

Renaissance News



Volume 7, No. 8

Vision - Integrity - Quality

August, 1993

ALL-SPORTS RADIO STATION PLUGS RENAISSANCE

By Dina Amberle

The Delaware Valley is home to a wide range of broadcast radio – everything from all-news to eclectic public and university programming to hipper-than-thou rock stations. So which radio station has given Renaissance the most publicity? WIP 610 AM. That's right, the home of all-sports talk radio. There are some who would say it ain't as strange as it seems at first glance.

The latest plug came when I sent midday host Jody MacDonald a copy of our Chapter News where I chided him about doing his show in drag after losing a bet and favoring sneakers rather than high heels with his dress. Along with the News, I sent a letter mentioning Renaissance's six year history, large membership base, and activities for the man who would be Queen. Oh, and I also sent a photo of myself with the offer to help him look a little more together the next time he wanted to dress up.

Jody read the letter and News blurb in their entirety on his Thursday June 24 program, mentioning Renaissance in all the right places. He introduced the bit by saying it was his 'favorite piece of fan mail so far this year.' Jody had fun with it – as it was hoped he would – but didn't take any potshots at the group or make any crass comments about

our community.

The show was being broadcast from a 'remote' at the Berlin Circle MacDonald's restaurant and Jody had a small crowd of guys in the audience in front of him. Before he revealed the nature of our group, he showed them the photo of Dina in her swimsuit and high heels and asked the guys what they thought. An enthusiastic chorus of catcalls could be heard in the background. When the big secret was revealed, there was some embarrassed laughter and an almost audible bang from some burst macho bubbles.

When all was said and done, Jody admitted that he kept the dress he bought for the occasion and it is hanging in his closet. Because if he was challenged to bet a day in drag again – he'd do it. And if he lost... well, you know where to reach me, Jody.

The following is the letter that Dina sent to WIP. June 21, 1993

Jody MacDonald
WIP AM 610
441 N. Fifth Street
Philadelphia PA 19123

Dear Jody,

I am a regular listener to your program during my lunch hours and afternoon business in the car. I am also the editor of a newsletter for the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Renaissance Education Association.

RENAISSANCE is a social and educational group for crossdressers located in King of Prussia, PA. Your recent afternoon in drag after losing a bet was one of the items I wrote up in our newsletter and I thought you might like to see it. It's probably not the kind of publicity you were seeking (or is that being presumptuous?) but many of our members are listeners of WIP. Yep, we're just a bunch of regular guys under all the makeup, wigs and foundation garments.

RENAISSANCE just celebrated its sixth anniversary in May. We have about 150 active members and hold monthly meetings and special events. Our group has been featured in the Inquirer, Philadelphia

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Chapters & Affiliates

New Jersey

South Jersey: 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) 435-5401 or write Renaissance SJ, PO Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Chapter leader - Terri [REDACTED]; Assistant Leader - Phil [REDACTED]

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia: Meets on third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, PA. Doors open at 8:00 p.m. Write to Renaissance PHL, Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020 or call (215)630-1437. Chapter Leader - Maryann Kirkland

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Meets on the first Saturday of the month at The Greens at Westgate in York, Pa. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105, or call (717) 780-1LSV. Chapter Leader - Yvonne [REDACTED]

Affiliates

MOTG: Terry M., PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701

Metropolitan Gender Network: 561 Hudson Street, Box 45, New York, NY 10014 (201) 794-1665 Ext. 332.

American Educational Gender Information Services (AEGIS): Dallas Denny, PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033, (404) 939-0244

Renaissance News

© 1993 Renaissance Education Association, Inc., Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406
\$2/copy, \$16 per year, 12 issues
215-630-1437

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

And, don't forget about...

Articles, opinion pieces and letters to the Editor are always welcome at the Renaissance News. Ideas for articles and opinion pieces should be sent to Renaissance News, P. O. Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020. Complimentary and irate letters to the Editor may be sent to the same address.

