



# News & views

Vision • Integrity • Quality

Vol. 9, No. 4 • April 1995

# Renaissance

## Just When You Thought It Was Safe To Be Stupid... It's The 1995 MONAs!

That's right ladies (and gentlemen) it's something we haven't done for awhile but we said, "Hey, let's dust off those old MONA statuettes and give out a few in the April issue." MONAs aren't like the Philadelphia Chapter's Rennie Awards. Oh no, those are given out to women that the chapter picks as good role models. The MONA is a Renaissance National presentation and the name stands for: **Meaningless, Obscure, Nonsense Awards.**

These prestigious awards are picked by the *News & Views* editorial staff. Do we have some obscure ritual or esoteric method by which we pick these lucky winners? No. Whenever we feel like it, we sit around, attired in elegant drag, sipping aperitifs, noshing on dainty finger sandwiches and thinking about every stupid thing that we've observed in the community over the past year. Then, we give them an award. Here are this years lucky winners:

**The "Nobody Likes A Whiner" Award**—to Linda and Cynthia Phillips for complaining so loudly that the International Congress on Gender, Cross Dressing and Sex Issues would draw people away from the Texas "T" Party. It didn't.

**The "Dale Carnegie" Award**—to IFGE for their remark that California Dreamin' is "for fun" while IFGE's Coming Together conference is "serious." Registration at IFGE's conference this year was at an all-time low.

**The "I Like The Dark Ages" Award**—cheerfully presented to everyone who worked against the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance.

**The "Orkin Terminator" Award**—to Laura Caldwell of IFGE for this comment on the recent

transgender alliance Pledge for Community: "We have to stop this before it gets started!"

**The "Darwin Was Right" Award**—to everyone who believed last year's *Renaissance News & Views* April cover story.

**The "All Fizz, No Soda" Award**—to It's Time America. After a blitzkrieg announcement of political lobbying goals this summer, nothing else has been heard from them.

**The "We Ain't No Preverts" Award**—to Jeri Lee and *Transformations* magazine for publishing a magazine with pornographic drawings and photos of transvestites and she-males, and then claiming to represent the transgender community.

**The "For Your Eyes Only" Award**—to Spartacus and Michael Salem for selling names from their crossdresser mailing lists.

**The "Preverts Need Not Apply" Award**—to the Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich for this gem of Newt Speak: "I am not prepared to establish a Federal law that allows you to sue your employer if you end up not having a job because of a disagreement that involves your personal behavior at that level. Does that mean, for example, a transvestite should automatically have the right to work as a transvestite? I don't think so."

That's it for the 1995 MONAs. Just think, if you do or say something stupid in the next few months maybe we'll include you whenever we get around to doing this again.

NB.: The MONAs are a joke. No statuettes, certificates or poker chips will be sent to the winners.



## IFGE: Lynn-Out, Laing-In

The International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) announced the resignation of Merissa Sherrill Lynn, founder and philosophical architect of the organization. The announcement was made at the IFGE annual convention in Atlanta, March 18. No official statement was available from Ms. Lynn, but insiders, who requested anonymity, say she was forced to resign or be fired.

At the same time, IFGE announced Alison Laing will fill the position of Executive Director of IFGE at a date to be determined, probably late summer. Ms. Laing currently serves as Chair of the board of the Outreach Institute, and sits on the boards of AEGIS and Renaissance.

Congratulations Alison! IFGE couldn't have picked anyone better.





# Chapter & Affiliate Information

## Chapters

### Delaware

**Wilmington, Delaware:** meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wil-mington, DE 19808 or call 302-995-1396.

### Maryland

A chapter is forming in the Baltimore area. Watch for more information.

### New Jersey

**South Jersey/Shore Area:** Write Renaissance South Jersey, Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ, 08330. Meets first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee City. Doors open 7PM. Call 609-641-3782 for details.

### 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 p.m. all year 'round. Call 610-975-9119 for information.

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

## Affiliates

### Georgia

**Atlanta:** The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 404-939-0244. Information resources.

**Atlanta:** Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 404-939-2128.

### Louisiana

**New Orleans:** The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 870213, New Orleans, LA 70187-1300. Local support group.

### New Jersey

**N. Central Jersey:** Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701 or call 908-219-9094.

### New York

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

**Long Island:** New York GIRL & Partners, 149 South Howell Ave., Centereach, NY 11720, Call 516-732-8219 for info.

### Oklahoma

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

# 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. 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.

## Local Calendar

### April

- 1 Ren. South Jersey
- 1 Ren. LSV meeting
- 8 Ren. Delaware
- 15 Ren. GPC
- 22 Balto. Affiliate

### May

- 6 Ren. South Jersey
- 6 Ren. LSV meeting
- 13 Ren. Delaware
- 20 Ren. GPC
- 27 Balto. Affiliate

### June

- 3 Ren. South Jersey
- 3 Ren. LSV meeting
- 10 Ren. Delaware
- 17 Ren. GPC
- 24 Balto. Affiliate



## Resources



### Background Papers:

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

### Significant Other Support

To network with other partners of transgendered people contact Evelyn Kirkland, PO Box 1242, Newtown, Pa., 18940.

### Pen Pal Program:

If you would like to correspond with other people around the country contact Pen Pals, care of Maryann Kirkland, PO Box 1242, Newtown, Pa., 18940. Maryann will put you on the Pen Pal List and give you a copy of that list so you may correspond with as many new friends as you like.



# News Beat & Reminder



by Angela Gardner

Every April we here at *News & Views* try to come up with some kind of funny **April Fools** joke to spring on the unsuspecting readers. Last year we did the phony front cover that was "written" by the "new editor" telling about how JoAnn and I were not doing the newsletter anymore. The year before we were more subtle. The only nod to April Fools was replacing the Mona Lisa with a photo of noted dinosaur, Earl Sinclair. What can I say? We loves the fun stuff.

This year we return to a Mona Lisa motif for April Fools, by handing out an outrageous batch of **MONA Awards**. (No trophy will be presented, no salesman will call at your home.) Remember, we give these awards in the spirit of fun. It's nothing personal. Yeah, right. And now—the steamy sludge of script that worms its way out of my word processor, yes, the latest addition to that continuing opus, *News Beat & Reminder!* (Is that any name for a column? I ask ya.)

## I RU MY REPORTAGE

Okay, I'm not omniscient. I thought Ms. Charles would do the **Brady Bunch** guidance counselor gig in butch mode. Wrong! She did it in a cute little business suit and she said, "You better work." I wasn't that far off, though. It seems Mister Charles will make **his** debut in *A Mother's Prayer*, coming soon on the USA Network. It stars **Linda Hamilton** and RuPaul plays a preppie guy in tweeds.

What more could RuPaul want? She seems to be the embodiment of

the phrase, "You got it going on." The latest addition to the dream queen's list of acquisitions is a fat contract with **M.A.C. Cosmetics**. I've been telling people for years they should hire me to promote makeup. Who better than a drag queen to show what good makeup can do for a girl? I guess M.A.C. thought RuPaul's higher profile would be better in this coveted spokesmodel position. They're probably right. I'm just not famous enough, yet. Till I am maybe I could get a deal with **Wet & Wild**? Get my agent on the phone!

## HELLO DOLLY

**Carol Channing**, who has always been an inspiration to drag queens, is rolling around the country in a production of **Hello Dolly**. It's being billed as her last road show tour of the famous musical. My word! The woman's in her seventies. How does she do it? I couldn't do it. All that time on stage in heels. Brutal. Anyhow, on opening night in Philadelphia one of the local drag queens (David Blake) got a balcony box seat and showed her admiration for Miss Channing by dressing like her. Now, you and I think that's a cute idea, and I'll bet even Carol didn't mind. (I saw Patti Labelle in New York once when she had her hair sticking straight up. There were drag queens in the front row with the same do's and Patti brought them on stage to sing with her. Imagine if Carol had brought her girl down to the stage for the finale.)

Well, they say drag queens are

bitchy. They haven't got anything on the gent who pens the *Philadelphia Inquirer* society column. "What did he say?" you ask. Well, he called David Blake's tribute to Channing a "dubious accolade..." Buddy, the only thing dubious around here is your understanding of drag.

Oh, he's got me so upset, I've gotta calm down. My seamstress will be here any minute with that copy of Carol's finale gown. Just a few more alterations and I'll be able to sit down in it for the whole show, and breathe. Some people follow the Grateful Dead, others find a different drum. 1,2,3,4--Dolly will never go away....

## YOUR 15 MINUTES OF FAME

Actually it's your 200 to 400 words of fame. The University of Florida is publishing the second edition of a textbook titled *Exceptional People*. The author is looking for stories of first person experiences about being diverse in our society. What have you gone through as a result of your transgendered nature? Accounts may be either positive or negative.

Submissions will be chosen for publication on a competitive basis. Those selected must sign a release form. If your experience is published you will get a complimentary copy of the textbook. *Exceptional People* is expected to be published before the end of this year.

Submit your personal account to Mr. Craig Conley, Dept. of Special Education, G-315 Norman Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611. For more information you can call Mr. Conley at 904-392-0701, extension 291.

## HAS ANYBODY SEEN SHIRLEY?

Of course not, silly. *The Shirley Show* I told you about last month hasn't aired yet. I mention this just in case you thought I was nuts when it didn't appear in March. I spoke with the show's producer and he informed me the crossdresser show will run in May during sweeps week. Well, if you've got a show about men in dresses and the women who love them, get the

*continued next page*



## News Beat...

most bang for your buck and run it during a rating period. Makes sense to me. If you miss it on the tube, a copy will eventually be made available in the Ren Library. Check with the librarian for availability and feature times.

### FUNNY FELLOW IN A FROCK

Ms. Alison Laing handed me a copy of a story from an English paper about a lad named Eddie Izzard. It seems Mr. Izzard has been selling 'em out in the West End for simply months and months with a stream of consciousness comedy act. I'm not talking about some dinky little comedy clubs but real theaters with audiences in the 800 to 1000 person range. The really interesting thing about Eddie is, he's an openly transgendered man. (Oh boy, that's just like, "an openly gay man." Now we're makin' progress.)

