

News & views

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RENAISSANCE

Managing Director's New Year Message

by **JoAnn Roberts, Ph.D.**

I am pleased and proud to have been elected Managing Director of Renaissance for its tenth anniversary year. There were several well-known community "leaders" back in 1987 who thought we'd never last five years, let alone ten. Ironically, most of them are gone from the scene, while Renaissance is still here and still growing.

There are many reasons our organization has remained so vital throughout its ten year existence. One reason is the shared vision of its board of directors. Another is the Renaissance policy of opening its doors to anyone and everyone in the transgender community. Yet another reason is the excellence of the newsletter you are holding in your hands. These and more combine to keep us moving ahead. I'd like to share with all of you some of the goals for 1997 and beyond.

• **Membership** — Over the next three years we will double our membership. We'll accomplish this by establishing new chapters and affiliates throughout the U.S. and we hope to have our first international affiliate. New in 1997 will be Lifetime Subscriptions and Memberships.

• **Outreach** — Renaissance will be very visible at

the national level in 1997. We're hosting the Second International Congress on Sex & Gender Issues in June. Beyond that, we're looking at establishing our own annual convention to spread the leadership values and lessons we've learned.

• **Grants** — Thanks to the tireless efforts of Angela Gardner, Renaissance received its first grant last year. This year our goal is \$25,000 in grants and donations to establish a toll-free hotline and upgrade other community services.

• **Internet** — Renaissance made its foray onto the Internet in 1996 and we'll continue to expand our presence in 1997 and beyond. All of our Background Papers and Community Outreach Bulletins will be available on the net for free.

Angela Gardner who served so ably as Managing Director in 1996, is now our Executive Director. Her job is to oversee the day to day operations of the Renaissance national office. (For more details, see below.) We are facing the most exciting challenges ever presented to our community. We have a chance to make a real difference both in the educational and political arenas of society. It is up to us to meet those challenges head on and we will with the help of every Renaissance member.



Board Appoints Executive Director

At the November 1996 meeting of the Renaissance National Board of Directors, the Directors acted to ensure the continued growth of Renaissance as a national organization serving the transgender community. Angela Gardner, a founding member, and 1996 Managing Director of the organization was appointed Executive Director.

In non-profit organizations like Renaissance, the board sets policy, the Managing Director guides the board, and the Executive Director is staff and responsible for implementing the board's policies. In order to take the E.D. position, Ms. Gardner resigned from the board. She will be able to make recommendations to the Board, but will no longer have a vote on policy decisions.

Before being elected Managing Director for 1996, Gardner was Co-Director of Outreach. She brings a wealth of experience in the transgender community to the Executive Director position.

"As Managing Director, I was not only filling that job for the Board, I was doing a lot of the work that would have been done by an Executive Director," said Gardner. "Getting out into the general community, identifying and accessing financial resources that may be available to Renaissance is my top priority. I feel we have been doing a great job so far for an all-volunteer organization. I want to take us to the next level where we will be able to do more of what we do now for more people who need our help," she concluded.

Ms. Gardner also stated she would work to streamline the way the office processes requests for information, and make the organization more responsive to member needs. Members will see new membership cards starting this year and membership numbers will not change from year to year. Hours when the office phone is answered by Phone

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Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

Wilmington, Delaware: meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808. Phone: 302-376-1990, or email to <sadetv@aol.com>.

Pennsylvania

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

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

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122 Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (780-1578) or send email to: <lsv@ezonline.com>.

Affiliates

California

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

Connecticut

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

Georgia

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

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

Illinois

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

Louisiana

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

New Jersey

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

Titusville: Meetings are 1st Saturday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing. Call Terri Risley at 609-933-2233.

New York

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

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

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

Oklahoma

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

Electronic Subscriptions

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

Renaissance News & Views

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

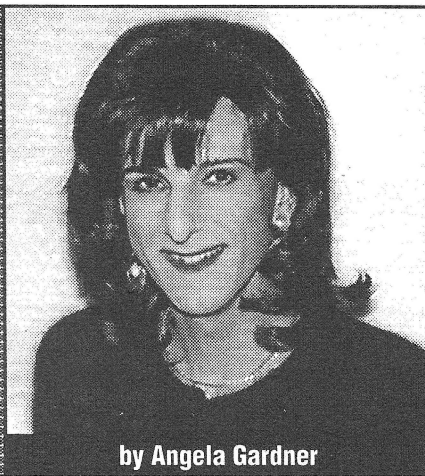
Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the transgender community and the general public. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, make your check or M.O., payable to Renaissance and send it to our National office. Your contributions will help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

Local Calendar

January

- 4 Ren. LSV
- 4 NJ Support
- 11 MOTG
- 11 Ren. Lehigh Valley
- 11 Ren. Delaware
- 18 Ren. GPC

News Beat & Reminder



by Angela Gardner

Did you have a happy holiday? I had a great time at Ms. Tips' (as in CDTips) holiday open house. Thanks Linda, I hope you found a good charity to take all the extra food. (She's not only pretty, she can cook!) And the GPC holiday bash, well, I could go on and on, but I'm still stunned that it's another year. It's 1997... that's almost the end of the century. It won't be long now. Let's just keep looking fabulous and not worry about the passing years. Repeat our mantra, better not older, better not older. Hey! Anybody want to start a retirement home for old crossdressers? Pass my curly blue wig. But now... the news!

Going Down Under?

I got a note from a Miss Robyn Richards down in Oz (Australia). It was sent by snail mail in October and has been wending it's way around the globe ever since then. Robyn wanted me to pass along an offer to all the members of Renaissance who may be thinking of a trip to Oz. Members of Robyn's group, **The Chameleon Society of Victoria** (I love that name) are willing to show TG visitors around the town (Melbourne). For more details on the Society and the hot spots they can show you contact them at PO Box 500, Williamstown, Victoria 3016, Australia. Ring them up at 61 3 9315 9172. (Don't forget the country code.) If you go, let us know how it was.

A Miss From Oz

Speaking of Down Under, Brad Rodgers, (a regular bloke, Bruce) is

the first male to qualify for the Miss Australia Contest when he won the Miss Victoria Fundraiser contest. The event was renamed simply Victorian Fundraiser in deference to Brad. It used to be a beauty contest but now it's a charity event, and Rodgers, 27, won his title by raising \$78,000 for the Spastic Society of Australia.

"I'm not here to make a political statement for blokes," he said, "but I do hope I'll be the first of many more to come. I'm not into that gender specific stuff."

His competitors will all be gowned for the February finals. Rodgers says he'll make do with a tux. Maybe we could get the Chameleon Society girls to talk him into a dress.

The Artist Formerly Known As...

Prince was on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* on November 20th. He said that when he was five years old he created "another person" in response to living in an abusive household. The reason we care? He's not sure if the "other person" is male or female. Well, I think we have a clue, don't we girls? Any man who can dance that well in heels that high is bound to have a high Femininity Quotient. I thought on several occasions that photos included with Prince albums were pictures of Prince in drag. (Turned out not to be but, it could have been.) Perhaps as The Artist Formerly Known As... continues his therapy he'll find out the other person inside of him is **Madonna**. Or, maybe not.

Speaking of FQ

Dolly Parton was on the *Late, Late Show* with Tom Snyder and the talk turned to her image. She said she was always interested in glamour and has always loved makeup and wigs. (She can get fully "Dollyized," wig and makeup, in fifteen minutes. You go girl!) Tom postulated a "hair & makeup" gene for girls and a "truck" gene for boys. We all know that he's on the right track, but he's missed the fact that the H&M gene (or the FQ) can leap from gender to gender. Same for the "truck" gene. Ask any diesel dyke.

Dolly looks fabulous for a woman her age, heck, for a woman of any age, and she admitted that she has work done whenever she needs it. Being Dolly is her business so plastic surgery is just property maintenance to her. She said she loves to go out on Halloween in Santa Monica and other spots near L.A. since she runs into a great number of Dollys walking around, about half of them guys. They have no clue that she's the real thing so she always get's compliments on how good a job she's doing. Take a close look at the next Dolly you see, ya never know.

Let The Show Go On

A few months ago I wrote about the city of Raleigh, North Carolina, and how their classification of drag shows as adult entertainment would have messed up a main stage production of *La Cage*. The reclassification also had the girls over at Legends a little upset since they would have had to stop their drag shows, and several female impersonators would have been headed for the welfare line. Fortunately they won the appeal and Wake County Superior Court Judge (they wear those sexy black robes don't they?) Howard Manning, Jr. said the law, which was aimed at stopping "lewd" displays on stage, did not apply to drag shows—as long as they aren't lewd. Now heaven knows most drag shows aren't lewd, unless the performer is doing Cher, so the shows can go on at Legends, the First Amendment is safe and the welfare office won't be full of queens.

continued next page

News Beat...

Be Part of the Solution

Crossdressers tend to own an enormous quantity of clothing. Once out of the closet most of the ladies spend a lot of time trying to fill it back up with frocks. I myself am a semi-reformed shopaholic. I say semi, since I'm fighting the urge to stop typing this delightful column and head out for some of those fabulous before Christmas bargains right now.

There, I'm back and that new little black dress looks so good next to all those others in the closet. Now where was I? Oh, yes. I was about to tell you about a wonderful program that gives us crossdressers a chance to do something really nice for the people we love to emulate—women. Many women who are trying to get off of welfare (you knew I was going somewhere with that didn't ya?), and who are getting training in job skills through various programs set up for that purpose, find they have a hard time going to interviews since they haven't a thing to wear. They may have mastered the skills but if they show up for a job interview in an old house dress or pair of ratty jeans they aren't going to have much of a chance at getting the job. It's sad but true (and we know better than most); clothes make the (wo)man.

