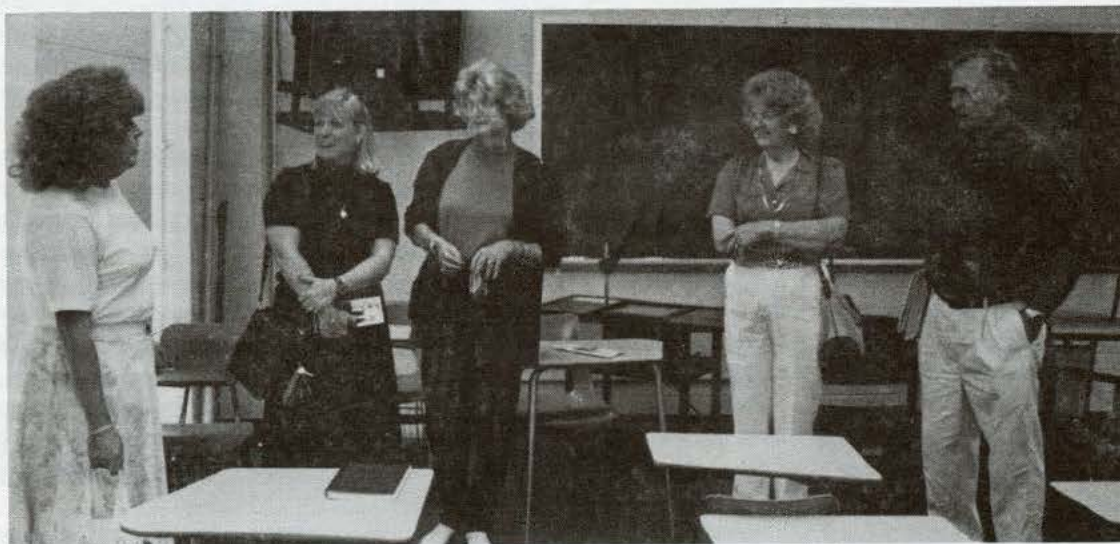
In sharp contrast to the serious tone of her earlier discussion about being arrested, Bobbie Renee chuckled when talking about encounters with the police nowadays. Things like license checkpoints are taken in stride. Bobbie laughed as she remarked, "They all know who I am now." Sherri commented that crossdressers usually pass best at night in straight bars. "After a few drinks, ALL the women start looking good," she added.

Several interesting ideas were brought out in the question and answer exchange with the students. When one student asked if any of these ladies regarded themselves as feminists, Bobbie Renee, who runs her own business, replied that she definitely is. She mentioned that she is a member of the National Organization of Women (NOW) and the National Association of Female Executives (NAFE).

Talking about her military service, Sherri Lynn offered the idea that crossdressers make excellent leaders. Sherri, who served in combat infantry and has had extensive martial arts training, suggested that crossdressers might excel in roles like military service, by

over-achieving in an attempt to compensate for their feminine tendencies.

Throughout the day, the apparent interest and involvement of the students followed an unfortunately typical pattern along gender lines. Although nearly half the class was male, most of the questions and discussion came from the female students. Earlier in the session, when she passed around the photo of herself with her new employees, both of whom are women, Sherri had also commented that none of her male coworkers would consent to be photographed with her. There is obviously a long way to go before males in today's society will feel comfortable dealing openly with the full spectrum of gender expression.



Sherri, Karen and Bobbie visit with Hilary Edwards (2nd from left), a UNC-Charlotte graduate student researching crossdressing, and Dr. Larry Lance (far right) of the Sociology Department.



Bobbie (a charter member of Kappa Beta Chapter) tells the class about her experiences, as Karen looks on.
Summer 1996

Poet's Corner

Don't Hate Me For What I Do

by Stacey [REDACTED]

Baby, Baby, I have something to tell you.
It's something I do, and I must tell you.
I'm a crossdresser and I wear women's clothes.

So, Baby, Baby, please don't hate me for what I do,
But please, please love me for who I am.

I have a feeling from deep within.
It's like a spell that comes over me.
I tell you now, Darling, I'm holding the key
Because I do feel like she from deep within.

And I have a very special need.
For the woman inside me needs to be set free.
Yes, I said I'm a crossdresser and I have a very special need.

So Baby, Baby, please don't hate me for what I do.
But please, please love me for who I am.

Because this is who I've got to be.
And let my heart be set free.

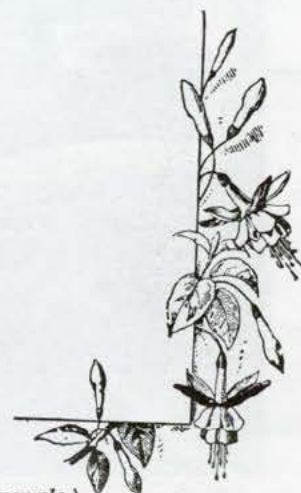
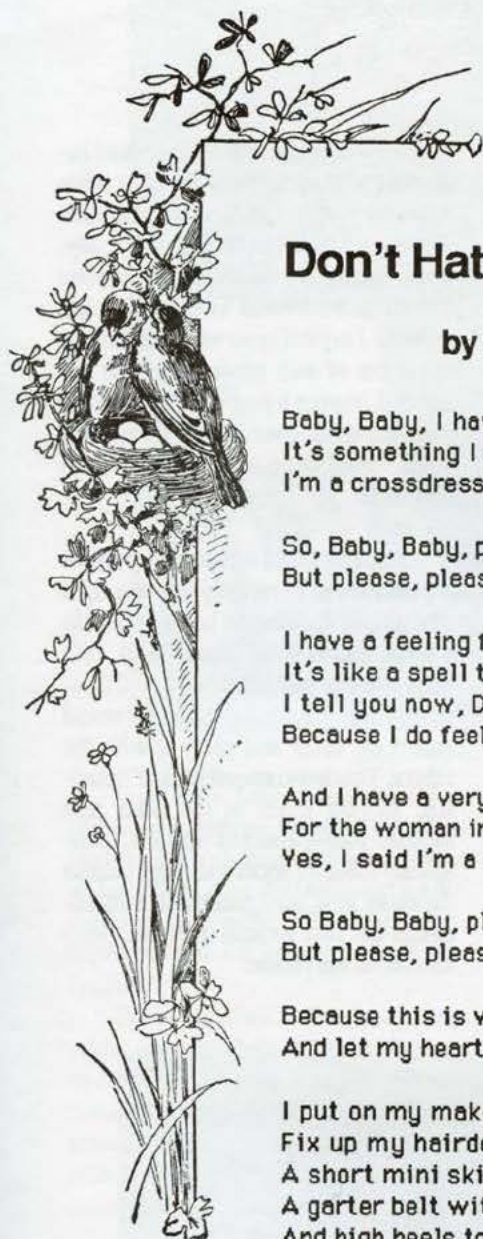
I put on my makeup.
Fix up my hairdo.
A short mini skirt.
A garter belt with silky stockings.
And high heels too.

When I crossdress I look and feel like a woman should.
I don't want to hurt your feelings, Baby, in any way.
But I can look just as good as you do.

So Baby, Baby, please don't hate me for what I do.
But please, please love me for who I am.

For I've got to be a woman, too.
A crossdresser I will always be.
Baby, you can't change me.

Oh, yes, Baby, a crossdresser I'll always be.
And you can't change me.
Because this is who I've got to be.



(Ed. Note: Stacey writes and performs her own rhythm-and-blues numbers, of which this is one example.)

The Passing Parade

Deborah [REDACTED] UT-4248-G

In June's sunny light your eyes followed me with your curiosity as I passed. I saw in you the attraction of the familiar that you could not put words to. As you distantly saw yourself, I was re-acquainted with my past. Being told that you were alone, made you as an island.

I came for fun and adventure, and in doing so, I found a more serious purpose. For in your recognition, you were introduced to a larger world. I told you that you were as common as 1 out of 20 people, and that we were your neighbors. And most of us were very similar to yourself. I also want to say that you can welcome yourself into a world that promotes your self confidence, esteem, and growth into your own interpretation of your whole being, and to love that person in the mirror.

Sadly, you must learn this only now. More joyously, you now know that there is the possibility of being free, for you are not alone, or even rare, but a mere common variation in the behaviour that we call "human."

Often we let our fears think in terms of scarcity, which is merely the product of our sometimes impoverished view of the world, as our inner vision often overrides what we really find.

I saw this lesson unfold to me one day as I shopped in a grocery store, and saw the free food samples disappear slowly with the bored shopping crowd. Yet when the samples got down to the last one or two, one would notice a frenzied competition for the last remain morsels. A hurried stretching and reaching, with quick movements that almost led to a shove. Like starving shipwrecked sailors, the people seemed ready to fight over the last crumbs.

This occurred in a grocery aisle stuffed with abundance.

This is similar to the "expeditionary food scare," where people away from their usual surroundings will often panic at the mere thought of inconvenience or starvation. Experienced outdoor guides know this: that when food

is perceived to be scarce, irrational behavior, sometimes humorous, at other times near tragic, can occur. On Colorado River trips, this can be caused by, say, food falling out of a raft, or supplies belatedly discovered to have been left behind. I myself have witnessed this in the form of two professors with advanced degrees trying to kill each other with ice-axes, over half a can of sardines. And there was plenty of food available.

Another time I was at a camp where we decided to bring only half our food (the guides deciding to bring the rest in a week due to space limitations). We were to share half of the food, and then, as the other half arrived, we would return the favor and share it with the others. This led to an outbreak of hoarding, serving those in the other tent smaller-than-expected rations, conspiracy theories about sneaking food in the other tent, and general ill will between the two groups over imagined imminent starvation.



Deborah, Monika, Crystal and Aere ride with Pride!



Deborah distributes literature on crossdressing at information table.

Four days later, when the other half of the rations arrived, we were again in an environment of plenty. We all felt a little silly, dreaming our nightmares at high noon. The friendships survived, and we went on about our business.

For some of us, in finally meeting others like ourselves, think that this is a rare occurrence and that our interactions with others and ourselves are scarce, and thus must be approached with the extreme caution sometimes reserved for walking on eggshells.

While considerate care of the people one meets is commendable, a better way would be to experience each person as unique and "scarce" to the point of being one-of-a-kind, yet our possible interactions with other crossdressers as being in a practical way, almost unlimited. There is plenty of interactional "food" available.

Often people in our community, in the perceived rarity seen in the mirror, have something similar to a "loneliness scare," and act accordingly, producing a situation where unease and fear of loss produce conditions of conflict, where petty politics, competitiveness and conspiratorial atmosphere reign supreme.

I, myself, have seen groups recoil in fear of an imagined "sucking" of members from one group to another. I have also seen some members play upon the fears and shortcomings of others, while spectators passively watched, giving that "nod" of silent approval.

This would not be put up with in other areas of their social lives, for there, there is a feeling of plenty of people with which to be with.

Think of any class you had in school. There were probably some of us there. There are most certainly within a block of your house, some of us in residence. You probably met two or three of us today— you just didn't know. We are everywhere. We are your neighbors.

Similarly, in myself, I once thought I was the only one on earth involved in this activity, and the fear was that I would lose everyone I knew, with their association of the activity of crossdressing with me. I have since learned and grown. I have personally weighed the cost, and am beyond having to please those who formerly were my "chains."

Today, I ride in a parade, and wave at thousands of people. I am clearly marked as a crossdresser, and I felt the joyous energy of contagious enthusiasm. There may have been some disapproval, but I wouldn't know, as they were drowned out by the many cheers of those of that majority who appreciated a stand of liking who one is, and seeing that in the light of possibilities.

This is a dream come true— a dream so distant, I never even thought to dream.

"Crossdressers! An Engendered Species!"

EDITORIAL POLICY

The FEMME MIRROR will not publish any material that bashes any cross-gendered person or support organization, nor will it publish any ad hominem argument.

Understanding Our Sexuality...Second Verse

• By Rachel Miller
[redacted].com

S38-7

More talk
about sex?



Opportunities for Improvement
P.O. Box 31475
Oakland, CA 94604

After passing through the first stage of sexual discovery I was certain that I wasn't a transsexual. If you can positively say that you are a transsexual then there is no reason to continue on this path of sexual exploration, but you do need to decide what to do about your discovery. If you know that you aren't a transsexual or if you aren't certain, then you still have work to do. The next question wasn't any easier – Was I a homosexual?

I understood a homosexual as a person with a definite preferential sexual attraction to persons of the same sex. For a man the question is – Do you want to have sex with another man rather than a woman? Society tends to brand any male who wears women's clothing as a homosexual. That outlook made me uncomfortable, and I didn't know how to deal with it. I tried to disregard the stereotypical views that I had listened to in the past and find out how I felt independent of what others said.

Even though I liked to wear women's clothing I did not feel attracted to men. I was attracted to women. Simply dressing like a woman didn't mean that I wanted to sleep with a man. Actually, the more I cross-dressed the more I confirmed my attraction to women. If men truly didn't interest me how could I be homosexual? The answer was that I couldn't. The answer was so simple that I wondered why it was so hard to find out. Why was I afraid of even asking

myself the question? I had previously convinced myself that I wasn't afraid to ask, I just didn't have the time. I'll do it next week, next month, soon. I finally stopped avoiding the question, faced my fears and found out the truth – My own good sense and clear thinking had become clouded.

Society's prejudicial opinion of men who wear women's clothing and of homosexuals had overridden my thoughts. I overcame most of those society-induced fears by working with gays. One of the best businessmen that I have ever worked for was gay. Several admired and respected co-workers were lesbians. I found them to be exactly like anyone else. They came in all sizes, shapes, colors and characteristics. Knowing those people caused the stereotypes to disintegrate. It no longer mattered to me if someone was homosexual. After all, why should it?

So don't let the stereotypical views deter you from self-examination. Those views are wrong and you need to find the truth to achieve lasting happiness. Independent of what other's think, what do you think – Are you a homosexual?

- Are you sexually attracted by men? By women? Do you want to have a physically intimate relationship with another man? With a woman?
- Is it possible for you to have an emotional connection with another man without being a homosexual?
- Is it okay if you are a homosexual? Is it okay if others are? How do your emotions fit this question?
- Is homosexuality compatible with your current life style or would you change anything if you discovered you were a homosexual?
- Do you need help in understanding and accepting the truth? What support resources are available to help you find the answers? Family, friends, correspondents, therapists? What do you think you should do next?

Some of you certainly found your answer in this series of questions even though the majority of transvestites are heterosexual. If you are clearly a homosexual, then your next step is to decide what action to take in making your life correspond to this discovery. If you are still trying to find the truth perhaps you share some of the worrisome questions that I still faced.

I found myself fascinated by two of the male-to-female cross-dressers with whom I corresponded. They sent several photos that I found provocative. My reaction disturbed me and reinforced my fears and again I was afraid of the truth. It seemed easier if not better not to look at the question. Finally I looked. When is this going to get easy? The next question – Was I bisexual?

I assumed that if a person had approximately equal sexual attraction to men and women then he could be considered a bisexual. Was this my answer? The pictures had turned me on and they were guys so didn't that make me bisexual? After a while it became apparent that it was their appearance as women that attracted me. While I was attracted by the impression I finally understood that I wasn't attracted by a man. I was projecting their feminine appearance onto myself. I wanted to adopt the sexy, feminine image that I saw in others whether they were women or men dressed as women. I had long-denied these very real sexual feelings but they didn't mean that I was bisexual.

It took awhile to understand that I could admit the attraction but still be free to choose not to act on those feelings. I could have erotic feelings for women and for the feminine mystique displayed by cross-dressers without being bad. I could admit my true feelings while reaffirming my commitment to my marriage. It was not an either/or choice. I could stop denying the truth. That was a liberating discovery.

Finding answers to difficult questions was infinitely better than remaining in the dark. I had suffered far too much for far too long. I could see the problems caused by believing negative stereotypes; how those thoughts repressed my true spirit; how they caused me to be far less happy and content than I could be. It was definitely time for a change. Now it's your turn to find out – Are you bisexual?

- Do you have sexual feelings towards both men and women? Are those feelings for men dressed as women? Must you act on or explore these feelings?
- Could the feelings be of warmth and compassion instead of sexual?
- What is your attraction to multi-sex relationships? Having an affair? Group sex?
- Is it okay for you to be bisexual? Is it okay for others?
- Do erotic sexual feelings make you a bad person? Are you concerned about your feelings or the reaction of society?
- What do you want to do next to answer these questions?

Where does that leave us? Am I a transsexual? No. Am I a homosexual? No. Am I bisexual? No. What else is there? The only choice that society seemed to have left was sexual deviant. Maybe they were right after all. I had never seen any indication that men who felt and acted as I did could possibly be normal, well-adjusted, functional or productive people. They were always pictured as warped.

I am thankful for my correspondents, *Tapestry* (now *Transgender*) and Virginia Prince's books. By myself I felt lost and unable to cope but with these resources I found enough positives to know that I wasn't alone. I had found well-educated, bright, considerate, spiritual, family-oriented men who shared similar feelings. There were so many of us who were solid citizens by

any reasonable definition that it was incomprehensible that we could all be perverts. There had to be another answer but what could it be? With all this talk about sex could it be so simple as just being sexy?

I thought back to the sexual feelings that I had discovered while asking the bisexual question. Many men are turned on by a woman wearing sexy undergarments. If men perceive something as sexy on a woman why couldn't they see it as sexy on themselves? It seems reasonable to me.

I grew up with a complete supply of sexual hang-ups. Didn't we all? Those hang-ups inhibited the fun my wife and I could have together. When I finally divulged my cross-dressing desires to her we began to explore ways that both of us could wear sexy lingerie. The result was that I no longer sneak around to wear sexy clothes. Wearing lingerie became a release for my sexual inhibitions and provided a harmless, even desirable avenue, for long-suppressed exhibitionism. I finally concluded that I was basically a heterosexual male with repressed sexuality who wished to explore his sexuality. That sounded reasonably healthy.

Is wanting to be sexy exclusively for women? Is dressing and acting sexy unhealthy for men? Is there only one formula to follow for dressing and behaving? I used to try to deny my sexuality; now I'm finding out what it is. Why do other people make such a big deal out of this? Are they afraid of having the same feelings themselves? Suddenly the questions became much easier and far less threatening –

- Am I a sexy person? Yes. Do I want to be sexy? Yes. Is there anything wrong with that? No.
- Can I be sexy and remain a man rather than becoming a woman? Yes.



- Am I simply a normal, healthy male? Yes.
- Why shouldn't I wear clothes that give me pleasure? Why indeed!
- Are sex and clothing the same thing? No. How are they connected for me? If sex is ice cream, then having sex while wearing lingerie is a sundae with hot fudge, whipped cream, nuts and a cherry.
- In what ways would I like to express my sexuality? Be much more free in my love-making. Where, when and how can I do that without causing problems for others? At night in our bedroom in ways my wife and I agree.
- Do I have to be sexy all the time? No.
- Does having erotic sexual feelings make me a bad person? No.

