

Renaissance News



Volume 4, No. 6

Vision - Integrity - Quality

June 1990

IFGE in Philly for '93

Philadelphia has been selected by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) as the site city for the 1993 *Coming Together* Convention. Renaissance will be the host organization.

Convention site selection was discussed at the 1990 IFGE board of directors meeting in Boston. Sites for 1991 and 1992 were announced as Denver, Colo. and San Antonio, Texas, respectively.

During a program planning meeting at the 1990 Boston convention, Maryann Kirkland (Greater Philadelphia Chapter representative to IFGE) noted that the '93 convention site had not been confirmed. According to Merrissa Sherril Lynn, Executive Director of IFGE, the fantastic job that ETVC did in San Francisco for 1989 "scared" off two potential host groups. After a hasty conference between Renaissance board members in attendance, the

offer to host the convention in Philadelphia was extended to IFGE, pending approval of the full board and general membership.

The executive board approved and the general membership of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter concurred. (Greater Philadelphia is expected to take the heaviest share of the work with support from the other three chapters.) IFGE was notified and has since confirmed the site and Renaissance as host.

Hosting this convention is no little task. The '93 convention could potentially draw as many as 400 people to the city. Renaissance must provide coordination with IFGE programs and develop its own activities for the conventioners. It will be pure hard work.

Anyone who wishes to volunteer their time and services toward the convention activity should contact the Renaissance main office

Ball Report

The first annual Renaissance Spring Ball & Birthday Party took place on May 11. Over 50 people attended the event at the Great Valley Hilton Hotel, where many Renaissance members stay and party on regular meeting nights. The hotel staff has learned to expect the girls on the third Saturday of every month.

The Ball & Birthday was no less an event for them as it was for Renaissance. Every employee was courteous and helpful.

The truly serious party girls put their best spikes forward and had a great time. This was the senior prom they didn't get to when they were in high school.

While the turnout was less than expected, the party planners say they'll do it again next year.

Watch for photos of the Ball & Birthday party in a future issue.

Couples group forming for socials

Many couples are learning to deal with transgendered behavior as part of their relationship but all too often the "social" aspects of partnerships get neglected. It is the aim of three partners to correct that defect.

Betty Roberts, Rachel Marshall, and Sunny [redacted], partners of JoAnn Roberts, Beth Marshall, and Alice [redacted], are forming a Sunday Social group to meet monthly at the King of Prussia location. The idea is to provide a non-crossdressing, social function that will be as enjoyable for the partners as the regular meetings are to their

transgendered mates.

The social will be held on the fourth Sunday of each month at The Woods complex and will begin in the late afternoon. Couples will be asked to bring munchies or hors d'ouerves for eight people. The organizers will supply beverages.

Anyone interested in attending this function should call Betty Roberts at 215-[redacted] and leave a phone number so she can get back to you with details.

Give your partner a break and spend a little "quality" time with him/her and good friends.

Prelude party

Just when you thought it wouldn't happen again...Just when you thought there's nothing to do in June...Get ready for...

PRELUDE-III.

The Prelude management "loves" us so much they couldn't live without us until September. So on June 22nd they've given us the club from 9 pm. to midnight and we're giving it to you for just a \$5 cover charge per person.

Come out and dance, boogie, and have a ball with your sisters at the Prelude, just off Route 202 in New Hope. Call 215-862-5171.

For more details call the Renaissance Greater Philadelphia Chapter at 215-946-TVTS.

Chapter info

New Jersey

South Jersey: Kelly [REDACTED], chapter leader. Write Renaissance SJ, c/o P. O. Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 641-3782.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Angela Gardner, chapter leader. Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Summer hours: starts at 9:00 p.m. Call (215) 946-8887.

Pennsylvania

Reading: Susan [REDACTED], chapter leader. Write Renaissance RDG, Box 14421, Reading, PA 19607. Meets twice a month. There is a dinner-social held at THIS IS IT, 801 Walnut St., Reading, second Wednesday of the month and a membership meeting on the second Saturday. Call (215) 376-8886.

Lower Susquehanna Valley:

Elsa [REDACTED], chapter leader. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 7412, York, PA 17404. Meets the first Saturday of the month in Camp Hill, Pa. Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. Call (717) 767-4095.

Important information

✓ Renaissance has a new mailing address, please correct your records: P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa., 19406.

✓ Renaissance has a new phone number as well. Call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day for current information about events and activities.

✓ The board of directors has approved a new policy for the development of chapters and affiliates.

—Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit in-

stitution in their home state (except Pa.) before asking for chapter status.

—Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance affiliate will pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlimited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

And, don't forget about...

• Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 7-What Is Renaissance?, and 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics. A

paper on transsexualism is in work.

• 3R addiction recovery support group meets at King of Prussia on third Sat. of the month.

• The Pen Pal Project. If you are willing to write letters to pen pals, please let Alison know. Write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

• A few copies of the Deluxe Edition of Dr. Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* are still available at \$39.95 postpaid. Make checks payable to Renaissance.