Eddie is very off-hand about his crossdressing. Sometimes he does his act in "bloke" clothes, sometimes he wear a dress. He says, "...the funny thing about people going on about me wearing dresses is that I really don't consider myself to be a transvestite. People say I wear "women's clothes" but I don't, they're my clothes I'm wearing. Sure I wear dresses and makeup and stuff, but I'm simply wearing what I want to wear."

There is a photo of Eddie in the article and he doesn't look as if he's made a great effort to "pass" as a

woman. His hair is short and his face looks manly, with some subtlety applied makeup, but the point is, here's a guy who has told all of England, "I like to wear dresses and makeup." And, instead of shunning him or reviling him, the British have made him a star. He has done straight acting roles in several plays and is now discussing a television series with the BBC. ("It's called The Cows. Great name isn't it? It's a surreal series about these cows who move into society after the general strike, gradually demanding the vote and full integration.")

He does have a problem with the label, "transvestite but heterosexual." He says, "That's what they're always using in the newspapers about me. I'm not "but" anything. I'm a transvestite who just happens to be heterosexual. I'd be happy to fancy men, but for some reason it just so happens that I don't. I happen to fancy women."

I love the word "fancy." It's really a better way to say you are attracted to someone than, "Boy she get's me hot." Really, we Americans are so crude. Sorry, I transgressed for a moment. Eddie went on to say that one time he was performing for an audience of drag queens and when he said he was heterosexual one of the disbelieving ladies expressed her opinion in a crude (almost American way) by shouting "Liar!" at the stage. "That's the sort of thing you expect from some Nazi in the audience, not from a drag queen." Yes Eddie, intolerance and ignorance are everywhere, even among our own

ranks. Give that queen a label maker. She can put them on everyone's forehead and then we'll know what we're dealing with. Of course, Eddie doesn't need a label. He's just wearing his own clothes. I think we all are, aren't we? Let's hope Eddie hops the pond and does some shows for us soon.

### GOLDDIGGERS WITH A TG TWIST

Michelle [REDACTED] handed me an article from the February issue of *Gentlemen's Quarterly* entitled, **Golddiggers Of '95**. The thrust of the article was that the art of gold digging (using feminine wiles to pry cash, jewels and furs out of a sugar daddy) is still going strong in the '90s. It's an art that has survived bra burning, feminism and all the progress women have made in their quest for equality. In fact, the author, one Freda Garmaise, postulates that gold digging may be breaking new ground and perhaps transcending gender stereotypes.

After going over archaetypal golddiggers from the movies, like **Marilyn Monroe** and **Jane Russell**, she talks about real life practitioners like **Pia Zadora**, **Marla Maples** and her predecessor, **Ivana**. Having given us this background the author postulates that since transvestite dancers are becoming mainstream attractions and many a sugar daddy has found his golddigger by haunting the backstage door, perhaps the trophy wife of the eighties may give way to the trophy TV of the nineties.

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She says, "Will the corporate world, which took the trophy wife to its bosom and boardrooms, open the field to a wider range of candidates? Will it even put gender prejudice aside and open the field to transvestites, mindful of the fact that, for pure display, nothing could better attest to the might of the leveraged buyout than a six-six (in heels), jewel bedecked beauty?" Ms. Garmaise goes on to mention TG show girls **Peché Melba** and **Crème Brûlée**. They appear in a show called Kaptain Banana (evidently in the Big Apple) and she says, "...it would be nice if these two could enter the trophy wife stakes and take their place in a new society... the sort of society we can only regret **Divine** is not here to lead in the manner of a Gilded Age dowager with a rope of pearls dropping over her stout monobosom to her ankles."

Well, anything's possible, and I for one think it's high time girls like us were rewarded for our beauty and grace. Take us out and treat us right, you rich guys. Who knows, maybe it's inevitable. If all women decide they no longer want to be goldiggers, we may have to carry the art forward into the next century. An awesome burden but one I'm sure our lip gloss and blush will stand up to.

#### CROSSDRESSING IN PERIODICALS

That's magazines girls. My wonderful Mac computer allows me to call the local library's computer and search the periodicals and books listed therein. I

can't actually download books from the library (yet) but I can make complete use of the computerized catalog system. As **Robin, The Boy Wonder** would say, "Holy Dewey Decimal System, **Batman!**"

Back in the old days if you wanted to find out if the library had anything about crossdressing or transvestites, you had to slink in, discreetly fumble through the card catalog and hope no one noticed you were spending time in the tell-tale Ts. Of course you could always linger around the "transformer" area for awhile... till the coast cleared. Who could say you weren't an electrical engineering student looking for a hot 220 to 500 volt design? Now, however, there is no need for slinking. Fire up the modem and log on to a library computer near you. It's not exactly the information superhighway. More like the information cul-de-sac but it's surprising how much cool stuff you can find.

In a recent computer search of periodicals printed during the last few years I found over 14 articles with some reference to crossdressing. One I am going to look up and report on is an article in *New Statesman & Society* called **Ghoul Standard**. It seems that in Derry, Ireland sexual identity is a major theme of Halloween celebrations. (Come to think of it, it is over here too.) In order to celebrate properly people there crossdress and since religion is such a major part of Irish life they also dress up as priests and nuns. Of course, some of the guys

really love to dress up as nuns, allowing them to honor sexual identity and religion. Ain't it amazing, the things you can find in the library?

If you want to spend a little cash you can leap out into the heavy traffic areas of The Internet. With just limited access to the Net you can send electronic mail to people all over the world and you can scan through over five thousand "newsgroups" (places where messages of common interest are posted to be read by one and all and commented on.) My favorite newsgroup is alt.barnie. dinosaur die die die. It's sole reason for existence is to count up different ways to kill the purple dinosaur.

Of interest to you will probably be the transgender news group, alt.transgendered. This is a place where TG people can get to know one another and exchange information and express their opinions. All of the newsgroups are bulletin board type things. You put your message out there and people either respond in the same newsgroup or they send you e-mail. You can reach me by email with comments or questions at: bensalem@cpcn.com. That's it kiddies! Keep those cards and electrons coming.



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# Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance

## An Experiment In Community Building

During the February meeting of Sigma Beta (Okla.), the future of transgender support groups was altered forever. Sigma Beta, founded in 1992, was primarily a support group for heterosexual crossdressers and their spouses/partners. However, since its formation, the group's membership experienced a great diversification in terms of sexual orientation, lifestyles and goals. Over the past several months a plan was devised and presented to the membership to meet the varied needs of this community while still remaining united.

The result of that planning is the creation of The Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance, known as COTA. COTA is an umbrella organization presently encompassing three Sister Interest Groups (SIGs). Each of

the SIGs focuses on a particular area of need within the local transgender community. The three present SIGs are: **Sigma Beta**, for heterosexual crossdressers and their spouses or partners; the **Sooner Belles**, an open membership transgender support group; and **OK New Woman**, a support group focusing on transsexual needs. COTA was formed with provisions to add additional SIGs as needed.

The plan calls for each of the Sister Interest Groups to have a national affiliation. Sigma Beta will affiliate with Tri-Ess, The Sooner Belles will affiliate with Renaissance and OK New Woman will depend on AEGIS for support. (Note: The Sooner Belles are now an official Renaissance affiliate.)

Representatives of the three national organizations pledged their sup-

port to this new model for transgender community. The joint cooperation of these national organizations in a local area transgender support network is a first for our community.

Each of the three SIGs will hold their own meetings and several times a year will host "Unity Events." These will be occasions when members of all three COTA SIGs will come together for sistership and to catch up with dear friends. The new organization will publish a newsletter called *The Sooner Belle*, containing news and items of interest to all three member groups.

For more information, COTA may be contacted at PO Box 60354, Oklahoma City, OK 73146.



## Alert: Electrolysis for Neovagina

*AEGIS (The American Educational Gender Information Service) sends us Medical Advisories on a regular basis with good information for members of the transgender community. The following advisory shows how it is a good idea to plan ahead.*

Vaginoplasty using the penile and penoscrotal inversion methods, with or without skin grafts or skin flaps, can result in a neovagina which is lined with hair-bearing skin. As the hair grows, the neovagina can become choked with hair. Not surprisingly, many transsexual women find this embarrassing.

Some sex reassignment surgeons do not appreciate the extent of this embarrassment. During a presentation given at the October, 1993 meeting of the Harry Benjamin International Dysphoria Association, one prominent surgeon remarked that although his procedure sometimes results in a hair-bearing vagina, his patients do not seem to mind. Reports to AEGIS from post-op transsexual women indicate, however, that they *do* care.

AEGIS recommends that surgeons doing male-to-female reassignment surgery be aware that a hair-bearing vagina is extremely embarrassing for their transsexual patients, and provide them with materials educating them about the problem and indicating where they should consider having electrolysis to avoid the problem.

Electrologists should be aware that transsexual women who are seeking reassignment surgery have legitimate reasons for seeking electrolysis in the perineal area.

Anyone seeking male-to-female reassignment surgery who has excessive hair in the pelvic region should consult with their surgeon in order to determine which skin will eventually be inside the vagina so they can decide whether electrolysis is desirable and so they can schedule electrolysis and surgery accordingly.

All parties should keep in mind that electrolysis is a gradual process, and it can take a year or more to completely clear an area.

## GPC Holds Meeting In Center City

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter is happy to announce they are starting monthly meetings in downtown Philadelphia. Meeting in the suburbs has allowed the chapter to reach many individuals but some people who live in Center City don't have transportation to the King of Prussia area. Now, with the help of Dr. Jeffrey Wolper, GPC will hold its first downtown meeting at his center city office. The big night is April 19. The meeting will start at 8:00 PM. No special program will be presented. The evening will afford Center City residents a chance to get acquainted with Renaissance.