How did your self-examination process come out? Whatever results you found are okay. The important thing is knowing the truth. Whether bisexual, heterosexual, homosexual, transsexual or a mixture, we are all human beings. Now that you understand yourself better, invest more energy in accepting yourself as you are. Incorporate the truth of what you found into your life. It may take time. It may be extremely difficult. It may cause upsets. But don't let that stop you from finding a resolution that benefits you and those you love. If you have serious issues, seek professional assistance. You and I are not qualified to deal with deep mental and emotional problems alone and there are many who can help. There is no reason to continue to suffer in silence. Get Help! Take all the time you need and pledge to yourself that you will –

Find the truth about you.

You can't give yourself a better gift!

Rachel's book, *The Bliss of Becoming One!*, is available through bookstores (ask for ISBN 1-56825-031-2), by credit card at 1-800-356-9315 or by check/money order for \$15.95 postpaid from Rainbow Books, Inc. P.O. Box 430, Highland City, FL 33846-0430. Phone/fax 1-941-648-4420.

Celebrating Spring in the Southeast

Kappa Beta Celebrates Spring With a May Banquet

by Elisabeth Ann

With summer and vacation time approaching, members and friends of Kappa Beta gathered in Charlotte in late spring to celebrate the end of another year. Although monthly meetings now continue through the summer months, the May Banquet has traditionally marked the end of the social year.



Southern belle Elisabeth Ann in her white ball gown.

A weekend full of activities was kicked off Friday night as early arrivals congregated in the motel clubroom. Karen and her wife Nancy provided refreshments and hosted a discussion group about "first visits" with Kappa Beta. Newcomers and charter members alike shared tales of first-time jitters and laughter over the anxiety of meeting someone else who really knew each was a crossdresser.

On Saturday, sisters and spouses began arriving in greater numbers. The afternoon event was a wonderful wine and cheese reception hosted by Dee Dee and Heidi. A party in itself, the gathering was a relaxing time of food and conversation, often with friends we had not seen in quite some time.

The main gala of the weekend was the banquet itself, held Saturday evening at a nearby restaurant. About 35 attendees filled the banquet room with satin and sequins, evoking memories of proms of years past, now celebrated in more fitting attire. The usual air of caution seemed to be left



Dyan, Dana, Melissa and Diane.

discarded in the corner, as everyone posed willingly for anyone toting a camera. The weeks that followed would be filled with a continuous exchange of photos.

A short program followed the dinner hour. All who had served as officers were recognized. Mandy, Gloria, Michelle B., Gerri, Greta, Sherri, Diane J., Karen B., and Melissa D. were given a very appreciative round of applause for their work during the year. The officers elected to serve during the coming year were announced. Sherri, Melissa, Diane, Beverley, and Ann will make up the 1996-97 Board of Directors.

Nine spouses and partners were present, a high for Kappa Beta for the year, and appreciation was expressed for their participation in the festivities. Hilary Edwards, a researcher from UNC-Charlotte studying gender issues, attended the banquet, along with her very brave husband Nathan (affectionately known to all as Beanie), the lone "male" in the entire party. Kappa Beta was also delighted to have Jane Ellen and Frances Fairfax visiting for the weekend.



Dyan presents Sherri Lynn a special award for her three years of continuous service as Kappa Beta's Corresponding Secretary.

Two special presentations were made. Sherri Lynn was presented a gift certificate for a new wig, in appreciation for her three years of continuous work as Corresponding Secretary for the group. Hilary Edwards was given a check for \$500 to support her research work on crossdressing.

Jane Ellen Fairfax gave a brief keynote address, speaking about the phases of development many Tri-Ess chapters go through during their early years. In her talk, she spoke about chapters helping to found new chapters, citing the possibility of Kappa Beta seeding a chapter in the Raleigh (NC) area, an idea that was already being discussed by members of Kappa Beta.

Outgoing board chair Ann concluded the program with a few remarks about the events of the past year. She recognized the difficult issues the chapter had struggled with - the focus of the chapter, its form of organization, Tri-Ess membership - and spoke appreciatively of all who had worked together to pull the group through.

With the serious stuff out of the way, it was party time! Katie, our M.C. and resident sound-and-light wizardress, cleared the dance floor and opened the microphone for entertainment. Ann offered a few humorous observations about crossdressing. Then Gloria, showing off the best legs in the house, put on some music and showcased her dancing skills. Her performance even inspired Michelle to come up and try to



Hilary Edwards, a UNC-Charlotte graduate student doing research on crossdressing, visits with Dana after receiving a \$500 gift from Kappa Beta to support her research.

deposit a financial reward in the usual location! No other brave souls took to the stage, so the dance floor was opened, and Katie kept the music going into the wee hours.

The May Banquet came with a wonderful postscript. The idea of a Raleigh chapter was ready to blossom. Less than three weeks after the banquet, Heidi announced her plans to form that chapter, with the help of Kappa Beta.



After Dinner, Heidi and Jane Ellen discuss chapter development. Two weeks later, Heidi announced plans to form a chapter in the Raleigh NC area.

Sigma Epsilon's Spring Cotillion '96



by Stephanie [REDACTED]

The festive weekend of May 31st-June 2nd got underway with Lauren opening up the hospitality suite on Friday afternoon just before lots of "out of towners" hit "Hotlanta"! By suppertime we had over 20 in attendance including Helen & Peggy (from the land down under), a British Isle Invasion (Jennifer S, Renee, & Toni), and the second appearance of Heather from Bubbaville, AL.

Others in attendance were Annette, Fay, Darlene, Lauren, Suzanne, Wendy, Georgia, Abby, Ms [REDACTED] (Jennifer E), Ms [REDACTED] (Brenda), Lisa A, Bobbie Y, & a few stragglers we may have missed. At least 15 folks gathered downstairs in one or the other of the Doubletree's 2 restaurants.

Also in attendance were the reigning Miss Cotillion of 1995 & spouse (Linda) who were both saddened that a year of glamour, travel, beautiful clothes, dinners in the White House, endless endorsements, & way too much money to spend was finally coming to an end.

Another nice occurrence was the first appearance of "Trisha" who came with 2 very nice friends, Sam & Debbie, who spent several hours with us in pleasant conversation. There was also some "dingbat" running around in a white hat & camera taking pictures for the Sigma Epsilon Cotillion Weekend Album!

Renee was left with honors of closing down the bar with Sandy, the bartenderette.

On Sat A.M., Annette hosted the **Newcomer's Group** from 10 A.M. 'til noon with 10 folks in attendance including 2 new faces.

By noon several members were present for Renee Abrams 3 hour jewelry expo. Because of a miscommunication, some of the women showed up at 3 P.M. & others at 4 P.M. for the **"Wives & Sweethearts Group"** which turned into more of a social gathering.

By 6 P.M., most everyone had migrated to The Marque Hotel, some 2 miles away for the **Spring Cotillion Champagne Reception** which was held outside in the

courtyard under a sunny but pleasantly cool setting. Everyone was dressed so elegantly and the Cotillion Committee had already assigned numbers to the 14 contestants competing for **Miss Spring Cotillion 1996**.

One of the most pleasant sights of the evening was the attendance of no fewer than 16 women including several spouses & significant others, 3 judges, a daughter, & a few friends. This was more than twice the number I remember from the last 2 years. And all of them were so beautifully attired.

Yvonne wore a beautiful blue lace dress, Charlene was attired in white satin, & Karen A was sporting an elegant satin dress in powder blue that she had made herself. Jennifer's date, Sandra looked wonderful in black lace, while Brenda's friend, Tammy, reminded us of the movie, "The Lady in Red!" Black was the in color for Linda, Harriet, Dae, Karen S, & Julia, while Catherine & Chris were into the prints.

And last, but not least, was Suzanne who wore a gorgeous full length green sequin gown.

Not to be outdone, our 4 **Cotillion Judges** were dressed impeccably as well. Gary & Patty, long time friends of Sigma Epsilon, looked smart in a silver/black tuxedo & formal black evening dress. Our favorite wig consultants (2 sisters in business together) obviously planned their wardrobes in a coordinated fashion. Shirley wore a nice blue number, while Lee was attired in a smart red/white outfit.

Edie [REDACTED] acted as our MC for the Miss Spring Cotillion contest & also provided her brand of "bawdy" music & humor. The meal was excellent & was hopefully enjoyed by the 50+ in attendance at The Marque. Most of us returned to the Doubletree afterward for a couple of hours of socializing before dawn.

Breakfast was well attended by almost 20 of us (all in the "Bubba" mode). We talked about the Cotillion weekend, the Olympics & Memphis before heading out!



SPRING COTILLION CONTESTANTS

Michelle M (pictured left) was **1st Runner-Up**, wearing a full length gown of white satin with lace top, while **Heather** (pictured right) was **2nd Runner-Up** wearing a navy sequined dress at knee length with black gloves. Pictured below are the 12 finalists. They are (from left to right) **Wendy, Heather, Lisa A, Fay, Susan (SC), Christina, Toni, Renée, Michelle M, Bobbie (hiding behind Michelle), Barbara, & Ann.** Annette & Lauren were also entered, but dropped out to do all that mundane stuff that comes with leadership!



SPRING COTILLION CONTEST

The 12 contestants were judged by a panel of 4 on overall appearance, grace, & ability to handle Edie [redacted]'s selected questions. **Fay's** (the winner of the **Miss Spring Cotillion '96 contest**) answer to Edie's question "What would you do if you woke up & found that you had been sleep walking & ended up in a "Biker Bar" in your nightie?" was classic! She simply stated "**Guys, if you're gonna kill me, be merciful & do it quickly!!!**"

Unsung heroines - **Annette** (left) & **Lauren** (right) - thanks!



Shared Femininity

by Maryann Kirkland

This is the term that my spouse, Evelyn, and I have selected to describe our special relationship. As far as we can tell, our mutual sharing of things feminine is unique among the people in the transgender community. Comparative statements to others' experiences is virtually impossible, since people value their secrecy and privacy.

I volunteer a picture of our life so other couples may have the courage to discuss thorny issues in their own relationships. Statements made here are solely our opinions ("I" statements), not recommendations for anyone.

Simply stated, "Shared" eliminates competition and contests. It is a vile male quality to view life and everything in it as a competition. "Femininity" is a quality to strive for. It is gender-based (i.e., behavior-based, not genetically-based). It appears possible for a transgendered male to be comfortable with femininity without being stereotypically effeminate.

Society has not give men permission to exhibit crossgender attributes because of the threat to patriarchy (male domination). In a committed relationship, however, we are free to bless the other partner with special options. I decided to discard my male underwear and pajamas. Also hitting the trash bin were male posturing of ego, arrogance and male deference (king of the forest syndrome). There have to be permanent trade-offs, for everything has its own price.



I am a feminine person, all my life. Just in the last ten years have I been fortunate to share it with another feminine person, my wife.

Obviously, our relationship is our business and we don't expect it to fit nicely into society's structure or classifications. We don't see this as a lesbian twosome, as there are no lesbians present. I am transgendered 24 hours a day, every day of the year, and I am empowered by my spouse to share in and participate in femininity.

Once again, slowly: not tolerated, not even accepted or supported, but empowered to enjoy an enormous range of feminine interests - ballet, opera, flowers, dressing, shopping, music boxes, dolls.....

Is this worth tearing up my membership card to the Good Ol' Boys Club? You bet!

We decided that if I made reversible changes to my body, such as hair removal, eyebrow waxing, or long nails, these appearances would be kept up without periods of drastic changes. If you prefer a nightgown for bed, then do it every night. What was asked for early on by Evelyn was a predictable routine and daily dressing behavior.

After ten years of partial crossdressing day and night, we feel we are sharing something beautiful and self-managed. We respect and treat equally each other's feminine wardrobe, with common laundry batches. In the winter time we have the same amount of lingerie items in the wash. In the summer time I go braless and barelegged. Clothing and makeup for me is considered as valid as clothing for her. I do not feel discounted, nor are my female clothing, toys, or tons of accessories discounted because I have male anatomy - that comes in handy also.

Chapters On Line

With this issue we have begun listing E-mail and Web Site addresses for local chapters who have designated an E-mail contact. Ideally, each chapter should have at least one member "on line." We are receiving an increasing number of inquiries in response to Tri-Ess's Internet presence as well as to ads in gender community publications. Whenever possible we refer inquirers to the nearest local chapter. A Helpline or an E-Mail address makes the referral process much more efficient. To list your chapter's local E-Mail address, contact Jane Ellen Fairfax at [redacted]m.



Pictured left is **Veronica (Miss Spring Cotillion '95)** crowning **Fay** as **Miss Spring Cotillion 1996** & handing her the roses as **Renee & Barbara** look on. **Fay** was also given a white sash & got quite "choked up" about the whole affair - congratulations to **Fay** - she truly looked radiant! **Michelle** received yellow roses for **1st Runner-Up** & **Heather** got pink roses as the **2nd Runner-Up**.

Pictured at right are 27 of the 50+ who were in attendance at The Marque for "**Spring Cotillion 1996**". The front row (sitting) includes **Heather, Veronica, Fay, & Michelle** (strictly nobility).



Renee (Pictured left) is "grilled" by Mistress of Ceremonies, **Edie King**, while **Fay** (right) in black satin with sequin bodice gown is all smiles after winning the **Miss Spring Cotillion '96** Contest!



Successful Fundraising

by Christine



Christine

Yes, a fundraiser can be done! Ours took place on February 3, 1996. I began planning it back in the fall of 1994. "Within the Hearts of Gender" was born to benefit hospice food banks in Southern California. Before the special evening was over, 92 tickets were sold, raising \$1500.

The story actually begins even further back, when I began to visit the Coronation Balls put on by the Imperial Courts. They were prime examples of entertainment spectacles, and did they raise money! Because I was well known to the Court members, I knew some of them would want to attend our fundraiser. And, I knew I could count on the ladies from Alpha Chapter, PPOC, Born Free and other transgender organizations. Still, when I thought about all that needed to be done, I had several doubts that such an event could be pulled off.

I decided to schedule this special day early in the year, after the annual joint Christmas Party, and well before the highly successful California Dreamin' convention. We would have a Swap Meet, a formal dinner and a beauty/talent show.

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As I did my best to assemble a team, however, it got very difficult to acquire any help. At first I found this hard to understand, but then I realized most people were unsure of a brand new event on the gender calendar.

With all the energy and enthusiasm I could muster, I brought the message to any gender group or person I could find. Our one simple rule of thumb was, "Raise Money - Have Fun!" As the program got closer to being a reality, the Holiday Inn in Burbank grew more supportive. They did everything possible to help and guide the program.

Long before the event I decided to hold a beauty/talent show following the dinner. I needed contestants. This was tough since most of us have some stage fright. Another part of the program was the ability to secure donated prizes. Here, everywhere I went, people opened their arms to me.

Then came one major problem the night before the show. I lost my light/sound person plus my mistress of ceremonies due to illness. Guess who went into a semi-panic? Thank goodness for Katie (another Alpha member), as she broke down her own home stereo system and set it up for us in the hotel ballroom. Without it, I was cooked, and so was the event. Here is a big THANKS to Katie! To my surprise, I still had to be the M.C. I just did not want to be on stage, but no one else felt comfortable doing it.

The event was well attended by a cross section of the community, including several professionals. And, of all the things experienced that day, one item stands out: Everyone had a great time!

Already plans are underway to do "Within the Hearts of Gender II" on February 1, 1997. If you are in Southern California, check it out!

The Femme Mirror

Advertising Rates Per Year (4 issues)

Full Page	\$300
1/2 Page	\$175
1/4 Page	\$95
Business Card	\$50

Please send us a copy of your ad, camera-ready if possible, along with your check or money order payable to Tri-Ess to:

The Femme Mirror
8880 Bellaire B2, Ste. 104
Houston, TX 77036

Tri-Ess members deduct 20% from all rates.
Gender Community events and publications free on reciprocal basis.

Day Dream Girl

by Marie

I'd like to spend a day as a girl, not a freak.

This morning I stood in front of my mirror. What looked back at me was a somewhat overweight, brown haired woman. I had on a black skirt, white blouse, black hose, heels, and pearls. My make up and outfit didn't really hide the basic fact that I am actually a man. While I might try to move about with as much feminine grace as I can muster, nothing I try can completely mask what is underneath the silk and satin. I still look like a man. Whenever I have the time, I pull out my outfits, I dress myself up, I borrow some of my wife's things, and I spend an hour or two pretending that I am a girl.

This started when I was twelve when I sneaked about my house, experimenting with slips, bras, girdles, stockings, and any female clothing that I could find. Years after I wore my first dress, I learned what that harsh word transvestite meant, and after that, the more gentle term, crossdresser. It took me years to come to terms with my secret hobby.

I enjoy dressing up and I feel good when I wear women's clothing, but underneath there is always tension and an uneasiness that comes with it. I am always afraid that some one will discover me prancing about, all dressed up, and that he will think terrible and ugly things about me. I have always hoped and wished that I could just spend some time, a week, a day, or even an hour, as a girl. Not a boy dressed as a girl, but as a girl. Or at least as a person that the world accepts as a girl and who is not scrutinized or questioned.

Ever since I first started dressing up, I have periodically had dreams in which I have achieved this goal. In them, I always emerge from my room or house, and I have on feminine clothes;

and I am completely accepted by who ever I meet. These dreams are very simple. Sometimes, in them, I meet family and people I know, or sometimes I am among strangers. However, in my dreams, all of these people accept me in whatever clothing I have on because, to them, and more importantly to myself, I look normal and I feel normal. These dreams are some of the most pleasant dreams that I have.

Someday, I wish that these dreams would become reality, but I don't think that it will happen. Part of the problem is me and the difficulty that I have with my blurred gender, and part is society and its interpretation of the same. I'll continue to dress up in secret and I'll occasionally seek out the relative level of acceptance that the Tri-Ess safety net offers, but I still wish that I could spend a week, a day, or even an hour, as a girl, to explore the world of feminine things as a real sister. Or, that I could spend an afternoon with girl friends, real girls, as a real girl myself, enjoying the activities that girls enjoy. I wish that for me it wasn't only a dream.

One might argue that my inability for a complete, or comfortable, transformation is because of my own unwillingness to let go of my maleness and my inhibitions. However, I know what I look like when I am dressed. I also have seen many crossdressers and transsexuals. Some look good, but most do not, and I do not want that time spent being stared or laughed at.

(Reprinted from the Chi Tribune.)



Tri-Ess Helpline!