Renaissance News

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For current information call (215) 630-1437 24 hrs. a day.

Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the gender community at large.

Events Calendar

June

2nd Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
2nd RenLSV Chapter
6-10 "Be All"-Pittsburgh
Contact Transpitt
9th Ren. Reading Chapter
16th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

July

7th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
7th RenLSV Chapter
14th Ren. Reading Chapter
21st Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

August

4th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
4th RenLSV Chapter
11th Ren. Reading Chapter
18th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

September

1st Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
1st RenLSV Chapter
8th Ren. Reading Chapter
15th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter
20-23 Fall Paradise In The Poconos — CDS

S JoAnn Altman Stringer **URVIVAL**™

To be or not to be . . .

Employed, that is, as the great Bard used to say. Well, maybe not.

'Twas in the March issue that I first wrote of getting that first job. Many of you who read it probably thought there was no more to know about finding employment. Wrongo!! Though this column is not going to be eternally devoted to this issue, I thought it appropriate to devote another chapter covering more issues of finding employment.

Believe me, for the transsexual seeking that first job, or any job for that matter, and needing to keep the rent and electricity paid, employment *is* a big issue.

The reason I unearth this topic from the editor's morgue stems from a very personal situation of recent origin. Though I am a professional photographer and teacher, occasionally I want new equipment or there is a lull in business. So, I sometimes take a temporary position doing something else until my business picks up. Remember the rent?

In March I was hired as an executive secretary to the administrator of a medical facility. In that capacity I do a whale's share of typing. Part of that is what I call "Thanks but no thanks" letters for unsuccessful hopefuls. Prior to sending out letters to these sad souls I often take the time to browse through their applications to see why they weren't hired.

I've hired many a person for various organizations so I'm familiar with what to look for. But, in this secretarial position, I admit, my eyes were opened to new realities of the job world. From what I've seen many of these people didn't get hired due to their own carelessness! They blew their chances of employment because of dumb things. I mean, why go to all the trouble to fill out an application form and hand it in just so your mistakes will disqualify you. Do you want the job or not?

How does this relate to transsexuals seeking work? Transgendered people have two strikes against them already. Everything they can do to improve the odds of landing a job needs to be done.

Let me share some of what I've concluded from my observations, and I'll let you make up your own mind whether they are valid or not.

First, when going to pick up a job application, always wear nice clothes. Always look your best. There are two reasons for this: 1) Often the secretary/receptionist has the authority to enter a code on your application stating whether or not they think you might make a good employee, based on your appearance and manners, and; 2) If you fill out the form, wearing blue jeans and T-shirt, the prospective interviewer may walk by and see you in those shabby clothes — the first impression will already have been made before the interview.

Always treat receptionists with courtesy and professional respect. If you get her/him mad at you, believe me, your application won't even make it to personnel.

I can't stress this next item strongly enough; fill out the application form *legibly*. Type written is best. If you must handwrite it, do it clearly so even your old grandmother with failing eyesight could read it. I don't know how many applications I've seen that were printed neatly but in a style that was harder to discern than Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Fill in *all* of the questions and spaces on the form. Don't leave anything blank. Some employers see blanks as a lack of attention to detail and in the trash can it goes.

I see a lot of applications bearing prison records. Though I give the people credit for being truthful, a criminal record looks very bad to a potential employer. 'Nuff said.

If the personnel manager calls you up to set an appointment —

keep it. Many of our department heads are continually frustrated because they call someone for an interview and they don't show. Nor do they call to cancel. This is rude. It baffles me why one would go to the trouble of filling out an application and not show up for the interview.

When you do go to an interview, try to guess the type of questions you may be asked. Rehearse for the interview in front of a mirror or while driving the car. That's not as crazy as it sounds. When I was on the stage and television, we rehearsed in front of the mirror all the time to see what we looked like. There is no replacement for preparation and there's nothing worse than being caught off guard in an interview. Be prepared.

Always dress professionally. Make that initial first impression a good one. I have one dress I've worn to five interviews, and I've landed the job each time. I call it my interview dress. It works.

If you are applying for an executive level position, it is customary to follow up the interview with a thank you letter. And, you refresh yourself in the interviewer's mind.

During the interview, be aware of your body language. Don't slouch. The silent language of the body can speak much louder than your voice ever can, especially to someone who knows what body posture means. When you speak, look the interviewer straight in the eye. Don't look out the window or play with your hair. Know what may be construed as sexual or flirting gestures. Many experts say women should use little or no perfume.

My suggestions may be obvious to some but not to others. I've seen the job market from all sides as I hired/fired, coordinated applications, looked for jobs, prepared resumes, and suffered through hundreds of interviews. These recommendations do work. Try them.

ON THE TOWN™

with Alison Laing

Backstage Performance Tops

Just a few blocks off South Street is one of Philadelphia's best kept secrets; a fine restaurant with delightful decor, pleasant service, and both a clientele and staff who are open minded regarding lifestyles. Having been there several times for light fare (dessert, drinks, coffee), I thought it about time to try a full meal. My partner, two friends and I arrived at our reservation time and were seated immediately. The place filled within the next 15 minutes. Reservations are a must.