How can we help? There are eleven shops scattered across the country, from Philly to California, that provide second hand clothes to women coming off welfare and getting ready to join the work force. (I saw them on ABC News.) The shops are called **Bottomless Closet**. They get all of the clothing from donations so before you do something drastic, like purge... again, or if you're just considering a closet cleaning, it might be a great idea to donate any good business attire (suits, business dresses, coats, shoes) to the Bottomless Closet. What is a pleasure for us is a real necessity for women who are trying to support themselves and their kids through gainful employment. That Jones New York suit you've

worn a few times and grown tired of may be just what some woman needs to get her through a successful job interview. Check the phone book for the number in your area or call their main number in Chicago: 312-527-9664. It's really a worthy cause that dovetails nicely with our "need" to buy new outfits all the time.

For ladies in the Philadelphia region, there is another project that needs your old clothes, and this one is after your male attire as well as your femme stuff. They're a little more specific in what they want—give them your coat. (Your old coat, not that beautiful new Cruella DeVille number with those lovely spots.) **Philadelphia Cares** is taking old coats to give to people with HIV/AIDS and homeless people of both genders. The drive is on till January twentieth. The fun part for us is where you drop off the coat. One of the collections sites is chi chi women's clothing store Nicolle Miller. Drop of an old coat, buy an expensive new dress. Works for me. Other locations taking the coats include Starbucks Coffee and Body Shop. For information regarding the coat drive or drop-off sites, call Philadelphia Cares at 215-545-5335. No ratty old coats please. Only those you or your "brother" just aren't wearing anymore, but are still in reasonable shape. Let's show 'em the transgendered care, too.

He's No Virgin

Richard Bransome is no stranger to publicity stunts. His company, Virgin Group, opened a new store called Virgin Bride that's going to be a one stop shop for couples heading for marriage. Bransome borrowed an idea from Dennis Rodman as an opening day stunt. The lovely bride arrived in a white wedding gown, veil and fishnet hose. "She" was Richard Bransome and he went so far as to shave off his beard of 30 years to do it right.

No word on who the groom was or where the lovely couple went for their honeymoon but knowing Bransome it was probably an around the world high altitude balloon ride. Meanwhile, back at the store, Bransome tossed out red roses to the crowd and showed of his

fishnets (I really hope they were white, black would be so tacky) to the photographers. Now this is what we need from more CEOs around the world. If more of them would wear dresses... ah, well, more of them would... wear dresses. Boy, when you don't have a good punchline it can get real scary.

It Took A Year But Here's The Info

Last year I mentioned a song called *Walkin' Round in Women's Underwear* that gets played by twisted DJs every holiday season. I may not have all the info *right away*... but I never sleep (OK, a slight exaggeration. I get my 10 hours of beauty sleep every night) until I deliver the goods. My informant in Tennessee, **Tennessee Vals** boss lady, **Marisa Richmond**, found the album the tune is on and has passed the information along. It's called *I Am Santa Claus* by Bob Rivers & Twisted Radio. Twisted Radio is a collection of Seattle DJs and the whole album is nothing but Christmas parodies. It also includes *I Came Upon a Road Kill Deer* and *Teddy, The Red-Nosed Senator*. Marisa got hers at Tower Records so you should be able to find it fairly easily. Then you'll be... walkin' round in women's underwear. Do de do de do de do de do. Catchy little tune.

Some Things To Do In The New Year

It won't be long till 1997 kids. Ninety six has been a wild ride so far and there's still a few days left to get us in trouble. Here are a few things to do in the coming months that should help keep us all occupied:

1. Visit **Lady Chablis' Cabaret** in Savannah, Gee A. This real life character from the best selling novel, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* parleyed her fifteen minutes of fame into a nightclub where she and other local girls perform. According to Chablis, now they've got a little job security.

2. Sign up for an aerobics class at New York's **Crunch Gym** with fifteen-minute-of-fame instructor, **Anthony Truly**. Sure, most of us have had workout fantasies where we swath ourselves in Spandex® and sweat (not

too much) to the oldies, but Anthony has taken it a step further. He leads the class in drag. He has twenty five different wigs and uses props and strobe lights. The classes have names like Aerobics With Attitude and Abs, Thighs and Gossip. His costumes range from a dominatrix outfit to the ever popular bridal motif. If you want to be a supermodel you better get that body in shape and what better way to do that than with a drag queen aerobics instructor?

(Thanks to Jessica Brandon for the first two items.)

3. Dress-up events are springing up out of the woodwork. I guess people are finally catching on. Here's an event I've never heard of before and who knows if it's any good. I present it merely as a diversion. No endorsement is implied. There, that oughta stop any lawsuits. February 20 - 23, 1997 in New Orleans, Louisiana they're putting on an event called **New Orleans Fantasy Fest**. Registration for the event is \$225. It includes various dress-up stuff and for more info check out the Fantasy Fest website. (Use your

web search tools. What am I, your mother?) Let me know if it's any good.

Here's another first-time event for you FtM's. February 22-23, **True Spirit Conference**, happens at the Best Western Hotel in Laurel, Maryland (near Washington, D.C.). Conference registrations are \$15 before January 1, 1997, and \$25 after. Deaf interpretation, child care, scholarships, and other services are available on a first come, first serve basis. For more information, contact: True Spirit Conference, The American Boyz, POBox 1118, Elkton, MD, 21922-1118, or email to <transman@netgis.com>.

In March, there is the recurring **Texas "T" Party**, in Dallas, Texas, on the eleventh through the sixteenth. Contact PO Box 17 Bulverde, TX 78163. Phone or Fax (210) 980-7788 or email to <TXTP@aol.com>.

That's it for now my lovelies. I must begin my ten hours of renewing sleep or I shall simply be a wreck on the morrow. Keep smiling. Drop me a note with any transgendered news items you'd like me to mention, happy new year and all that.

Exec. Dir...

Watch volunteers will be expanded (see notice below) and when no one is available in person, technology will be used to provide more options than just leaving a message. Callers will be able to have information faxed back to them automatically and a voice mail Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) menu will allow even those who can't leave a phone number to obtain the information they need twenty four hours a day.



CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

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

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

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

The Renaissance Phone Watch Needs You

The Renaissance phone crew works on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings between 6 and 10 PM. This year we would like to expand the days the phone is answered by a real, live person. Our first goal is to have someone answering the phone every weeknight. It isn't necessary for you to come into the office since we can forward the phone to any number. It is better if you can be in the office because of the resources available in case people need referrals, as well as general information. If you would like to help with our phone answering effort contact Jessica Brandon or Angela Gardner. Either leave a message with the live person on Monday, Wednesday or Friday, or leave your name and number on the office machine at 610-975-9119, or send email to <bensalem@cpcn.com> or <treetop@voicenet.com>.

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NGLTF Issues Statement on GID

Washington, D.C., Dec. 11, 1996:

The following statement on Gender Identify Disorder (GID) and transgendered people is attributable to Kerry Lobel, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Executive Director.

“NGLTF is sensitive to the differences of opinion within the transgender community on GID and the implications of GID on insurance payments, civil rights and other issues of concern to transgender people. Thus, instead of supporting wholesale GID eradication, we support GID reform. Reform means another diagnosis — possibly medical — that does not pathologize transgender people or gender-variant youth and children. Reform also means increased funding for research on

transgenderism and full participation by transgender people in policy decisions that affect their lives.

“We are particularly concerned with the use of GID against children. Gender-variant youth, whether they grow up to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or not, should not be stigmatized or mistreated because of a GID diagnosis.

“The struggle for transgender people in 1996 invokes the struggle of gay and lesbian people in the early Seventies when the National Gay Task Force (NGTF) was successful in helping remove homosexuality as a mental disease. We are aware that transsexual people have unique concerns in their lives, including medical treatments

such as hormones and surgery, that are different from being gay or lesbian. However, we believe no one — whether gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex (hermaphrodite) — should have to accept being pathologized as mentally ill in order to attain wholeness, completeness and civil equality.

“NGLTF strongly supports civil rights protections and affordable health care for transgenders. We loathe discrimination and violence perpetrated against transgenders and stand in solidarity with transgender people in their struggle for visibility, inclusion, equality and justice.”



Unlived Lives

by Anne Vitale, PhD

When I say “unlived lives,” I am speaking of the inherent frustrations in “waiting.” Waiting for life to begin. Yes, one is doing what everyone else is doing. However, the “doing” has a hollow feel to it. Life has more of a spectator quality rather than real time actual involvement. Life takes on the quality of being in an intolerably long line at the bank. Everyone gets to the teller window but you.

For most gender identity conflicted individuals the waiting starts very early. Little boys wait to be allowed to enter play with the girls as a girl. They wait for a pretty dress to wear or a doll to mother for their birthday. Little girls get by with tomboyish behavior but they also know they’re in a serious struggle for real gender expression. Unknowingly, these children start the long wait for the problem to resolve itself. It is common for all children to turn to magical thinking and to expect miracles. For example, one of the more common appeals gender conflicted children make to end the waiting is to pray for God to intervene. Others wish upon a star or make a

birthday wish when blowing out the candles. Most children use every chance they have to petition for divine intervention. It’s heart breaking to think of all those innocent children out there at this very moment, preying and wishing for a miracle that will never happen.

And then there are the adolescent years of waiting. A time that starts full of false hope but ends in further disappointment and confusion. This is a time in life when the boys watch in wonder and heart breaking envy as the girls start to develop into young women. On the other hand, gender conflicted girls begin a feminization process they wanted desperately to avoid. As boys endure what they feel is grotesque masculinization, girls endure what they feel is the indignity of feminization. At this point a certain resignation sets in. They now are aware that the problem is a significant part of their life and may never go away.

When the gender conflicted individual enters his or her early twenties, the efforts to relieve the waiting takes a more practical turn. If a young man can’t be a woman, perhaps if he makes some changes, he can become a man. Perhaps if he joins the armed forces. Perhaps if he gets married. Perhaps if he has children. Perhaps if he starts

lifting weights. Perhaps...perhaps...perhaps. If a young woman can’t evolve naturally into a man perhaps she can simply continue acting like one. Of course, it isn’t the same but it is better than the alternative. However, there are other complications for these dysphoric peoples. Foremost amongst these is the need for intimacy.