Since we must pay Dr. Wolper for the use of his space, all those attending will be asked for a five dollar (\$5) contribution. April 19 is a Wednesday night so if you don't have any plans stop by and check it out. Doctor Wolper's office is located at 1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 810.





## The American Educational Gender Information Service **AEGIS**

### ANNOUNCES A NEW MEMBERSHIP POLICY

AEGIS is now a membership organization. Membership at \$36/year includes: 2 issues of *Chrysalis*, a theme-oriented magazine focusing on serious transgender issues; 4 issues of *AEGIS News* our quarterly newsletter; a 10% discount on all publications sold by AEGIS; a membership/I.D. card; and the right to vote for AEGIS board members. Membership is open to anyone.

AEGIS is a 100% volunteer, non-profit information and education resource for all people and does not discriminate on any basis. AEGIS supports SSSS, HBIGDA, SIECUS and other professional organizations. AEGIS is a founding partner of the Transgender Alliance for Community and an affiliate of the Renaissance Education Assoc., Inc. Write or call today.

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**Dallas Denny, M.A., Executive Director**

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The working of the organized transgendered community is about nothing if it's not about politics. And, taking my lead from our counterparts in Washington, I am championing a sweeping set of proposals I like to call the **Contract With Transvestites**.

Among its many planks are such items as: a *balanced wardrobe amendment*, in which support groups dominated by dowdy crossdressers will be required to have an equal number of members dressed up like Parisian street tarts; *drastic cuts in subsidies for support group meeting snacks*, thereby reducing the fat not only in the budget but around member's waistlines; a series of *incentives that will benefit the most attractive two percent* of our population in hopes that their beauty will trickle down to the rest of us; and an *ambitious social planning agenda* to legislate immodesty and a sense of humor while placing sanctions against such unhealthy practices as using "gender gifted" in serious discussions.

The great thing about politics is that nothing substantive will really change for most of you out there. But, since it's my platform, I'll get to be in charge and do all the talking.

#### A NEW IDEA UNDER THE SUN

We just started receiving the *Sooner Belle* newsletter of Oklahoma City based Sigma Beta sorority and it is already paying dividends. In their February issue, they discussed a new idea for expanding their membership base. It is something called COTA, but the meaning of that acronym is not given to us outside readers and though I looked it up in my "Transvestite-to-English Acronym" dictionary, I was still clue

less—until I saw that JoAnn Roberts mentioned it in her March column. COTA stands for Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance. (See the article on page 6 for more info.)

The nub of the COTA idea seems to be this—local members will be able to choose which national TG group they wish to affiliate with and the Sigma Beta group will "split" down in segments to accommodate the different interests of its membership. The national groups are: Tri-Ess, AEGIS, and some outfit called Renaissance. The brilliance of this idea is that although the Sigma Beta sorority will be "divided," they will essentially remain whole because the affiliations will be on a sub-level to the umbrella sorority group. With all the hullabaloo over whether to exclude bi/gay and/or transsexuals from certain groups, how come nobody ever thought of this before?

In certain metropolitan areas it might be easy for non-heterosexual crossdressers or transsexuals to hook up with another group. But in an area like Oklahoma City (not to be condescending, but simply realistic) there's only room enough in this town for one transgendered support group, pardner. The leaders of this idea realize they have a responsibility to offer something to anyone who comes looking for it and they don't want to turn people away because of some rigid rules.

It's a great idea—and that is something this community sorely needs—an innovative approach to *include* members rather than *exclude* them. This is a Nobel Prize-class discovery, brilliant both in its practicality and simplicity. I wish other groups could take a look at this concept and see if it wouldn't work

in their own jurisdictions as a way to broaden their scope.

#### STAND UP STRAIGHT, YOUNG LADY

Elaine is the Executive Director of the Connecticut Outreach Society in Farmington. In her monthly column in their *Outreach News*, Elaine gives tips on feminine deportment, based on her observations of real women.

In the January issue Elaine addresses the topic of posture for crossdressers. She quite rightly points out that most of us part-time ladies overlook the feminizing benefit of simply standing up straight and maintaining a dignified, womanly posture. Men have a tendency to stand in a way that accentuated their shoulders and torso, a kind of flat-footed hulking posture which is decidedly unfeminine.

Women tend to stand in tall, almost posed positions, presenting themselves in the best form possible. She suggests keeping your feet close together, and distributing your weight off the typically male flat-foot stance. Arching the back also pays dividends by straightening the torso and accentuating the chest and buttocks, keeping your weight from sloshing into your belly.

In their February issue, Elaine takes aim at a part of the anatomy near and dear to every male—whether they crossdress or not—breasts. Here, she points out that many crossdressers tend to wear their "breasts" too high on their chest. Because of the weight of a natural female breast, the point of the nipple will be lower on females than on males. Thus, one should aim their breastforms so the nipple is an inch or two below their natural nipple.

Practice makes perfect and simply observing the genuine articles in real-life settings can help us imitate their natural bearing.

#### AN ODD PLACE FOR THAT SORT OF THING

I was looking at an old magazine aptly named *Female Impersonators*. It's copyright was 1970, and it featured pictorials of (what else?) female impersonators on the stages and in the dressing rooms of the clubs where they performed.



I last month's column I mentioned my fondness for the high drag style of the old impersonators and even though 1970 doesn't seem that long ago to me (I was just a slip of a girl back then, of course) it is now a quarter of a century back in time. The photos in this issue reconfirmed my liking for the totally unnatural look of bouffant wigs, false eyelashes, and starched evening gowns over industrial strength girdles.

There was one very interesting tidbit between the photo spreads. As a service to their readers they had listed about two dozen clubs where female impersonators plied their gaudy trade. Although this was a "national" magazine published in New York, the listing included eleven locations in the greater Philadelphia area. Even more interesting was that most of the nightclubs listed in our area were located in the blue collar working class neighborhoods of Frankford, Kensington, Port Richmond and Fishtown. Only one of the clubs was located in the traditionally gay area of downtown Philly.

I'm sure these working class bars that once featured female impersonator revues no longer do so—if they still exist at all. If you're familiar with Philadelphia, could you imagine going to a drag show on Aramingo Avenue? How about Front and Allegheny? Or Fifth and Erie? And, if you were traveling through South Philly you could have stopped in for a lip synch and an Ortlieb's at 27th and Passyunk.

This is fairly amazing history for a Philly kid like myself. Those were tough neighborhoods all the way back to the nineteenth century. Apparently, these few night spots tried to soften those mean streets with falsies and a little pancake makeup.

### THE LEISURE QUEENS

Our culture and national economy seem increasingly driven by American's pursuit of recreation. While steel mills and other old line manufacturing enterprises went belly up or downsized drastically, the film and music industries, national sports franchises and local leisure time businesses seem to have come of age. The amount of money being spent by consumers and

the amounts of money paid to our cultural heroes, celebrities, is amazing, if not obscene.

February 28th was Mardi Gras. At one time, Mardi Gras was a local New Orleans phenomenon that got marginal mention in other cities around the country. In the last few years, the celebration of Mardi Gras has become almost a national event, not quite on a par with Halloween... but give it some time. One cable channel carried Mardi Gras coverage live all day from New Orleans. Here in Philadelphia, there was a concerted effort to "make" Fat Tuesday a happening with newspaper articles about where and how to celebrate the event in several local watering holes hosting Mardi Gras parties.

It is a great opportunity to do a bit of fancy crossdressing in "straight" establishments we wouldn't ordinarily haunt. I know several of our Renaissance girls took advantage of it this year. (Prediction: the traditional genteel Easter parade concept will eventually evolve [devolve?] into a gaudy, camp-it-up, show time for citizens who already miss Mardi Gras and can't wait until Halloween. Remember, you read it here first.)

The interesting thing about this national cultural movement toward finding more and more reasons to party is that the non-crossdressing public becomes more and more accepting of non-mainstream ways to celebrate whatever it is we're all celebrating. That may not be the way we would like crossdressing to be accepted but, "any port in a storm" as they say. And, it reinforces my belief that Americans will tolerate almost anything if it's done in pursuit of a good time. "Expressing our feminine personalities?" "Phooey", they will say. But, dressing in drag because it's a fun thing to do, THAT, everyone understands.

### LEAVING LIFE BEHIND

*Lifelines*, the newsletter of the Long Island Femme Expression group, carried an interview with three of its top board members. Apparently, they are resigning to form a new group after some disappointments with the general LIFE membership—and vice versa. The new group will be called New York

Girl and Partners. (Dina is so busy she didn't notice that NYG&P is now a Renaissance affiliate. *Ed.*)

From the outside, it wasn't clear exactly what moved the three defecting board members to leave and form a new group. Reading between the lines, it seemed to have something to do with the general administration of LIFE activities. There seems to be a long background of squabbling that had gone on before this secession occurred.

Anyway, there will be a new group formed on Long Island in addition to, or in competition with, the original LIFE group and this new group is planning to affiliate with Renaissance. (We're getting to be the McDonald's of TG support groups it seems. "Over a billion groups transformed.")

My question is: who on Long Island will make up the membership for the leaders of the new group if the membership of the old group was less than enamored of their leadership in the first place? But that's a philosophical question on the order of, "which came first: the pantyhose or the L'Egg?" and far too vexing to tackle here.

### PICKIN' AND GRINNIN' AND CROSSDRESSIN'

There's an article in the Tennessee Val's newsletter about a new nightclub venture in Nashville called "Cowboys La Cage." It will be a featured revue at The Ace of Clubs and presumably aimed at the straight C&W fans, not specifically the gay community.

Auditions were held and a sneak preview performance for an invitation-only crowd got a nice write-up in the *Tennessean* newspaper. Female impersonators do their versions of C&W stars such as Reba McEntire, Dolly Parton, Patsy Cline, Lorrie Morgan and Wynona Judd. Other acts include a comical Nancy Kerrigan—Tonya Harding duet.

It should be interesting to see how this venture pans out in the heart of the Bible Belt. But country music always had a place for the comic element, so perhaps this down home drag revue is not as off-the-wall as it may seem at first glance.