We began with cocktails, all of which were well made and generous. Our friends shared a Shirley Caesar salad (\$7.50 for two), while my partner and I split a Shrimp Louie De Palma (\$8.00) which provided four jumbo shrimp and a hard boiled egg with greens, dressed in a

fabulous la Maize sauce. The shrimp was from part of the menu titled Act I and the salad from Act II. Some of the other stars from Act I were Paté La Belle, a forcemeat of filet mignon, chicken liver, and veal seasoned with spices and Cognac (\$5.50), and Prosciutto Bardot, prosciutto and crab meat, en croustade, topped with Hollandaise sauce (\$7.00). For Act III (entree) our friends selected Crab cakes (\$16.50) which were spectacular. I chose Princess Steak Di (\$15.50), two lovely prime filets with a sauce of essence of veal, mushrooms and shallots. My partner had the Oscar winner of the evening with her selection of Daffy Duck (\$16.00), medium-rare slices of succulent duck breast in a light wine sauce. This dish alone could earn the restaurant at least a couple of stars in

any gourmet rating. Each entree was accompanied with a side dish of vegetables al dente and potatoes au gratin. Other Act III offerings range from Mae West, breast of chicken with honey mustard sauce (\$11.00) to Rhett Butler, an 8 ounce prime center cut filet mignon (\$19.00), plus the Esther Williams catch of the day, on our night it was Norwegian salmon with a lobster cream sauce.

It must be apparent by now the theme of this restaurant is the theater and they carry it off well with Hollywood decor and posters of the all-time movie greats.

We ended the meal by ordering four different desserts. Our waiter (whose femme name is Blanche) realizing we were taking our meal seriously, returned with a selection of *all* the desserts, each one better

continued on page 7



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THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

Time again for that fun game — “Celebrity Crossdressing.” Bowing to the convention of age before (fleeting) beauty, our first contestant is Greta Garbo.

While it is no surprise to movie buffs that Garbo’s films pioneered man-tailored clothes for women, few may know that in her later years the reclusive Hollywood legend wore *only* men’s clothes. The owner of the Swiss hotel where Garbo spent her summers for many decades recently said, “I never once saw her wearing women’s clothing. With Greta it was always men’s pants and coats. She told me ‘male clothes are the only type I like wearing.’”

♣ ♣ ♣

From the sublime to the ridiculous...

Rocker Adam Ant had a spot of difficulty with customs agents at London’s Heathrow airport. “I was squirming with embarrassment,” Ant said. “The last thing you want is some burly customs officer holding up your nail polish, mascara and jewelry.”

♣ ♣ ♣

Janet Jackson knows how difficult it is to get away with a little gender masquerade. No stranger to men’s clothes, she once tried to escape the attention of her fans by donning a fake moustache while walking her dogs. But it didn’t work. “One guy passed me and said, ‘Gosh, that looks like Janet Jackson with a moustache,’” she said.

♣ ♣ ♣

But it seems that some people are more easily fooled than others. According to a published report, Rob Lowe was shocked to learn that the gorgeous gal he picked up at a L.A. nightspot was really a guy. The revelation came as Lowe was driving “her” home. Lowe reportedly slammed on his brakes and ordered the girl out of the car.

What do you bet that wouldn’t have happened in Atlanta?

♣ ♣ ♣

Now for some important news.

In an attempt to reduce Medicaid costs, the state of Oregon has proposed a system to rate the medical procedures it will pay for. The rating system takes into account the cost of the procedure, the number of people suffering from the particular affliction, and the quality of life after the procedure is performed. Later, the state legislature will draw a line across the list; procedures above the line will be paid for by the state, those below the line will not. The goal, officials said, was to have more money to spend on more people.

Sex change operations come at the bottom of the list, and are likely to be dropped from the Oregon Medicaid program.

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A transsexual attorney from Texas is trying to get the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus (GLPC) to add “transgenderal” to its name.

GLPC has so far resisted Phyllis Frye’s motion for a name change. Caucus vice president Larry Lingle said the change was unnecessary because the organization’s bylaws provide for the inclusion of many groups of people. Furthermore, “this is not an issue in any other gay and lesbian organization anywhere else in the country,” he said. “The term she is using (transgenderal) is not even an accepted term anywhere.”

Lingle said the question was a “fringe issue” that “distracted” from the main goals of the organization.

Frye disagrees. Bigots, she said, will selectively exclude any group not specifically included when legal gains are made in the area of civil rights. She said she wants to make sure that transsexuals and transvestites are not lost in the shuffle.

♣ ♣ ♣

Another transsexual political activist, Terri J. Pohrman, finished second in the race for mayor of

Yountville, Calif. But she promises to try again.

Pohrman made no attempt to hide her transgendered status, and even ran with the campaign slogan “A Change Will Do You Good.” Her candor made the mayoral race news around the world.