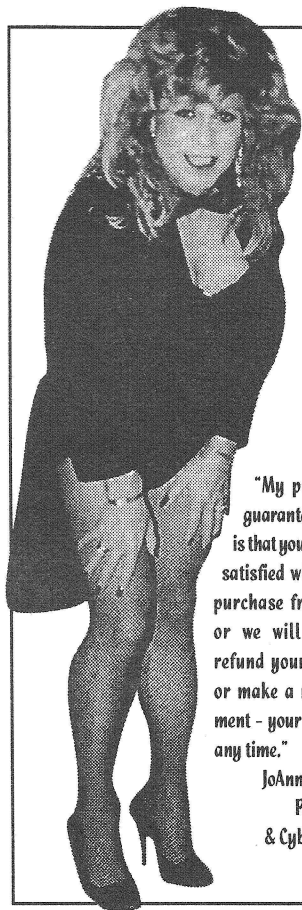
For some men being with the right woman eases the tensions of non-participation. It adds a touch of social respectability and makes the family happy. The problem, of course, is that he almost invariably falls in love with the woman he wants to be. And often as not starts living his life through her. This pseudo-life is characterized almost invariably by secretly crossdressing in her clothes. Even going so far as going shopping with her and encouraging her to buy cloths that he wants to wear. It usually doesn’t take very long for the wife to rebel and the individual to realize that far from providing resolution, marriage has complicated the matter. Now he finds himself waiting to become a wife as well as a woman. Can waiting to become a mother, be far behind?

In the meantime gender dysphoric

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Merry Xmas from CDS!

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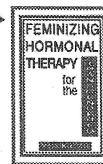
The Man In The Red Velvet Dress ▶

by J. J. Allen
Allen gives us an insider's view of the psyche of the tg community. This one's sure to cause a stir in some circles.
216 pages, \$22.90



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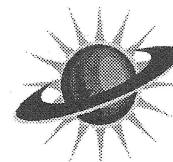
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2. The TGForum Resource Center

<http://www.tgfmall.com/>

3. The TGForum Community Center

<http://www.transgender.org/tg/>

Brought to you by 3-D Communications, Inc., a community owned and operated web presence. Contact us about getting your organization or business on the WorldWideWeb. [webmaster@tgfmall.com]



It's the January issue and the start of what will surely be the best year since 1996. It is also the time of year when we will be studying those ubiquitous "What's Hot and What's Not" lists for the new year.

My prediction for what will be hot in '97? Stiletto heeled pumps with pointy toes (if I keep saying it, maybe it will happen someday.) But who really pays attention to any of those lists? Remember the guy who sang the song *Rico Suave*? Yeah, he was on the Hot List for 1992. And the Epilady hair removal system? Very hot in January 1989, until the screams of women and crossdressers everywhere cooled it off by February. Some people said personal computers were going to be red-hot in the early 90's. But those were the same people backing indoor soccer in the late 70's. What do they know?

I guess what I'm trying to say is that the only truly constant source of rock solid information is right here in front of you: *Vis a Vis*.

And don't tell me you made a New Year's resolution to stop reading it. C'mon, we all know resolutions are made to be broken.

WILL THERE BE A TRI-ESS CHAPTER FOR DALLAS?

The question above refers not to the geographic "Dallas" but the transsexual activist Dallas Denny, who formally applied for membership in Tri-Ess, the national organization for heterosexual crossdressers. At present, Tri-Ess excludes transsexuals from full membership in the group but has a category called "Friends of Tri-Ess" for people not of the heterosexual persuasion. Ms. Denny's application is the

gauntlet thrown down so that Tri-Ess must either refuse her membership—or change their policy.

This latest assault on the controversial Tri-Ess membership requirements grew out of Dallas' past treatise on heterosexual crossdressing in general and Tri-Ess membership in particular titled *Heteropocrisy: The Myth of the Heterosexual Crossdresser*. In that essay, she chronicled the divergence of the membership's personal practices with regard to hormone usage, admitted desires about gender transformation, and the number of Tri-Ess members who eventually identify themselves as transsexual, as against the stated mission of the organization.

Tri-Ess honored Dallas with an award at their national convention in 1992. "It's because I am a friend of Tri-Ess that I'm doing this," she is quoted as saying about her latest protest of the membership policy. "If Tri-Ess denies me membership, then I'm going to insist on a clear explanation why. I don't want to hear that I don't believe in and support the mission of the organization, which is to serve heterosexual crossdressers and their partners. I do. And I don't want to hear that I'm a transsexual. Tri-Ess has no right to label me."

It should be interesting to see how this all will end. And it would be just fine with me if this particular controversy over the exclusionary membership policy—which has been raging since the beginning of time, it seems—would just go away. Somewhere in Dallas' quixotic quest to become a card-carrying Tri-Ess member, there should be a paraphrase of the old Groucho Marx line about "not wanting

to belong to any group that would have me as a member." Maybe it would be "not wanting to belong to any group that would have me with my member."

SHE SAID WHAT?!

As I perused the *Transgenderist* newsletter of the TGIC group in Albany, N.Y., I saw a small sidebar critiquing a recent article by Virginia Prince that appeared in *Cross-Talk* magazine October 96.

The critique reprinted direct quotes from Prince's own article about transsexuals and they were so shocking that I had to go right to the horse's mouth (so to speak) and read the original article in full in *Cross-Talk* to confirm they were true. They were indeed.

Virginia Prince writes a regular column for *Cross-Talk* and the one in question was titled *Gender Fundamentalists*. Her thesis was that transsexual activists are of the same stripe as the rabid fundamentalists who create so many problems for everyone else of a more broad-minded bent. Specifically, Ms. Prince disagrees with the transsexuals' attack on the Tri-Ess membership policy, the same tired bugaboo noted in the item above. Her arguments in favor of an exclusive heterosexual-only organization are good (and in truth, I don't have a big problem with the Tri-Ess policy although I find it unnecessary) but her choice of words in denigrating transsexuals' motivations are quite unbelievable.

The reason transsexuals want to tear down the Tri-Ess exclusionary policy, according to Prince: "They don't have anywhere to go because there are no effective organizations for transsexuals. So they remember that they were crossdressers once and look back on those days with a 'sexual nostalgia', remembering the days when they were a kind of human [who] fitted in..."

Yes, you read it right. Ms. Prince would argue that TS's are no longer human as we have come to know the word. "Now after surgery they are no longer fish nor fowl since they have no reproductive organs of any kind and could not survive without synthetic hormones the rest of their lives."

Her next argument reminds me of

the racist sentiments that met the civil rights activists of the Fifties and Sixties. "Nobody made them have the surgery so now that they've had it why don't they just go about living their own lives, forming their own organizations and leave the rest of us alone? We feel no need to bother them; why do they feel a need to bother us? After all, for every TS in the country there are probably a thousand crossdressers." Ms. Prince seems to think that transsexuals are like the "uppity colored folk" who dared to ask for inclusion to the society run by the white majority. We ain't bothering them, why they bothering us with all this civil rights stuff?

The critique in the *Transgenderist* (by an unnamed author) called Virginia Prince senile, with a virulent phobia towards transsexuals. I thought that was a little harsh—until I read Virginia's own words.

...AND BE CAREFUL OUT THERE!

Paradise Tales is the newsletter of the Paradise Club in Cleveland, Ohio, and the October issue carried a noteworthy article by their Secretary, Emilia Lombardi.

Emilia reported that a member of their group was attacked by two men after leaving a nightclub in town. She printed a list of safety tips that might be good for all of us to review. They go as follows:

1. Be aware of who is in front of you and behind you.
2. Don't walk alone, especially if upset or intoxicated.
3. Choose busy, well-lit streets.
4. Walk near the curb, avoid construction sites and parks after dark.
5. If you feel threatened, cross the street, change directions, or run to a safe place.
6. Always have money for a cab, bus or phone call. It's a good idea to carry a list of friends on whom you could call in case of emergency.
7. Carry a whistle or "screamer" to attract attention if confronted.
8. If you leave someplace with a new friend, introduce him/her to another friend so someone sees the per-

son with whom you leave.

9. Harrassment often precludes an attack. If you decide to answer back, do so from a safe distance and be prepared to fight or run away.

These tips were originally printed in a hate crimes bulletin. The advice also encourages anyone who becomes a victim of an attack to report it to police as well as the local anti-violence committee of the gay/TG community in which it occurred. Only by reporting violence against us will the police be able to recognize the problem, and perhaps add to the statistics of hate crimes from which legislators can measure the extent of the problem.

NINE OUT OF TEN DOCTORS - AND ONE CROSSDRESSER

The Neutral Corner, San Diego, Calif., and their newsletter, *Reflections*, have a new editor, Karen, who wrote a piece called *Running With The Wrong Crowd* in the October issue.

Karen's article is about her first hand experience with unsupervised hormone experimentation. While living in Dallas several years ago, she fell in with a group of transgendered individuals, half of whom identified as transsexual. Apparently, Karen at that time was confused as to whether she might be transsexual herself, and the availability of hormones through her friends led her to take them without a doctor's supervision.

As Karen states herself: "I thought, sure, maybe a little here to help round out my body, maybe some small breasts would be nice. This happened because I didn't know where I was and decided that the glamour of being a transsexual would help everything work itself out."

In Karen's case, she met the woman who would become her wife and her interest in hormones lessened as she realized that she was not truly a transsexual. But there must have been something that didn't feel right about it even before she stopped them—although her essay only hints at this feeling. She tells us, "The bottom line is to make sure that you want to [take hormones] and to see a doctor. Since I am not transsexual, I can't explain how

it should feel, but I do know when it feels wrong. Do you?"