Do you have a question about Tri-Ess? Do you need help regarding media outreach in your area? Tri-Ess Executive Director Carol Beecroft may be reached at the Tri-Ess National Office in Tulare, California at:

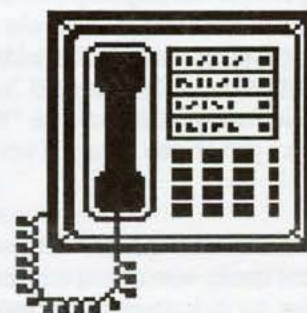
1-209-688-9246

Carol is often available to speak to radio audiences via long-distance telephone hook-up, and she is compiling a list of members who are able to appear on radio or television, or speak before college classes.

Are you interested in starting a Tri-Ess chapter? The new Tri-Ess Liaison for Chapter Support and Services, Judy [REDACTED] may be reached at:

1-417-[REDACTED]

Does your local chapter have a Helpline? Ideally, each Tri-Ess chapter should operate a Helpline and list the number with the local Crisis Hotline, Gay Switchboard, Mental Health Clinics, etc. The expenses involved would vary with local phone rates and installation charges. As a second, unlisted line in a sister's home, a Helpline does not take a lot of money. What it does take is considerable dedication on the part of the sister volunteering to answer the Helpline. How about it, ladies? Does your chapter have a Helpline yet?



It's Heaven or HELL

by Diane H.

It can be either; it's up to you. Yes, you do have the power to choose. I've lived with them both. For thirty years I lived the Hell version of a crossdresser, I let every person who came into Diane's life dictate how I felt about myself.

It all started with my parents who found out about Diane when I was eleven years old. My mother, who I thought would be understanding and helpful to me, was very very negative. She told my father that he had better fix me before "it" grew into a bigger problem. (My family was afraid to say Crossdressing or Transvestism, instead they referred to "it.") My father talked to me in a father to son sort of way, but nothing really personal or helpful. It took me thirty years to figure out why his talk was with me was so insincere. You see, he's a crossdresser also! My mother blamed him for me being the way I was, as she put it.

Through my adolescence and into early adulthood, I lived in fear of being found out by friends and family. I couldn't understand what was so wrong with "it." "It" didn't hurt anybody and "it" brought so much pleasure and joy to me.

As the years went by, one by one my sisters and brothers found out about "it." My sisters had no problem with "it" because they said they loved me no matter what. My brothers were a different story. They couldn't understand why the big brother that they respected and admired, was so flawed. And why if anything did it have to be "it"? I couldn't explain "it," I didn't understand "it." But their feelings didn't change "it." "It" was a part of who I was and who I am.

Then I came to the age when marriage and family were calling me. How do I live the dichotomy of "it" and a family? If most of my family disliked

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that part of me so much, how was I going to find a mate that would find "it" ok? It was like playing Russian Roulette with my heart.

The year was 1969. Free love, drugs, and every other kind of lifestyle seemed to be the norm, so why not "it"? I found a woman who seemed to be the right one, so I worked up the nerve and told her. She wasn't too thrilled but she said she loved me and thought she could tolerate "it." Did I want "it" to be just tolerated? I wanted "it" and I wanted a family. I had plenty of rejection in my life and being tolerated seemed to be a step above rejection, so we married. Bad move. Our life became a life of "Let's Make A Deal" and it was nothing like the game show on TV. It reduced me to the status of a door mat. I was this door mat for five years before finally deciding I wouldn't take it anymore. As soon as I started standing up for myself, she left.

At this point, one would think I'd had enough of the connubial bliss. So what did I do? I found another woman to wring some more life out of me. All the warning signs were there but again, I made that fatal mistake. I married her. Of course I told her about "it" beforehand. She said it was O.K., that she didn't mind.

But deep down inside she had plans. She was going to cure "it." Obviously she didn't know what she was dealing with. She had a better chance of getting me to like German opera than of curing "it." But she tried for almost four years before throwing in the towel, but not before running me through the emotional meat grinder a sufficient number of times. She taught me one hell of a lesson. Being single was going to be my life.

I was always a good provider, a good husband and father. I was tall,

dark, and not hard to look at, and I was a good lover. Weren't these things enough? Yes, but what about "it"? I couldn't make anyone understand about "it." Didn't they know that if I could have gotten rid of "it" I would have? How can one single thing in a person's life bring so much joy and so much sorrow?

Experience and maturity have helped tremendously, but both of these take a lot of time and the price can be very dear. I'm not exactly what you would call a religious person but I've thanked the Lord many times for giving me the strength to have survived all these trials in my life without throwing in the towel.

I know today how strong I am and what I'm capable of. It took a long time to find this out about myself and it isn't something I'd choose to go through again.

I am now at the point in my life where I'm not scared anymore about someone finding out about "it", or of finding out and rejecting me for "it." I'm at peace and it feels wonderful.

I truly hope that all of my sisters out there will also be able to find this inner peace as I have found it.

Tri-Ess Sorority Pins

Yes, these are the original Tri-Ess Sorority Pins created for the historic 1987 Holiday En Femme in San Francisco. A real collector's item, they are available exclusively from:

ALPHA ZETA CHAPTER
P.O. Box 1738
Tempe, AZ 85280-1738

Double Standards

by Joanne WA-1825-E

Recently I was listening to a talk show hosted by a female psychologist, who listens to problems of the members of the radio audience, then suggests solutions. A cross dresser called in. He had grown up crossdressing, and somehow supposed it would magically disappear when he married. He had professional counseling regarding the cross dressing, and the psychiatrist had enabled him to live with and accept that part of his persona without guilt. He married without telling his fiancé about his difference. Now serious marital problems had developed and he was seeking the host's advice.

The host told him that his desire for cross dressing would remain with him for the rest of his life, but that he should never cross dress again, so as to make his new wife happy. She wasn't concerned with HIS happiness. Her advice was, essentially, YOU be miserable, so

SHE can be happy. Even though the host knew he couldn't change his feelings and desires, she offered him no advice, other than total abstinence. We all know that doesn't work. For a while maybe, but it will become intolerable. My feeling is that if a marriage fails because of cross dressing alone, then it wasn't a strong marriage to begin with. The host could have advised the man to arrange counseling sessions with his former psychiatrist, to enable his new wife to understand, and not fear, this aspect of her husband's personality.

Our culture instills in women an insistence on stereotypical male behavior, while relieving women of the same limits of behavior. All of us have seen women wearing totally male attire, including jeans, shirts, boots, hats, suits complete with shirt, tie and vest, etc. Now, women can buy boxer shorts, made for women. (Can you imagine

pretty pink panties in the men's section?) There are no limits for women's dress, and that's as it should be in a free society. Men, too, should have this same freedom in choosing clothing to wear at home, at work, or in public, (even though obviously male), with the same acceptance women get.

Here was an opportunity for this talk show host to do a little educating, and all we got was more insistence on double standards. Here, also, was an opportunity for the host to advise this caller about Tri-Ess, and the support and understanding it offers to both parties. It's time for an end to double standards, and Tri-Ess is our standard bearer, our voice of reason and understanding, reaching out to open minds. It means a lot to me to read the Femme Mirror, written by, and for, people like me. To the staff of the Mirror, thanks, and keep up the good work.

NEW! TRI-ESS LIST SERVER

AVAILABLE ON CROSS-CONNECTION

The Tri-Ess listserv is now functional! Wouldn't you like to be able to send an e-mail message to all your sisters simultaneously, without having all their addresses appear on your letter? Now you can, by subscribing to **Cross-Connection's Tri-Ess List Server**.

If you would like to participate, the subscription process is as follows:

Send e-mail to [REDACTED] with your Tri-Ess membership number as the Subject and the message reading SUBSCRIBE TRI-ESS

Subscribe requests will be routed to my mailbox for verification before you are added to the list. Only subscribers will be allowed to post to the list. The only time anyone's e-mail address will be revealed is when they post a message to the list.

Cross Connection subscribers who are also Tri-Ess members will access the forum via a hidden command on one of our menus, rather than receiving the list in their mailboxes. They will still have to send a subscribe request as shown above.

| Kymberleigh Richards [KR260] | For "Cross-Talk" Information |
| System Administrator, Cross Connection | E-mail: [REDACTED]
| Publisher/Managing Editor, "Cross-Talk" |

(818) 786-8887

The "Dresser"

- A Unique Form of Man -

by "Dee Dee" PA-3722-M

Before I begin this article, we must understand basic terminology. This article deals mostly with males that enjoy dressing as women.

The words "male" and "female" describe the physical aspects of the two specific types of human being as regards their different functions in procreation; that is, the two distinct physical types of humans.

There are also inherent behavioral characteristics which, taken together with the physical anatomy, place the person more or less toward one of the two distinct social categories, which we call "men" and "women." We each are a unique blend of those characteristics making us "men" or "women." So "man" and "woman" are actually "blend words" or composites meaning not just how a person is built, but also who he is in terms of his social role. So "man" and "woman" refer to a person's gender, while "male" and "female" refer to the reproductive anatomy.

In today's western culture, however, the definition of the word "woman" leaves that particular type of person able to express not only those behaviors characteristic of that gender, but whatever extreme in either direction toward man or woman that she so chooses. And, she is allowed to switch back and forth whenever and however she chooses. She has no set structure to conform to or to maintain. She has a full extent of personal freedom.

Men, on the other hand, do have an invisible structure and may only slightly deviate away from the the conventional requirements for being a man. After all, he is brought up and socially guided to be big and strong, aggressive, a provider and a person who exhibits all the traditional attributes associated with being the conventional man.

We now have other males who are also in the "man" category, and can fully fit into the conventional role and enjoy being men. But, they also enjoy dressing like women, the complete opposite of the social standard. Why? Are we women inside? Do we envy the freedom women have?

We all know there are lots of personal reasons why we enjoy our "Dressing." Possibly we are soft-males, or male-women, or in my case, full male-PLUS. We like being guys. PLUS we also like doing something most other men would never do. Yet we do not place ourselves into an association with women, because we know we are not truly women. It's true that we like to look, move, and take on a more feminine role, and even be accepted as women when we are out in public. However, we also enjoy our masculine side and would not sacrifice one for the other when all the factors of both genders are sorted out. The aspects that we do like or choose to emulate are those more associated with being feminine or of femininity. And that is what we pursue-not woman. In essence, we are using the vehicle of femininity to simply be accepted as women.

So we are a unique form of man among other men in that we pursue femininity in real women, right up to the point of dressing up and emulating it ourselves. Those individuals who choose to continue further in living as women, or use bodily alterations and hormones to achieve more of the full package, would be the cross-living or Trans-gendering. But we as "Dressers," just temporarily get all dolled up and "Dressed." So Cross-Dresser doesn't really fit. But "Dresser" does.

This activity does, however, put us in among those others who also have a recognition associated with our oppo-

site gender on this diverse non-specific continuum; our dressing simply makes us different and unique persons in our own regard. As every other human being is different and unique from one another.

Since the 1920's a shift has occurred with regard to western societies' women, in two stages. At that time, they first began to change the look and status of the traditional woman. Not only in wearing shorter hair styles and skirts, but in completely swapping skirts for pants and exhibiting more body in bathing suits. She was now voting, driving autos, and smoking - a real outrage at first because she was beginning to look and act like men.

Society did clamor about it, but as more and more women adopted the new style, the less of an issue it became. The trend extended into the 1940's when they began replacing men in their traditional jobs for the war effort. They had proven themselves capable and were now established in more masculine roles - as well as looks - if she so chose. So she was allowed to put her femininity aside.

The second wave came in the 1970's with the women's movement's demands for equality in all areas, backed by laws. Her freedom to do whatever she chose was here to stay. In fact, young women in their twenties will never know a time when acting, doing, or being "like the boys" in anything was ever not permitted. And, she is putting aside her "femininity" more and more and assuming "masculinity."

Many transsexuals can associate with this, because being raised as men, they can relate to this masculinized form of women's lifestyle. But we as "dressers" are trying to retain those alluring aspects of being feminine that are attractive to us as men.

"Dressers" are kind of where the women were back 70 years ago in the 1920's. We are showing how we too want the freedom to look the way we want to look (which just happens to be as attractive women) yet still claiming the freedom to retain our masculinity.

A woman is still a woman, no matter how she acts in today's society. Why is what we are doing considered not acceptable?? We simply want to temporarily put aside our masculinity, just as women can fully put aside their femininity. That is where the invisible structure of man is still in place. Men have a structure, but women have no structure, and she is wide open to any option.

Now if more men would adopt wearing pantyhose and skirts, nail polish, some makeup and the like, we as men would be moving along with Step One. A transgendered person is already there. However, even this Step One form of man is something society shuns. Society tries to make us ashamed of what we are doing. Possibly they feel men moving toward femininity would be moving backward.

If a woman wears a tight short dress and high heels, and accentuates her body curves, she looks attractive and sexy to a man. But if a man would look just as good in the same outfit, he would most probably first be labeled as gay, a sexual deviate, or a nut. So public exhibitions like that aren't the way to win society over.

So how do we win friends in society, and why even try if it is all up hill? It's only a temporary thing, even though it is a real driving need. Why even bother risking anything? Let society think what they want.

The key is to become more visible to others in a dignified manner and appearance, and not be ashamed any longer, about being this unique person or man that you are. We must all become more visible so the incorrect pre-conceived ideas will begin to evaporate. Hiding in the home closet may be all a person may need, but usually not. We all must reach out further and further without taking excessive risks.

There are far too few of us out here now.

Even though we are trying our best to be presentable, acceptable persons who feel that assuming a feminine look and role is more for our own enjoyment, we are not renouncing our ability to be good men. Just as women are not renouncing being women, even though they are assuming a more masculine role in life. You will be telling everyone that you are more than just a man. You are a "Dresser" and are proud of this added gift. God gave it to you for a reason, I believe. We are not to be ashamed and hide it.

It is my hope that society can slowly begin to accept this added diversity in men, which means abandoning a lot of conceited, domineering, power-seeking, and superiority ideals which are absolute masculine attributes, and acknowledging that men can be more yielding, more attentive, more understanding, more accepting, more feminine. Then it can also begin to accept all of his fellow men in all types of diversity be it religious, ethnic, sexual preference, or disabilities. Just look out your window. It was God's master plan to make everything in creation unique and different, from the smallest snowflake, stone, and ant, to the trees, planets, and people. It is man who chooses to stereotype and categorize his environment so he can understand and control it.

Hopefully it could be the "Dresser," as well as all of us in this unique diverse community of blended males and females, who will be the catalyst in a beginning of acceptance for one another as who we are as fellow human beings without resorting to suppression, hate, and war.



TRI-ESS ON-LINE

With the growing popularity of personal computers, electronic mail and the Internet, Tri-Ess is moving ahead to establish its presence in Cyberspace. The Tri-Ess Bulletin Board in Atlanta has been joined by Kymberleigh Richards' Cross-Connection. In addition, as of press time there are six different Tri-Ess Web Sites. They are:

Brenda Thomas's at <http://www.firstnethou.com/brenda/>

Chi Chapter's at <http://users.aol.com/chitriess/trisss/chimain.htm>

Alpha Zeta Chapter's at http://www.netzone.com/~jenjen/alpha_za.htm

Theta Upsilon Gamma's at <http://www.intermind.net/theta/theta.html>

Alpha Pi Omega's at <http://members.aol.com/apotris/aponash.htm>

Phi Epsilon Mu's at <http://www.virtual-pub.com/misc/fem.htm>

Each site has multiple pages and links to other transgender Web sites. Available for downloading is a wealth of information about crossdressing, Tri-Ess and such programs as HCDA and SPICE. (At Chi Chapter's Web site you can even read and download the entire text of the Tri-Ess information brochure!) More articles will be added very shortly.

In addition, at least one Tri-Ess sister has expressed an interest in assembling and distributing by E-mail a Tri-Ess electronic newsletter. All sisters who might like to receive such a newsletter are asked to E-mail either Brenda Thomas at [redacted] or Jane Ellen Fairfax at [redacted] to be added to the list.

Chapter E-Mail Addresses

Ideally, each chapter and forming chapter should have a publishable E-mail address for contact purposes.

Is your chapter On Line yet?

It's A Matter Of Class

by Jaye R.

The other day, someone said to me: "When I go out in public while dressed, the best I can hope for is to be ignored." This comment set in motion a whole series of thoughts. Chief among them were memories of personal experiences over the years.

This looking back made me begin to become aware of just how often it is we turn out to be our own worst enemy in our quest for acceptance and freedom to express ourselves freely and openly. We tend to vilify society for rejecting us. We tend to vilify mainly the traditional males in society. We tend to bring ridicule and rejection upon ourselves by how we dress, how we behave, what we do, and where we go while dressed.

Inwardly, our own personal level of growth determines our inward perception of womanhood, particularly the sort of womanhood with which we identify and in which we seek to participate. If we have an inward vision of women purely as sex objects, we will tend to emphasize sexuality in how we dress. If we view women as purely glamour objects, we will tend to emphasize glamour in how we dress. If we view females primarily as fashion models, we will try to dress like a fashion model. If we are fixated on the very young females, we will try to dress appropriate to the age at which we are somewhat fixated. How we present ourselves tends plainly to illustrate what we think of women and what it is about women with which we identify.

Recently, I came across an article in *Cross Gender*, the Voice of The Mensa Transgender SIG. A significant portion of the article is quoted below. It speaks to an issue which is vital to all of us as we seek to be free to be true to ourselves openly and freely. The author: Ms. Stephanie A. [redacted] of Oakton, VA has given us permission to reprint her work here.

"Let me introduce you to Manners, the great gender equalizer. For instance, Summer 1996

what is one of the keys to mathematics? Logic, of course. What is one of the keys to medicine? Latin, certainly. Correspondingly, I contend that one of the keys to successful gender crossing is manners.

Take a specimen of American male, variety *neolithicus vulgaris*. This animal is known for knuckle dragging, swaggering, and talking at greatly elevated volumes. It engages in eructation and flatulence contests with others of its kind. Its consumption of nourishment is a model of blast furnace stoking, and has been known to evoke from observers the descriptive term: "swilling". Let's call him Paul.

What would it take to make "Paul" into "Paula"? Would putting him in a dress be sufficient? Would makeup, perfume, pumps, and appropriate accessories be enough? Would Paula's deportment be refined or beswined? Would she be the proverbial silk purse or sow's ear?

If the intention is to transform this entity into a lady, one would have a better chance of proving Fermat's last theorem, trisecting an angle, or squaring a circle. Of course, if the intention is to flip the gender while remaining at the bottom of the food chain, why bother? Sure there are American females of the *neolithicus vulgaris* variety, but is their existence sufficient reason to recommend such existence as a goal or ideal? Likewise, what female wakes up wanting to wear smelly jeans, a grimy tee shirt, and old work shoes, as well as wishing she had a beer belly?

Actually, the female-to-male crossdresser probably is able to change gender publically easier than her male-to-female counterpart. Our society doesn't want a male who has manners, refinement, or style. Self-control is seen as an affliction. The more "butch" the f-m crossdresser acts, the more successful she is likely to be. Yet, I still contend "refined" is a better state from which to begin than "beswined."