♣ ♣ ♣

And in still more political news, transsexual Leslie Elaine Perez lost her bid to become chairwoman of the Harris County (Tex.) Democratic Party. She received only 19 percent of the vote, while her opponent Ken Bentsen Jr. received the rest.

It appears that Perez’s transsexuality didn’t play a large part in her defeat. For one thing, her opponent is the nephew of Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.), and for another, Perez served time in prison as a man for a 1961 murder.

♣ ♣ ♣

Speaking of prison, Marty Phillips has won a lawsuit against prison officials who tried to stop her from becoming a woman.

At the age of 17, Phillips began taking female hormones. Later she added breast implants and facial surgery to the process. But the hormones were halted when Phillips began serving a life term in a Michigan prison for a 1985 murder.

Phillips sued prison officials in federal court to resume the hormone doses. In February, U.S. District Judge Richard Enslen agreed, and officials were only waiting the formal ruling before giving Phillips her hormones. They said they had stopped the treatments because female hormones increase the risk of stroke in uncastrated males, but Phillips said she was willing to take the chance.

♣ ♣ ♣

Gene Mountain, a pre-op male-to-female transsexual, has a beef with officials at the Oak Park Heights State Prison in Minnesota.

continued on page 6

NewsQueen...

She says they barred her from visiting her boyfriend (who is doing time for robbery) because she is transsexual.

Nonsense, prison authorities say. They don't mind if Mountain visits; they just want her to stop wearing dresses and makeup. The feminine attire makes other prisoners rambunctious.



Some high school boys in Jackson, Tenn., were feeling rambunctious last month. Spring was in the air, and so the guys decided to wear skirts to school.

The guys claimed that they were protesting the school policy that forbade shorts. But that seems unlikely, seeing as how one boy wore his skirt over his long pants.

Some people will go to any length to crossdress.



For example, young Thai men in Singapore have taken to wearing

red nail polish in their sleep in hopes that it will ward off death during the night.

So far, about 200 apparently healthy young men have died in their sleep from a mysterious illness. While doctors are looking for the cause, other Thais think they have the answer — a female ghost on the prowl for husbands. The nail polish, the men believe, will fool the ghost into thinking they are women.



From the supernatural, we move to the world of the female impersonator. (Come to think of it, that's not such a far leap after all.)

Brown Sugar, hailed as Denver's leading lady of illusion, has broken new frontiers in a profession not known for respecting conventions. In May, she headlined in the first show of its kind to premier in a major Denver nightclub outside the gay community. The show was an AIDS fundraiser for the Hispanic

community. Later in the month she starred in a half-hour cable television show searching for Colorado's five most beautiful men.



Least you think that drag is accepted in the Rockies, consider the case of Col. Edward Modesto, an Army dentist assigned to Fort Carson, Colo. He is charged with conduct unbecoming an officer because he imitated Bette Midler at an AIDS benefit held in a gay bar. He also allegedly exposed himself to patrons in a laundromat while in drag.

"I think the Army is trying to make an example of me," Modesto said, "and I don't know why."



We don't know how we missed it, but La Donna La Moore of Pittsburgh was recently crowned Miss Gay Pennsylvania.

La Donna went on to compete (unsuccessfully) in the Miss Gay USA

continued next page



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Lower Susquehanna News

Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter of Renaissance Education Association, Inc.

Volume 2, No. 4 - Elsa [REDACTED], Editor, P O Box 7412, York PA 17404 - June 1990

Chapter Meetings

LSV chapter meets the first Saturday of each month at Classic Designs Hair Care Center, 250 S 15th St, Camp Hill.

Doors open 9:00 p.m. Program 10:00.

Directions: I-83 to Exit 22-Lemoyne, right at light onto Third St. (from I-83 N, you can only turn right), at second traffic light on Third St., turn left on Market St. (Hardees), bear left onto State St (Hess gas) and go about a mile to Classic Designs, on the right just past the West Shore Plaza and a NAPA auto parts store. Use the parking lot on the west end of the building. Enter door facing the parking lot.

LSV Phone: (717) 767-4095

Our answering machine has a special message segment with late-breaking news and events that can be accessed from a tone phone. To talk to a human being, please leave a name and phone number or call back most evenings or weekends. When no one is available, the machine picks up on the fourth ring.

Harrisburg callers may call Brenda on weeknight evenings at (717) [REDACTED] for chapter information. She also organizes carpools to King of Prussia meetings.

Classic Designs

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offers full hair, wig, cosmetic and electrolysis services to our community. Private areas available for all services. Phone (717) 761-2284 or (717) 761-2285. Treva specializes in wig styling. For other salon services ask for Vicky. Phone (717) 763-8254 for Tracy Evens, Electrologist.