Karen's experience also illustrates the common misstep of some crossdressers who feel they may be or perhaps should "become" transsexual. Her earlier belief that becoming a transsexual would somehow help things work out where they weren't working out before should be a warning sign for anyone whose thought patterns are beginning to run in a parallel fashion. In another article I came across this month, a counselor commented that most transsexuals who have some post-operation regrets feel that way because the surgery does not remove one's problems, in fact it can magnify them.

TURN OUT THE LIGHTS, THIS COLUMN'S OVER

There are a few things that deserved some mention without the extensive analysis I usually give to my subjects. Such as...

A couple of newsletters reprinted an anonymous posting from the Internet that was, for the most part, a pretty good explanation of crossdressing and transgenderism for the uninitiated. It was laid out in a question and answer format. The only bum steer in the posting was the answer to this question: "Can crossdressers be cured?" The author mentioned that the current belief among professionals was that crossdressers cannot be cured, rather they are urged to make peace with their desire to express their femininity.

This answer, I thought, missed the boat entirely. In a monograph published as far back as 1985, a Dr. H. Lector wrote that crossdressers can indeed be cured over smoking hickory logs for periods between 7 to 10 days. Dr. Lector reported that the taste was generally satisfying although the texture was still somewhat tougher than a good ham cured for the same period.

Would somebody please clue me in to the arcanery of the Imperial Courts of Drag Queens? This is some sort of organization with branches throughout the country and they seem to be a kind of Masonic Lodge where wigs and

continued on page 15



Gender Reflections

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

In The Best Interest Of The Child

One of the most challenging issues brought to a therapist is that of disclosing and explaining transgender behavior to children in a family. In earlier articles I have written about whether and when to disclose ("What About the Children?") and the impact of not disclosing ("Keeping Secrets"). This article will focus on helping parents keep the best interest of their children predominant as they contemplate disclosure of a transgender parent.

Patty and Paul came to me around a disagreement over whether to tell their teenage son, Pete, about Paul's cross-dressing. Pete had found female clothing in Patty's closet that he knew was not his mother's. He confronted his parents separately and was clumsily put off by each until they could seek professional advice. While Patty had known of and accepted Paul's dressing for years, she had never planned to reveal this to their son. Paul felt that this was as good a time as any to tell him.

After eliciting a description of

Pete's psychological adjustment (stable), and his relationship with his parents (good), a new question arose. Why was Pete rummaging through his mother's closet? It occurred to all three of us that Pete, himself might be a crossdresser. It was decided that these parents should reveal to Pete his father's proclivity, in view of the possibility that the boy was similarly inclined and needed support and information about this behavior. Should it develop that there is another explanation for Pete's interest in his mother's closet, his stable psychological adjustment, good relationship with his parents, and their acceptance of crossdressing in their home, would predispose Pete to accept his father's behavior with a minimum of discomfort.

This is an example in which two parents were able to put their child's needs first and make secondary their concerns about Pete telling a friend, losing respect for his parents and any one of a number of less important issues.

Lila and Lester were the parents of three sons. They had a relationship of conditional affection and respect. In other words, Lila's affection and respect was conditional on Lester's keeping his crossdressing under wraps. That meant he was strictly limited with regard to when and where he could dress. Under no condition was he to socialize with other CDs or leave the house dressed. The consequences would be that his behavior would be revealed to their sons.

They came to therapy because Lester was increasingly interested in meeting and socializing with other transvestites ever since a chapter of a national "sorority" was established in a nearby town. Lila saw this interest as an escalation of his "problem" which could only be contained by threats of the harshest measures. It was clear to me that she meant business as she explained that if she "lost" Lester, she had no intention of sharing their children with him.

Lila is a good example of a woman so obsessed with controlling her spouse's behavior that she has lost sight of her children's best interest. It was only when I asked her how she would feel if her children blamed her for telling on their father and instead, rallied around him and deserted her, that she reconsidered her position. This bought time to work with her around developing an understanding and appreciation of each parents' role in the lives of their children.

Neither parent has the right to deprive a child of a loving and competent parent, even if that parent has characteristics, ideas or values that conflict with the other. Infantile parents with unresolved dependency needs are the ones who have the most difficulty subsuming their needs in the interest of those of their children. Not only are they causing their children psychic pain, they are creating a new generation of parents who will exploit their children in turn.



Background Papers

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

Significant Other Support

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

Pen Pal Program

If you would like to correspond with other people around the country, contact PenPals, attention Georgia Hilbert, PO Box 10723, Midwest City, OK 73140-1723 or email to: <75474.1025@compuserve.com>

The True Meaning Of Community

by Linda Kaye

Although I generally write about partners issues, I want to take this opportunity to talk about community. There has been a lot of discussion recently about the pros and cons of the transgender community in America today. In fact, both Vanessa and I have written about our perceptions and our responses to some of the things going on out there. We don't like what we see when we read of feuds, condemnations, accusations, and prejudices which often abound in this venue.

I was actively and visibly involved in the transgender community for some eight years, serving on a variety of boards and as a leader, both of a transgender support group and of partners support groups and conferences.

I served on the boards of directors of both Tri-Ess and I.F.G.E., as well as helping establish the now wildly successful Southern Comfort conferences. I worked hard along the sides of other women to establish S.P.I.C.E. and was lucky enough to see its value. I have been blessed with knowing a variety of people throughout the country who are involved (and not so involved) in transgender issues and groups, and I count amongst my friends many cross-dressers, partners, transsexuals, transgenderists, and helping professionals. I have seen the value of true dedication of those who wish to help, and I have genuinely felt the pain and fears and joys of both those transgendered, and those who love them.

The transgender community is no different from any other community of individuals. There are always those with large egos, those with humbleness, those who wish to be served and those who wish to serve. The transgender community is made up of human beings, a variety of personalities, as well as a wide range of differences. That such a melting pot could live to-

tally in peace is a pipe dream, but despite the idealism of such a thought, there is nothing wrong in hoping that such peace could happen.

In the last two years, there have been substantial changes in my life. I am no longer so much in the public view. My personal life has changed drastically, and these changes have been both painful and joyful. Other people have chosen to "perceive" how those changes came about and they have often chosen to judge. The truth is known to only a few, and that is my choice. Rather than raise issues that would hurt others, it is better to simply let the past be and get on with today.

An unfortunate happenstance that resulted from the personal changes in my life was the disruption of a very good friendship with Jane Ellen and Mary Fairfax, of Tri-Ess. Lack of communication, pain, anger, frustrations - all of these combined to create a rift from two people I had long liked, worked with and treasured as friends. The rift continued unabated for a year before Vanessa and I tired of the fight and asked for peace. Jane Ellen and Mary were wary, as we were, but the truth is that fighting, backbiting, accusations (true or false) simply do not work and only create more distress. Perhaps more important, the bickering and sniping only served to hurt others, who didn't deserve to be hurt.

So we established a wary peace, and have made honest attempts (on both sides) to open a communication, despite the differences in ideologies. Perhaps we are discovering that we are not as different as we thought. We recognize Jane Ellen's and Mary's true dedication to serving and I am personally well aware of the many sacrifices they have made over the years in their efforts to serve. In fact, they do too much, and the community allows it, ignoring the fact that they are human,

too, and could often use a rest.

The point of all this is to tell you about a rare gift that Jane Ellen has given us, her former "enemies." Recently, Vanessa and I have been undergoing a stressful time. Vanessa's ex-wife has been denying visitation rights with her son, and it is currently in the courts. This denial is based totally on the fact that Vanessa is transgendered. In any event, once this denial became known to us, I suggested to Vanessa that we turn to Jane Ellen to ask for help. Considering our former joint animosity, it was a humbling thing to do, but one I felt right in suggesting. We had no idea how Jane Ellen would respond, if at all. What we got was a lovely gift of friendship, caring, concern and willingness to help in anyway she could. It takes a large heart to ignore the past and instead reach out to help a former foe who is now in need. Jane Ellen never blinked and simply responded immediately. She offered not only that caring, but also sound advice, which we have followed.

I don't expect us to ever agree on many issues, but the message here is one of value. Jane Ellen, a devout Christian, no doubt responded in Christian love. Although Vanessa and I both profess spiritual beliefs, we took her response instead as that of simple friendship, concern for someone in pain and stress. Jane Ellen's response is what this community should be about. It is putting aside differences, beliefs and simply reaching out to help. It is time to put aside the prejudices, to put aside sarcastic, hateful reactions to those different from oneself and to concentrate on those within the community who are reaching out for help. Jane Ellen's response to our need is a great example to follow.



Hot Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



“When the need arises – and it does – you must be able to shoot your own dog. Don’t farm it out. That doesn’t make it nicer. It makes it worse.”

— Lazarus Long



For a while there I thought we might have to heed Mr. Long’s words, but it looks like we’ve survived the first organizational crisis in **GenderPAC**. At the mobilization meeting last November, an agreement was made (or at least several of us thought it was made) to change the name of the news service providing information about gender activism. **In Your Face**, the newsletter of transgender activism was deemed a bit too controversial and too “in your face” for association with GenderPAC. So, when press releases and news releases continued to go out under the *In Your Face* banner noting it as a news service of GenderPAC, some board members got a might testy. After much heated debate, talk of resignations and talk of firings, everyone seems to have calmed down. The real issue is “who is in charge here?” the Executive Director, **Riki Wilchins**, or the board of directors. That issue seems yet to be settled to everyone’s satisfaction. As for *In Your Face*, it will continue to be published, but not by GenderPAC. Stay tuned for further developments.



The December 10th issue of the **Advocate** is notable for two reasons. First, it

has an article about the **GenderPAC** Mobilization Meeting that took place in early November. We can use all of the good press, gay or otherwise, that we can get. Second, it has the most interesting back page editorial by columnist **Gabriel Rotello**. Rotello says he thinks that gays and lesbians are really transgendered and that homophobes bust on gays and lesbians, not for their sexual choice, but because of their so-called inappropriate gender roles. I like the way this Rotello fellow thinks. I’ve been saying the same thing for a couple of years now. Finally, someone listened.