As a m-f crossdresser, I have the privilege of interacting with some perfectly odious examples of masculinity while in male character. Lucky me, huh?! My preferred tools of interaction are manners, respect, logic, reason, listening, and speaking. But ya know, sometimes ya gotta just act like the brutes they are, take out that metaphorical big club, and hit 'em in the head to get their attention. It's called 'self-defense' (and it's okay that it's fun to do once in a while.)

For instance, the subtleties of a fine point in a business meeting are lost on the one who is banging his fist on a table, belching, and just acting imbecilic. When said value impaired (re: worthless) individual has reached a point where he is proclaiming the greatness of his abject stupidity over your ability to reason, a measured response from you is not only acceptable, it is duty! A loud verbal attack must be made against the idiot. This will elicit a counterattack from him, a counterattack to which you need not nor should listen since it will have no real value anyway. Eventually, his mouth will be in synch with his cerebrum—on hold. At that point, you may act civilized again.

Manners is a higher ground than bathos. The individual with manners understands something about humanity; the individual slopping about in bathos cares nothing about humanity. The gentleman crossdresser is at least familiar with the concept of 'lady', and has the potential ability to act as one while in the feminine role. The vulgarian crossdresser's true nature will betray him despite any feminine trappings."

While Ms. [redacted] uses the term "Manners", she is truly addressing the issue of "Class". We aren't talking about social class, economic class, racial class, or any other of the usual elements to which the term "class" is attached. We are talking about that poorly defined element of civility which involves sen-

sitivity to others, good taste, and a concern for social acceptability.

Those memories of experiences over many years really reminded me of the times in which I have been stared at, ridiculed, harassed, ignored, and even admired and complimented. In every case, the variation of reaction on the part of others has been directly related to appropriateness. Appropriateness of dress has to do with age, body build, time of day, and activities in which you are engaged. When you are dressed appropriately to your age, your body build, the time of day, and the activities in which you are engaged, you are demonstrating "class". When you dress in a "class" manner and behave as a lady, about the worst to happen is, you will be ignored. The most common thing you can expect to happen is, you will be noticed and admired. You may even receive compliments.

If you are among the many who really desire to "pass" and try very hard to achieve this, take note. Here's a hint. Spend some time at the nearest shopping mall on a busy shopping day. Take note of how the genetic females dress, how they behave, and how they present themselves. If you want to "pass" you don't have to "dress down", but you do have to dress with "class." When you dress with "class" you will be seen, you will be noticed, and you will be admired. This applies to all, for the most part, because the fact of the matter is, there will always be someone who looks better than you and likewise, there will always be those who do not look as good as you look.

If you dress in a ladylike manner, appropriate to your age, your body build, and your activities of the moment, you will find your apprehensions and fears will fade, and your opportunity to experience "passing" will grow with your confidence. It truly is a matter of class.

Travelin' with Tri-Ess

by Carla MN-3996-L

For many, travel holds a special fascination. I've discovered that Tri-Ess can enhance my travel experience. Crossdressing is an accepted part of my life - but it is not accepted by those around me. Carla lives a regulated life. The restrictions disappear as distance is covered.

Since my first "escape-restrictions-during-travel" experience I've learned a number of things. Travel gives a good opportunity to go public comfortably. It is a chance to practice my presentation. The relative anonymity of a new location reduces the concern over discovery and its negative consequences. Thus I can be myself, anxiety free. I've noticed that I don't cause a big reaction. Undoubtedly some people look twice and "read" me. Rarely has anyone made a cutting comment. If it happens, so what? In that setting it is easy for me to think, "Your problem, not mine!" Now when Carl plans to go it is also Carla's preparation time. Needless to say, I love to travel.

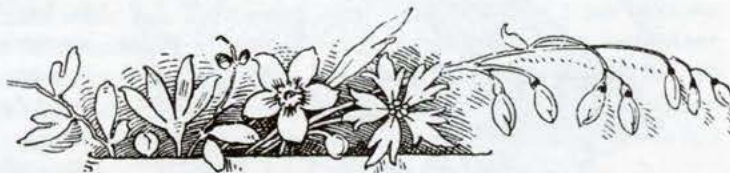
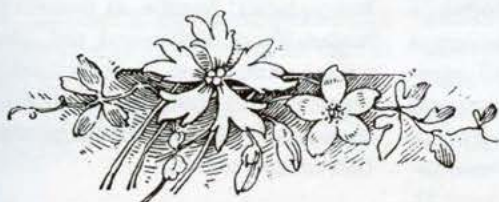
It was while on a business trip that I first stepped into my heels to cross the boundaries. In upstate New York at the motel I read the local alternative press and saw an ad aimed at crossdressers which included a telephone number. I called and connected with an answering machine. Thankfully they announced the time of their weekly meetings and promised to get in touch if the caller would leave a contact number. I had nothing to lose. I gave the necessary information.

That evening my phone rang and I jumped to answer it. The caller must have been the PR person for the club.

He convinced me that I would be welcome and could enjoy an evening among friends. It was the proverbial offer I couldn't refuse. The next evening Carla made her public debut. Contrary to my fears, no one seemed to notice, and if they did it didn't matter, to them or me. It was an enlightening, exhilarating growth experience which deserved repetition. That's where TRI-ESS entered the picture.

From personal experience trying to make connections with an organization in my home town, it was obvious that meeting crossdressers would not be as simple as that time out East. The idea hit me: the Tri-Ess Directory. My travel planning now includes the additional step of looking in the directory for sisters or chapters close to my destination. Then I use the mail forwarding service to try to make contact. Frankly, I didn't think it would work. Surprise! My first attempt resulted in a wonderful afternoon with a sister showing me around her town. Along with the tourism came the benefit of friendship and affirmation. I'm already looking forward to a return there next year.

One word of advice. If you begin to travel with Tri-Ess, always ask about the appropriate clothes for that location. It is easy to make mistakes and be overdressed for local taste and thus call undesirable attention to yourself. I'm anticipating travel in January and February - and am in the process of making those contacts that will enhance the experience, I encourage you to use the services of Tri-Ess to enjoy the benefits of membership in a national organization. (Reprinted from *En Femme*, newsletter of Beta Gamma Chapter.)



WHOREHOUSE PISTOLS

and Other Fashion Accessories of the Old West

submitted by Dagny T.

It took a century, but women's fashions have just completed a full cycle. We, in 1994, have returned precisely back to where our great-grandmothers were in 1894. This was about the time the American frontier was officially declared "closed" — settled by homesteaders, prospectors, cattlemen, railway men and others. The land of the Indian was no more. But that's another story...and then some.

Mid-calf length, flounced skirts were, and are, worn with ruffled blouses. Ankle-high laced boots, then a matter of necessity, are today a matter of style. This is "the look", and it's all the rage. Then, it was all there was. Even oil-cloth duster coats and broad brimmed hats are considered the height of fashion — whereas a century ago such outerwear was survival gear against the elements. Western clothes — denims, buckskin jackets fringed with Indian beads, tooled leather boots and cowboy hats — are, today, nothing less than the epitome of "haute couture."

Our pioneer forebears had, after 1874, looked upon Mr. Levi Strauss'

denims as just real sturdy clothes from San Francisco, and Indian beads, well heck, they were just a bit of fancy decoration got from some "Redskin."

Let's take a step back in time to those good old days in the Wild West when ladies were ladies, and whores were whores — and their clothes made it plain which was which.

The pioneer woman wore many hats, so to speak: she was wife, lover, mother, housekeeper, teacher, cook, farmer — and got her strength to do it all from the Bible. Industrious and self sacrificing, her life was physically brutal. And clothing? Thick, coarse wools for winter and strong, coarse cottons for summer. She sewed her own clothes and her family's, too. Pioneer clothing was never fancy or extravagant, and, like everything else in life, it had its purpose: to serve long, hard and well.

Ladies' collars buttoned right up to the chin and skirts dropped right down to the floor. If they were too poor to own coats, shawls, instead, kept them warm. Bonnets helped protect their delicate

complexions from the blistering sun of summer and the cold winds of winter. Invariably when a woman ventured into town she carried a pocket pistol in her purse. These were cautious women. They had to be. Today a woman may carry a Beretta .25 automatic for personal security. Back then she would have carried a Derringer .22.

Then the right to bear arms was an unrestricted freedom. Today it's conditional. It was none other than Susan B. Anthony who said, in 1871, "Woman must not depend upon the protection of man, but must be taught to protect herself."

Now, what about the woman who made a profession of her God-given attributes? For a certain type of man, a bordello was as close a place to home as he was ever likely to get. Miners, cowpokes, trail hands and railway workers were all transients, and home for any man was wherever he happened to lay his head that night. If it was on a soft, feminine shoulder, so much the better. Such comfort did not come cheap. It could cost an ounce of gold dust just to buy some time to sit and chat with a prostitute. Additional services, naturally, cost proportionately more. In those early days of westward expansion, women, let alone willing women, were a rare commodity.

A whore, as such, was a professional woman. In places like El Paso, Dodge City, Laramie, Cheyenne and Virginia City, prostitution was a bona fide business, and required a license. Such a woman had soft hands not roughened by hard work, nor was her brow lined with honest worry. Her hair was piled high with elaborate combs; her clothes, when she wore them, were fancy and carefully constructed to show off the right curves; and her jewelry was gaudy. This was serious equipment, for after all, it was a harlot's advertising. Today, ladies' lingerie, as featured in Frederick's of Hollywood and other catalogues and stores, copies garter-by-garter the undergarments of the more opulent and remarkable of this breed of 19th century women.



Summer 1996

However, underneath that red satin camisole did there really beat a heart of gold, as the movies glamorized? Photographs of "painted women" of the time show hard faces underneath the rouge, and cold eyes that, perhaps, had seen too much too much boozing, too much fighting...and too much death. A whore trusted no one, and her garter dagger was ever at the ready, just in case. For as much as a pioneer wife's life was hard work, at the end of the day she had the pleasure of her family about her for comfort.

What about the "soiled dove"? She had just another stranger in her bed. Her life had no such foundation. And pleasure? Pleasure was what she was handsomely paid to give. But for both types of women, this was work, and they worked to survive. As Sam Clemens said, "Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do." He may very well have come up with this sentiment after his extensive travels in the West while a young man. There was one important difference between the whore and the pioneer wife. The well-to-do whore's Derringer was engraved and nickel plated. The wife's was plain. Both served the same purpose.

Now, not all whores were dressed and garbed in satins and lace, and not all pioneer women were garbed in cottons and muslins. In small towns or mining camps, for instance, where less distinguished brothels existed, the only difference between a dress worn by the pioneer wife and a similar one by a prostitute was that the prostitute wore her ruffled blouse invitingly low on her shoulders...and took it off more often.

I will close with a quote from Mark Twain, who not only knew the West during this great era, but its guns, and its women. It sheds just the right light on whores and wives and how a man who knew both perceived the lot: "A thoroughly beautiful woman and a thoroughly homely woman are creations which I love to gaze upon, and which I cannot tire of gazing upon, for each is perfect in her own line."

(Reprinted from *The Cactus Flower*.)

Recreational Crossdressing

One Opinion on How to Cope with the Vagaries of Gender

by Donna NY-3433-T

We are strange, we are weird, we are unusual, we are misunderstood. We are part time ladies in a male dominated world. We find pleasure in dressing and acting as women, we find joy in the restrictive comfort of bra and girdles. We don wigs and makeup and do our best to create the most acceptable woman possible, yet knowing all the time it is a temporary fancy, with our male self being at the root of our lives.

We join together with like "sisters," finding solace and encouragement in sharing our little quirks. We praise and make comment as women, knowing all the time that the time is coming when the dress comes off and the episodes are over. We wonder where we fit in the social structure, seeking solace and encouragement from all others in the transgendered world, yet maintaining our identities as male, heterosexual crossdressers, and "better" than others in the gender field because we are confident of our basic maleness.

We associate with those who are gay and lesbian because they are forgiving and accepting and allow us to don our finery in their bars and at their affairs. We associate with their goals, because we agree that gay and lesbian rights are due, and because in some way it might further our own goals to be acceptable to all of society. Our leaders coin words and phrases to indicate our differences lest we be accused of being gay or lesbian ourselves.

The time has come to evaluate our position in the transgendered society and ask the tough questions. Are we gay? Are we lesbian? Does hugging another male, while both are dressed enfemme make each one a lesbian? Does befriending another male while so dressed make each of us gay? Are we superior to transsexuals because we have

only recreational cross dressing in mind and do not consider sexual reassignment? Is it possible we are all the same, with minor differences?

We are driven by impulses we did not seek but have found pleasurable. The path has many rest stops or "towns" which provide solace to different levels in the gender field. I met a man, with a full beard and crossdressing needs, who could no find answers in Tri-Ess and so felt left out. I know another person who dressed enfemme, is beautiful, but is satisfied by wearing female socks, and has little need to fully dress. I know another who had a fetish (if that is the right word) for corsets, and no general organization served his purpose. I can add gay men and lesbian women whom I have met, and quite recently, a crossdresser who is now a transsexual and well on the way to sexual reassignment. The key seems to be to find happiness. You have to stay on the path until you find the right "town" where you are comfortable. It could be at home, it could be at group meetings, it could be just simple acceptance of yourself as you are.

I have pondered the questions: "Am I gay?" "Are all crossdressers gay?" "Are we lesbian?" The answer is simple. We are all in this together. It matters not what the label, as I will dress the same way if I am called homosexual or heterosexual. I will find the same delight in sharing things feminine whether I be called "a man in woman's clothing" or just "odd." I truly believe the label is the problem. We are all brothers and sisters in the transgendered world and should delight in each others' help. Whether I am a closet crossdresser, gay, lesbian, transsexual, or a male lesbian is of little import. We are brothers and sisters sharing much in common and should not let labels be a divisive force.

Hey, Good Looking! Here's those Helpful Hints again! Not only do we scan all possible local newsletters, Tri-Ess and otherwise, we have our regular columnists Dr. Sheila Kirk and Dr. Jane Ellen Fairfax. We heartily welcome your original contributions as well. So if you've discovered a makeup technique that works for you, please consider sharing it with your sisters. (No, Jeanette, we're afraid spackling compound doesn't cut it as a makeup base!)

Ladies, Beware!

Those makeup testers at cosmetic counters may be contaminated with viruses and bacteria that can cause serious and even fatal illness, but there are still safe ways to sample these products, experts reveal. "Just as you wouldn't go to a restaurant and eat off someone else's plate, you shouldn't go to a cosmetics department and use those makeup testers without sensible precautions," says Marie Defoe, a top makeup consultant. "The main precaution is never to try sample eye makeup on your eyes. You could get an infection from someone," said famed dermatologist Dr. Jerome Litt. "However, most makeup products, including lipstick, foundation and powder can be tested safely on the hands," said Dr. Litt, author of *Your Skin: From Acne to Zits*. Just remember afterward to clean off any makeup you sample with a fresh cotton ball and alcohol-based cleanser. Here are some safe ways to test cosmetics before you buy:

Mascara: Never use the cosmetics counter's mascara sample on your eyes! Instead, brush the mascara on a clean white tissue to check color and texture. Also be sure not to touch the brush end with your fingers because you can pick up germs this way too.

Eye shadow: Stroke the shadow on your palm below your thumb. Then hold your hand to your face to see if the shade is flattering.

Foundation or Blusher: Rub a clean cotton ball across the tester and apply it to the back of your hand. Then hold your hand to your face to see if the shade is flattering.

Powder: Using a clean makeup brush or cotton ball, apply powder to the back of your hand. The best powders feel velvety and look sheer. If it cakes, don't buy it.

Lipstick: Testers can harbor germs, including the cold sore virus. A

safe alternative is to try the lipstick on the back of your hand and hold it up to your face.

Skin care products: Cleansers, toners and other skin care products are safe to use if the testers are carefully handled by the cosmetics staff. Clean cotton balls or tissues should be used. Just make sure to avoid your eyes. And, if you feel any burning or itching, remove the product as quickly as possible.

(Reprinted from the Cactus Flower.)



A SHAMEFUL SECRET

by Sandra

(ED. NOTE: Sandra is a Significant Other whose column appears in the FEM newsletter of Phi Epsilon Mu Chapter, Winter Park, Florida.

Since we are beginning a new year as I write this, there is an issue which really must be addressed. Just a few weeks ago, I discovered a new facet of Lolita. After five years of togetherness, I could not believe it. I had no idea that I would be facing such an enormous problem. "What is this issue?" you ask. You had better be sitting down. Are you ready? Lack of decent male clothing. Oh, the horror! The shame!

We were getting ready for Lolita's office party a couple of weeks ago. I was already dressed in a nice black dress, black hose, black suede shoes, and pearl and rhinestone accessories (I just had to put that description in here for the crossdressers), when we started to find something for Lolita to wear. Of course, the femme clothes were not even remotely appropriate. We opened up Lolita's male closet to discover Lolita is woefully underclothed in the men's department.

The following is a test. Please assemble a decent male outfit for an office Christmas Party from the following selections:

Shoes: Combat boots (black or desert scheme), Flip Flops, Sneakers, Boat shoes (which look like they have been around the world and back), and Loafers (burgundy).

Socks: White athletic, Black thick.

Pants: Very light light tan, Faded navy, Green khaki, Assorted shorts.

Shirts: T shirts emblazoned with various logos and events, Polo shirts, and one short sleeved white shirt with tan stripes.

Sweaters: One Blue and one Tan

Ties: Blue (one)

After considerable effort, we managed to assemble an outfit that was appropriate for the occasion.

Now, here comes my plea:

Please pay more attention to your male clothes. I know shopping for men's clothes is not exactly the most exciting thing in the world for a crossdresser, but it is important to take care of your male wardrobe.

Think about your femme wardrobe. How many items do you own that are appropriate for only one or two occasions (ever)? Now, translate that to your male clothes. It is highly likely that you have many items which fit this same description.

Most crossdressers spend more than 50% of their time in male mode. So why doesn't your wardrobe reflect this?

After I discovered this deficiency, I went out by myself and bought a nice outfit for Lolita. It was fun shopping for men's clothes. It would have been better if we could have shared the experience. I'm sure all wives feel this way. To be honest, at times it gets a little tedious to shop only for femme things for the men in our lives. We want you to be a great looking guy, too, and clothes do help to make the picture.



A Valuable Lesson Learned

by Jenni Lee

If you're looking to add real excitement to the next time you go out dressed, leave your purse with someone you barely know. That's exactly what I did a couple of weeks ago, and I soon regretted it.

I was on a business trip to Las Vegas and went to a night club I was familiar with. A "girl" I had befriended on numerous occasions was there, and we began chatting. Then I was approached by man to dance. I started to go with him, but realized it would be a bit awkward dancing with my purse. My friend said she would watch it and told me to get out and have fun.