Significant Others who have article ideas or opinions they would like to share should send their ideas to Evelyn Kirkland, c/o Maryann Kirkland, P. O. Box 1242, Newtown, PA 18940.

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, 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics, and 9-Understanding Transsexuality.

Pen Pal Program: If you would like to be a pen pal contact Maryann Kirkland at P. O. Box 1242, Newtown, PA 18940. Attn: Dept. PP.

If you are a transgendered person with children and would like to network with other transparents, contact Elsa Larson at: Transparent, C/O Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

For TS information and peer counseling in South Jersey call Kelly Harris at 609 641-3782.

Events Calendar

Renaissance GP

Sept. 18: Vendor's night
Oct. 16: Dr. Sheila Kirk
Nov. 20: Mariette Pathy Allen,
Photographer
Dec. 4: Christmas Party

Renaissance LSV

Aug. 7: Meeting 9:00 p.m.
Aug. 14: Board Meeting, 5:00 p.m.
Sept. 4: Meeting, 8:00 p.m.

Renaissance South Jersey

October: Terri M. on the NJ Gay Alliance
November: Halloween Party!
December: Elections

Chapters wishing to have their programs listed should get them to the Newsletter at least one month in advance. Two is better.

ROGER'S NOTEBOOK (#80)

by Roger E. Peo, Ph. D.

I recently had some correspondence with a woman who is planning her marriage to a man who told her that he used to cross-dress but that is thing of the past. Regardless, he thought she should know this before they were married. She is very upset over his disclosure and wonders if he has really put it behind him.

Here is the classic problem of telling or not telling someone about your cross-dressing. The difficulty is that disclosing such information can damage or destroy a relationship. However, not divulging the information has hidden consequences. The one situation where disclosure is necessary is to a potential spouse. Personally, I believe that honesty is the best approach. If the relationship can not survive the truth then it is perhaps better not to formalize it with marriage vows.

For the majority of cross-dressers, crossdressing is a necessary part of their personality. Withholding this information from someone with whom you plan to spend many intimate years can create tremen-

dous stress. A great deal of effort is spent "inventing" reasons for certain behaviors or avoiding certain situations. There may also be anger because it is felt—rightly or wrongly—that this woman is inhibiting an integral part of your personality. Any anger can come out in a wide variety of ways, none of which are pleasant.

At some point it is likely that he will find it necessary to resume his cross-dressing. Eventually it may become known to his wife. Imagine her shock, fear and anger. This discovery is often coupled with a loss of trust in her husband. If this happens, it is very difficult to save the relationship.

There is no simple or universal way to handle this situation. It is not clear whether counseling in such a situation has any value.

Marriages are often built on anticipation and expectation. Role expectations are learned at a very early age and are difficult to change. In our society a man's stature is often devalued if he does feminine things.

What can the woman in this situation do? Her fiancé has been honest with her but his disclosure is creating turmoil within her. She has begun by asking some questions about his cross-dressing and whether or not his desire might return. She is also honest in realizing that this behavior is upsetting to her. Her choices are tough. To terminate the relationship because his cross-dressing might return and she couldn't handle it or stay and deal with the cross-dressing should it return.

It is unfair that she should be the one who is forced to choose. Where is his responsibility? Does he have an obligation to resist cross-dressing to preserve their relationship? Is there a middle-ground?

I do not see a happy outcome for the woman whose story we began with. Her religious upbringing may inhibit her ability to accept her fiancé (even if he never cross-dresses again). I suspect that he will be unable to repress his cross-dressing forever. When it comes back it will damage the relationship regardless of whether or not she finds out.



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You may contact Dr. Peo at P.O. Box 3445: Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 or by phone at (914) 452-8405. All communications are kept confidential.

This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter if Dr. Peo's name and address appear in the reprinted version. Others must obtain written approval from Dr. Peo. A copy of such a reprint should be sent to Dr. Peo.