Gender Identity Dysphoria as a diagnosis available under the **Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)** from the **American Psychiatric Association** is under attack by trans-activists who claim the diagnosis is being used improperly by some therapists to incarcerate queer youth. The activists are protesting and lobbying the APA to remove GID from the DSM. Doing so, however, would have serious financial and social repercussions for transsexuals. For example, trans-people would face the loss of their healthcare and civil rights in Oregon and Washington states where being transgendered is legally defined as a disability. **Diana Slyter** a pro-GID activist noted; “ITA [It’s Time America!] has opened an Oregon chapter with their sole stated goal the elimination of Oregon trans-people’s civil rights under Oregon’s disability rights laws. With ‘friends’ like these, who needs Jesse Helms?” My two cents worth on the subject is this: why not protest against the publishers of chemistry books that tell you how to make explosives. It’s the same principle. Trash the editor instead of the terrorist who makes and uses the bomb. The problem with GID isn’t the diagnosis; it does exist as a disorder. The problem isn’t the DSM; it’s simply a dictionary. The problem is the unethical therapist who abuses them.



Jennifer Wells wasn’t afraid to shoot her own dog. Not more than two weeks after posting her message about the **New York Hate Crimes Documentation Project**, Wells pulled the plug after the initial person she was trying to help turned on her. According to Wells, while investigating the incident that prompted the documentation project, she discovered some discrepancies in the alleged victim’s story. After a confrontation with Wells over those discrepancies, the young transsexual said that Wells lost control and attacked her physically. Now, I don’t know the person Jennifer was trying to help, but I do know Jennifer Wells and I just don’t believe that she attacked another person, let alone another transsexual. I could be wrong, but I don’t think so. Anyway, Wells posted some hard learned lessons:

Lesson #1: Don’t Try to Help Anyone in the T-community

Lesson #2: Don’t Trust Anyone In the T-community

Lesson #3: If you do try to help anyone in the T-community, sooner or later it will come back to haunt you.

Lesson #4: The T-community suspects anyone who attempts anything productive.

Lesson #5: The T-community will ultimately turn against anyone who shows leadership... There were more, but you get the idea.



(Shameless Plug) We’re hosting a virtual beauty pageant at the **Transgender Forum** <<http://www.tgforum.com/tgf/content1.html>>. A cyberial, imperial Queen of the Internet will be crowned by popular vote. The winner will be lavished with all manner of goodies and win a free trip to a major gender event. Surf on over and check it out.



I promised to pass this along. **TransgenderNet** is a network of BBS systems which carry one or more TG-oriented discussion “echoes.” The active echoes include a general discussion echo, a crossdresser-only echo, a part-

HOT•BUZZ

ners echo, an echo dealing with transgender politics, echoes on transition and post-op discussion (both a MTF and a FTM echo are included), a BDSM echo, and a personal contact echo. TGNet is free of charge except for the cost of the BBS calling a *hub* system overnight to exchange mail and echo posts. These echoes are not available on **Usenet**, via Internet listserv, or **AOL**, **CompuServe**, **Prodigy**, **MSN**, etc. Unfortunately, as many of TGNet's original member BBSs saw their traffic levels drop and their users migrate to the Internet, they shut down and left holes in TGNet's connectivity. The founder of TGNet, Beverly Copeland shut down her own BBS, *Feminet* and handed off control to Russ Goodale of *The Room Next Door* in Seattle. Even in this era of "the Internet is everything" there are still many transgender friendly BBS systems up and running. This is an invitation to those BBSs to join TGNet and expand the number of participating voices in our echoes. If anyone has a favorite BBS that would be a good TGNet affiliate, urge them to have their sysop contact Kym Richards<sysadmin@xconn.com> or Russ <my.gizmo@trnd.serv.net> for connection information.

I got in some hot water with one of the *Renaissance News & Views* advertisers last month because I mentioned a lingerie store in **Phoenix**, Arizona. I'm sorry for upsetting an advertiser, but this column is internationally syndicated and appears in six different publications at last count. I have readers from all over the world, and if any one of them sends me a tip, I'm going to pass it along. Let's not be too parochial here. Besides, I hardly think that someone from the Philadelphia area is going to do business with some store in Arizona rather than one of the local advertisers.

Anyone seen the new **VIVA GLAM** ad from **M•A•C** with **RuPaul** and **k.d.lang**? Sorry kids, doesn't work for me this time. The ad has Ru looking like he's wearing just a bikini. Oh, please! Are we that stupid or what? Ru looks horrid,

just absolutely horrid. I mean it is sooo obvious he's wearing a corset. But, still the schtick with the Viva Glam lipstick is that every cent (not just the profit) goes to AIDs research. According to M•A•C that total is 5.5 million dollars.

See, there's some real benefits to cross-dressing. According to a study done at the University for Spoiled Children (Oops, sorry that's the **University of Southern California**, my son's alma mater), the more often a woman applied an **opaque lipstick**, the less likely she was to develop lip cancer, and that users who applied lipstick more than once daily cut their risk in half.

Miss Plus USA is the newest of the beauty pageants for women from size 14 and up. The winner for 1996 was **Vanessa Murphy** who measures a zaftig 40-33-44. What's really interesting is that the **Barbizon School of Modeling** has a special \$1200 course for the larger women. A spokeswoman for the school said a size 16 "... can't rotate our hips and push out our pelvis in the same way as a size 4... we have to learn to walk gracefully in other ways." Now, if we could just get that Barbizon course taught at the Poconos...

I seem to have ended up with lots of **browns** and **dark blues** in my closet this year. The good news is that one of the freshest looks this season is chocolate brown with navy blue. As each new season arrives, it helps to think about **building** upon a wardrobe rather than buying everything new. Each season brings with it prominent colors. If you're smart, you'll know exactly what to buy that will expand your wardrobe. For example, **purple** is one of the hottest colors this season but there are so many different shades — some are more blue, some more red. There are bright **grapes**, rich **plums** and deep **eggplants**. Find which colors you like and stick with them.

Accessorize! That's the ticket. If you have Christmas gifts to exchange, you might want to treat yourself to some hip, up-to-the-minute **accessories**, like... big, **bold jewelry** is back, long chains, big earrings, major bangles... a shiny vinyl or

patent leather purse in black or the more fashionable dark red this season, prices range from \$10 to \$300 (**Gucci** who started the trend)... **shiny shoes** will do as well, with a blocky heel a must, but if you really want to be on top of the scene, side-zip **ankle boots** in red suede... **belts** are big, especially if they have a big **military style buckle**, and even better if the buckle is engraved with a designer logo, like **CK**... and there are **hats and gloves**, though I've never found a hat yet that fits over my wig, but just in case, look for faux animal prints.

You'll notice I don't have much to say about **fashion** of late. That's because the designers have all taken leave of their senses. There isn't any clothing worth noting because no real woman would be caught dead in anything that's come down the runway. What I'll do here is give you a peek at some new year trends... new silhouette — the dress... "new" color — brown... "new" metallic — bronze... new shirt style — tight tee... "new" fabric — jersey... new respectable underwear — the thong... new fashion capital — London... newest fad — knickers... "new" shoe — sexy, ultra-feminine stilettos (again)...

Here are two books that warrant a mention for the post-holiday gift exchange... **The Lost Artwork of Hollywood** by Fred Basten (Watson-Guption \$40) is a coffee table book that gathers little seen screen gems gathered from the late teens to the forties including some gorgeous colorwork by well-known artists, as well as total unknowns... Near and dear to the heart of many a transvestite is lingerie and thus **Unmentionables: A Brief History of Underwear** by Elaine Benson (Simon & Schuster \$30) would be of immense interest. This book suggests we are what we wear underneath our clothes (no argument from me on that point). The text is full of interesting facts and bits of titillating information.

So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? I think a dog that bites the hand that feeds it ought to be shot. Comments? Write care of this publication or email to <CyberQueen@cdsplib.com>. © 1996 by Creative Design Services.

Ms. Lee Etscovitz, Ed.D.

Making Sense Of It All

I Am A Person

It may seem a bit obvious to state that I am a person, for I am obviously a human being. I am not, for example, an insect. Yet, to carry the metaphor a bit further, people often treat each other as if they really were insects. People even try to stamp each other out, sometimes psychologically, sometimes socially, sometimes vocationally, sometimes physically. In fact, soap operas have a heyday with the interpersonal intrigues growing out of these insect-oriented attitudes and behaviors.

What is even worse than the interpersonal undermining of each other, which we humans endlessly demonstrate, is the way we often undermine ourselves. From what I have observed of my own attitudes and behaviors over the years, I know for a fact that for all I can justifiably blame others for mistreating me, I have treated myself even worse. I have, in effect, stamped out some of my own humanity, some of my own potential, some of my self-belief, and a great deal of my own energy and creativity. I have been my own enemy, my own insect.

The problem with being my own insect-like enemy is that I have had trouble seeing the ways in which I have been self-destructive. I could always see and feel what others were doing whenever their attitudes and actions were against me. For example, I felt ashamed and guilty for many years concerning my transgender wishes, fantasies, and behaviors, secretive though all of it was, or perhaps because it was all so secretive. The shame and guilt served to erode my self-confidence and my overall sense of well-being. I treated myself as if I were no better than an insect that needed to be eradicated, as if I did not deserve to participate fully in the world of human purposes and activities. In other words, I not only lacked self-respect but also did not see myself as a real person entitled to be respected by others, even though others did.

It has been in terms of my long overdue self-recognition and self-ac-

ceptance as a transgendered person that I have at last begun to feel less like an insect and more like a true human being. I now feel I belong on this earth, not crawling around in shame but rather standing tall with dignity. This is not to say that I do not continue to face social and vocational struggles, nor am I free from personal shortcomings. I see more clearly than ever my personal strengths as well as weaknesses. I see myself as a human being with all the hope mixed with uncertainty, the potential mixed with limitation, which simply being human entails. I like myself as the person I now am with all of the naturally accompanying human characteristics. I feel I am entitled to live and to live with others.