# Wandering The World Wide Web

by JoAnn Roberts

Now there are techno-snobs who believe if you're not connected to the Internet, you're culturally and socially deprived. Fear not, babies, I, your Tek-Know-Tootsie, will give you the straight dope on getting wired.

First, think of the Internet as a global telephone network, complete with directory assistance, phone books, etc. Once you get your "phone" (in this case a computer with a modem) connected to the network, and once you know someone's "phone number" (in this case an Internet address) you can call anywhere and find information on just about anything.

First things first. You need three pieces: a moderately fast computer (a 386 PC, a MacIIxi, or better) a telecommunications program and a modem. The telecomm program I use regularly is MicroPhone and it is available for both Macs and PCs, but almost any will do. The modem needs to be a minimum of 2400 bps, but 9600 bps is better and 14,400 bps is really necessary for downloading graphics and browsing the World Wide Web (WWW—more on that later).

A decent 9600 bps modem these days can be had for less than \$100 and a 14,400 for about \$150. The latest modems are 28,800 bps and sell for over \$200. Remember, faster is better in this case. Most modems come with telecomm software and many also include fax software as a bonus.

If your computer came with software for America On-Line (AOL), CompuServe (CIS) or Prodigy, or if you've received such software through the mail, you may be able to get on the Internet through these services, but the cost is high. Of course, you have full access to the all of the service's other options in addition to Internet access, but not all of the major computer services provide full Internet access yet, although it is coming.

So, let's assume you *do not* use AOL, CIS or Prodigy, then how do you get on the net? Like your local tele-

phone service provider, there are Internet service providers all over the place. The service I use is DSC and they have access numbers in over 350 cities around the U.S. I'm very pleased with their service and the cost is quite reasonable. Call 1-800-521-2733 to see if DSC has a number near you. There are many other providers ranging from local (like Cross-Connections at 1-818-786-8887) to national (like Netcom and Delphi). Get thee to a bookstore and pick up one of the many computer magazines or one of the newer Internet-specific mags like *Internet World* and check out the lists of Internet service providers.

You call the provider and ask for Internet services. You will be asked what kind of connection you want. For our purposes there are only two of economical interest: a Shell account and a SLIP/PPP account. The Shell account is the simplest and cheapest, both in terms of actual cost and hardware needed. To get into a Shell account you only need the minimum equipment I described above.

Shell account access means that you will call your service provider's computer and log into an account set up just for you, complete with a user name and password, just like calling into AOL, CIS or a local computer bulletin board system. However, the service provider's computer system (the Host) is connected to the Internet, so once you are logged in, you type the word "Shell" and you can now tell the Host what parts of the Internet you'd like to call. Warning: The Internet itself runs under an operating system called Unix which can be difficult to learn and remember. All of the utilities available in a Shell account are Unix programs and you *will* need to learn how to use them to send and receive email, read newsgroups and do anything else on the Net. DSC will provide you with a Shell account and 24 by 7 access (i.e. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – in other words unlimited) for \$12 a month plus whatever it

costs you to call their local Host. Trust me, that's cheap!

But, Shell account access, as cheap as it is, doesn't allow you into the coolest, newest part of the Internet, the World Wide Web or WWW. Well, that's not strictly correct. You can access the Web from a Shell by running Lynx. However, you won't get the graphics, sound, and movies and that's the real point of the Web. But you can at least get a taste from Lynx.

Until recently, it took humongous hardware and lots of bucks to actually connect your own computer to the Internet and most people wouldn't want their machines on the Net full time anyway. But, a couple of network wonks got together and cobbled up something called SLIP or Serial Line Interface Protocol. SLIP runs through a moderately fast modem (minimum speed of 14,400 bps) and uses your service provider's computer as a "switch" to connect your machine directly into the Internet. Your computer becomes, temporarily, a part of the global Internet network.








But, SLIP has other advantages. By a feat nothing short of magic, SLIP allows you to make multiple connections to the Internet over a single modem connection. Truly amazing! You will also see these accounts referred to as SLIP/PPP accounts. Everyone says PPP (Point to Point Protocol) is SLIP done correctly, but both work the same magic. A non-commercial SLIP/PPP account on DSC is about \$20 per month for 90 hours of access, plus whatever phone charges apply.

As you might imagine, magic comes at a price. In this case, that price is additional software and the faster modem. I already had the modem, but I spent several months looking for the bits and pieces of software. I finally found the *Internet Starter Kit for Macintosh* by Adam Engst, published by Hayden Books at an Encore Books. It had almost everything I needed to get

*continued on page 21*



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# HOT BUZZ

## JoAnn Roberts • Queen of Prussia



*Any sufficiently advanced technology, to a primitive culture, is indistinguishable from magic.*

— Arthur C. Clarke

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I've mentioned the Internet several time over the past months and my excursion into the depths of the net are getting longer and deeper. I've opened a CDS "storefront" on the World Wide Web which should be up and running by the time you read this. The CDS Home Page address is: <http://www.cdspub.com/Cat.html>. Surf on over and take a look. But, I've been thinking that every organization really needs to get, at a minimum, an email account. Email is nearly instantaneous and information about events, news, and issues could be heard around the world within minutes of posting. I know many individuals associated with groups have email. I regularly "talk" to Jane Ellen Fairfax, Kym Richards, Linda Peacock, Vanessa Kaye, Dallas Denny, and many others via email. It is an ideal way to communicate. With enough groups on the net, it might be feasible to start an electronic newsletter that would automatically go out to every organization. Eventually, I expect every group to have a Web site where people will find the latest information and news about the group and its activities. Fiat Electron!

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Well, enough tech-talk. The HOT

BUZZ is about the International Congress on Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender Issues, held in Los Angeles at the end of February. By any measure, it was a tremendous success. About 300 people attended the confab. Of that number, I'd say a third were transgendered. Of those, about another third were presenters. Personally, I found the dialogue between the two sides stimulating and worthwhile. Sure, there were some controversies. At one point, Martine Rothblatt, author of the new book *The Apartheid of Sex*, got into a shouting match with a transgendered physician over the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care. But this kind of difference of opinion goes on at just about every kind of meeting. Overall, I'd say the people who made the greatest impact of the conference were the FtM transsexuals. James Green was simply scintillating, as was Jason Cromwell. I had the pleasure of meeting Stephen Whittle, an FtM from Manchester, England, who teaches at the School of Law, Manchester Metropolitan University. What a neat guy! And, talk about plugged into what's happening? We discussed the relevance to transsexuals of the recent divorce decree of an MtF transsexual in New Zealand. See, the court there granted her a divorce. In order to do that, they had to agree that her marriage was legal from the start. If that was true, then they had to recognize that post-op transsexuals have, indeed, "changed sex." Since New Zealand follows the same principles of law as Australia and England, this seemingly simple "divorce" decree has wide ranging ramifications for the legal status of transsexuals in those countries.

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One of the highlights of the congress was the Saturday morning plenary session with Roger Gorski, Ph.D. Dr. Gorski has been researching the biology of gender differences, particularly with respect to sexual dimorphism (sex differences) in the brain. He made a remark in passing that many people may have missed

which I think bears repeating. Dr. Gorski said that the male brain of primates (in this case monkeys) makes all of the hormones necessary to trigger ovulation were we able to successfully implant ovaries in a male. Now, couple that statement with the research discussed at Sunday's plenary session where Xia Zhao Ji, M.D., showed the results of his work implanting testes in FtM transsexuals and ovaries in MtF transsexuals. The testes survived 9 months and the ovaries for a year. The implication is that it may be possible in the near future to implant ovaries and a uterus in MtF transsexuals who would want to get pregnant and carry a baby to term, and that a functional penis and testicles may be transplantable to FtM transsexuals. Reminds me of *Steel Beach* (John Varley fans will recognize the reference).

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Other HOT BUZZ at the congress was the rather loud whining and complaining from the organizers of the Texas "T" Party because the L.A. meet was held on the same weekend. It was much ado about nothing since reports from people attending the "T" say there were more people there than ever. I believe the "official" count was 340. (Yes, they keep score. Apparently "mine is bigger then yours" is important to them.) So, my prediction that the L.A. congress wouldn't impact the "T" was correct. What were they complaining about? No one "owns" the calendar.

• • • • •

And, speaking of calendar, mark Spring 1997 as the tentative date for the Second International Congress on Cross Dressing, Sex and Gender Issues. Several of the reps from gender groups urged Dr. Vern Bullough, co-chair of the first Congress, to do it again, which he declined. But, both he and Dr. James Elias, Exec. Dir. of the Center for Sex Research at CSUN, said they would support and endorse a similar event at another site. Dr. Bullough even polled some of his colleagues for potential sites. An informal



# HOT•BUZZ

steering committee is talking to several academic institutions as potential hosts. Once there is agreement on the site, a date will be announced. Stay tuned.

On to fashion news... I think this "reconstruction" of femininity is being taken too far. I sit here looking at the clothing ads in the fashion rags and all I can think of is: Yuck! A shapely suit or chemise is one thing, but overtly corseted clothing with frou-frous and frills is a bit much. It's okay for a woman to want to look sensual and feel sexy, however, it is not okay to try to make her look like a marionette. Some of the waistlines are so nipped in it must be hard to breathe and impossible to eat or drink. Come on designers, get back to the real world!

The new femininity can make you sick, literally. One doctor has said that he treats as many as 25 patients a year for gastrointestinal distress because their pants are too tight. Imagine what a corset could do. Fruit of the Loom conducted a survey of 100 women and found that 82 percent said uncomfortable underwear ruins their day.

It's not just clothing. Eye makeup has taken on extreme looks. Most of the models in ads look like they've been in bar brawls or been date-raped. (And, no I am not making fun of date rape.) Jeez, if I didn't know any better, I'd think most of the models were transvestites. (And, yes, I am making fun of the way *some* transvestites dress.)

If you want to see my idea of sexy and feminine, look for the recent ad for Florence Cromer. It's a simple ad with a sultry blonde in a cream colored leather suit. Both the blonde and the suit are knock-outs. Simple, yet elegant.