Now you and I both know we place a lot of value on our purses. They contain our car keys, I.D., money and lipstick. Still, I felt I could trust her with my purse for a few minutes. Well, those few minutes turned into longer than I had expected, and when I got back I found that my purse was unsnapped. I didn't think much of it until I went to freshen up. When I reached inside for my lipstick, it became evident that someone had taken the liberty to rummage through its compartments.

Thank goodness my car key and I.D. were still there, but my money wasn't. How hurt I felt! Standing right next to me in the ladies' room was the very person to whom I had entrusted my purse. What could I say? "O.K., bitch! Hand over my money!?" I just stood there shocked and stared at her.

She asked what was the matter. I thought long and hard for a moment and then said, "My money is gone. Do you know where it is?" She looked surprised and started to laugh and said she didn't take it. Was I sure that I hadn't just dropped it somewhere? Yeah, right! I could have dropped my purse fifty times, even thrown it against the wall, and the money would not have fallen out of its zipped compartment.

She went on to say I could search her, but since I didn't write my name on the face of any of the presidents, what chance would I have of claiming any of hers was mine? For the next thirty minutes she followed me everywhere, saying we could go out to her car and I could strip search her. To someone else that could be erotic; someone might even have had some fun doing it. But I was fuming and I didn't want to be around her. I kept thinking, "What if she had taken all the money I had brought with me for my trip?" I had placed myself so carelessly into her trust, but a great lesson was learned that night.

As much as we may want to get to know and be with other girls, there are some simple precautions that should be taken. When you go out dressed don't take anything for granted. Your safety and well being is at stake just as any other woman's would be.

1. Take only enough money into the evening's setting that you can afford to miss. Leave some in your car for reserve and the rest back in your hotel room or home.

2. Check your purse in with your coat, or keep it in plain sight, even if it's with a person you think you know. Everyone's human and they don't need you testing them by placing valuables in easy reach.

3. Don't have anything in your purse but what is essential. I know we all want to look good, but your purse or handbag should reflect the evening. Stuffing it full of personal items only makes a loss worse.

4. Keep a car key separate, perhaps tucked inside your bra. You don't need to take a whole ring of keys in

with you. Leave most of them safely placed in your car.

5. Find a convenient place on your person, such as the tops of your nylons, to secure the majority of your funds. If you end up buying the meal or drinks, you can always retire to the powder room and retrieve your money there.

6. When you do use your money, don't flash it around. Common sense dictates your safety. Be discreet and ladylike. Don't give someone an excuse or an idea to accost you for the little value money is compared to you.

7. And lastly, be aware of your surroundings, especially if you are on your own. After you are through with the evening, ask an employee to escort you to your car if you are alone. Don't be a target or easy prey for a mugger. Your night would be totally ruined if you were to be attacked. Don't give anyone the opportunity to put your life into jeopardy.

I only lost \$20.00 that night and became a smarter lady for it. Had I arrived by cab, it would have been a long walk home.



Ask the Dermatologist

by Dr. Jane Ellen Fairfax

Dear Dermatologist,

I always seems to get little pieces of skin around my cuticles that peel back and sometimes get sore and red. I think they're called "hangnails?" Whatever they are, they're annoying and they sure mess up the look of my nicely polished nails. (I do them myself. I guess a professional manicurist could take care of my unsightly pieces of skin but I'm too poor.) This particularly seems to occur in the Winter. What causes this and how can I stop or minimize it?

- Miss Shredding

Dear Shredding,

As you might suspect, hangnails are a manifestation of dry skin around the nail folds. The cold dry climate of winter is definitely an aggravating factor. (You might also notice that your nail plates are more brittle in winter.) The worst thing you can do with a hangnail is peel it back. This will cause a deeper injury to the skin, and possibly infection. You may, however, clip it cautiously with a cuticle scissors, being careful not to break the skin. There are several excellent ways to prevent hangnails. If the skin is not broken, a 12% lactic acid lotion worn overnight under Saran Wrap will normalize the integrity of the top layer, and hydrate the skin. Bag Balm and Vitamin E oil are also effective and unlike LacHydrin, available without a prescription. You will find the cost quite reasonable. Enjoy those soft, feminine hands, Miss Shrednomore!

Dear Dermatologist,

I am in my thirties and still find myself getting pimples. Sometimes, usually when I have a date or other social function, I will develop a real

doozy somewhere that all the world can see. (My chin line or right beside my nose are two of the commonest.) Nothing looks as unhip as a strapless dress, heels and angry red facial lump. (It's hard to even camouflage them with makeup.) I wash my face and I use a Buf Puf every day. How can I stop these evil things? Also, I have heard it's dangerous to pop a pimple. Is this true?

- Kathy

Dear Kathy,

Your question about manipulating pimples is one of the most significant in dermatology. My advice is simple: Don't do it! If you are squeezing a hard, painful "undergrounder," you have little to gain. The pus is poorly organized, and the manipulation will cause even more swelling and pain. You may have a lot to lose. In breaking the skin, you may inoculate the area with Staph from your fingers, thus causing a local infection called an ecthyma. The center of the face is the worst possible area for this to happen. The bridge of the nose and the corners of the mouth form the "critical triangle" of the face. This area drains directly backward into the venous sinuses of the brain. Manipulation in this area may cause a retrograde flow of bacteria back into the brain, with possibly critical consequences such as blood clots or encephalitis.

So what do you do with these "undergrounders"? If you need a quick resolution, a dermatologist can inject the lesion with a tiny dose of corticosteroid. Hot compresses may cause the lesion to drain spontaneously. Antibiotics sometimes help, the most effective being minocycline, tetracycline, and erythromycin. Frequent application of Benzamycin, a gel containing erythromycin and 5% benzoyl peroxide, has both drying and antibacterial effects, both of which are beneficial.

If you frequently get these painful red nodular lesions, the potassium-sparing diuretic spironolactone has been helpful in my hands. The dose is 25 to 50mg twice daily. It probably works by an anti-androgen effect that turns down oil production and the production of free fatty acids in the follicle. This prescription medication should definitely be monitored by a dermatologist, because it can lower the blood pressure and cause accumulation of potassium, among other side effects.

You are doing very well to use the Buf-Puf. This sponge removes excess oil and skin cells that cause obstruction of the follicles. A salicylic acid cleanser such as Sal-Ac is quite useful with the Buf-Puf. You may obtain benzoyl peroxide gel, such as Persagel, over the counter.

In treating acne, the dermatologist has access to an increasing number of beneficial products. One of my favorite regimens is Benzamycin in combination with Retin-A. For patients with more sensitive skin, the erythromycin ointment, Aknemycin, or topical clindamycin (Cleocin-T) solution are effective.

Sulfacet-R is a drying lotion with a coloring agent that can double as makeup in a pinch. It is certainly a good (and therapeutic) cover under makeup. The new topical, azelaic acid (Azelex), seems to be as effective as Retin-A but without the photosensitizing side effects.

A water-base makeup is preferable to a moisturizing base. In dermatology, "moisture" usually means "oil." Most patients with acne have too much of that commodity already. Medicine is making great strides to defeat this devilish disease, which has been a dermatological disaster at so many dances!

Ask Marylou

Advice column on apparel and its wear and care
by Marylou Luther

Dear Marylou,

For the first time in my life, I am truly overweight; having gone from a size 12 to a size 18 since I stopped smoking. Because I've never had to cope with fat before I don't know how to disguise the bulges. Any secrets?

First, for your health's sake, start dieting. Second, try vests. Actress Pat Ast, who used to model for Halston, says she disguises her 220 pounds by wearing loose cotton knit or khaki poplin vests, night and day, always in solid colors. "There's something about a vest that 'cuts' you in the right places, breaking up the body mass in a kind of magical way." For day, she says she wears them unbuttoned over big, tunic-like shirts - also called nightshirts. For night, she switches to silk vests, also in solid colors such as green, beige or navy and often wears them with printed jackets. Ast says that her favorite silk vests often have tiny Chinese buttons and that she sometimes wears the night versions buttoned over white sleeveless men's ribbed undershirts that show about 2 in. of white above the vest. She layers those pieces with a printed jacket.

Dear Marylou,

In my opinion, the most practical robes in the world have zip fronts. Why, then, are they so difficult to find? I'm 5-foot-10, but I'll take any length.

A machine-washable, zip-front robe in cotton velour is available in bottle green or deep violet at Tall Classics, (800) 345-1958. Priced at \$75, the full-length robe has rib knit cuffs, and is available in tall sizes small (8-10), medium (12-14), large (16-18) and extra large (20-22). Reprinted from *News Briefs* Summer 1996

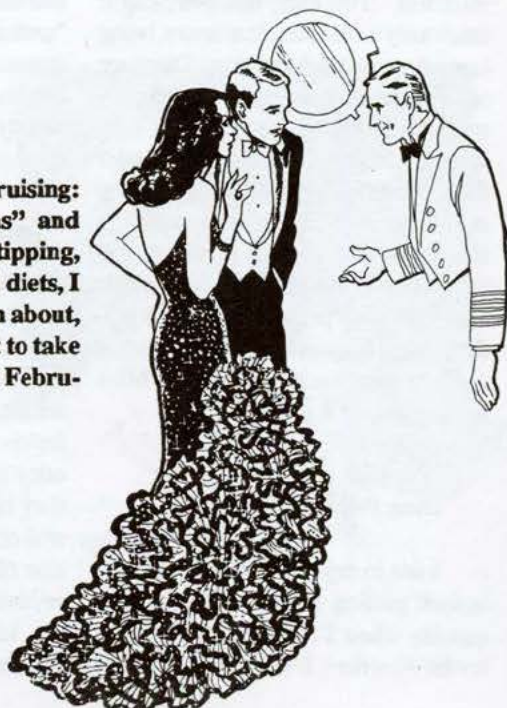
Dear Marylou,

I deplore the lack of lightweight cottons. I have been stymied in trying to find women's shirts made of voile, batiste or some other fine cotton. If you know a source, please tell us.

I found a white cotton voile tuxedo shirt at Regina Poiter, who says she'll be having even more lightweight cottons when her spring blouses and shirts were delivered to stores in February. If the latest survey from Cotton Incorporated holds true, you will be seeing more and more casual clothes in such cotton fabrics. About 80 percent of the 1,000 women polled said they believe casual cotton clothes are appropriate for the office. These findings were given to fabric mills, and those mills are now cottoning to cotton in a wider variety of weights than ever before, according to Cotton Inc. Porter's novelty tuxedo shirt, priced at \$68, is available in extra small, small, medium and large, white only. For retail outlets, write to Ogan Dallal Associates, 1185 Avenue of the Americas, 20th floor, New York, N.Y. 10036.

Dear Marylou,

I read the pamphlet "Cruising: Answers to Your Questions" and while I learned a lot about tipping, laundry facilities and special diets, I didn't find much information about clothes. Can you advise what to take on a Caribbean cruise in late February?



Barbara Wiener of Cruise Lines International Association says to pack as you would for a resort. "Don't get stressed over what to wear," says this cruise expert. "Cruises are to reduce stress. Clothes aren't the most important thing."

She says that even if your cruise has formal dinners or captain's dinners, tuxedos are not required. "Even on the most formal of ships, a dark suit and tie are fine for the dressiest occasions. Similarly, long gowns are not obligatory for women, many of whom wear cocktail dresses or dressy pants outfits on formal nights." Wiener says she was "too dressed up" for her first cruise, and advises women to go mainly casual.

During the day, cruise passengers will need flat-soled walking shoes, sneakers, T-shirts or polo shirts, shorts, jogging outfits, swimsuits, sunscreen, cover-up and a hat. For evening, most ships are informal. That translates into slacks and a blazer for men, pants and a festive top for women.

Girdles

EdNote: This article was submitted by "Anon," who found it on the Internet, and is reprinted from the June '96 Cactus Flower.

"Anon" says, "There have been some discussions of girdles here in the Women's Wire Forum, so I thought the following Girdle FAQ [Frequently Asked Questions] might be of interest. It was created by [redacted] (Suzanne), a friend of mine, and is posted with her permission. This FAQ, and a number of other articles of interest concerning not only girdles but other items of lingerie as well, may be accessed at the alt.clothing.nergie homepage: <http://www.tn.unix.oit.umass.edu/~mat/acl/>,

GIRDLES MEANT GLAMOUR

A girdle is an elastic garment designed to shape and smooth a womanly figure from the waist to the thighs. It was invented around 1910 by the French designer Paul Poiret to be worn with the clothing he was designing. Compared to the fashions of the period 1830-1910, Poiret's revolutionary designs placed much less of an emphasis on the waist and fit much closer to a woman's body in the area of the hips and derriere. Poiret's revolution became permanent in the 20th century. His new understanding of the way in which women's

bodies should interact with their clothing, and his invention of the girdle, was a major reason why the corset, which had determined the shape of women's clothing for most of the previous five centuries, went out of fashion.

Girdles were worn by most women throughout the period 1920-70. They were an important part of the fashion aesthetic of these decades. A woman needed to be smooth and sleek if she was to look her best in most of the clothing of this period.

Although girdles became the butt of jokes and the object of resentment when they went out of style in the 1970's, it is, I think, important to remember how much they were a part of the glamour of the far more glamorous 30's, 40's, 50's, and 60's. Anyone watching the films of this period, observing the way women wore their clothes and moved through space can see the effect of the ubiquitous girdle. The elegance of Grace Kelly, Rita Hayworth, Veronica Lake, Lauren Bacall, Marilyn Monroe (the list could go on forever), was due in part to this universally worn garment.

A glance at fashion magazines of this period will also give anyone a sense of the degree to which the girdle was represented as a glamorous garment. Although, of course, ads and articles in

fashion magazines had an agenda to promote the wearing of the girdle, the extravagant glamour of girdle ads and articles suggests that women found it plausible to associate girdles with perfumes, lipstick, slips, stockings, and all of the other accouterments of femininity that tended to be associated with skies filled with stars and swirls, New York nightclubs, and Paris in the springtime. I certainly made this association of girdles with elegance, sophistication, and glamour, as I was growing up in the fifties. And I know that I was not alone.

In any event, they still make and sell girdles. Girdles are even enjoying something of a revival. Women wear them to make their clothes fit better, to support their backs and stomachs, and to correct what exercise and diet cannot. I feel, however, that there are other reasons to wear girdles. They can be very seductive and even lovely garments. Many men find them very attractive.

Girdles deserve a place in the pantheon of lingerie. Having been worn by so many glamorous women in the most glamorous years of the twentieth century, they are certainly as worthy of a place in that pantheon as garter belts, slips, or teddies. It is out of such a conviction that I am taking the trouble to compose this article.

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Most girdles available today are made from an interweaving of nylon and lycra spandex. Contemporary girdles made from this blend are the most comfortable girdles that have ever been made. Although they are light and comfortable, they are almost as controlling as the much heavier and stiffer girdles that were worn before Lycra was developed in the early '60's.

Girdles sold today are normally classified as light control, medium control, or firm control. The difference in these levels of control is usually a reflection of the thickness of the girdle material or the degree to which a girdle is paneled. That is, a firm control girdle will normally have more areas in which the fabric has been doubled or tripled to form a panel design that will have more controlling power. Although most contemporary girdles are relatively light pull-on garments, it is still possible to find girdles which contain boning, which incorporate materials like rayon, cotton, or satin, and which must be hooked and/or zipped.



GIRDLES MEANT GLAMOUR

There are several classic girdle styles:

- 1) The long-leg panty girdle: a girdle with legs that extend fairly far down the thigh.
- 2) The boy-leg panty girdle: a girdle with legs that only extend to mid-thigh.
- 3) The girdle brief.
- 4) The open girdle.
- 5) The pantsliner: a special girdle, designed to be worn with pants, that extends to the ankles.

Girdles that extend to the waist are called high-waisted girdles. Although many girdles are now available without garter tabs (since most women wear pantyhose now), the classic girdle has garters suspended from it, to hold up stockings. These garters are normally placed under the leg of a long-leg panty girdle and at the bottom of all of the other kinds. If you want to get the full vintage effect of wearing a classic girdle, I would recommend wearing a girdle with regular stockings. Girdles can, however, be worn quite effectively over pantyhose and they are particularly easy to pull on over pantyhose.

Tricks of the Trade

A mini-series of beauty tricks and tips from the top makeup artists of today
by the News Briefs Staff



This month's tricks and tips comes from Trish McEvoy. Trish McEvoy is the founder of a makeup and skin care agency that bears her name, Trish McEvoy Ltd. Her beauty philosophy focuses on options, ease and education.

"I want women to look their absolute best and feel good about themselves," she says. "Because when you look good you feel good."

McEvoy shares these points for looking your best:

If you do your eyes dark and dramatic, keep your lips soft. Soft eyes can wear bold, colorful lips.

Keep the makeup routine simple—when you are taking care of your skin and applying your makeup.

Consider professionally groomed eyebrows.

Use makeup colors that define both your lips and eyes.

To highlight your cheeks, it is best to use a clear, neutral color.

Use a neutral, light shadow over the entire eyelid to open and brighten eyes.

Use a medium shadow on the brow bone for contour.

Shopping for Your Husband

by Frances Fairfax

No matter how you discovered your mate's cross-dressing, odds are a major component of your initial shock was his appalling taste in women's clothes. Poor quality, poorly fitted, "no-class" clothes may have been all he could find. Let's assume that, having achieved some measure of understanding and tolerance for his femme persona, you decide to help him improve "her" image. Then it becomes clear: shopping for a six-foot-plus, not-exactly-female body is downright difficult! What follows are some pointers to make the job easier.

The most important thing, of course, is finding clothes that fit. The first piece of equipment you'll need is a tape measure. Take his measurements, just as you would your own. See if his measurements correspond to anything in the size charts found on patterns in your local fabric shop. You'll need to look under the Women's and/or Talls to find anything. If you sew, you'll know what I mean. Or, look at the size charts in mail-order catalogs.

Otherwise, you may need to consult one or more books on the subject of fashion, clothes, "image" or sewing from your local library. Once you've determined "her" size, you can look for stores that might carry the appropriate clothes. If you sew, of course, it becomes a matter of selecting the closest size that will work and then modifying the pattern as needed. But too many of us lack the time (not to mention the skill) to sew our own clothing, so let's concentrate on the matter of shopping.

The largest problem (no pun intended) is the man who is both tall and big. It's very difficult to find nice dresses for someone over six feet tall. Few shops cater to Talls, even in larger cities. Large size shops are far more abundant, but they generally have little for Talls. If you can find a Tall Shop, check it out. They sometimes carry a

few dresses in sizes up to 22 or even 24, and there is a strong likelihood you'll not be their first crossdresser customer! Among the large size shops, August Max and Lane Bryant are good choices to start your hunting. Even if your man is short to average in height, he probably has larger arms and shoulders and a smaller rear than a woman of similar height. One thing that often works, whether tall or average, is skirt and blouse combinations. Sometimes fitted dresses or two-piece suits are cut all wrong for the male body, but less structured skirts, soft blouses and loose jackets (which for Talls have extra long sleeves and bodices) work just fine.