My gender change has become the glue which has, at last, helped me to put myself together and to keep myself intact, to give me a sense of wholeness as a person as well as a firmer basis for social involvement. But there is an irony in all of this. Most of my life, as I have said, I felt like an inner freak whose outer image, though socially acceptable, did not match my inner sense of self. In other words, though I was socially and vocationally acceptable to other people, at the same time I felt unacceptable to myself. As I have pointed out, I felt no better than an insect, for I did not really feel like a person. I did not like the outward presentation of myself, nor did I believe I had a right to be the person I felt myself to be on the inside. But now, while I do feel better about myself both inside and out, others often feel uncomfortable with me. I seem to have gone from being an outwardly acceptable person who felt like an inner freak to an inwardly fulfilled person who is sometimes seen as an outer freak.

It seems that, as a woman, I am not always seen simply as a person who has love to share and capabilities to utilize. Part of the problem, of course, may be the fact that I am experiencing what women in general experience. But this fact is in addition to my gender change. I do not give any outward indication of my male roots. My appear-

ance, mannerisms, and voice are apparently okay, in spite of many testosterone-filled years. Nor do I announce to everyone my gender change, but my biological history does follow me around in my medical, legal, educational and vocational records and at times must be revealed. Also, family members and friends, all of whom have known me in the past, now see that I have changed my gender. I am not saying that everyone has difficulty with all of this, but I am saying that gender change is understandably difficult for many people to handle. I myself have certainly spent a good portion of my own life coming to grips with it, so the difficulty on the part of other people is also understandable. It is not something we expect to face in life.

My work as a gender educator is one of the ways I try to help others understand this particular phenomenon, not just within the transgender community itself but also in the wider community in which we all live and work. It is thus true that I do reveal to some people my gender change. And yet, the more I write and speak about the transgender phenomenon, especially in terms of myself as an example of it, the more I may be contributing to my own depersonalization. That is part of the ironic twist to all of this, for I do want to be seen as more than simply a phenomenon. Hopefully my own humanity will shine through it all, for I know I am more than a transsexual; I am a woman. I am an American citizen; I am a person. Perhaps a brief poem I have written, called "On Being Different," will add a bit more depth to what I am trying to say:

*Each person is certainly different,
but a difference not everyone knows,
so all we can do is be patient
and see what we each will disclose.*

*And then we are put to the test
to accept or reject what we see.
The result is what makes us all human,
but love is what makes us all free.*





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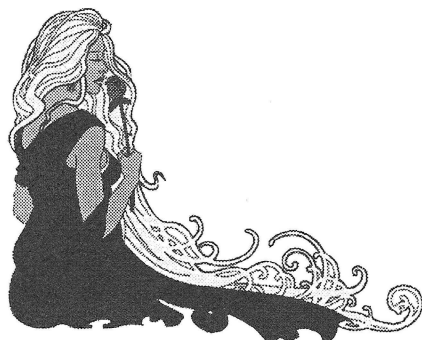
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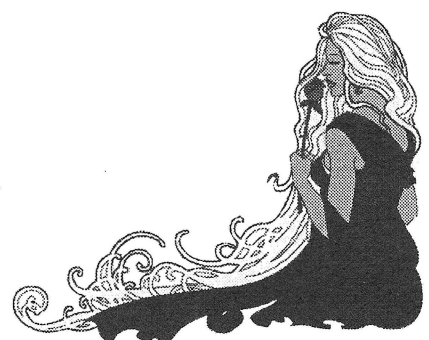
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Vis A Vis...

rhinestones replace the fez's and epauletts. Jackie Evelyn Thorne down in Houston is active in their chapter and the pomp and circumstance surrounding even the simplest club activities is mind-boggling. F'r'instance this nugget: "I [Jackie Thorne] have been honored by Empress XII Ruby Stone in her appointment of me as Queen Mother XII in the line of succession for the Imperial Court of the Single Star." Actually, when I was elected Chapter leader of our Renaissance group a few years ago, they tried to impress me with language like that during my inauguration. It translated to: "And you have to empty the trash cans before you lock the door after each meeting."

The recent split-up of Tommy Lee and Pamela Anderson Lee holds an important message for humankind. Apparently, Tommy was doing drugs and cheating on Pamela Lee after only having been married 21 months. If this doesn't prove that man is by nature not monogamous, I don't know what proof you'd need. How do you trade up from Pamela Anderson? If you can look over at Pamela (who is probably wearing a rubber dress and five inch heels, which seems to be her usual outfit judging by photos in *People* magazine and the *National Enquirer*), and say "Been there, done that," then it proves that anything—and I mean anything—can get old. If Pamela is the postergirl of feminine sexiness, then Tommy Lee must be the poster-boy of base masculinity with the caption:

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BOOK NOOK

A Review by Ms. Lee Etscovitz, Ed.D.,
Renaissance National Librarian

TRUE SELVES: Understanding Transsexualism—For Families, Friends, Coworkers, and Helping Professionals, by Mildred L. Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsley, (Hardbound, 247 pages) San Francisco, Calif., Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.

Mildred L. Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsley's **True Selves** is a breath of factual and compassionate air in a world often polluted by ignorance, misinformation, and outright prejudice concerning transsexualism. The book's primary aim is to help those who come in direct contact with transsexuals to understand them as persons engaged in a struggle of life-shaking proportions, a struggle born out of necessity and not out of choice.

This compassionate understanding is made possible by a logical progression of chapters embracing a comprehensive list of highly pertinent topics. For example, the first five chapters deal with transsexualism as a dilemma, the childhood years, the teen years, the adult years, and therapy. These topics help us to understand the transsexual's inner struggle for self-acceptance in the face of the gradual realization that he or she may not be out of his or her mind after all but rather out of his or her proper body.

Given this self-realization, which is easy to state but often painful in its development, the transsexual then faces the usually arduous outer task of making the transition from one gender to the other in the context of society. The next five chapters, therefore, discuss the beginning of such a transition, the transition and the workplace, bringing the news home, medical and surgical options, and guidelines for support. Since we live in a bipolar society, which means that people in general are identifiable as either male or female and not as something ambiguously inbetween, a transsexual seeks acceptance as the male or female he or she presents to the world. Unfortunately, acceptance by family, friends, and coworkers is not always forthcoming. The authors, with realism and compassion, discuss the transsexual's social struggle. The chapter on bringing the news home and the chapter offering guidelines for support speak directly to the pain suffered by transsexuals as they try to live a normal life, a life of productivity, enjoyment, and friendship.

Several autobiographical statements by transsexuals themselves help us to understand the overall struggle which their experience entails. A female-to-male transsexual, for example, is worth quoting: "Every day is a

struggle for me because I know I have to play a role I'm not comfortable in. It stresses me out so much! I'm sick and tired of the whole charade! At work, I present a cheerful image. So they expect me to be all feminine and happy. They're used to seeing me with a smile on my face all the time. If they only knew the pain and torture I'm going through!"

At the very end of the book the authors provide a resource guide containing the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of many transgender organizations throughout the United States, some hotline telephone numbers, and transgender websites on the internet. A brief but useful bibliography is also included. Overall, this is a book which is meant for anyone who wants to understand the transsexual phenomenon, not just for the sake of knowledge but also to improve one's way of dealing with the transsexuals with whom one comes in personal contact. This may be one of the best books yet on this whole topic.



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Good Tidings... For Some

by Jennifer Barnes

Countertenor Derek Lee Ragin sang alto in the Philadelphia Orchestra performances of Handel's *Messiah* on December 1 and 3, 1996. The *Messiah* is an oratorio, not an opera, so no crossdressing was involved. Nonetheless, when I raised my eyes and looked at the chandelier while Mr. Ragin was singing, I could not tell that a woman was not singing. Derek Lee Ragin was heard as the singing voice and on the soundtrack of the 1994 movie *Farinelli: Il Castrato*.

Countertenors tend to have regular male speaking voices, but have the range to sing female parts because of their highly developed falsetto. The use of countertenors to sing alto parts is on the rise for two reasons. The first reason is historical authenticity. The Baroque opera regularly used castrati to play female roles. The use of castrati ceased in Italy at the end of the Eighteenth Century. Unfortunately, there are no recordings from the Baroque era, but it has been argued on the basis of Baroque treatises that countertenors can duplicate the sound of castrati naturally. An authentic instrument movement arose in the sixties and seventies which has advocated the use of all male choirs, just as Bach used them. No females would have been permitted in church choirs performing Bach's Cantatas in his day. A second reason is that, while there have always been natural male sopranos and tenors, and the appearance of countertenors seems

to be on the rise, female altos are becoming rare. Furthermore, although in Handel's England, castrati would have been used only in performances of Italian opera, and Handel could have used women, the low notes in Handel's alto arias make them difficult for women to sing. Handel may in fact have used female altos and sopranos, but apparently he composed as though for castrati.

The title of this article derives from my favorite portion of the *Messiah*, the alto air with chorus, "O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion." When I saw (not just heard) Derek Lee Ragin sing, I thought it would open doors. I heard the aria many times on recordings, but I first noticed how beautiful it is when I went to a Handel's *Messiah* Sing-Along at my alma mater. The audience may join in the chorus portions in Sing-Alongs. For some reason, it was difficult to coordinate the air and the chorus in this particular aria, and it had to be redone several times. The piece was beautiful, but I was barred from singing it because I am a genetic male. I thought that the only thing that would bar me from singing it after Derek Ragin would be my bass croak. I thought that after Ragin, people could sing along with the *Messiah* according to vocal competence, not gender.


I thank the person associated with the orchestra for doing two things. First, I appreciate the information he provided me on the history of music, which would have been difficult for me

to research for myself given the deadline for this article and the demands of my job. Second, I thank him for disabusing me of a few illusions. At the present time, I do not think there is much of an element of transgenderism in the use of male countertenors to supplant female altos in classical performances. In a way, this is appropriate. If a male wishes to be female in his singing voice only, he should not have to undergo physical castration to do so. Nor should he have to suffer insinuation that he is gay or transgendered unless in fact he is such and wishes to be known as such. Nonetheless, the transgendered community should note and watch this phenomenon for several reasons.