The recent trend in real world makeup is to combine and layer colors to add depth to the face. One such layering trick is to prime lips with a shocking fuschia and then layer with burgundy or deep plum. The effect can be amazing.

Makeup artist Kevin Aucoin was able to create a perfect tomato-red by combining a deep red base and then covering it with lemon-lime lip gloss. Cool! Similar tricks are performed with eye shadows, like iridescent blue over black, and gray and brown finished with a shimmery gold. The combinations are endless. Experiment and have fun!

The March issue of *Allure* has a "Trick of the Month" that we've known for years, thanks to makeup mayven Jim Bridges. Le Jim taught me to use baby wipes to remove makeup a couple of years ago at FanFair. Well, guess what "trick" *Allure* came up with for March. Yeah, girl. That one. Tooooo slow.

Women of color are finding more and more cosmetics designed just for them, and that of course helps feminine transgendered people of color too. Lots of companies are adding shades of black to their product lines, and while anyone can use these products, they work best on African-ethnic skin. Check out Bobbi Brown's Black Berry lipstick and Navy eyeshadow, or L'Oreal's Sangria nail polish, and Dior's Precious Green eyeliner pencil (almost green-black).

The trend for foundation is away from the ultra-sophisticated matte face and toward sheen, bordering on shine. The idea is that no one's skin is matte so why make it look that way? Newer base makeups look dewy on the skin. But how can we take advantage of that since many of us need heavy coverage and those thick concealers must be set with powder. Try fusing the powder into the base with a solvent like water, witch hazel or alcohol. Take a wad of cotton and soak it with the solvent, then carefully press the soaked cotton into the face. The pressure plus solvent will fuse powder and base, restoring some of the natural shine to your skin.

Once a woman comes of a certain age, she has to be concerned with wrinkles. Foundation has a nasty habit of accumulating in wrinkles which makes them even more noticeable. The newest foundations use silicone carriers and special pigment that claim to hold the makeup

"above" the wrinkles so they are not so visible. Check out Revlon's Age Defying Makeup. Personally, I still like Max Factor's Active Protection best.

I've noticed another retro-trend: lining the inside lower eyelid with black. Didn't they tell us **not** to do that just a few years ago? If you wear contact lenses like I do, lining the inside lower lid is a sure fire way to goo up your lenses.

I caught a quick sound byte about a one day, throw away contact. You put in a new pair each day. The piece said they were expensive, about \$700 for a year's supply. Hell, that's not expensive. At just under \$2 a day, that's less than most smokers spend for cigarettes in a year. My nicotine habit runs almost \$900/yr. So, "expensive" is a relative term. If you wear contacts, ask your optometrist or optician about throwaway contacts.

Here's a trend that won't last long: Gun-Moll Chic. Fueled by the success of Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, some designers want to make every woman look like Uma Thurman. Not.

Getting back to the femininity craze... Getting into that retro-40's suit may mean some serious dieting. I've done the majors - Nutri-Systems and Jenny Craig - and they work... for a while. Then, bang, you've gained it back and spent a lot of money for what? I've found that the only real way to lose weight permanently is watch what you eat, especially fats, and exercise at least three times a week for 20 minutes. I lost 8 pounds from just after Christmas to the end of February by doing just that and I'm going for another 8 to 10 the same way. But, there are some recent developments concerning how our bodies make and store fat. The latest BUZZ on fat is Chromium Picolinate which can be purchased at any health food store. It is thought that the chromium helps the body metabolize fat more efficiently. Who knows, maybe it does work.

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# Dining Out With Babs

by Babs

In January, friends and I visited the newly reopened restaurant at the Cartwheel club in New Hope, Pennsylvania. The new name for the "Wheel's" dining facility is Cafe Mo. Also new were the ownership, decor and menu. We found a casual, light and airy Southwestern decor and a lower priced, yet expanded, menu featuring sandwiches and burgers, as well as interesting gourmet style dishes. Specials of the Day were unusual and interesting. The restaurant was filled and there was a mix up in our reservation.

While we waited, we were offered a round of drinks at the piano bar. We were given a substitute table and sincere apologies.

Appetizers ranged from a tasty but peppery rigatoni in vodka sauce to average nachos. The stuffed chicken ravioli du jour and shrimp scampi were

well above average and the "Julia Child" salmon wrapped in potato crust was described as "divine." The only complaint was the filet mignon was "chewy." Desserts ranged from key lime pie to baklava and were enjoyed by all. The wine list was a little pricey by New Jersey standards, with a consistent Glen Ellen chardonnay at \$16 and a richer Kendall Jackson for \$24.

The service was prompt and professional, yet a little cool compared to some of the friendly waiters from the old restaurant. We got the feeling they were limited in their experience with the TG community.

On a return visit, on a Friday night in February, four couples were welcomed by Georgann, one of the co-owners. We met several old friends and regulars from the old "Wheel," both in the restaurant and at the piano bar, including a few "sisters." The staff

seemed a little warmer. We were accommodated with our requested table and the food was consistently first rate. Onion soup, Caesar salad, the "special rock shrimp" with butter and garlic over linguine, strip steak with an "enticing" sauce, the ravioli du jour and the Julia Child salmon did not disappoint anyone. Desserts, again, were excellent, and even the house wine had a nice body. One note of caution for those who cannot tolerate pepper—ask ahead! There was a little extra in the rice. As a lower priced, more casual eatery than the more upscale Raven and Prelude down the road, the new "Wheel" represents an enjoyable alternative.

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# T-Speak: A Lexicon of Gender

by Angela Gardner

Many people are confused about the nature of the transgendered, and exactly what the many different terms used in the **transgendered community**, (there's one now!) mean. A while back I was on the phone with a reporter who was interested in doing an article on transsexuals. She had a number of questions, one of which was, "How long do transvestites crossdress before they become transsexuals?" Stop the presses! Hold everything. As Ricky said to Lucy, "You got a lot of 'splainin' to do." This confusion exists in the general public and within the community itself. People are throwing words around without having a clear understanding of what they mean. The introduction of the term, **crossdresser** just added to the confusion. I don't know how many times I've heard people say, "I'm not a transvestite, I'm a crossdresser." Well big guy, **why** are you wearing that dress?

Let's start the definitions right there. A **transvestite (TV)** is a person who derives a satisfaction from wearing the clothing of the opposite sex. This satisfaction may be an all-over-your-body good feeling, a relief of stress, erotic stimulation or all of the above. The desire to engage in cross-dressed behavior is most often present at an early age and stays with the transvestite for the rest of their life.

The politically correct started to use **crossdresser** as the "proper" term in order to avoid negative connotations that had begun to accumulate around the word, transvestite. Middle-aged men with wives, families and an inexplicable desire to wear hair bows in wigs that would really look better without one, decided the word, "transvestite" conjured images of hot (as in overtly sexual), five inch heeled hookers with boob jobs and several social diseases. Obviously the girls with bows in their wigs couldn't be related to the street-walking transvestites so the word "crossdresser" was born. (**Girl** is a term often used by members of the

crossdressing community to describe themselves.)

Actually crossdresser is not a bad word. It's useful in describing anyone who wears clothing, considered by society, to be appropriate to the gender opposite their physical gender; for any reason. Thus, we may say that a professional **female impersonator (FI)** (someone who imitates a woman on stage or screen for money), who would not be caught dead in women's clothing off stage, is, because he crossdresses regularly, a crossdresser. (Most FI's would disagree with this due to their imperfect understanding of transgender terminology.) He may or may not be a transvestite. Someone like Dame Edna, who cross dresses to perform as a female character, could be described as a crossdresser, but again we have no idea if the motivation to create that character came from transvestism or theatrical flamboyance.

A **transsexual** is a person who has always felt their physical gender does not match the way they feel inside. They may crossdress to look more like the way they feel, but they don't get the type of satisfaction a transvestite would from, "dressing up." In fact, most transsexuals are not that concerned with clothing. Matching the body with the mind is their number one priority.

The myth that transvestism is a step on the way to transsexuality comes about, in part, from the difficulty many people experience in knowing themselves. Early feelings of transsexuality may be confused with homosexual longings or transvestite feelings. It is important to talk with qualified counselors and peers who have "been there" to sort out exactly who you are.

To further confuse the issue, some transvestites are having such a good time being feminine and such a dull time being men that they feel they should have a sex change and live full time as females. When daytime talk fests do shows about "sex changes" who have regrets and want to reverse

the process, it's usually people who have allowed their transvestite fantasy to take them down the wrong road. These people are called **pseudo-transsexuals**. The *Harry Benjamin Standards of Care* were written to help professionals in the psychological and medical fields sort out the true transsexuals from the pseudo transsexuals.

True transsexuals are **gender dysphoric**. Gender dysphoria is a discomfort with one's physical gender. This differs from a transvestite's feeling of excitement at being dressed up. The transvestite may not feel as good when not "dressed" but acting like their physical gender will not be uncomfortable for them. The gender dysphoric may experience anything from slight discomfort to outright loathing of their physical gender. The treatment for a severe gender dysphoria is **SRS**.

SRS stands for Sex Reassignment Surgery. Often referred to as **The Operation**, SRS is more accurately described as several procedures. More procedures are required for a female-to-male than for an **M-to-F**. (The initials are often used to describe individuals who are crossing the gender border. M-to-F for male-to-female and F-to-M for female-to-male. The initials may be used for both transsexuals and transvestites but are most often used for transsexuals.)

Of course this short article can't cover all the words used by people in and around the transgender community. For example, **Drag queens** (gay transvestites who always go for glamour looks, or, more commonly among younger queens, wild and trashy club looks) have their own terminology that can get so complicated I won't even try to get into it girlfriend.