Mail order catalog shopping is an option, of course. Even J. C. Penney has a Tall section in their catalog. You'll face some of the same difficulties, especially that of determining the correct size to order. Be sure the policy on returned merchandise is clear, since by definition this is a trial and error process. Another difficulty with mail order merchandise is the difference between the illustration or description and the actual garment. I've been disappointed in the quality or merchandise too many times, but in all fairness, others have reported excellent results. Mail Order does provide the advantage of anonymity. You won't be going into stores to try things on. This is the scary part to both you and your husband, and I can certainly understand if neither of you is quite ready to take this step. However, there are ways of minimizing the risks and fears. Shopping for "her" can even be fun! Here's what to do.

First, if you have a local Tri-Ess chapter or other support group, you may find they have compiled a Buyer's Guide and can direct you to sympathetic businesses, or even to a seamstress. Failing that, you can develop your own contacts. Check out stores to locate dresses that seem to measure up.

Never go shopping without your tape measure! Find out what the store's policy is on returned items. You may be able to take a dress home for him to try on, and return it if it doesn't work.

Even in areas without local support groups, Large and Tall size shops are often aware of crossdressers and will make special arrangements to accommodate them. You may have to get up your courage and ask the manager what their policy is, and whether your husband could come in and try things on, and under what arrangements. Use the telephone if you don't want to confront them face to face, although face to face is better. That way they can see that you are an OK, nice, ordinary person. You may run into the occasional rude manager, but most of them are at least interested in making sales. Turning off good customers does not win points with District Managers, either. Just be sure the store has some good stuff you are really serious about buying. Don't inconvenience them with special arrangements and then not buy anything. The funny thing is, while you may not find anything that really works well for "her", you could find a great outfit for yourself!

Now for the actual expedition, with your husband. Be sure you have all the necessary undergarments (properly fitted bra and breast forms, decent slip, pantyhose or stockings, etc.). Of course, you'll be with him to help out. This is vastly reassuring to him and to the salesladies. One thing to be aware of: the excitement, not to say anxiety, he'll be feeling will be tremendous. Mood swings, cold feet, and negative self-image may alternate with euphoria and the urge to splurge. Hang in there, be reassuring, and keep the money in YOUR purse. Don't be afraid to make those initial approaches. Sales personnel are used to it all these days, at least in larger cities. Do go far afield if you are too well known locally. If you can accompany him on trips, check with support groups in those cities about shopping possibilities. Once there, you could shop in sympathetic businesses in complete anonymity. Have fun!

(Ed. Note: This article first appeared in the wives' & partners' newsletter.)

Summer 1996

Ready-to-Wear Software

by Francine Parnes (Associated Press)

In times BC (Before Computer) tools of the garment trade were sketch pads, mannequins, pins, fabric swatches, a good eye and a creative mind. Then ready-to-wear met software.

Today, Nicole Miller and her assistants log onto a computer to settle down to the business of sketching, creating prints and colors, and enlarging a sleeve here, raising a hemline there.

Todd Oldham, Anna Sui and other Seventh Avenue designers also are caught up in the high-tech world that is already old hat to students from New York's Fashion Institute of Technology to LA's Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising.

Menswear pro Jhane Barnes was a pioneer in 1982 with an Atari computer that operated a loom. She used it to create patterns for knits - socks, ties, sweaters and shirts. "It was just a little game computer," Barnes says, "but now I don't know what I would do without Power Macs. Every single employee who designs for me has a fully computerized work station. It's a whole new way of thinking of design."

Thanks to computers, a designer can create a garment by scanning a

photo into a computer, sketching a design over the image and experimenting by adding details such as shape and drape and pleating of the fabric.

For spring one of Todd Oldham's fabrics has 1,755 synthetic colors. That's his description of hues pumped up by light that only software can offer. "This the first season that technology has really shown some newness," Oldham said of his spring line. "We've fine-tuned strange color combinations like powder blues and bitter apple greens mixed with fluorescents."

That type of technology is why computers are a must, says Rose Rosa, chairman of the fashion design department at FIT. The computer can house millions of colors, so you're able to see different tints in a fraction of a second. Rosa's students are required to take a computer course in design. "Many prospective employers expect our graduates to be literate in computers," she says, adding that the new-age technology is particularly useful for big companies like the Gap, Banana Republic and Liz Claiborne that tend to stick with basic shapes. "They use computers because it simplifies and speeds up production," Rosa says, "It's just a matter of changing fabric, patterns, colors and prints."

Bill Glazer of West Hollywood, Calif. is president of a software company that offers Snapfashion, a library of 25,000 design details that can be snapped together to form styles. In pockets, for example, designers may choose from patch pockets, flap pockets, welt pockets, western-style pockets, novelty pockets and more. Glazer introduced Snapfashion in 1991 for Macintosh computers, and six months ago it became available for Windows. Mass merchandisers are his major clients.

Six months ago, ModaCAD of Los Angeles gave fashion houses to sell from virtual samples. ModaCAD, which stands for computer-aided design, assists apparel design from start to finish.

"The program lets you simulate the entire design process so that you almost have a virtual sample of the garment before you even put it into production," says Linda Freedman, marketing vice-president. Freedman's clients such as Bugle Boy and Ocean Pacific can entertain prospective clients by showing an entire upcoming line and adjusting according to their needs. Clients see a change in seconds, so ordering and waiting for samples is history.

Nicole Miller started designing by computer three years ago and now uses it to generate 90 percent of her women's wear prints. For spring, the software came in especially handy for a watercolorlike floral print that bleeds from light green to purple. Computer-generated colors are so intense that even designers who haven't adapted to computers are adopting the colors. John Bartlett says the greens in his upcoming menswear collection are derived from those found on a computer screen.

"We work mostly in old-world tailoring," he says. "But I've been fascinated by the Internet. When I was working on my spring '96 collection, I was very inspired by the hyper-natural colors and the graphics that I kept seeing in computer magazines such as *Wired*. That inspired me more than the colors of the natural world."

(Reprinted from *News Briefs*)



All the Right Tools

Specific Makeup Brushes and Tools Are Essential
in Order to Correctly Apply Cosmetics.

by Eugenia Weston

When women want my advice about what are the most important makeup articles, I always stress tools: brushes, sponges, blenders, curlers, dusters. These are the vital instruments of correct color placement, correct texture, and daily brow and lash grooming.

The following list is a description of the tools I recommend women have in their makeup kits.

1. Brow Brush. A spiral twirler shape is best but standard toothbrush form also works. The point is to have one. Grooming your brows is as important as brushing your hair.

2. Eyelash Curler. Curling lashes is the best trick for making eyes look bigger and giving them dimension. Use a curler with a rubberized inner lining so that it won't damage the lashes. Squeeze lashes and hold for 10 seconds. Move to lash tips and squeeze quickly to create a rounded curl.

3. Foundation Sponge. Applying your liquid or powder foundation with a sponge makes blending easier and ensures more even coverage. With a liquid foundation, dot onto the T-zone and then use a very airy sponge to spread over the face. With powder or creme, use a firm, large, round sponge. Be sure to wash the sponges daily.

4. Powder Brush. To set foundation and create a smooth, polished finish, dust on a light layer of translucent powder over the entire face using a large, soft dusting brush. The brush should be dome shaped, about two inches long in the center, tapering to one inch at the sides, and about one and one-quarter inches wide. Look for soft hair so that it won't irritate your skin.

5. Blush Brush. Here you want soft, precise application, so the brush should be no longer than a one-inch circle. Also look for a dome shape; this will allow for a pretty, natural graduation of color.

6. Concealer Brush. If you really want to get rid of dark, under-eye circles, applying concealer with your fingers won't do. A firm, very thin, flat oval brush will get into the deep, narrow recesses of the under-eye and apply a good concentration of color right to the spot itself. It's a better blender than fingers.

7. Lighting Brush. To lighten the eye and set the stage for color, a wide, tapered oval brush should be used to apply a light shadow color uniformly to the entire eyelid. The brush should be about one-half an inch wide and one-half an inch long.

8. Shading Brush. For soft shading of color around the crease of the lid, find a one-quarter inch rounded, medium-firm brush.

9. Contouring Brush. To define the eye and place strong, dark color into the crease of the lid, use a very thin, very firm, slant-angled brush. Dab color right into the crease and then blend slightly up toward brow bone using the same brush.

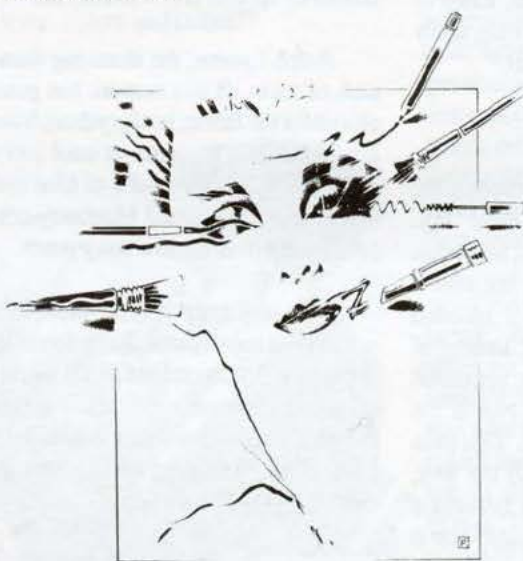
10. Lining Brush. A sable brush for cake eyeliner is the best choice to achieve a smooth, narrow line. For a softer eyeliner, use an eyeshadow powder with a very firm, slightly angled brush.

11. Shadow Blender. The best blenders are soft, natural fleece in a very small, tapered oval shape. They will diminish the hard edges while leaving the color intact. Buy two blenders, and use one for shadow and one to blend lip liner.

12. Tweezers. A good set of tweezers is important for touchups in between your professional brow-grooming appointments.

Once you have all the right tools, you have to make sure to keep them clean. Wash the brushes once a week with a mild cleanser. You should also change the eyelash curler pads when they are dirty and throw away worn sponges.

(Reprinted from
News Briefs)



Fashion Forum

Compiled by the News Briefs Staff

Knits lead way for '96

Knitwear has always been a classic component of the well-dressed woman's wardrobe, but this spring it made a major fashion statement too. At a time when designers are pushing ease over fussiness, knits, long known for their packability and comfort, are a perfect answer. In addition, the refinement of microfiber synthetics, offering fine blends that make knitwear practically wrinkle free and more lightweight, has pushed them into the forefront of year-round dressing.

As well as the knit dress and the many two-piece and suit options, the knit pantsuit was a strong spring element. Today's knitwear manufacturers are co-operating in producing knitwear pieces of standardized navy and black dye lots, which may be interchanged, although from different labels.

Shiny pales and neutrals

With some exceptions, notably the strong presence of citrus colors including orange, lime green and yellow and lots of turquoise and red, pales and neutrals in shiny fabrics and luminous finishes dominate this year's fashion. Look for lots of white tones, tones of beige and tan, silvery pale blues, dusty pink, banana and moss green.

Safari looks

Once again these are prominent, for the first time since the early '80s. Expect all the classic details, self belts, bellows, pockets, epaulets, but with a mid-'90s touch of Lycra or blended cotton to ease a slimmer fit. Instead of just khaki, safari clothes appeared freshly minted in pastels. Nor is the safari suit the only way to go. This time around, the safari dress lead the way, and where '80s safari suit boasted a long A line skirt, the '90s jungle lure is a skirt that is short and slim.

Expect lots of jacket dress combos. Look for a wild mix of prints and florals larger than last year. Airy summer plaids and madras are now looking highly chic again in new fabric mixes and color variations, from costume jewelry to handbags and shoes, pearlized finishes and shiny fabrics will add newness to spring accessory choices.

Silk Shantungs Shimmer

Silk shantungs drenched with opulent colors literally have captured the spotlight this season. These silks come as the naturalist's rejoinder to the fashion inclination toward shine and gloss, a trend which tends to favor synthetics. Now designers recognized for championing natural fibers — Ralph Lauren, Gianfranco Ferré and Bill Blass among them — are making sure the organic rendering of the high-luster trend also gets its gleaming moment in the sun. These slubbed silks are turning up everywhere. Blass displayed Capri pants and jacketed dress ensembles in soft yellows and pinks and champagnes.

At Ellen Tracy, designer Linda Allard uses shantung for shirts and jackets in rich stripes and madras plaids, in shades of apricot and watermelon.

Ralph Lauren, the shantung monarch of them all this season, has gone all-out for the fabric, in everything from duster coats in icy aqua or cool ivory and shirtdresses in shades of blue and taupe, to a long, fitted blueberry-colored jacket over narrow navy pants.

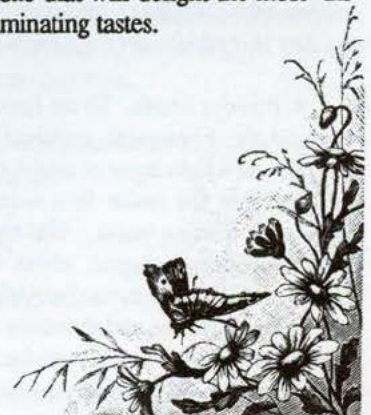
Silk shantung begins with silkworms that aren't particularly demanding eaters. Silk is created as silkworms spin their cocoons, and fine silk is produced by silkworms that consume a fixed diet: They dine exclusively on cultivated mulberry leaves.

But the nublier silk fibers including shantungs — originates with wild silkworms that feed on oak leaves or cherry leaves or uncultivated mulberry leaves. The fiber of their cocoons much thicker than fine silk fiber, and slubbed with irregularities, which give these coarser silks — rajah, nankeen, pongee, shantung and tussah — their allure.

Victor Alfaro has a medley of ballgowns in brighter, more delicious colors like flamingo pink and lilac. The fabric's balance works well over undershirts in white netting, and just so the gowns don't get too sticky; Alfaro adds little hardware buckles. Shown was his ballgown in peony shantung over netting with a ring buckle.

Whether a shantung is pure silk, or a blend combining with rayon or cotton or both, its natural shimmer tends to be quieter and more subdued than the futuristic synthetics; that could make it easier for many women just now venturing into the luster trend. Shantung also tidily fits with the greater trend towards textured fabrics — the waffle weaves, piques, damasks, pebbled surfaces and other raised weaves. And colors in shantung tend to be more transparent, even icy, which works well this season.

Despite the wild silkworm's unparticular taste buds, the end product is one that will delight the most discriminating tastes.



Summer 1996

Health Matters

by Sheila Kirk, M.D.

If there is a pill to stop my cross dressing, I don't want to know about it, but others may. What can you tell us?

There are sporadic reports in the medical literature of single individuals taking Buspirone and being relieved of the need to cross dress. There are no large series of individuals who have been observed for prolonged periods of time, only isolated cases, treated over short periods. Many cross dressing individuals "purge" without medication, and the purge can last from several months to several years. We all are aware of that occurrence. Without doubt, medication and even psychotherapy could help a person to set aside their Transgendered Spirit and need to dress. The patient can be taught techniques to cope with urges and participation, hence a "cure". But is it a cure or a temporary redefining of one's needs and life-style? I think it's the latter and I stress the word "temporary."

I'm going to be frank. Why is cross dressing such an erotic experience for me?

The answer is a complex one. For most of us, the discovery of our intense interest in contragender apparel occurs before puberty and oddly for most it is intimate apparel that is most attractive. Shortly thereafter, individuals develop sexual urges that result in masturbation. This is so for both genetic males and females. For a Transgendered young male at least, the association between being dressed and feeling erotic urges, comes together so quickly and so strongly. In later life as that person matures and taste in dress develops past the fetishistic and erotic, the association may disintegrate and sometimes disappears. Is it all narcissism? Are there other components? Many texts and articles deal with this component in the crossdressing individual's behavior. Look around you at a convention or at a club meeting. How often do you see someone with exotic and erotic taste in their presentation? Is this their concept of what femininity is all about? Undoubtedly that's a part of it. Some will outgrow that behavior in their preparation and presentation. Others never will. What does it all mean? Much better informed professionals other than I try to give answers. My constant belief is that the Transgendered person is unique. Their sexual habits with self or another is theirs alone to experience and enjoy.

You've written about medical topics other than hormones for the Transgendered. It's helpful when you do. What about sexually transmitted disease in Transgendered people?

This is an area infection specialists are looking at ever more closely. The population drawing most attention are those who are Transgendered and who work as entertainers and in "the streets." But the population that is silent are those who enjoy being "women" and will co-habit with men and women in that role, in a careless and even promiscuous manner. The reservoir for the diseases, Herpes, Gonorrhea, Syphilis and HIV-AIDS (particularly the latter) is in the general population in increasing numbers. AIDS is a disease to be feared by the entire world, not just a special small population co-existing in the world. There is not space enough to instruct our community about safe practice but if caution and thought is engendered in those who read this, their attempts to find accurate information will be highly successful. I encourage direct contact with me for information.

I am the spouse of a cross dressing man. He is now talking about taking female hormones. I'm comfortable with this and I plan to allow him use of my birth control pills. Is this permissible?

To allow use of your birth control pills is NOT a good idea. First, they are not correct therapy for feminizing. Some changes will take place but they are not the correct approach. Secondly, your spouse must have proper pre-medication evaluation and testing and then correct monitoring while a regimen is in use. The temptation to avoid this, using your medication, is very great. Lastly, are both of you aware of what the introduction of this kind of therapy can bring to your lives? To take hormones can seriously affect your sex lives. It has impact on male libido and fertility. Continual use of feminizing hormones diminishes the ability for erection. You may not need your birth control pills yourself once he begins use of them. At the risk of sounding as if I'm self-serving, both of you would benefit from knowing more about this endeavor before such a drastic and sometimes irreversible step is taken. My new book *Feminizing Hormonal Therapy For The Transgendered* would help to better inform you and answer any questions you may have.

If you have a question, comment or suggestion for Dr. Kirk, please contact her at:

Sheila Kirk, M.D.
P.O. Box 38114
Blawnox, PA 15238-8114

Phone: (412) 781-1092
Fax: (412) 781-1096
e-mail: [REDACTED]

Gaby's Gems

by Georgia Ann

TOUGH AS NAILS

The suggestions below will help you to develop or keep strong nails.

Apply a nail-hardener, but don't use products containing toluene-sulfonamide formaldehyde resin, which can cause rashes.

To prevent cracking, splitting, and injury, don't let nails get longer than a quarter-inch past the nail bed.

Avoid polish removers containing acetone, which may dry nails. If you must use acetone remover, add olive oil or unscented castor oil to it.

Repair splits or tears with nail glue or clear polish.

Unless you're deficient in protein (rare among Americans), no change in diet will strengthen your nails. Gelatin for example, has no effect on weak nails.