First, countertenors may begin donning women's clothing to play female parts in Baroque operas. Second, if it is true that there is a rise in men who, without castration, by natural means, can sing ranges normally possible only for genetic women and castrati, while genetic female altos are becoming rare, this should be investigated as regards to possible physical and cultural influences.

Third, I asked an orchestra representative if feminist groups would not protest supplanting genetic women vocalists with countertenors. I noted that the proportion of female instrumentalists in the orchestra is much lower than in music school orchestras. My inter-

continued on page 18



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Opera...

locutor responded that in Europe, for example, in Vienna, the orchestras are all male. But then he said that feminists are not protesting the use of countertenors because this phenomenon is being counterbalanced by the use of women in "trouser roles," that is, performances of Baroque operas where women play all roles, including male roles. I have yet to see the Opera Company of Philadelphia put on such a performance. If feminist groups mount a protest, the transgender community should be prepared to suffer a backlash, despite the fact that the or-

chestra wishes no association between countertenors and transgenderism.

Fourth, there are feminists who advocate female separateness. As a woman's soul in a man's body, adherence to such tenets would be ridiculous for me. I just finished Rene Denfeld's *The New Victorians* and am glad to see genetic female feminists criticize separatism. As I know from experience at a company where I used to work, when departments become all female, it is no advance for women's rights. The jobs become work no male would voluntarily accept. Companies can prey on women by exploiting their traditional role, for example, by promoting women because it is cheaper (due to lower initial rank), they are

cute (giving a good looking young woman executive rank so she can escort a balding runt to high level meetings), or because they are obedient (will become compliant tools of downsizing). On the other hand, the castrati hark from a day when men played women's roles to make the latter superfluous. It was an era in which women were cut off from performance, and performers were, no pun intended, cut off from women, life-long! I have lived through the feminist overreaction to this culture-and entrenchment of it. I became transgendered because I live and work in a pink collar environment, and welcome the presence of genetic female colleagues.



Letter to the Editor

Dear Angela,

I would like to express my feelings on your newsletter! And, how the information you have in the letter is there to help your readers. Or, is it for the writers to get on the soap box for the ego?

Example: Vol. 10, No. 12, December 1996, page 13: How you can get a fitted undergarment and the correct size. And also a brand (of) garment called (a) Smoothie. Well, why go to Arizona when you have it right here in Pa. (at) Romania's Lingerie. All of the above!

To tell you the truth, I wanted to write you for over a year or so. I have a few questions for you. Why do you run ads in your newsletter? What is the purpose? I would say so your group can make money. Would that be correct? Well, that's fine. And what about the advertisers? Do we get to make money from running the ad? If so why haven't you written articles on your advertisers?

I am not the only one who feels this way. But, I am the one who will express my feelings in this matter. I would like to see this letter in your newsletter next month. I wonder how many calls you

would get? But I know you won't print this letter.

I have told many people about your group. I have given your number and a run down on your group. No longer! I will never tell anyone about Renaissance, your group. You should look at who helps you! Then, maybe you should extend yourself to them. One hand really does help the other.

Sincerely,

Josephine B. Thuesen
Romania's Lingerie

PS: I ran an ad in the newsletter for three years. No longer. Please, don't send me anything on your group any longer. Thank you.

Well, since I love to rise to a challenge, that was the letter Ms. Thuesen thought we wouldn't print. She raises a couple of interesting points. Yes, in the past we have not paid as much attention to our advertisers as we should. We have gotten some advertisers mentioned in columns, however, we could be better at that and we will. But, (and you knew I'd have one) Ms. Thuesen admitted to me on the phone the ad she ran with us *did* attract the clientele she was hoping for. She got the value she paid for when she placed her ad.

This newsletter is for *all* of our members, to inform through the editorial content and through the information presented by advertisers. If you, as a reader of the news, visit an advertiser

and get great service, a good deal or have a bad experience please let us know. Write a review or send the info to our shopping column. If you read something in the *News* that you agree with, disagree with, or can add information to, write to us and let us know. From the beginning of *News & Views* we have tried to make this thing a two way communication process.

Which brings me to the second point. If you (a member or an advertiser) have a problem with *anything* about Renaissance—from the newsletter to the meetings to the response you get from a phone call to the office, please let us know. If you wait a year to tell us about it we can't do anything to correct the situation. I'm sorry that Ms. Thuesen didn't mention her feelings sooner and I apologize for the oversights on our part that led to those feelings. It's not a question of writers feeding their egos. It's more that we have a hard working group of people who volunteer their time and skills to produce the newsletter every month. A lot of the time we are facing a deadline and wondering how we're going to fill our space. I think the whole staff does a great job, and I hope you do, too.

JoAnn Robert's reply: Ms. Thuesen is complaining about my column, so please see my reply in this month's *Hot Buzz*.





Ask The Dermatologist

Dear Derma,

I have a patch of skin near my nose that will not hold makeup. Every time I apply makeup there the sponge takes off more than it places. I had a girl friend once who had this problem but I never thought it would happen to me. Is there anyway to recondition this patch of skin? Fortunately it's not in the beard area but I'm afraid someone will notice a bare patch on my otherwise made up face.

Spotty

Dear Spotty,

Since you do not describe a raised skin lesion, scale, or other obvious abnormality, I will assume that the area appears reasonably normal. Since it is near the center of the face, the problem may very well be sebaceous (oil) gland

overactivity, or rosacea, in which both oil glands and the surrounding tissue overgrow. Since most makeups consist of oil, water, and covering material, oil gland overactivity may well cause the skin not to receive makeup.

Several solutions are possible. There is an acne medication, Sulfacet-R, which consists of a drying lotion that contains sulfur and sodium sulfacetamide, that can be used as a makeup base, especially in small areas. It comes with a pigmenting agent you can adjust to the desired color. Cover this with powder, and you may be "Spotty" no more.

Another possible method involves the use of makeup application technique. Rather than sponge on a makeup, you can pat it on, as is done with water-base makeups. Makeup ap-

plied by this technique usually stays put. You may even want to go with one of the better covering water bases in this area. Prescriptives is a good brand of this type. As always, you do best to set the makeup with a pressed powder, which again can be patted on.

Or, you can go in the opposite direction. An extremely heavy makeup, such as Covermark or Dermablend, patted on, may overcome even a lot of underlying oil. These makeup bases cover skin lesions of all types, from bare areas to birthmarks.

Dear Derma,

I have a lot of hair on my hands. This is very inconvenient since I love to cross-

continued on page 24



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Shopping With Jessica

by Jessica Brandon



Greetings, girlfriends, and Happy New Year to one and all! I hope everyone enjoyed the best the holidays had to offer, and that Santa brought you everything you asked for and more! As for moi, I'm now doing my shopping columns on a brand new Apple Power Macintosh, courtesy of my alter ego, Jeff, who, on occasion, can be a really swell guy! Now, if he can get me one of those diamond studded, million dollar bras Victoria's Secret was pushing, then I'll love him forever!

But I digress, it's time to talk shopping! To start off the new year, I wanna talk about boobs, no, I don't mean stupid people, arrogant athletes or scummy politicians, I'm talking about the various forms of forms we stuff into our bras to give us that wonderfully busty feeling. Now, since the majority of us are "mammarilly challenged" (i.e. flat chested), we have to resort to all sorts of clever homemade inventions to fill out our bras, everything from birdseed, rolled up socks and BB pellets to the water boobs made famous by JoAnn Roberts. Me? I've just about used them all!

Eventually, some of us gravitate towards using prosthetic breastforms, the kind used by women who have had a mastectomy. These forms, as you no doubt know, are extremely expensive, ranging in price from \$400 to \$500 apiece. Hardly something every Jane Q. Crossdresser can readily afford. Even the well known Mirage breastform (which, when last I checked, costs around \$650 a pair) can be prohibitively, almost obscenely expensive. However, it just so happens that less

costly alternatives are available.

The first alternative is what I currently use, **Curves**. I first saw them advertised in *Cosmopolitan*, so I decided out of curiosity to give them a try. I was pretty amazed with the results. Curves are soft, durable, non-attachable silicone pads that look, feel, weigh and even bounce like real breasts. Once inserted into a bra (preferably an underwire) or swimsuit (the pads are waterproof), Curves warm to your body temperature and mold to your breast shape, making them extremely comfortable to wear, almost to the point where you might forget you're wearing them.

Obtaining a set of Curves couldn't be simpler. Just call 1-800-5-CURVES and tell them which size you want. The Large increases you from 1½ to 2 cup sizes while the Extra Large takes you from 2 to 2½ cups. Heck, they even come tinted for darker skin tones! If that wasn't enough, the forms come in a sturdy case for travel, complete with marked compartments for those of you like me who don't know their left from their right, along with directions on the use and care of the forms. And the cost: under \$150 a pair before shipping. A bargain of Partonesque proportions!

Alternative number two is a similar product called **Accents**. These are also non-attachable silicone pads that can be put into any underwire bra to help fill out your bust. Just like Curves, Accents move, bounce, weigh and feel just like real breasts, molding to your breast shape and warming to your body temperature. Accents also come in two tones, cream and taupe, I or-

dered the taupe, but weren't quite as dark in color as the mocha color of Curves. In addition, Accents also comes in a sturdy container separated into left and right compartments.

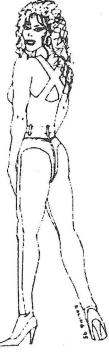
I ordered a pair of Accents and they came pretty quickly, thanks to FedEx. In addition to the forms themselves, I also ordered a cleaning kit for an added \$10.00. The instructions for the use, placement and care of the forms are quite upfront and simple to follow. I wore the forms in a bra and spent a Sunday wearing them from sun up to bedtime and found them very comfortable. After awhile, I almost forgot I had them on as they felt very natural to me. However, Accents cost less than Curves at only \$89.95 before shipping. If you're interested, call the company at 1-800-714-3399.