What do you call a TG person who has breasts and a penis? If she comes from a middle class background she is a **transgenderist**. If she is lower on the class ladder, she is a **she-male**. Here is a case where the words de-

*continued on page 20*



# Jimmy Olsen: Queen Of Comics



from Mobster's Moll

by Robyn Dormer

At last we come to the nadir of comic book crossdressing—Jimmy Olsen herself. Jimmy is the reason I began this whole series in the first place. It was about a year ago that editor Angela Gardner did a write-up on a photocopy she had received of a Jimmy Olsen story in which he masqueraded as a gangster's moll. Angela stated that there were at least two other instances of Olsen in drag and if anyone had copies to send them in. As a comic fan from way back, I owned those issues and many other instances of crossdressing/transgenderism in comics. When I opened my comic store and used my collection as back stock, those prized issues and the other titles I've reported on were the only books not for sale.

Now that the store is closing, I will be donating them to the Renaissance library and I am focusing full attention on my new career as a "document control clerk," not a "secretary." (Editor's Note: Oops!) This will be the last installment of *TG Characters in the Comics*. And who better to end the series than with the person most responsible for it in the first place—Miss Jimmy Olsen.

It was *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen*, issue #95, cover date September, 1966 that the "Miss Jimmy Olsen" story Angela reported on first appeared. For those who missed her summation,

Jimmy decides to investigate "Big Monte" McGraw, the ex-racketeer suspected of being the mastermind behind a large jewelry heist. Since no one is allowed into the theater Jimmy just saw Big Monte enter, Jimmy decides to get close to McGraw by disguising himself as a girl and trying out for the chorus line of the "Metropolis Follies" show that McGraw is producing. Jimmy pulls a dress and wig from his disguise trunk, (cleverly labeled "disguise trunk" to distinguish it from his other trunks) and heads for the audition. His ability to catch a thrown baseball lands him a job in the chorus. He introduces himself as Julie Ogden and is offered a place to

downstairs? Or that Jimmy is supposed to be watching Lucy's pet Great Dane while she is away? And that the hamburger Jimmy prepared for Maisie with the sleeping powder in it was actually dog food he snatched from Lucy's ice-box? All of these plot elements in just five pages!

The next day, Julie wakes up and after donning the same dress as the day before heads off to practice where Big Monte takes a shine to her. He tells her to borrow an evening gown from Maisie because they're doing the town that night. McGraw arrives and makes Julie remove her crummy old man's watch, replacing it with a diamond watch and a new mink coat. Julie likes the watch so much, she covers it up with elbow length evening gloves and they head out to dinner. The evening ends in a kiss and the next day, Big Monte is so smitten by Julie that he proclaims her the future Mrs. McGraw. Until he sees that Adams apple...

As if this story wasn't priceless enough, there's a wonderful shot of Superman unplugging that pesky electric fan with his super-breath!

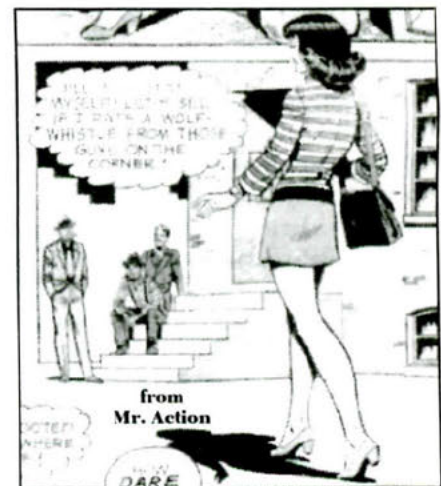
This was not Olsen's first foray into female impersonation, however. Jimmy Olsen donned drag in the March, 1963 issue (#67) in a story titled *Leslie Lowe, Girl Reporter*. Jimmy is upset that his girlfriend Lucy makes twice as much as he does (she makes "several hundred



from Leslie Lowe

live at the apartment of Big Monte's girlfriend Maisie. Maisie is not thrilled with sharing her place with this pretty newcomer, and besides, she already has a chimpanzee for a roommate.

"Julie" overhears Maisie tell Big Monte not to worry about the rubies; she hid them in her apartment where nobody will ever find them. After dopping Maisie with sleeping powder cleverly concealed somewhere on his feminized self, he searches her apartment to no avail. Did I mention that Maisie has a pet chimpanzee? Or a small electric fan that appears in every shot inside the apartment that is never turned off? Or that Jimmy's girlfriend Lucy Lane (Lois' sister) lives in the apartment



from Mr. Action



## Comics

dollars a month") he quits his job at the *Daily Planet*, believing he'll land a better job at the *Globe*. The *Globe* just hired a new girl reporter and doesn't need anybody else, so Jimmy decides since everybody seems to be hiring girls, he'll apply for his old *Planet* reporter job as a girl. Into the trunk (Disguises, Property of J. Olsen) he goes and soon, in tight blouse, flaring skirt, "desire me" lipstick, and straight stocking seams, Olsen is on the streets, fending off advances from leering men.

Perry White hires her on the spot and despite Jimmy's best efforts to look like a dumb dame (which would make Perry want to hire Jimmy back as soon as possible) he becomes a prize employee. He is treated to lunch with Lois Lane, is attacked with a salad bowl by a jealous wife, takes a bath in the bathtub of a model home in an exhibit (the home is for sale for \$25,000), and receives candy and flowers from his boss.

After being offered a five year contract, Jimmy has had enough and exposes himself, slamming his wig onto

Perry's desk. Lois and Clark Kent enter the office and they all have a good laugh. They knew it was him the whole time! He had forgotten to remove his Superman Signal-watch! You'd think that after that episode he would remember to take it off when he became Julie Ogden some three years later.

The final episode of Jimmy Olsen in feminine finery was in the August, 1973 issue (#159). Jimmy was in his mod period, with long hair, bell bottoms and white boots. In *The Day They Unmasked Mr. Action*, Jimmy is forced to hide from the masquerade squad he had helped establish for the police department because someone tipped off the police commissioner that Olsen has been selling their anti-crime plans to the underworld. An apparently guilty Olsen dives out of a second floor window, does a cartwheel in mid-air and escapes from police headquarters.

On the lam, Jimmy decides there is no way to escape the masquerade squad, because anybody he meets could be one of the cops in disguise. He tries to hide out in an abandoned building but there are "three crooked professional gamblers" in there shooting dice. Since Olsen once helped get them all

tossed in the clink, they throw him out on his ear.

Desperate, Olsen buys some second-hand threads from "Sam's Used Clothing" store and dresses in an alley in a striped sweater, pink mini-skirt, stockings and pink pumps. With a little make-up and a wig, he looks "like a slick chick." He decides to see if his get-up will rate a wolf whistle from three guys on a corner and he sashays past... and wait, it's the same three guys who booted him out of the abandoned building! Jimmy answers their lewd and lascivious remarks with a "How DARE you?!" and smashes them in the kisser with his second-hand purse.

Continuing on, Jimmy spots a member of the masquerade squad masquerading as a hot dog vendor. Putting everything on the line, he makes the ultimate test of his disguise and orders a weenie, with mustard and relish. What he gets is gun in his face and his wig yanked off! It seems Jimmy Olsen, Mr. Action, the man of many disguises, FORGOT TO REMOVE HIS DAMN MAN'S WRIST WATCH! Thus endeth the career of Jimmy Olsen, female impersonator.



## Letters to the Editor

Dear Angela,

In the December 1994 issue the lead story, "Community Alliance Forms," reported the cooperative outreach effort undertaken at the NASW convention by AEGIS, IFGE, Outreach Institute, Renaissance and Tri-Ess. As a social work professor, and advocate for transgendered issues/community, I can not stress strongly enough the importance of this alliance; and the subsequent and long overdue education of social work professionals regarding these community issues. Social work is a profession comprised of four basic

arenas of practice: enabling (counseling), brokering (directing one to appropriate resources), advocacy, and activism (bringing about change through advocacy).

Although through the four realms of the profession one may come by the impression that social workers are open minded, accepting-change agents who are sagacious, knowledgeable, and empathetic of all diversity; which much to my chagrin is not true. Social workers are human beings who maintain their own opinions, ideals, ideology, and beliefs—often unwarranted and exacerbated by their own religiosity, close mindedness, or blatant ignorance, resulting from a lack of knowledge regarding a particular subject matter. As with any human faction this is certainly not the rule or the norm, and there are many social workers who have attempted to augment change from within the micro to macro levels of the profession.

As an example, social work professors at St. Cloud University in St. Cloud, Minnesota have attempted to be the gatekeepers of the profession by barring entrance into the social work program of anyone who has anti or negative feelings toward the transgendered community. Albeit this may be laudable and relative to the cause, not to mention applauded by the Gay Association of Social Workers (GASW), it certainly is not the answer. While this faction of professionals have utilized their professional abilities to advocate and initiate change, they may very well have violated their professional ethics through their own close mindedness regarding the diversity of other's beliefs; but I do believe that you have to start somewhere. Unfortunately by gate keeping only social work students there are still many other social (behavioral) science professionals who

*continued on next page*



# Dear Doctor

Dr. William R. Stayton answers your questions in a monthly column.

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

Dear Dr. Bill:

I have a delicate medical problem that is hard to bring up with my regular M.D. because of my crossdressing. I hope that you can give me some information. I have been crossdressing for a number of years and most of the time that I'm dressed I "tuck" my genitals. Lately, I have been having a slight, aching kind of pain above my right testicle. I have mentioned it to friends who say it sounds like a hernia developing. My father has had a hernia and needed surgery to correct it. The operation doesn't worry me, what has me worried is, how will a hernia (that's what it is) affect my ability to tuck. Will I be doomed to wearing big, loose skirts from now on?

Worried.

Dear Worried:

First of all, it is very important that you have a checkup immediately by your physician to find out the cause of the ache in your testicle. It may or may not be related to a developing hernia. If it is a hernia and you do need surgery to repair the hernia, it is likely that you will be able to continue your "tucking" process, unless there is scar tissue. You will need to start the tucking process carefully, starting with maybe 10 minutes around the house, then gradually building up the time until you can tuck as long as you do now.