New from CDS

Sacred Cows Make the Best Hamburger — A collection of 39 of the best essays and editorials by JoAnn Roberts from the pages of *LadyLike*, *onFemme*, *ITS* and *Renaissance News*. You'll find out why JoAnn is one of the most respected writers in the TV/TS community. 100 pages for \$12.00 postpaid. Pa. residents add 6% sales tax.



Who's Who in the Transgendered Community

— Who is Billie Jean Jones anyway? Where can I find large size shoes? Is there a support group in Kansas City? You'll find the answers to these questions and more in the first annual *Who's Who in the Transgendered Community*, which includes • **Bios of VIPs** • **Detailed info on support groups** • **Where to buy goods & services** • **List of counseling resources**. All for just \$15.00 postpaid. Pa. residents add 6% sales tax.



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A Review of *Transgender Liberation: A Movement whose Time Has Come*, by Leslie Feinberg (New York: World View Forum, 1992), 22 pp.

In Search of Unity

by Lynn E. Walker

Leslie Feinberg is no stranger to the transgendered lifestyle, or to politics. She came out as a young butch lesbian in Buffalo more than 25 years ago, and has been active in the Workers World Party for twenty years. This booklet represents the blending of these two worlds, and is certainly one of the first such efforts (politics and transgendered people). A call to optimism, to pride, to awareness, and to action: one hopes that this slim volume is the first of many which must inevitably follow.

Feinberg, now living in the New York metropolitan area and active both in politics and in the gender community, sifts through many cultures and continents, and centuries – not simply to present a history of our phenomenon, but rather to develop and support an interpretive view which could be helpful. We humans begin to achieve real understanding when we come to see patterns, cycles, threads of continuity over time and across cultures. And clearly, it is not enough to see transgenderism simply as one of those threads of continuity within society or culture, but rather as something *sui generis* which has its

own patterns, its own schemata.

To write well is to write with a perspective, and Leslie Feinberg's perspective – as a Marxist – is one which has not hitherto been applied to our lifestyle. This is a refreshing booklet with rather more detail than a casual reader might expect, and with more questions and food for thought than many of us can handle in one sitting. There have been several books, and long ones at that, which discuss the history of transgendered behavior in some detail. Some have been largely historical, some with a feminist, psychoanalytical, or some other perspective. To view our history from a political perspective, is a bit new, and worth the effort.

One basis of Feinberg's long view of our herstory/history is the recognition that we have been marginalized – relegated often to the fringes of the fringe – because we have had no sense of unity, because in the heteropatriarchal caste system we must be and often are invisible, ignored, impotent, isolated and trivialized. But at the same time, we find that there is, there *is* a herstory/history, and it is one which we ought to rehearse and remember, and celebrate.

This booklet calls for a renewed sense of unity and solidarity among the transgendered, and the call is

indeed a timely one. If the '90s are our decade, as some of us hope, then we must find more ways toward self-definition and self-understanding. We must find those threads of continuity – for they connect us with one another and they prompt us to work productively for our common benefit. It will not do to emphasize the differences between our TVs and TSs, or between our M to F and F to M sisters and brothers. It will not do to isolate ourselves from the lesbian, gay, bisexual or drag communities. It simply will not do to think only of our own little corner of the world.

The call for unity and solidarity is a fairly recent thing among transgendered folk. The quest for unity is finally beginning to be expressed – in the March on Washington, in various local "pride" parades, in the formation of the transgendered political action/awareness committee (TG-PAC) within the Congress of Transgender Organizations (CTO), in various journal articles the past several years, and now in this booklet.

Transgender Liberation is a welcome addition to the literature, not so much because of the historical research, but because it calls us to optimism, to pride, and to action.

Lynn E. Walker is the secretary of the Metropolitan Gender Network of NYC.