If you want something to put your Curves or Accents in, you might be interested in knowing that the legendary **Wonderbra** now comes in a satin strapless model for around \$26 (but are cheaper through mail order in the One Hanes Place catalog) in all the better department stores from coast to coast. I put it through a day long test for comfort (on the same day I tested the Accents) and it passed with flying colors on that score. In my book, you should have a good strapless bra or two in your lingerie drawer and this model of the Wonderbra is a winner.

The aforementioned **Victoria's Secret** also makes some pretty good bras. In addition to their **Miracle Bra** which comes in satin, lace and studded diamond, they also have a model called **Perfect Silhouette** which is seamless so it won't show underneath clothing. I wore one under a tight turtleneck and it provide a smooth, natural look. The Perfect Silhouette comes in a classic back close version, a racerback with a front close and a convertible model with removable straps. If you want a V.S. catalog, call 1-800-888-800.

Now for an update from last month. As promised, I put **Revlon's New Complexion One Step Makeup** through its paces recently at the Renaissance Holiday Party. Just as with

continued on page 23



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Call me, Mistress Eva Johnson for counseling and fantasy exploration. Ms. Scarlet, Sweet TV Kelly and myself are available to train or transform you into the glamour girl, or demure girl you desire to be.

Privacy assured. Call now for free 24 hour info: 215-602-2888.

Shopping...

Clinique's City Base, New Complexion went on smoothly, covered completely, felt light on my face and had lasting power, even after a long night of merriment. With a whopping 16 shades, New Complexion will work for just about anyone. As I've mentioned previously, Revlon has greatly impressed me with the quality of their products, especially their excellent **ColorStay** line.

Lastly, here's an item that everyone should have for what I call "safe shoe wearing." Prior to the Henri David's Halloween Ball, I bought a pair of pumps and had them dyed to match a red dress. Since these pumps sported four inch spikes, I worried about slipping. So, I bought a product called shoe sole ground grippers. These are pads with a rough, stucco like surface that you attach to the soles of your shoes via adhesive backing. Once on, they give you traction on wet or slick surfaces, ideal for new shoes.

Well, girls, that's it for now. In next month's column, I'll be starting a regular feature where I'll spotlight the advertisers you see here every month in the pages of *News & Views*. If you wanna rap to me about shopping or pass a tip along, you can buzz me at <treetop@voicenet.com>. Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping, sisters!



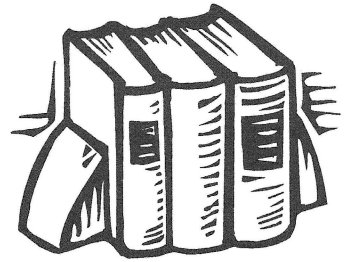
Lives...

females take full advantage of a world denied their male counter parts. Unlike gender dysphoric males who avoid gay life with a passion, these women often move into the lesbian community. There they have a history of easily finding someone who enjoys their unique blend of maleness and femaleness. They also take full advantage of the social acceptance of short hair on women and the wearing of gender neutral clothing. Add a few male affects and the image, if not the fact, of maleness is almost complete.

By now the picture is clear. As the decades pass, anxiety and depression places an ever growing burden on life. Typically, life stagnates and becomes something to endure. Some people turn to drugs and alcohol to mollify the pain. When that too becomes intolerable, thoughts of suicide creep in and all too often becomes the solution of choice.

Unfortunately, this is an all too familiar pattern. The only way to end the dysphoria, like any other problem one faces in life, is to come to terms with it. Acceptance is the key here. Acceptance of gender diversity and acceptance of an answer based on the reality of what is possible. The good news is that what is possible usually far exceeds initial expectations. Thanks to the influence of modern therapeutic understanding of gender issues, there are now thousands of people who have worked through their fears and are leading authentic lives. For all of you who have yet to face your gender issues, it's time to let the waiting end.

© 1996 by Anne Vitale, Ph.D., a psychotherapist specializing in gender related issues. She is an associate of the D Street Counseling Group, 610 D Street, San Rafael CA 94901, (415) 456-4452, Internet: <avitale@nbn.com>.



From The Renaissance Library

The bimonthly meeting of Discussion Plus, a discussion group sponsored by the Renaissance Library under the guidance of our National Librarian, Dr. Lee Etscovitz, was held on Wednesday, December 4 from 8 to 9:30 PM at The Woods. The meeting was conducted by Gloria Vogel, the assistant discussion leader and a member of Renaissance with professional experience in facilitating group discussions. Gender identity was the major topic for the session. The next meeting, which is open as usual to everyone at no charge, will be on Wednesday, February 5, 1997 at 8 PM at the Woods. For further information, please call Dr. Etscovitz at (215) 657-1560.

Two new books have been received by the library:

1. **Counseling In Genderland: A Guide for You and Your Transgendered Client**, by Niela Miller (Paperback, 200 pages) Boston, MA: Different Path Press, 1996.

2. **True Selves: Understanding Transsexualism - For Families, Friends, Coworkers, and Helping Professionals**, by Mildred L. Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsley (Hardbound, 247 pages) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.

Both books are excellent. **Counseling In Genderland** was reviewed in the November, 1996 issue of *News and Views*. **True Selves** is reviewed in this issue.



♥ Marilyn's Wigs

Large Selection

René of Paris, Henry Margu, Eva Gabor and more.

Call for appointment

Dear Derma...

dress regularly and nobody likes a girl with furry hands. I know one of our girls who plucks the hairs out with tweezers. I have been considering this since electrolysis seems like an expensive solution. I know you can pluck your brows. Are there any drawbacks to plucking the hair on your hands?

Follically Gifted

Dear Gifted,

Plucking the hair out of the hands is an acceptable way to remove it temporarily, although it is about as pleasurable as a leisurely Epilady. The main problem is that careless technique may

cause a bacterial infection of the follicles. Electrolysis will remove the hair permanently. How quickly the removal occurs depends upon the skill of the operator and your own hair's propensity to regrow. As you say, it is expensive, and can lead to a variable degree of scarring. It is not a procedure I would recommend to anyone with a history of keloid formation (overgrown scars). Epilating creams can be effective, but can cause severe irritant reactions.

On balance, I favor waxing or sugaring. Both these techniques have the effect of a massive pluck. These procedures, which are done by cosmeticians, cost in the \$60 to \$80 range. Sugaring is probably the less painful of the procedures, but not all cosmeticians use this technique. Doing the forearms and

hands takes about 90 minutes, more or less, depending on the amount of hair present. The chief side effect is a hive-like reaction, caused by release of histamine around the hair follicles. Usually, this lasts only a few hours. The most pleasant side effect for crossdressers is that, over time, the hair tends to thin out, as a certain number of hairs seem to get discouraged and don't grow back. After waxing, the hair usually takes about 6 to 8 weeks to grow back. So the crossdresser contemplating this technique may have to evaluate it in the light of family functions or summer activities. On the other hand (so to speak!), his hands and arms may be "good" for two genderland conventions!



Happy New Year and best wishes from the staff of
Renaissance News & Views

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AUNT MONA WANTS YOU!

Renaissance is about people helping people. If you'd like to get in the swing, get in touch.

If you're in the Greater Philadelphia area we could use your help in the National Office:

1. Talking to people who are in need of contact with other transgendered people as a member of the Phone Watch.

2. Join the Library Team and help organize the Renaissance Library, cut and paste newspaper articles, file newsletters from other groups.

3. Join the newsletter mailing crew and help get out the *News*.

If you're not near the National Office:

1. Write articles for *News & Views*.

2. Organize a local chapter. (If there is none in your area.)

3. Write to lonely people who aren't near a Renaissance chapter and give them emotional support and information.

Yes, Aunt Mona wants you. Send a note to the office with your address, phone number, email, etc. and mark it to the attention of "Volunteers" or call us and leave a message for Angela Gardner. You can do a lot to help Renaissance grow.

987 Old Eagle School Road, Suite 719, Wayne, Pa. 19087

◆ Phone: 610-975-9119 ◆ email: bensalem@cpcn.com ◆

Splish Splash I was taking a swim—and somebody snapped my picture!

Remember, next month is the **Annual Renaissance News & Views Swimsuit Issue!** Get your photo in a bathing suit to us right away. Deadline for being included is January fifteenth. Run to the post office! (No, don't run—you'll trip in those stilletos and hurt yourself. Walking is fine.) Send your swimsuit photo to: Swimsuit, c/o Renaissance. PO Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020.

See you in *News & Views* in February!

If you participated in the Speaker Training Session last year, please make sure we have your address and phone number on file. Drop us a note with that information and your daytime availability. Thanks for participating.

Membership Application/Renewal

Mailing Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

If this is a renewal, please enter your current membership number: _____

Note: All memberships are good thru Dec. 31st of the current year. If you join after February 1st, you may obtain back issues of the newsletter free on request. Dues after Oct. 1st are the full amount but count for the following calendar year. Please mark your choice(s) below:

Renaissance Greater Philadelphia, 987 Old Eagle School Rd, Suite 719, Wayne, PA, 19087

\$40 per calendar year.

Renaissance Lehigh Valley, PO Box 3624, Allentown, PA 18106

\$40 per calendar year.

Renaissance Lower Susquehanna Valley, PO Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105

\$40 per calendar year.

Renaissance Delaware, PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808

\$40 per calendar year.

Newsletter subscription only, 987 Old Eagle School Rd, Suite 719, Wayne, PA, 19087

\$24 per calendar year.

Additional donation to national \$_____ (tax deductible)

Membership in a chapter includes a national newsletter subscription. Make all checks or money orders payable to *Renaissance*. Mail this form to your chapter or to the national office.

Membership Change of Name or Address

If you have changed your mailing name or address since you last renewed your membership, please complete this form to insure uninterrupted delivery of your newsletter and other important information.

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