Chapter Happenings

April 28, Dawn & Elsa got to AAAOK III at Altland's Ranch. This was the first show we saw there that started on time. Unfortunately, it ran until 2:40 and lots of the audience left early. They missed a great show co-hosted by Beulah Lament and Lily Tomlin, and featuring Kelli St. James (Miss Gay Maryland), Nya Bleu (Miss Hippo), Joanna Blue (Miss Club Mitchell), Vanna White (Miss Deer Park Lodge), Tyrone Nolan (Mr. Gay America) and Fernando Ramos (Mr. Gay Maryland). In December, Berni told us that AAAOK was the next scheduled show, however, he neglected to tell us about the Altland's Ranch Valentine's pageant in February. Berni assures us that one does not have to be gay to participate in the competition. The reigning Altland's Queen of Hearts, Miss Stephanie Michaels, is stunning. Both Stephanie and last year's queen, Cher, are from Virginia. Next year, maybe LSV can enlist enough local talent to give them some competition.

May 5: It looked like a slow evening for the scheduled LSV meeting until Heather arrived with a carload of lovelies. We chatted away the evening and watched a Donohue tape. As usual, we adjourned to the Villa Inn where we had to shout to be heard over the music. Why is it that some DJs think that louder is better?

May 11: Roxy, Heather, Lynn, Beth and Elsa's other persona got to the Spring Ball at the Great Valley Hilton for a delightful evening. We especially enjoyed the DJ who played some Mozart and Haydn as dinner music and knew that after-dinner dance music was best appreciated when it still allowed conversation.

Coming Events:

- Next LSV meeting June 2 at regular location (directions at left).
- For one of our summer meetings, we hope to have a computer imaging program so that Jim can electronically transform into Julie without the bother of wig and makeup in the hot weather. The imaging meeting will be at a *different location*, so please check our next newsletter for details or call to confirm summer locations.
- We were chartered July 16, 1989 and held our first membership meeting on August 26. For the first anniversary celebration of that meeting, we are planning the **LSV Luau** for August 25 or September 1. Details next month.

Chapter Still Growing

We now have 30 paid chapter members. Chapter membership dues are \$18/yr in addition to \$12 national dues. We anticipate approving a half-year rate beginning July to correspond with the half-year national rate. Non-members are asked for a \$3 contribution per meeting toward rent and refreshments.

New Baltimore Group

Diane reports she is trying to form a group in the Baltimore area. For info, write to D. S. Associates, P O Box 194, Joppa MD 21085.

We will gladly print any information of interest to the Lower Susquehanna transgendered community on a space-available basis and can also include announcements on our phone message.

Would you like to be a Big Sister?... Terry M., South Jersey & 3R

One of the greatest joys I've had since I came out of the closet has been the support and encouragement I've received from the people I've met in the gender community.

I, like many of us, lived alone with my secret. I dared not share that secret with anyone else. I dressed alone, shades drawn, in fear, and always felt guilty about it afterward. So, I would throw everything out and vow never to put on those clothes again. However, purging the apparel did not solve my problem. I could not ignore that fact that I wanted and needed to dress in feminine clothing. I just did not know why. I did not understand that my dressing was and is an expression of my own natural feminine energies.

It was a huge step for me to creak open my closet door and reach out for help. At first, I wrote and made contact by mail. I contacted Tri-Ess and Renaissance and was delighted to receive responses from both. Next, I contacted a producer of a TV getaway weekend. There I first came out as Teresa. I also met for the first time real flesh and blood human beings who all had similar stories to my own. I started to attend Renaissance meetings on a regular basis.

I am grateful to all the people who have put these support groups together. I do not know what I would do without them. I do not think I would be able to stand anymore time back in that closet.

But, as is the case with a twelve step recovery program that I involved with, the most important person in the room is not the person who has been there for a few months or years. Nor is it any of the officers.

The most important person is the one who walks in for the first time, the newcomer. It is with the newcomer that I best identify.

I know how scary it is to put on a dress and actually go to one of the meetings for the first time. It is a journey over miles, over fears, and over a lifetime of loneliness. What a wonderful feeling it is for me now to talk to new sisters. How exciting it is to see them come back and literally blossom.

The importance of supporting new sisters, of helping them feel at ease and at home, cannot be understated. It is one of the things a support group is all about. We help ourselves by helping others. We grow by helping others grow. This can take many forms but most of all it simply takes a willingness to share. I would like to propose a "Big Sister" program to assist newcomers. A "Big Sister" would simply be someone willing to give her time to someone new. This may involve phone or postal contact, or it may involve personal contact outside of the meetings. Ideally, a "Big Sister" might encourage a new person to come to her first meeting. I know how much it means to know somebody first and then get to a meeting. I know that other Renaissance members have talked about doing something like this and are anxious to help a newcomer. This would not be something to replace any of the ways we already reach out to people but would rather serve to enhance those efforts. If there is anyone else interested in becoming a "Big Sister", please let me or one of the officers know.

NewsQueen...

pageant, but Sabrina K. Brooks decided to skip the pageant on advice from her attorney. It seems that several years ago when she held the title of Miss Kentucky Continental, she was involved in a matter that reportedly included two policemen and oral sex. The matter is still unresolved, but authorities said that if Sabrina came to town she would be arrested immediately.