Fingernails are not nature's screwdrivers. Don't use them to assemble bookcases, pull out staples, or open boxes. Pick things up with your fingertips, not your nails. Push telephone buttons with the fleshy pads of fingers, and use a pencil to turn rotary dials.

If you have fragile nails, practice this regime nightly: Submerge your nails in lukewarm water for 10 to 15 minutes. Gently pat them dry and immediately apply a moisturizer directly over them. You can also try an occasional soak in warm olive oil, a horsetail infusion, or cider vinegar.

Clipping can weaken nails, so don't trim them unless they're very long. Cut nails while they are wet; they're more flexible and less susceptible to splitting. File nails, however, only when they are dry.

Don't pick at polish, especially if nails are weak. When you peel off a layer of polish, a layer of the nail itself may come with it.

A dark streak running length under the nail may indicate melanoma, a type of skin cancer. Unless you're dark-skinned and such marks are normal, have a dermatologist check it immediately.

HEALTHY HABITS

Break the nail-biting habit with regular manicures. Not only will the manicures keep the area smooth, but your attractive hands will give you an incentive not to chew.

Certain medications can make nails sensitive to sunlight, possibly causing brittleness and ridges. To help prevent this damage, apply sunscreen from the first joint below each cuticle to the tip of the nail. Nail polishes that are opaque or contain sunscreen also act as shields against ultraviolet rays.

Be careful when cleaning under your nail tips. If you're too vigorous, you may create space that allows fungi or bacteria to grow.

If a hangnail develops between manicures, soften it with cuticle cream, then cut it off with sharp scissors.

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Tri-Ess Pen Pals

Many sisters have written over the years to express their disappointment in not receiving replies to their letters to other Tri-Ess sisters. It seems that while some sisters are wonderfully prolific pen pals, others (for a variety of reasons) are not. To assist those who would like to receive lots of letters, we have compiled a "Pen-Pal List". All you have to do is promise to reciprocate. Just fill out and sign the form below and send it to:

Carol Beecroft
P.O. Box 194
Tulare, CA 93275.

"I promise the courtesy of a reply to all correspondence from my Tri-Ess sisters."

Femme Name _____
Code Number _____

Here's how to write a Pen Pal through the Forwarding Service:

1) Write your letter to your chosen Pen Pal. Include your picture if you wish. If you choose not to include your own return address at first, be sure you include your own Code Number in your letter.

2) Place your letter in an envelope, affix correct postage, and lightly pencil in the name and Code Number of your Pen Pal on the front.

3) Place this envelope inside another envelope and address this outer envelope to:

Tri-Ess Forwarding Service
P.O. Box 194,
Tulare CA 93275

4) Include your return address on the outer envelope and be sure to apply correct postage. Once received at the Forwarding Service, your inner envelope will be properly addressed to your Pen Pal and sent on its way. If or when you and your Pen Pal choose to exchange letters directly is up to you. Have fun, Sisters!

Now, here are the Pen Pals:

AZ-3954-B
CA-1765-B
CA-3845-C
CA-1282-V
CA-3354-N
CA-4009-W
CA-4249-F
FL-2789-S
FL-3434-C
FL-3892-B
FL-2520-B
FL-3720-R
FL-3640-C
FL-4046-J
GA-4158-B
HI-3562-A
IL-3623-G
MN-3996-L
MO-3752-B
NC-3743-H
NC-3723-C
NJ-3818-L
NJ-3884-K
NJ-2548-W
NY-4022-B
NY-1320-N
NY-3433-T
NY-3277-H
NY-4177-H
NY-3943-F
NY-3717-P
PA-2542-K
TN-1230-H
UT-3779-E
VA-2642-I
VA-3401-W
WI-3846-L
FCON-3797-B
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Sherri
Carol Ann
JoAnn
Joanne M.
Cathy Ann
Connie
Donna
Evelyn
Joan
Lisa
Tammie
Jan
Rita
Genevera
Madelyn
Samantha
Adrienne
Barbra
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If you wrote us asking to be placed on the Pen Pal List and your name does not appear above, please write us again. We are sorry, but sometimes we do "drop the ball." (Or, in this case, the name!)



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Death Takes Loyal Friend

Famed Scholar & Researcher Will Be Missed



Bonnie Bullough

It's sad to report that Bonnie Bullough, one of the pioneer researchers into the gender community, died April 12 of pneumonia. She was the victim of a deteriorating interstitial lung disease and death came quickly.

Up to the end she was working on the papers and the planned book of the Northridge Congress and these will be published later this year by Prometheus books with her as first author. She had completed several recent studies on crossdressing and transgender issues and these will be appearing in referred journals over

the next year or so. At the time of her death, she was involved in still another study, and the results of this be summarized later by her husband, Vern L. Bullough.

Bonnie became interested in the transgender community through meeting Virginia Prince in 1960, and attended some of the early meetings of what later became TRI-Ess. As a professor of nursing at UCLA, she organized one of the first public presentations to nursing and medical students on transgender issues and having reports from members of the community expressing how they wanted to be treated by nurses and physicians. She often had Virginia Prince address her classes at UCLA.

She (along with her husband) began gathering data and materials on gender issues, and worked closely for a time with Reid Erickson and the Erickson Educational Foundation. She participated in the early international conferences on transgender issues sponsored by the Erickson Foundation, including one in what was then Yugoslavia. In the 1970's she conducted one of the early survey studies on the community with Richard Smith and Vern Bullough. The results were published in the *JOURNAL OF SEX RESEARCH*, *HEALTH VALUES*, and the *WESTERN JOURNAL OF NURSING RESEARCH*. In 1979 she moved from Los Angeles to Buffalo to become a dean of

nursing at the State University of New York in Buffalo, and here she helped design the research into the wives of cross dressers. Unfortunately, she felt she had not done enough to be listed as coauthor with Tom Weinberg and Vern Bullough of the studies which appeared in the JOURNAL OF SEX RESEARCH and JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN SEXUALITY.

After stepping down as dean in 1991, she collaborated with Vern on their CROSS DRESSING, and GENDER book. She was also one of the organizers of the 1995 Northridge conference on these issues and first presented the results of a new study on transgender issues and these articles will appear either late this year or early next year in various research journals.

From her early contacts in the field, she and her husband began collecting literature on the topic, as well as other areas of sexuality which she also studied and wrote on including contraception, abortion, homosexuality, lesbianism, sexually transmitted diseases, and general

history and sociology of sexual behavior. This material was donated to the California State University, Northridge, library in the 1970's and became the Bonnie and Vern Bullough collection in human sexuality. She hoped that scholars would use the material, and one of the first to do so was Richard Doctor whose students helped classify some of the materials and who went on to do his own studies.

All told Bonnie was the author or editor of over 30 books on various aspects of nursing, public health, history, gender and issues. She also published over 100 referred articles, and written hundreds of others on a wide variety of topics. She was a co recipient of the Alfred Kinsey award from the SSSS for her research into human sexuality.

A native of Delta, Utah, she married her high school sweetheart, Vern Bullough, in 1947. Adopted herself by a uncle, she and Vern later adopted three children to supplement their own two biological ones. At the time

of her death, she was a professor of nursing at the University of Southern California, a position she took after retiring from Buffalo. She was a member of the Tri-Ess national advisory board, and died two days before she was to receive the Alpha Trailblazer award of the Alpha chapter of Tri-Ess. Kathy Helms, representing Tri-Ess, spoke at the memorial service.

She had presented papers or given talks in the majority of the 50 states, and had traveled and lectured in China, Soviet Union, Thailand, Philippines, Japan, Egypt, Israel, Cyprus, Yugoslavia, Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Scotland, England, Wales, and Ireland as well as Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and Canada.

Bonnie was always interested in research concerning cross dressing. In fact, she was going to assist me in my research dealing crossdressers under the age of six years of age. We'll all miss her.

Carol Beecroft

HOLIDAY EN FEMME 1996 COME CELEBRATE OUR ANNIVERSARY!

Chi Chapter/Tri-Ess cordially invites all Tri-Ess members, potential members, spouses, partners and friends to **Holiday En Femme** to be held in Chicago from Wednesday, November 6th, through Sunday, November 10th, 1996.

Holiday En Femme is a non-profit event sponsored annually by Tri-Ess. This year we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the creation, by Virginia Prince, of the Hose 'N' Heels Club, later renamed Full Personality Expression (FPE) and the 20th anniversary of the merger of FPE with Carol Beecroft's Mamselle to form Tri-Ess, The Society for the Second Self.

American Air Lines, the winner of IFGE's "Partners in Diversity" award is the official air line of Holiday En Femme. They have a reservations desk in the lobby of the Hyatt Lisle. For flight arrangements call Patricia Carroll at:

1 (708) 769-0142 (after 8/3/96 the (708) area code changes to (630)).

To Register: Simply fill out and return the enclosed 1996 **Holiday En Femme Registration Form** with your minimum deposit of \$80 per person, payable in US funds.

Hotel Reservations: We have reserved a block of rooms at the Hyatt Lisle at the special convention rate of \$74 plus tax per night, single or double occupancy. To make hotel reservations call:

1 (708) 852-1234 (Hyatt Lisle Reservations)

After 8/3 the area code changes to (630)

or call 1 (800) 233-1234 (Central Reservations)

In order to get the special \$74 rate you must tell the hotel you will be attending the Tri-Ess Holiday En Femme convention.

Send your registration form, payments or requests for more information to:

Chi Chapter/Tri-Ess

Holiday En Femme

P.O. Box 40

Wood Dale, IL 60191-0040



Or call the Chi Chapter Hotline:

1 (708) 262-8707 between 7 PM and 9:30 PM

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Library Project Update

by Frances Fairfax

Carol Beecroft reported on the status of the Library Book Project at the recent Summer Board Meeting. At this time Carol's office is working with 24 libraries. We have more donors at this point than we have libraries willing to accept the books. Even though we provide the O.C.L.C. cataloging information for each book, thus saving the libraries time, trouble and expense, some are reluctant to accept books on this subject. (The four books are: My Husband Wears My Clothes by Dr. Peggy Rudd, Crossdressing, Sex and Gender by Drs. Vern and Bonnie Bullough, Understanding Crossdressing by Dr. Virginia Prince, and Coping With Crossdressing by Dr. JoAnn Roberts.) In most cases, the acquisitions librarians simply fail to respond to our letters. Carol and Marlene plan to follow up with telephone calls.

It would be very helpful if members on the local level could make contact with the acquisitions librarians at their own public libraries. If your library already has materials concerning gay issues, an argument can be made for inclusion of our books for the sake of balance. Another venue is college and university libraries. These have already proved more receptive than public libraries. Besides contacting the acquisitions librarian, it would be useful to develop contacts with professors of psychology, sociology and health-related subjects. It is on the recommendations of these professors that librarians often rely in selecting books.

Finally, Carol and Marlene would like to encourage each chapter to place at least one book packet in a local library. In larger cities, where city and county libraries have several branches, one packet could be donated for each branch. Some chapters, such as Tau Chi Chapter in Houston, have committed to donate the necessary \$30 for a book packet each month.

Summer 1996

Here is a rough outline of what to say when you have established contact with your library's acquisitions librarian:

"I am a local citizen and a regular user of your library. In view of the recent movies and other media featuring crossdressers, I decided to see what information about the crossdressing phenomenon was available in the library. I found a certain amount of material on gay issues, but next to nothing about the subject of crossdressing.

"In my research I have become aware of an organization that will donate a set of four books on the subject of crossdressing, including helpful information for women who discover their husbands are crossdressers. Wouldn't you like to have this helpful, factual information available to your readers? The Society for the Second Self, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization, will send you the books absolutely free. They have even provided the O.C.L.C. cataloging information for you. They will be happy to send you material describing the books, including endorsements by leading researchers in this field.

[Be sure you get the correct mailing address for the Library, and the name and title of the person who will make the decision.]

"All you have to do to receive the books is to return their postcard, indicating the library will accept them. These books are highly recommended by experts in this field. By placing them on your shelves, you will remedy the current information deficiency for your readers. Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me. Please be on the lookout for their letter, and return the postcard to receive your free books."

How about it, sisters?

Highlights Summer Meeting of the Tri-Ess Board of Directors

1) The Board passed an appropriation of \$1000 to fund grants for studies promoting knowledge of crossdressers as ordinary people.

2) The Board decided that vendors could not be full members of Tri-Ess or its chapters unless they are otherwise qualified for such membership.

3) The Board established a committee to prepare standardized forms, logos, stationery and key documents.

4) There will be no change in the dues structure at this time..

5) The Board established a committee to revamp the membership renewal system.

6) The Board approved unanimously the formation of a Canadian branch office.

7) A motion to reaffirm the focus of Tri-Ess as being for heterosexual crossdressers, spouses and nuclear families, passed unanimously.

8) The Board budgeted funds for advertising in selected mainstream magazines.

9) A motion was passed encouraging individual Tri-Ess members and local chapters to network with local G.L.B.T. (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered) organizations on projects of common interest and concern. Cited as a model was Chi Chapter's support for G.L.A.A.D. (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Discrimination).

10) Another motion encouraged each chapter to participate in the Library Project by placing a book packet in a local library.



*Spouses and Partners International
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Education, according to Stephen R. Covey, is largely a matter of paradigm shift. It serves to enable us to see a thing from a new perspective. An example is given of the battleship commander who signals another as being on a collision course and orders his counterpart to alter course to avoid the collision. When the "other ship" identifies itself as a lighthouse, a paradigm shift occurs.

In the case of S.P.I.C.E., paradigm shifts happen when spouses and partners of crossdressers change their perception of crossdressing from that of a curse to a benefit. The shift in perception must occur if a collision in a transgendered relationship is to be avoided.

Paradigm shifts are not free. As with all education, S.P.I.C.E. costs money to present. We therefore make this appeal to you for support of this program with your tax deductible contributions. You may contribute in one of the following ways:

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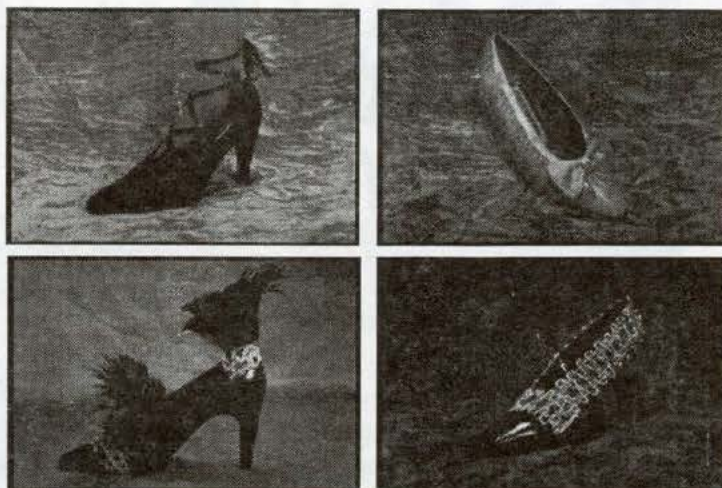
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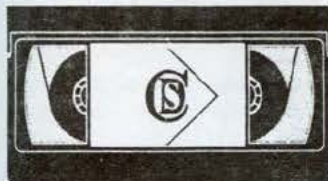
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INTERNATIONAL SHOPPING GUIDE

Our 1993 Crossdressers International Shopping Guide is the most comprehensive book of it's kind. Problems finding correct clothing and shoe sizes? The Guide has clothing, lingerie, and swimwear size charts to help you get the correct fit plus a do-it-yourself shoe sizing chart for 4AA thru 16EEE!

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Proper Attire for the Well-Dressed Leader

- Some Suggestions -

by Gloria Sue [REDACTED]

1. Sensible, comfortable shoes - There is a long path ahead, so don't pinch your feet in those 3" heels. It can get uncomfortable.

2. Heavy-duty support hose - to help keep those legs and knees from getting weary and buckling (knee pads are optional).

3. Asbestos (or ecologically safe equivalent) -lined underwear - At times that seat in the front of the room can get mighty warm.

4. Dresses, blouses, tops and sweaters with ice packs down into the collars - To help you to be cool under the collar at all times.

5. Wear a very expensive hairpiece - In order to help you resist wanting to pull your hair out.

6. Light-weight earrings - So your ears don't get tired when you are listening to another.

7. If needed, proper glasses or contact lenses - You will want to see everything going on around you with clear vision. Forget the rose-colored glasses.

8. A brace for posture support - To help you stand tall and proud in any situation, and to keep those shoulders firm, no matter how much weight is on them.

9. Use your own fingernails - If you should get into a nail-biting situation, the plastic nails are too tough and taste terrible.

10. Shine-resistant make-up - Let the only shine of your leadership be your brilliance of mind.

11. Wear lots of blush - That way, if people think you are a clown, you will at least look like one. It saves confusion for some.

12. Wear waterproof mascara and eyeliner - You may at times shed tears of joy or frustration. Don't look like a raccoon.

13. Wear very bright-colored clothes - That way it will be much easier for people to find you in a crowd, so they can point their fingers at you as the one responsible.

14. Always wear shoulder pads - To help prevent a concussion as your head is bouncing around trying to take care of everything.

Although there may be other items for this list, I believe this is a good start for any leader to keep in mind. One last suggestion, however, is to always make sure your feet are planted firmly on the ground when you speak - and that your brain is functioning.

If you follow all this advice, you may not be the best-dressed leader, or look cute, but at least you will be prepared for the thrill of the adventure of being a leader.

Enjoy!

(Submitted by Someone Who Has Been There and Done That)



HOLIDAY EN FEMME

TRI-ESS HOLIDAY EN FEMME Returns to Chicago, Nov 6-10, 1996,

Chi Chapter/Tri-Ess Invites You

Chi Chapter/Tri-Ess cordially invites all Tri-Ess members, potential members, spouses, partners and friends to **Holiday En Femme** to be held in Chicago from Wednesday, November 6th, through Sunday, November 10th, 1996.

Holiday En Femme is a non-profit event sponsored annually by Tri-Ess. This year we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the creation, by Virginia Prince, of the Hose 'N' Heels Club, later renamed Full Personality Expression (FPE) and the 20th anniversary of the merger of FPE with Carol Beecroft's Mamselle to form Tri-Ess, The Society for the Second Self.

Chicago Welcomes Holiday En Femme

Chicago is unique! Not only is it a world class industrial, commercial and cultural center, it is also the home of Michael, Scottie, Dennis and the world champion Bulls. Chicago is noted as a center for the arts and architecture and for its diverse ethnic heritage. You will see its exciting skyline with three of the world's five tallest buildings; its lake front, and its museums and public places. Early November is an ideal time to visit Chicago. Not too hot! Not too cold! Just right for enjoying a "**Holiday En Femme**"!



The Hyatt Lisle Welcomes Holiday En Femme

The Hyatt Lisle is conveniently located at the intersection of I-88 (East-West Tollway) and Route 53, in west suburban Lisle, Illinois. The hotel is a contemporary 14 story building with 311 plush suite-sized guest rooms and all the fine touches associated with Hyatt hotels.