Dear Dr. Bill:

I am a crossdresser. I have been out of the closet for a couple of years and have had a lot of fun. My problem is that lately I have trouble getting motivated to dress and go out. I don't feel like going through all the trouble just to have dinner or hang out in a bar. The urge just isn't as strong as it once was. Will I feel like it again or have I used up all my crossdressing desire?

Cindy

Dear Cindy:

You have asked a very important question. It is likely that you will feel the desire again sometime in the future. Nobody knows why the urge to crossdress may come and go throughout life. For some crossdressers the desire is strongest when the person is tense or under pressure. Crossdressing can be a way of reducing the tension and creating a real sense of relaxation. Others crossdress for erotic purposes and may no longer need to get an erotic charge and thus lose their reason for crossdressing. I have had clients who have gone years between times when they desire to crossdress. I am sure that there are other reasons why persons may lose their interest in crossdressing. If you are concerned, it may be helpful to talk with a gender therapist to get insight into why you have lost your crossdressing desire.

## Unemployed? Underemployed?

Ben Franklin said, "The Lord helps those that help themselves." Renaissance is going to try and help the transgendered who are unemployed or under-employed. **Announcing: Renaissance Job Match**, a national employment resource center. If you are looking for work send a resume or brief description of what type of employment you want. Make sure you include a way for us to contact you. If you are in a position to offer employment or let someone know of a job opening send a description of the position. Maybe we can make a match. To be included in the Job Match files send your information to: **Renaissance Job Match**, c/o Renaissance, 987 Old Eagle School Rd, Suite 719, Wayne, PA 19087

## Letters

also come into contact with the transgendered on a day-to-day basis. This then pose the question— can we or should we gate keep the professions of psychology, psychiatry, the clergy, or anyone else who does professional counseling? This would be impossible. It's also noteworthy that the NASW has not condoned nor condemned the actions of the social work faculty at St. Cloud University but should be applauded for coming to the realization that these issues should be addressed at the future NASW convention in Philadelphia.

The question then becomes what does this all mean for us in the transgendered community? Consider that 60% of all therapeutic counseling done in the U.S. is done by social workers, 20% being done by psychologists, 10% by psychiatrists, and the remaining 10% being done by the clergy and various other groups of social scientists, and/or others. Presently where do they base their information when dealing with a transgendered individual— the DSM IV. Although many of your readers may be unaware of the exact nomenclature of the DSM IV, it offers a nosology for diagnosing and treating diseases, and then allows the treating individual to place a label or stereotype on upon anyone who deviates from the norm— whatever that is, and falls into the subsequent category. Are we diseased or are we being ourselves? I would rather believe that we are being ourselves i.e., who we are; but these myths, labels, and stereotypes must be broken and dispelled. A good example of this comes from the February 1995 issue in "News Beat"— *Perversion Is As Perversion Does*, when Suzanne asked, "...if that means that the transgendered are now acceptable company... reading a lot of behavioral science crap in the sixties and seventies that we were, 'a rank below child molesters.'"

One may now question who reads this behavioral science crap? The answer is social workers, psycholo-



gists, etc.— those in the treating profession who can bring about change and initiate acceptance for the transgendered community— meaning each and every one of us. What can we do? Continue to unite, educate, support our cause and be proud of who we are and what we are because this IS who we are. I personally ask all sisters of Renaissance to support the tg community in conjunction with the NASW's up coming conference in Philadelphia so that we can become the first class citizens that we are— not some anomaly of nature. We're not going to change, but we can make a change. I'll be there dressed as Sharon, and if I'm recognized— so be it. It's worth the chance that I'm forced to take as an advocate, an activist, and a social worker— for all of us.

In conclusion I offer a quote from Abraham Maslow (1968) who was the father of the "Humanistic Approach" in psychology— a theory utilized by social workers of the time (as well as today): "Self-actualized people have a lack of fear of their own insides, of their own impulses, emotions, thoughts. This lack of fear enables them to live joyfully and comfortably. Through integrating our gender identity into our whole person, we can come to be comfortable in our own skin."

Sincerely,

Sharon Lynne Strayline, LMSW

Dear Editors,

I am a supportive wife of a cross-dresser and I spend numerous hours volunteering [in the tg community].

Several months ago a crossdressing friend of mine who knows I am very active with various animal groups sent me a copy of the article on Premarin that was published in the October, 1994 issue of Renaissance News & Views. I was upset to read in the January issue that the article on the "Suffering Behind Premarin" was not taken seriously.

After reading that article, I immediately went out and made dozens of copies of "The Suffering Behind Premarin" and mailed them to various animal groups I am involved with to make sure they are aware of this cruelty to animals. I even sent a copy to the Humane Society of the United States which is a national organization which tries to oversee the humane treatment of all animals. Several local animal organizations in the San Antonio area have since published similar articles and hopefully a letter campaign has resulted. I have also sent the article to the national Appaloosa Horse Club in Moscow, Idaho which publishes a monthly journal to over a thousand

members. I am waiting to see if they will publish something in regards to this cruelty to horses.

I have not quite reached that point in life where I may need to take estrogen supplements but when that time comes I will ask my doctor for an alternative. I do know that there is a homeopathic estrogen that comes from a wild yam and believe the name of the product is Progest.

Every day there seem to be more and more members of the community who think they are transsexuals or that hormone treatment will change their life. What little I have been involved in these situations has made me realize that these people are not willing to listen to reason. They are bound and determined to take whatever is necessary to make them look like a woman and the suffering that may result from this is just too bad. All they seem to care about is how large their bosom will grow, as if breasts makes one a woman.

I just recently had the experience to speak with a crossdresser who is going to start taking hormones and I asked her to please read this article that was in RN&V about the suffering of mares and their foals in order to produce Premarin. I was told that she would read the article but it would not

*continued on back page*

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## T-Speak

scribe the same thing but the connotation of "she-male" puts that individual in a different class. Connotations can get you in trouble in all areas of the transgender community. As stated before, some crossdressers don't like the connotation of the word "transvestite." Drag queens don't want to be called crossdressers, since they don't see the connection between their glamour and the CD's desire to **pass**. (Have people think you are a genetic female.) Of course, only the most blatant babes among us revel in being called **chicks with dicks**. (That one's meant to be derogatory but I kind of like it.) Just remember, like the Bee Gees once sang "it's only words". If someone uses one of these words to describe you, and you don't like it, politely correct them and go on about your business. You will have the satisfaction of knowing what label you prefer.



## Renaissance Gets Wired

*News & Views* Editors on the Internet: Keeping pace with modern technology, Renaissance is happy to announce you can now send your Letters-to-the Editor and other submissions via email. Our Editors invite those with an urge to communicate to address their electronic missives to: bensalem@cpn.com. Since electronic mail is so much easier than writing a

letter, going to the post office, standing in line, paying for the stamps, etcetera, Ms. Gardner may not only run your electronic letter in *News & Views*, but dash off a quick reply via the Internet.

JoAnn Roberts announced she is opening a World Wide Web site for her business which will include much information about Renaissance and the ability to send email to the group.

## Human Dimensions

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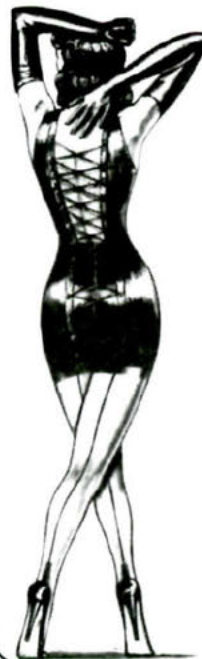
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## Wandering The Web

wired. There is a similar volume for PCs. The most important piece of software you need is a system extension called TCP/IP which stands for **Telecommunications Control Protocol/Internet Protocol**. Remember, I said the Internet is like a phone system? In the case where you use the Shell account, you're IP address (phone number) is actually the Host's address and the Host knows who you are. But with a SLIP/PPP account, you need your own IP address. The TCP/IP system extension is where you will store this information. On Macs, the latest System 7.5 software includes this extension as MacTCP. If your Mac runs an earlier system, get the book because it includes MacTCP. For PCs, I presume the PC edition of the book contains a similar extension. IBM's OS/2 Warp apparently has TCP/IP built in and the much touted Windows95 will also have TCP/IP built into it. So, once this extension is installed in your computer, your service provider will give you a series of IP addresses. These look something like this "192.222.15.00". One address will be for your machine, one will be for their mail server, one for their news server and maybe a few extras. Follow the directions in the book and you won't go wrong. In addition to all these numbers, you will get an email address that looks like: name@provider.com. Mine is: cds@pub@omni.voicenet.com. This address is very important since you will use it to log in to other systems and other people will use it to contact you.

Okay, next step is to access your SLIP account, but you won't do this via the telecomm program as before. At least for the Mac, there is a little program called InterSLIP that does the call and log-in automatically. The program runs a script (an ASCII text file) that will be provided to you by your service provider. If you have to type the script manually, be very careful to type everything *exactly* as it is given to you. InterSLIP gives you minimal feedback, but it does let you know that you are logging in and that

you are connected. Once you see the word "connected" you're on the net

The Internet books described provide you with shareware programs that let you send and receive email (Eudora) and read newsgroups (like soc.support.transgendered), and download software from other Hosts (via FTP or **F**ile **T**ransfer **P**rotocol). This last part is important because you will use it to find and download other software products like Mosaic and Netscape Web browsers which is why we went to all this trouble in the first place. With SLIP/PPP you can read newsgroups, send email and browse the Web simultaneously.

I recommend getting Netscape. The address for the ftp site is mcom.com and the directory you want is /netscape/. Netscape is fairly large so it may take a while to download, but it is worth the wait. There are other browsers, Mosaic being the most common and the most recognizable. There are shareware Mosaic versions for Mac, PC and Unix machines, but all are buggy. Mosaic is available as shareware on CIS and AOL. Mosaic is also available as a non-buggy commercial product. Prodigy has it's own Web browser which is a version of WinWeb and only for PCs. The Mac version of WinWeb is MacWeb. (Catchy names, huh?) But, everyone seems to agree that Netscape is the best so far.