♣ ♣ ♣

Although he may have trouble competing with the pretty young things who enter these pageants, time was when Richard Gere could have walked away with a tiara.

Reminiscing about his early days as an actor, Gere told *Fame* magazine, "I had very long hair, which I refused to cut. When I first came to New York, it came down to my tits. I looked like Rita Hayworth."

♣ ♣ ♣

Police in Pensacola, Fla., didn't mistake Darryl Willums, 23, for Rita Hayworth when they nabbed him for shoplifting. But they might have mistaken him for Roseanne Barr. Willums was in drag and managed to stuff 14 items of clothing worth \$457 into his panties. These were not regular panties, as Police Officer Dusty Cutler said, "it was big mamma underwear."

That may have been Willums' downfall, so to speak. When store security tried to detain him, he bolted, threw off his high heels and started running across the parking lot. But the loot was more than the elastic waistband could bear. Soon the panties and the stolen clothing fell down around Willums' ankles, tripping him.

You know what to do with clippings about crossdressing—send them to Miss Sinclair at the Renaissance office!

Backstage...from page 4

than the next. I favored the Bourbon pecan pie and lemon tart. Our friends liked the white chocolate mousse and the baked pear with caramel sauce.

Since they serve wine by the glass, we were each able to select a wine of our choice best suited to match the main course.

Backstage has one other very

important feature; an undesignated, unisex powder room.

Backstage, 614 South 4th St., Philadelphia, (215)-928-1025. I'm going back for seconds!

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Friendships: making them, keeping them...Dina Amberle, Greater Phila.

For most of us, making new friends is not an easy thing to do. This is especially true when we are the new person in an existing group and everyone else seems to know each other. It is easy to feel alone and intimidated by the others in the group.

I, and perhaps many others of us, have heard that Renaissance is filled with little cliques of friends. For new members, or the shy members, in our group this presents an intimidating barrier to making friends quickly - or at all. Now, I think we have all been through this, both in our Renaissance outings and in general social settings. I can't help you become the social butterfly of the cocktail party circuit but I would like to help everyone break these barriers down in our little group here.

Think about it: why should anyone be intimidated by a man wearing a dress? Yet most of us have been reluctant to talk to someone else because of appearance, or because they were in a group, or felt like the odd woman out, at some point in our Renaissance careers. And it's only human nature to feel that it's the other girls' fault that you aren't making friends.

Making friends with new people takes effort. You need to make the

effort yourself - unless your personality and good looks are so magnetic that people beat a path to wherever you are. In a group like ours, where everyone's most vulnerable secret is exposed, what better common ground do we need to strike up friendships? And if snappy conversational gambits aren't your forte, complimenting or asking the other girl about her fashions or makeup or hairstyle never fails. Especially compliments! We are all inveterate compliment hounds.

Even if you start slow and meet only a few people at each meeting, those people will know others and then you can join conversations with them and by geometric progression you will have a wide circle of friends. But you need to make a start, fight your bashfulness and don't be intimidated by looks or preconceived ideas about the other girl. I have never met a person I didn't like in our group. Yet, I have never spoken to many members for the same poor excuses I am trying to combat with this very article. I just met a girl at one of our dance parties who I always felt was a little intimidating or standoffish. Not only was she not standoffish, she was very friendly, open, and leads an interesting life. It was my loss in not making her acquaintance months ago.

And that brings me to another friend-related topic. Once you meet some of our members, you realize how diverse and interesting some of our lives are - as if transgenderism wasn't enough!

Have you ever thought of extending your Renaissance acquaintances to your 'other' life? There's no law that says we should only see each other once a month, dressed en femme. Wouldn't it be nice to have a buddy who knew why you shaved your legs? or why your nails were so long? or what was so damn important about the third Saturday night of the month? If you have made friends, and as you make new friends, keep it in mind that we are nice people even when we're dressed as men. So I don't want to hear about how our group is cliquish anymore. Make an effort to meet new friends at each meeting or function. You'll be richer for it and so will our organization.

The Greater Phila. Chapter has compiled a listing of events, night-clubs, and bargain shopping spots. The listing will be updated each month in conjunction with the new Chapter newsletter. If you would like a copy of the events listing, send a request and an SASE to Renaissance, Gr. Phila. Chapter, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020

Additional comments to Transsexual Issues...Jackie K.

I have to agree with the analysis in the Editor's Comments (Renaissance News, Vol.4, No. 4). There are many reasons why someone may feel that "going the TS route" may be an answer for them.

Reassignment surgery has developed to the point where the results are very good, aesthetically and functionally. It represents a "solution"

for some to gender dysphoria.

However, people fail to recognize that reassignment is *not* a "solution" but a form of treatment for a specific diagnosis — transsexualism. A person with a female gender identity in a male body, the "classic" TS, is only one of many people with transsexual feelings, most of whom are *not* candidates for surgery. A

person with a primarily male gender identity with accompanying strong feminine identification, such as a transvestite, would be making a big mistake to try to "become" a TS.