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WRITING TO THE RICH & FAMOUS

by Angela Gardner

Dina Amberle is not the only Renaissance member who has been writing to show biz types. [See *Dina's letter to WIP on page 1, Ed.*] After a spurt of transgendered jokes on the Tonight Show I decided to tell Jay Leno something about men in dresses. Here's the letter.

Jay Leno
The Tonight Show
NBC Productions
330 Bob Hope Drive
Burbank, CA 91523

Dear Jay:

Ok, fun's fun but lay off the transvestites. You've shown an alarming tendency, (from our point of view) to poke fun at guys who wear dresses. The J. Edgar Hoover jokes were all right since we don't like him anyway but some of the other stuff has got our pantyhose in a twist.

There was that time Murray, oops, I mean Maury Povich was on the show and you asked him about his "trans" policy. Maury seemed a little bit scared by the whole thing. Don't worry Maury, we wouldn't appear on any talk show hosted by a guy named Maury anyway.

What was politically incorrect on your part Jay was asking Maury about his other, "normal" guests. I recall that part of the conversation was about how you get guests on those type of shows and how you get them to talk. I know why we go on those shows. We do it to reach other people like ourselves, transvestites and transsexuals who are out there in the country with no one else like themselves. We go on shows like Maury's and Phil's and even Mort's to reach those lonely, confused people and let them know they're not the only man in the world who feels like that.

It doesn't help when big name entertainers make jokes at the expense of people like us. The dysfunctional dad bit on the June 18th program was what got me over to the word processor to write this letter. There are thousands of men who are "regular" dads and they also wear dresses. The guy who's out there all alone only gets more upset about his burden when he hears jokes that equate him with dysfunction.

Transvestism is not a dysfunction. It appears randomly through out all racial, social, political (I

know a few who are Republicans!), and religious backgrounds. It isn't an idea that hits you one day. "Gosh, those guys on Geraldo were pretty hot! Think I'll give it a try." It is something that's there from a very early age if not from birth. It's not contagious and it has nothing to do with a person's sexual preference. Most transvestites are heterosexual.

Our organization is a support group for men who find that they enjoy wearing dresses. It isn't an easy thing to do. In fact, it takes balls for a man to wear a dress in our society. So Jay, please don't make jokes about men in dresses on The Tonight Show. Some poor guy is sitting there in a floral print, polyester house dress feeling really humiliated. It isn't what everybody wants to do but that guy shouldn't feel guilty about doing it. He needs fashion help not guilt.

Thanks for your time and thanks in advance for watching the trans jokes in the future. It will make our job of helping those guys in dresses out of loneliness a lot easier.

Sincerely,
Angela Gardner
Another Man in A Dress

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The following reply was received
from one of The Tonight Show
flunkys.

THE
Tonight
SHOW
WITH
JAY LENO

June 23, 1993

A. Gardner
Renaissance
PO Box 60552
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Dear A. Gardner:

Thank you for writing with your suggestions for improving
THE TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO. We appreciate your taking
the time to write and send your constructive comments.

We are always pleased to be made aware of our viewer's
opinions, for it is through this awareness that we are
able to improve our programming.

Again, thank you for the interest.

Sincerely,

G. Stanley

Correspondent
THE TONIGHT SHOW

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by Angela Gardner

Good bye July and good rid-
dance. If you indulge in the plea-
sures of crossdressing all year round,
as I do, then you know how hard it
can be to keep the make up on your
upper lip in hundred degree heat.
Fortunately I took the advice of our
Greater Philadelphia Chapter leader,
Maryann Kirkland. In the June issue
of the local chapter news she ex-
horted us to, "show some skin."
That's really the only way to
crossdress in a heat wave so I stuck
to shorts and tank tops during July's.
One night a sleeveless dress worked
out well and I only wore pantyhose
once when a closer razor shave of the
legs was impractical. The day the
heat wave broke in the Philly area, I
had followed Maryann's sugges-
tion all the way and went to the pool
at the Raven in New Hope. Not yet
slim enough for a two-piece, (I'm
workin' on it!) I wore a one-piece
black suit and had a great time.