The hotel has plenty of free parking for those who drive. If you will be flying to Chicago, transportation between the hotel and O'Hare or Midway airports, each a half hour away, can easily be arranged. Travel details will be sent with your registration confirmation.

We have reserved a large block of rooms at the special rate of \$74 plus tax per night, single or double occupancy. Hotel reservations should be made by

October 23, 1996. After that, room reservations are on a space available basis. To make your reservation call the Hyatt at:

1 (708) 852-1234 (Hyatt Lisle Reservations) or

1 (800) 233-1234 (Central Reservations)

Be sure to mention Tri-Ess Holiday En Femme

Note: After 8/3/96 the (708) area code changes to (630)

The Hyatt Lisle and its staff eagerly waits to make your stay comfortable, secure and friendly.

P.S. American Air Lines, the winner of IFGE's "Partners in Diversity" award is the official air line of **Holiday En Femme**. They have a reservations desk in the lobby of the Hyatt Lisle. For flight arrangements call Patricia Carroll at:

1 (708) 769-0142 (after 8/3/96 the (708) area code changes to (630)).

Attention Chapter Leaders!

Join us for Chapter Leadership Day
Friday, November 8, 1996

TRI-ESS invites you to attend a "how-to" seminar designed to help chapter leaders and members build successful chapters. At noon we will break for lunch and a talk from our own Kymberleigh Richards, editor and publisher of *Cross-Talk*.

Seminar participants will share information on: how to organize, how to obtain new members, how to run a meeting, how to develop a fun social and educational program, how to create an outreach program; how to develop a couples group, and how to produce better newsletters.

All chapter leaders and members are urged to attend this seminar so you can learn what other chapters are doing, how to avoid common pitfalls, and what you can do for your chapter.

Computer Boot Camp

Thursday, Nov. 7, 1996

Are you baffled by the Computer Age? Do others use words like "E-Mail", "Internet", or "world wide web" and you aren't sure what they mean? Do you know how to use an "E-Mail address" or find a "site" or a gender friendly "homepage"?

Catch up with the Information Age at our special session designed to put you in touch with the gender community.



Dance Class

Saturday, Nov. 9, 1996

We are fortunate to have Amanda, a professional dancer and dance instructor, as our guest. She will teach us how to trip the light fantastic. What are the latest dances and how can we move gracefully on the dance floor? All this in preparation for the evening's festivities. Leave your inhibitions in the closet and join in the fun.



"On the Town" Dinner Theater

Thursday, Nov. 7, 1996

Traditionally, Thursday night is reserved for a trip to one of Chicago's outstanding dinner-theaters. We have several outings under consideration but theater schedules are still in flux. We will notify you of our choice in the final details packet. In the mean time don't forget to bring that lovely "goin'-to-the-theater-in-November" outfit!



Highlights

In the Beginning:
How it all began!
Friday, Nov. 8, 1996

In the beginning Virginia created the Hose 'n' Heels Club. What happened after will be discussed by Virginia Prince, Carol Beecroft, Barbara Lee and others. Don't miss this fascinating session! Now who was it that said: "History forgotten is bound to be repeated."



Understanding Crossdressing for spouses and partners

Thursday & Friday morning
November 7 & 8, 1996

TRI-ESS welcomes spouses and partners to *Holiday En Femme*; particularly those who are attending their first gender weekend or wish to meet with other wives and partners of crossdressers. At these sessions, for women only, participants will gather to candidly discuss issues of concern to those who love crossdressers. The group will be led by Dr. Peggy Rudd, author of *"My Husband Wears my Clothes"*; *"Crossdressing with Dignity"*; *"Crossdressers: And those who share their lives"*, and *"Love Calendar"*.

On Saturday afternoon there will be a panel of wives and partners who will lead an open discussion on *S.P.I.C.E., What is it? And, why do we need it?* This will be followed by a meeting of the S.P.I.C.E. planning board.

Humor: The Ultimate Aphrodisiac

Friday, Nov. 8, 1996

It's happened to most of us, an embarrassing moment or a funny thing that occurred while we were out in public while crossdressed. This is a fun session where we all get a chance to tell a few "war stories". Perhaps there was a lesson to be learned, or maybe we can just look back on a "growing" experience that we'll never forget.



Grace Under Fire: Personal Safety and "Do's and Don'ts" for Going in Public

Thursday, Nov. 8, 1996

The title tells it all. Join us for a candid discussion of some of the rules of conduct crossdressers need to be aware of for our own personal safety when going in public.

Lookin' Good Clinic: Maximizing your feminine appearance!

Saturday, Nov 9, 1996

This clinic is just the thing for a newly emerging crossdresser or those desiring a refresher course, or who just want to find out what's in or what's out in fashion and femininity. It all relates to our philosophy that when you look good, you feel good!

Learn how to determine your dress size. What to wear when. What styles are in and what's out. How to disguise appearance flaws and take advantage of appearance strengths. Learn basic make-up tips. What lingerie you need and how to determine your size. How to pick your colors. Basic comportment; how to stand, sit and walk.



This is a FUN program led by a team of experts including: Dee Dee, Christine, Miranda, Amanda, and Eve. Authors of *Everything I Know I Learned at a Chi Chapter/Tri-Ess Meeting*. In addition, Rachel will give us some helpful hints about hair and wig care and styling. Who knows, maybe Dennis Rodman will give us some tips on hair coloring.

Procrastinator's Halloween Ball

Friday Eve, Nov. 8, 1996

Are you a glamour Goddess, or a fashion Diva? Are you a procrastinator? Have you always wanted to go to a Halloween ball in full femme fantasy garb but were afraid that friends, family or neighbors might not understand? Well, here's a chance to satisfy that hidden desire or fantasy, and it comes just a week after Halloween!



Paris had its *Artists and Models Ball* and Harlem its *Vogueing Ball*. Now, *Holiday En Femme* presents its Procrastinator's Halloween Ball. Join in the fun. Come to the Ball, have dinner, and strut-your-stuff in a pageant of glamour and costumes with prizes for the most beautiful, most humorous, most outrageous, most authentic, most creative, best look-a-like, etc. There will also be music and dancing featuring "George" and "Amanda", Chi Chapter's favorite D.J.'s.

Ethics & Responsibilities: 'Am I My Sister's Keeper?'

Thursday, Nov. 7, 1996

There is a point when ethics and responsibilities shifts from a self-centered focus to a "group" focus. Join us for an open and frank discussion of the unwritten code of gender conduct, some just common sense, and some of special interest to crossdressers and their partners.



Dr. Sheila: "Is Crossdressing Hazardous to your Health?"

Thursday, Nov. 7, 1996

Many crossdressers hesitate to seek medical advice from their family physician or worse yet neglect their health or fail to seek medical advice when they should. Is this a problem? What issues should crossdressers consider when seeking medical services? This session is led by Dr. Sheila Kirk, a physician with enormous experience in the gender community.



Rev. Kathy: "Is Crossdressing Hazardous to your Soul?"

Thursday Nov., 7, 1996

In this session Rev. Kathy will lead a discussion on how faith and spirituality mesh with crossdressing and transgendered behavior. What are the issues? Is there a problem? How much room is there for different beliefs?



Transgenderism And Past Life

Thursday, Nov. 7, 1996

This session explores our heritage and causation. Dr. Alycia Ellison and Dr. Jeanette Bevilacqua will use guided imagery in the discovery of your true self in order to achieve a better comfort level.

Red, White and Blue Post-Election Dinner Party

Wednesday, November 6, 1996

No politics at this dinner even though it's Election Day - plus one. There are no losers at this party, only winners! Join us in celebrating freedom of choice. Wear something red, white and blue!



Chi Chapter/Tri-Ess requests the honor of your presence at the marriage of Candace and Dawn and the renewal of vows by Colleen and Verna at 7:00 PM Saturday evening the ninth of November, 1996 in the Arbor Ballroom of the Hyatt Lisle

"Puttin' on the Ritz" Dinner, Dancing & Entertainment following the ceremony

Micro Mini Mall of Vendors

Holiday En Femme will feature a micro mini-mall of vendors eager to supply your special needs at reasonable prices. Included are make-up, cosmetics, and make overs, shoes, jewelry, manicures, wigs, hair pieces, brushes, and supplies; hair styling and comb outs, ornaments & bows; lingerie and clothing, eyeglasses (??), photography, and books and magazines.

Our tentative list of vendors includes, Jim Bridges, Fay Bass, Rachel's Wigs, and the IFGE book store, all of whom, have assured us that they will be there.

Under Consideration

Several other programs or seminars are under consideration: "Creating a Positive Self Image with Irresistible confidence"; "The Importance of Setting a Good Example"; "What it means to be a Team Player"; "Transgender Scales and Terminology used by Helping Professionals." Do you have a suggestion? Let us know, it's not too late.

Daily Events

Wednesday, Nov. 6, 1996

Registration Opens
Vendor Area Opens
Red, White and Blue Post-Election Dinner Party

Thursday, Nov. 7, 1996

Continental Breakfast
Computer Boot Camp
Luncheon Fashion Show
Transgenderism in Past Life
Is Crossdressing Hazardous to your soul? - Rev. Kathy
Ethics & Responsibilities
Dr. Peggy Rudd, Samantha
Dinner Theater

Friday, Nov. 8, 1996

Continental Breakfast
Understanding Crossdressing for wives and partners - Dr. Peggy Rudd
Chapter Leadership Day
Building a Better Chapter Seminar
Luncheon - Kymberleigh Richards
In the beginning... - Virginia Prince
Humor
Procrastinator's Halloween Ball Dinner, and Costume Pageant

Saturday, Nov. 9, 1996

Continental Breakfast
Tri-Ess Board Meeting
Is Crossdressing Hazardous to your health? - Dr. Sheila Kirk
Lookin' Good Clinic
Luncheon - Jane Ellen Fairfax
State of Tri-Ess Report
Wives and Partners Panel- Dr. Peggy Rudd
Dance Class
S.P.I.C.E. Planning Board
Wedding Reception and 'Puttin' on the Ritz Dinner

Sunday, Nov. 10, 1996

Devotionals
Farewell Breakfast Buffet

Wanted: Brides, Bridesmaids, and Flower Girls. Wear your own gown and join the wedding processional on Saturday night.

Holiday En Femme Chicago, II - Nov. 6-10, 1996 Registration Form

(Please Print)

Femme Name (for your name badge): _____

Mailing Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (optional): () _____

I am registering as an: _____ individual or, as a _____ couple

Spouse/Partner Name (for name badge): _____

Chapter Affiliation (if any): _____

Arrival Date: November _____, 1996 Time: _____ AM/PM

Departure Date: November _____, 1996 Time: _____ AM/PM

Arrival by: _____ auto _____ plane

Special needs or diet? _____

PRICE PLAN:	FROM:	TO:	Before 10/1/96	After 10/1/96
A	WED 11/6/96 (3 PM)	SUN 11/10/96 (Noon)	\$280	\$295
B	THURS 11/7/96 (3 PM)	SUN 11/10/96 (Noon)	\$245	\$255
C	FRI 11/8/96 (9 AM)	SUN 11/10/96 (Noon)	\$175	\$185
D	FRI 11/8/96 (3 PM)	SUN 11/10/96 (Noon)	\$145	\$155
E	SAT 11/9/96 (9 AM)	SUN 11/10/96 (Noon)	\$105	\$115
F	SAT 11/9/96	All Day	\$95	\$105
G	SAT 11/9/96	Evening Only	\$45	\$50

HOLIDAY Price Plan: (Letter _____) \$ _____

Spouse/Partner Price Plan: (Letter: _____) \$ _____

Sub-Total \$ _____

Less Deposit (minimum \$80 per person) \$ _____

Balance Due Upon Arrival: \$ _____

Registration Details

To Register: Simply fill out and return the attached 1996 Holiday En Femme Registration Form with your minimum deposit of \$80 per person.

Hotel Reservations: We have reserved a block of rooms at the Hyatt Lisle at the special convention rate of \$74 plus tax per night, single or double occupancy. **To make hotel reservations call:**

1 (708) 852-1234

(Hyatt Lisle Reservations)

After 8/3 the area code changes to (630)

or call 1 (800) 233-1234

(Central Reservations)

In order to get the special \$74 rate you must tell the hotel you will be attending the **Tri-Ess Holiday En Femme** convention. Reservations made after October 23, 1996 are subject to space availability. Note also that you **must make your own arrangements for a room mate.**

Price Plans: Package price plans include all activities, sessions and all meals during the time covered in your registered plan. (They do not include your hotel accommodations.) Please contact us if you need a price plan different than described on the registration form.

Payments: There is a minimum deposit of \$80 per person that must be included with your registration. Make your check or money order payable in US funds to: TRI-ESS HOLIDAY EN FEMME. Your confirmation will be sent upon receipt of your registration and deposit. A final package containing travel directions, check-in procedures and last minute details will be sent two weeks before the event. Upon arrival the balance due of your plan will be due payable in cash, money order or major credit card. Personal checks received after October 20, 1996 must be guaranteed with a major credit card. **Send your registration form, payments or requests for more information to:**

Chi Chapter/Tri-Ess

Holiday En Femme

P.O. Box 40

Wood Dale, IL 60191-0040

Or call the Chi Chapter Hotline:

1 (708) 262-8707

between 7 PM and 9:30 PM

After 8/3 the area code changes to (630)

MAIL TO: Chi-Chapter Tri-Ess, Holiday EnFemme, PO Box 40, Wood Dale, IL 60191-0040



DIGNITY CRUISE #8
WITH PEGGY RUDD & THE GENDER-GIFTED
SPECTACULAR 7-Day Alaskan Cruise
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Roundtrip from Vancouver with stops at Hubbard Glacier, Skagway, Haines, Juneau, and Ketchikan

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RATES (Cruise-Only, Per Person, Double Occupancy)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Broch. Rate</u>	<u>Group Rate</u>	<u>Port Chgs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
N / Inside Cabin	\$2149	\$1429	\$141.50	\$1570.50
I / Picture Window	2399	1629	141.50	1770.50
Single Occupancy	150% of Selected Category Rate, Plus Port Charges			

Also Available: Low-cost airfare from major gateway cities. Pre- and post-cruise hotel pkgs.


NOTE: Limited number of Category D / *Deluxe Staterooms with private verandah*.

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**EARLY BOOKING DISCOUNT: DEPOSIT BY SEPTEMBER 30, 1996 AND RECEIVE
 ADDITIONAL DISCOUNT OF \$50 PER PERSON!**

TERMS: \$250 per person deposit with reservation secures cabin & rate.
 Balance due May 23, 1997.
 Payment can be made by personal check payable to CRUISES INC.,
 VISA, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

CANCELLATION CLAUSE: \$25 charge on any cancellation after deposit is made. Additional penalties apply from 60 days prior to sailing date. Optional Cancellation/Travel Insurance is available.

For Reservations or Additional Information, Call: CRUISES INC. 
Brenda Cyrus, Master Cruise Counsellor
Toll-free 1-800-247-7021

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 Nordic Empress, Viking Serenade, Song of America, Sun Viking, Song of Norway*

Ms Barbara Heath
3318 S. Glenstone #298
P. O. Box 2502
Springfield, MO 65801

Occupation _____
Left Handed? Yes _____ No _____
Your Age? _____

CROSSDRESSER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

1. When you dress, is sexual arousal a part of the "feminine feeling?"
Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____ It Never Was _____
2. Did you ever have a homosexual experience as a child?
Yes _____ No _____ If yes: Age 1-5 yrs. _____ 6-12 yrs. _____ 13-19 yrs. _____
3. What is your own explanation of your cross-dressing?
Genetics _____ Conditioning _____ Male-Role-Escape _____ Fantasizing _____
4. Have you experimented with hormones or plan to?
Yes _____ No _____ Maybe Later _____ Never Have & Never Will _____
5. What rewards have you obtained as a man in this society?
Fatherhood _____ Husband _____ Respect _____ Admiration _____ Love _____
6. What rewards do you believe a woman obtains in this society?
Motherhood _____ Wife _____ Freedom _____ Admiration _____ Love _____
7. Do you have a desire to be taken care of and treated as a woman?
Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____ Only When I Dress _____
8. What was your relationship to your father when you were young?
Distant _____ Close _____ Abusive _____ Absent _____ Good _____
9. What was your relationship to your mother when you were young?
Distant _____ Close _____ Abusive _____ Absent _____ Good _____
10. Who knows about your dressing activities at this time?
Spouse _____ Children _____ Parents _____ Siblings _____ Friends _____

Please answer the above questions by checking all that apply. Since a questionnaire can only scratch the surface of each individual's story, I would appreciate any additional information you care to include. Send it to the address listed above on the questionnaire. Thank you very much.

Ms Barbara Heath
3318 S. Glenstone #298
P.O. Box 2502
Springfield, MO 65801

PLEASE TELL ME

1. Did you want to be anything like your father? Why or why not?
2. Was there a male "Hero" in your early life? (Before puberty).
3. What was your mother like? Were you close to her? How close?
4. Were you first born? Last born? The middle? Brothers? Sisters?
5. Tell about the very first time you remember cross-dressing.
6. Were you sexually aroused? What was the most arousing to you?
7. Do you have a higher power? What do you call your God?
8. Did you have close male or female friends in your pre-teen years?
9. As an adult, are you more comfortable with males or females?
10. Are you strictly heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual?
11. Are you married or seriously involved with a female? For how long?
12. How well do you honestly feel your wife or mate is handling this?
13. Are you secretly ashamed, at times, because of your dressing?
14. Do you feel/think you were born this way--please explain.
15. Are you right handed, left handed, or ambidextrous?
16. If you quit--how long would you stay quit? How did you feel then?
17. Have you used hormones at any time? For how long?
18. Do you believe you will ever go all the way and become transsexual?
19. Do you believe being a "real woman" would make you happy?
20. What are the rewards you feel you get because you are a man?
21. Express as best you can what your fantasy lady is like--in detail.
22. If you could live your life crossdressed at all times, would you?
23. Would anyone in your life be hurt if you chose to do the above?
24. Do you have any understanding of the reasons behind your dressing?
25. Have you had any psychotherapy? Did it help you in any way?
26. Do you feel this might be an addiction or an obsession of some kind?
27. If there were a magic pill to stop crossdressing--would you take it?
28. When you dress now, is sexual arousal a part of the "femme feeling"?
29. Do you receive acceptance or "pass" in public, or do you go out at all?
30. Were your earliest experiences of crossdressing voluntary or forced?

The information obtained is for dissertation purposes and confidentiality is assured.
The questions require a certain amount of soul searching, but your answers may
enable others to understand this lifestyle. Please feel free to include your spouse, if
she cares to contribute, plus any additional information you feel might enlighten.

Your cooperation is deeply appreciated.

OCCUPATION: _____ AGE: _____