Being a transsexual is something that comes from within, is something you have no control over, and cannot be intellectualized.

Wanted: Authors

Do you have something to share with your sisters? Maybe a funny story? A sad story? Comments on

something you saw in NewsQueen or National Gender News? Which ever, we're interested in what you

have to say. Send all submissions to the Editor, Renaissance News, care of the national office.

From around the TV/TS community
NATIONAL GENDER NEWS™

MINNEAPOLIS — The program for the National Conference on Sexual Compulsivity/Addiction carried an announcement for an unusual paper titled, *Treatment of Transvestism Through a Model of Compulsive Sexual Behavior*, authored by Walter Bockting, Drs. (sic) and Eli Coleman, Ph.D.

We have heard from other professionals that there is a movement afoot to label all sexual minorities as compulsive or addicted and attempt treatment through various models, such as 12-step programs.

The main problem we see with this approach is most transvestites don't want to be "cured" of their crossdressing; they want to be able to dress without feeling guilty about it. That's the main purpose for our support group structure.

We suppose as long as someone still believes that transvestites are "sick" people, they will keep looking for a "cure."

NGN

WOODLAND HILLS, CALIF. — We don't make this stuff up; we just report it.

Virginia Prince is in the news once more, this time complaining about a lack of participation in her

Tri-Ess Alpha Chapter, according to Kymberleigh Richards in the March issue of *Cross-Talk* (Valley Girls). Readers may recall that the Valley Girls are a former Tri-Ess chapter that "seceded from the union" last year.

Richards believes the Alpha Chapter and Tri-Ess in general is an organization aimed at novice crossdressers. Once a level of experience and confidence is achieved, the organization offers little to keep members satisfied. Richards continues, "However, it does mean that in some areas, Southern California among them, there may not be a place for a Tri-Ess to flourish. This seems to be the case with Alpha."

Golly Gee! If Le Prince can't hold a chapter together, who can?

NGN

CHICAGO — The heat is on. That is it's turned on Dr. Glenn Humphrey for the conclusions reached from his doctoral dissertation, *Cross Dressing in Males: The Attempt to Retain the Comforting Object* (See *Survival*, May 1990, and this issue for details).

Chicago Gender Society president, Laura, agrees with our JoAnn Altman Stringer that Humphrey's

research design was flawed.

The item that seems to cause the most controversy is a "finding" that Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) is a "momentary palliative" (i.e. a temporary fix) and does not resolve a transsexual's search for security.

Stringer and others strongly disagree with this conclusion as a generalization for all transsexuals.

We would agree with that position but must point out that it may be true for Humphrey's sample population. Further, it may be pointing out a serious problem with the current system of counseling transsexuals for SRS; many people presenting themselves as transsexuals are getting through the "system" when they shouldn't.

On the brighter side, his findings seriously call into question the DSM classification of transvestism as a paraphilia.

One hand giveth and the other taketh away.

NGN

ATHENS, GREECE — It sure looks like Greek to me...

We truly enjoy receiving international mail, but this latest item leaves us very puzzled.

continued next page



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From around the TV/TS community
NATIONAL GENDER NEWS™

We received a copy of a magazine called *AMPHI*, written entirely in Greek. Our many years of Latin, French and German are of no help in trying to decipher the contents.

If the sender reads this newsletter, we would appreciate it if you would identify yourself and the publication.

We're reminded of Cicero's admonishment on gifts from Greeks.

NGN

KINGWOOD, W. VA. — New groups keep poppin' up all over the place. **Trans-West Virginia** is the latest to surface. The group is serving West Virginia and southeast Ohio. They held their first meeting on January 19. Future meetings will be held on the third Friday of each month at the Days Inn located at the Winfield exit of I-64, between Huntington and Charleston.

Interested parties should contact Alona V. Miller, P. O. Box 258, Kingwood, WV 26537.

NGN

CINCINNATI — Long time readers of NGN will recall the trials and tribulations of **Heather Peerson**, a male to female transsexual and founder of **Cross-Port**.

Peerson lost her job during her Real Life Test because her employer refused to allow her to wear clothing appropriate for a female. She later won a lawsuit against her former employer when they tried to deny her unemployment benefits.

We are very pleased to find that Peerson is gainfully employed in her former profession, but with a new company that seems ever so much more enlightened.

We're very happy for Heather. Her refusal to be put down by an ignorant male power structure is a fine example for all of us to follow.

NGN

CHICAGO — There will be a changing of the guard at the **Chicago Gender Society**. In particular we note that newsletter editor **Karen**

Ann Baumgardner has laid down her pen, aspiring to the presidential suite. Well known Chigoan, author, and publisher **Gloria Wright** will take over as editor of the *Primrose*.

We've enjoyed Baumgardner's tenure as editor. The *Primrose* was always a joy to read, even if it was stream of consciousness.