Web browsers use an address called a URL or **U**niform **R**esource **L**ocator and they look like this — **http://home.mcom.com/welcome.html** — (this is not a legitimate URL by the way).

Crank up Netscape and you will see a special "Welcome" button at the top of the window that will take you right to Netscape's Home Page.

The first thing you will notice about a Web page are words that are underlined and in blue. These are links to other sites. Embedded invisibly within the text are URLs for other locations. Click on one of the links and you will be connected to that site. More magic.

The other thing about Web pages that make them so neat are the graphics. Web pages can also have sound and movies embedded. Most browsers require "helper" applications to hear

sounds and play movies. The "Read me" files that come with the Browsers and the Netscape Home Page will give you more information on these helpers and let you download them directly from the Internet.

Okay, so let's drop back a step. I said you could get to the Web without graphics through Lynx. There are other ways to get to the Web *with* the graphics through a Shell account, but your service provider has to play along.

For both Mac and PC, there is TIA, **T**he **I**nternet **A**dapter. Think of this program as a three prong plug to two prong plug adapter. Place the TIA files in your Shell account directory and run TIA from inside the Shell. You can now crank up Netscape or Mosaic and surf the Web. There are two caveats with TIA. First, your service provider must have TIA running on their system (DSC **does not** run TIA), and second, TIA does not allow multiple simultaneous connections, although this is probably not a big deal. TIA is shareware and will cost you \$25. FTP it from marketplace.com, and the directory is /tia/docs.

For Windows-only users, there is SlipKnot which will work from a Shell account as long as your provider has Lynx too. SlipKnot, from MacroMind will let you browse the Web but does not support forms or email. It will let you FTP files, though. SlipKnot is \$29 for non-commercial users. FTP the files from netcom.com in directory /pub/brooks/slipknot.

Once you get on the Net, this will all become second nature. You'll be cruising the Library of Congress and surfing the waves of data in New Zealand in no time.

The tg community is on the Web too. A really neat place of interest to the tg community is the Above & Beyond Mall at **http://199.170.0.46/**. Chris Wells has done a fine job of creating a marketplace to serve some of our needs. Both ETVC and the Diablo Valley Girls have really nice Web sites and I believe they are the first tg organizations on the Web. So, go get wired and explore. I leave it to you to find the many other tg Web sites.





# Shopping With Jackie

by Jackie

Put on your Easter Bonnet, with all the frills upon it, and be the grandest lady in the Easter Parade. Great words, and it seems that bonnets or hats are back. Look around the fashion stores and you will see more millinery than has been around for many a year. If you are a catalog shopper,

**Paula Young**, the wig place, has a new hat shop called "Paula's Hat Box" and of course you can get a free catalog by writing to Paula Young, PO Box 483, Brockton, MA 02403-9967 or call 1-800-343-9695.

There was no mail this month to answer. It makes me feel like I'm not

wanted (grin). Come on gals, drop a note and share your sources. Remember, this is a national column. If you know a great place to find bargains in Louisiana, California or Atlanta, let me know and I'll pass the info on to my readers.

Last month I told you about **Support Plus**. Since then I have gotten their catalog and I'm impressed with the selection and prices. They have nice prices on support hose, girdles, bras, garter belts, shoes (to 12), and other miscellaneous items. If you need these things, call for a catalog at 1-800-229-2910.

**Chadwicks of Boston**, one of my

favorite catalog houses has added an 800 number (1-800-525-6650) which saves expensive toll calls. (We are bargain shoppers, right?) Chadwicks's is great for outerwear with dresses from \$19.00 and most items in the \$29.00 or less category. Their clothing is nice and they offer great service. Sizes offered are from small to XL (20).

Keep your eyes open for bargains and let me know about them. Drop me a note in care of Shopping at: Renaissance, PO Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020. I'll pass them on to the rest of our readers and we'll all save money and look fabulous. So, until next time... Happy Shopping.



## Coming Events Calendar

### April

- 20-23 3rd Annual Moonlight In Manhattan, in New York City. Call: 212-765-3561.
- 20-23 California Dreamin' 95, in Burbank, Calif. Call: 714-779-9013
- 21-22 First Annual Transgender & Transsexual Health Conference, in New York City. Call: 212-620-7310.

### May

- 17-21 CDS Paradise In The Poconos. 10th Anniversary. Call 610-640-9449.
- 17-21 Esprit in Port Angeles, Wash. Write: Esprit, PO Box 873, Kirkland, WA 98083

### June

- 7-11 The 13th annual Be All 1995 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact Crossport, PO Box 54657, Cincinnati, OH 45154.

### June

- 14-18 4th Annual Transgender Law & Policy Conference in Houston, Texas. Contact: Phyllis Randolph Frye, 5707 Firenze St., Houston, TX 77035.

### July

- 26-30 The Third Annual SPICE in Memphis, Tenn. Write: PO Box 24031, Little Rock, AR 72221

### September

- 14-17 CDS Paradise In The Poconos. CDS Paradise In The Poconos. Call 610-640-9449.
- 27-30 Southern Comfort Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Write: PO Box 77591, Atlanta, GA 30357.

### October

- 5-9 Tiffany Club Fall Fling on Cape Cod. Write: TCNE, PO Box 2283, Woburn, MA 01888, or call (617)-891-9325.
- 15-22 21st Annual Fantasia Fair held in Provincetown, Mass. Write: FanFair Registrar, PO Box 941, SE PA 19087.
- 28-29 Fall Harvest sponsored by MAGGIE, Mid-America Gender Group Information Exchange. Write: PO Box 9433, St. Louis, 63117.
- 31 Henri David's Hallowe'en Ball in Philadelphia. The largest Hallowe'en party on the East Coast, Call: 215-732-7711

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## Letters

make any difference to her because Premarin was the only one that would do the trick! All I can hope for now is maybe this crossdresser will help to clean off the table the next time she comes over for dinner.

Being a woman comes from the inside, it is part of our soul and no amount of chemicals can change that. So listening to a crossdresser tell me about his femininity and womanhood makes me want to vomit when he can condone this type of suffering. I am sorry you wasted editorial space in your newsletter thinking that transgendered people would take heed. I have decided to spend my time talking to my genetic female friends about this situation. Thank goodness the November issue of Vogue magazine carried an article about Premarin. At least real women will listen to reason and open their hearts to this suffering. You should be commended for being the first to publish this article about Premarin but unfortunately it fell on deaf ears.

I plan to take copies of your article to the Texas "T" party for distribution and hope you will do the same when you attend the International Congress on Gender, Crossdressers, and Sex Issues. Hopefully, some members of the medical society will read the article and prescribe something besides Premarin for these men who think they are real women. Unfortunately even the medical society is hard to convince since they are only looking for a way to make an easy buck to make the payment on their wife's Mercedes!

Sincerely,  
Bonnie B., [redacted], Texas

Dear Bonnie,

The article you mention was written by another Bonnie, Bonnie [redacted] and was published first in the *Redwings Horse Sanctuary Summer Newsletter*. We were the first to bring it to the attention of the TG community in the U.S. (TransEssex published it in the U.K.) It was not a waste of editorial

space since you took the suffering of these poor animals to heart and have taken it upon yourself to make the efforts you outlined.

Unfortunately I have run across that same male pigheadedness in some of the Renaissance members I discussed the article with. They told me they were going to take Premarin and let the horses be damned. Thank you for pointing out how unfeminine their selfishness is. What good is looking like a woman if you have no sensitivity? Keep up the good work.

Dear Ms. Gardner,

I have just recently received a copy of the February, 1995 *Renaissance News & Views*. Excellent publication ladies. I think it's really neat! I enjoyed all of the articles especially the swimsuit page. I want to compliment all of the ladies appearing in the swimsuit section. Very awesome! You are all very sexy. I'd like to extend a special compliment to Dina—you are tremendously sexy.

Back to reality. At present, due to the fact I'm incarcerated, I'm not able to subscribe at this time. I'm working on it and hope to be able to subscribe within a month or so.

It's amazing. All my life I've felt that I was alone. I felt I was the only person on Earth who would sneak brief moments attired as the girl I've always dreamed of being.

I never had the courage to publicly display my true self. But I want to so badly! I have worked hard on removing myself from the idiotic male stigma which has been relevant to us all throughout the formative years.

It's well past time that the real me rises above society's demand of place and role, grab up my heels and purse and sashay forth into the existence I desperately desire! Which is my ultimate goal for my future. I'm seriously committed to being a woman and I hope to become a member of your organization as soon as possible. Once again, thanks for your courage ladies!

Oh, by the way, awesome pose on the beach Angela!

Yours in sisterhood,  
Corrine

Dear Angela,

It is a pleasure for us to see that members of the other support groups with which we exchange newsletters are actually reading and using some of the information we print. We here in Nashville are justifiably proud of the long established performing tradition of our local gender community which has produced two Miss Gay USA's and one Miss Continental.

While the old bars mentioned in our January newsletter are now closed, including *The Other Side* where I saw my first drag show in 1977, we have several that are second to none. The Connection, which opened in its new location in November, is supposed to be the largest gay-owned nightclub in the entire country. It will host the National Entertainer of the Year Pageant this August. Furthermore, a new club called Cowboys La Cage, which is scheduled for opening this June, has been getting a lot of media attention lately, including a story on Entertainment Tonight featuring Reba McEntire with the two Reba impersonators. The club will also feature a Cher, Liza Minelli, Barbara Streisand, and three Tina Turners (Ed.Note: Three Tinas, no waiting!) in addition to the expected lineup of country music stars.

We hope that anyone who comes to Nashville for business or pleasure, or is just passing through the area for any reason (1996 Atlanta Olympics?) will take the time to visit us and see all that Tennessee's Capitol City has to offer. We have a lot more here than just the Grand Ole Opry.

Sincerely,  
Marisa Richmond  
Board Chair Tennessee Vals  
(and unofficial Chamber of  
Commerce Representative)



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