In her closing remarks Baumgardner payed tribute to our own **JoAnn Roberts**, and this newsletter, for her stand on copyright infringement. Roberts sends her thanks.

We look forward to reading future issues of the *Primrose*.

NGN

SEATTLE — We reported last month on the antics of one Philip [redacted] in the great northwest. Now, it appears, [redacted] may have gotten himself in hotter water.

According to **Bobbie** [redacted], editor of *TV-TS Talk*, [redacted] represented himself as a medical doctor and offered her feminizing hormones through the mail.

Meanwhile, publications elsewhere are refusing Salem's ads. According to one source, *The Transvestian* has dropped Salem as an advertiser. CDS publications has also refused to run Salem's ads.

NGN

SAN ANTONIO, TEX. — The results are in and the second annual **Texas 'T' Party** was a huge success. Over 200 people attended this year.

Plans are in process for 'T' party III and the dates to mark are February 22-24, 1991. Registration is \$65.

San Antonio will also be the site of the 1992 I.F.G.E. "Coming Together" convention. We certainly hope that the convention doesn't interfere with the 'T' party.

We'd also like to congratulate the **Boulton & Park Society** on the approval of their tax-exempt status.

NGN

ROYAL OAK, MICH. — Several members of **Crossroads** were fea-

tured in the February 5, 1990 issue of *Newsweek*. Members **Grace, Karu** and **Tammi** appeared in a photo for an article on support groups of all types.

The girls were not pleased with the coverage. They were quoted as needing help to "find shoes" which really frosted their nails. They had hoped for a real discussion of transgender issues.

Naive? We'll bet they didn't do their homework before talking with the reporter. Even girl scouts should be prepared.

NGN

PHILADELPHIA — I'm a **PEPPA**, you're a **PEPPA**...

Sorry 'bout that. **People Exchanging Power (PEP)** is coming to Philadelphia next month. PEP-PA is a support/discussion/social group for people interested in S&M or B&D in their intimate relationships. The PEP meetings will feature speakers, demonstrations, workshops and rap groups. No location or exact date has been set.

PEP has chapters in other parts of the country created largely through the efforts of **Nancy Ava Miller**. Miller is well known in S&M circles and has an excellent reputation as a sincere, honest and caring person. PEP is not exploitive.

While S&M is not in our bag of kinks, we do believe in freedom of choice for consenting adults. So, if you're interested in PEP-PA, contact Nancy at P.O. Box 332, Edgewood, NM 87015 or call (505) 832-6950, Tuesday through Friday.

NGN

PHILADELPHIA — This newsletter is looking for an additional editor to lighten the workload and eventually take over production.

Candidates must have a Macintosh computer (any model) and be familiar with Mac word processing programs. Experience with Quark X-Press®, Ready, Set, Go® or Page-Maker is a plus®.

Comments on Dr. Glen Humphrey's gender research

Last month, JoAnn Altman Stringer wrote in her *Survival* column about gender related research conducted by Glen Humphrey, Ph.D. Stringer noted several conclusions reached by Humphrey and strongly disagreed with them. She is not alone in her assessments.

But, first, there is one item of note in Humphrey's research that Stringer did not mention. He is opposed to listing transvestism in the DSM-III-R. This is of great significance to many of us since we do not see ourselves as mentally ill. Stringer left this out of her column as it did not relate to Humphrey's conclusions about transsexuals.

In addition to the items listed by Stringer last month, there are two other "problems" with Humphrey's research. One relates to transsexuals alone and the other concerns both TVs and TSs.

Humphrey stated that some

transsexuals seemed soothed by the wearing of women's clothing and therefore, he concluded, those transsexuals had unresolved issues about transsexualism. The problem may not be in Humphrey's conclusion but in taking the self-diagnosis of transsexualism at face value. What Humphrey may be seeing in his sample are not true transsexuals but transvestites that have convinced themselves they *ought* to be transsexuals. Richard Docter has noted in *Transvestites and Transsexuals* that some male transvestites, in later years, become convinced they are transsexuals. Docter calls this "secondary transsexualism." There is some question whether these secondary transsexuals are in fact transsexuals.

The last question that arises from Humphrey's research in the connection between anxiety and crossdressing. For many years,

we've been led to believe that when transvestites experience anxiety, crossdressing relieves that anxiety. Could it not be the other way around? Could it not be that the lack of opportunity to express the feminine side of our nature causes the anxiety and when finally permitted to dress that anxiety is ameliorated? Likewise, could it not be that a transsexual who believes herself a woman is anxious in the male role and that anxiety is soothed when she is permitted to be herself in a female role (crossdressed)? Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

In conversations with transvestites who have unlimited opportunity to dress, they say they no longer experience the anxiety related to dressing. Many transsexuals say they finally find peace in their lives when they begin the Real Life Test. It is possible, then, that Humphrey has misinterpreted his data.

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LadyLike Magazine - \$8 each
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Art & Illusion: A Guide to Crossdressing - \$10
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