If you would like to try a pool
party of your own, the Raven pool
is open from ten am 'til six every
day. If you stay in the Raven's hotel
it's free. If you just go up for the day
it's \$4.00 per person on weekdays
and \$5.00 on weekends. The pool
will be open on weekends only in
September.

If you want more info on

location, etc. give the Raven a call at
215-862-2081. Don't forget your
sun block!

SARTORIAL OFFENCE

The other day while browsing in
a bookstore I picked up a copy of
Bart Simpson's Guide To Life. Both
male members of the Simpson fam-
ily have been in drag on their popu-
lar TV show and sure enough, Bart's
book had a drag reference. In a
section that shows us cartoons of
strange laws from around these great
United States we learn that in Port-
land, Oregon, there is a law against
taking a bath without proper cloth-
ing. In Indiana it is illegal for mon-
keys to smoke and in Miami, Florida,
it is against the law for men to wear
strapless gowns. A small drawing of
Homer in an off the shoulder gown
illustrates this dic-
tum. I guess it's ok
to wear short
sleeves or even
spagetti straps as
long as the shoul-
der is not com-
pletely bare. Do we
have any law stu-
dents out there
who would like to
look this one up?
Let us know if you
do.

SHOW BIZ STUFF

As if The
Simpsons aren't
show biz enough
here are some

more gems from the media.

First up, another crossdresser
joke. I already boosted Jay Leno's
transgender awareness (see "Writ-
ing To The Rich & Famous" on
page 6 of this issue), but I may have
to drop a line to Richard Lewis, the
black clad comic and king of angst.
During an appearance on the the
Letterman show June fifteenth
Lewis gave away the "secret" of
Jurassic Park. It turns out to be
similar to the secret of "The Crying
Game." The T-Rex is a cross-
dresser.

Actually, that's kind of cute, so
no letter for Richard Lewis yet.

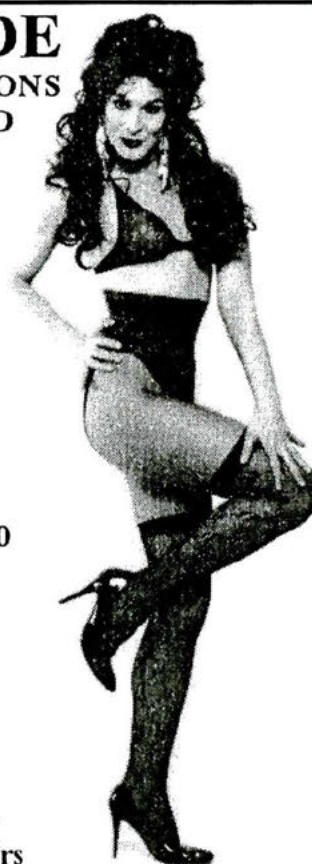
Second show biz note concerns
that old alien, Mork from Ork,
Robin Williams. Williams is work-
ing on a new picture called "Mrs.
Doubtfire" and he's playing an eld-
erly woman in the flick. A photo
cut from the paper was sent to us by

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one of four many readers (Terri from South Jersey. I think. My desk is a mess.), and it shows Robin in a pink sweater, white blouse with a pin at the neck, plaid skirt with those heavy knee socks and sensible old lady shoes. She looks like my grandmother. Really. Keep an eye out for it at your local theater next year. Williams won't have to pick a femme name if he decides to keep dressing up. Robin works fine both ways.

SPOT THE CROSSDRESSER

This is not about a crossdressing dog named Spot. In June the National Examiner, one of those tacky tabloids, had an article called "Hey, guy, your slip is showing!" It gave hints from "experts" on how to spot a crossdresser. If you're still trying to stay firmly in the closet then you'd better know what behavior to avoid. Here's what the Examiner experts had to say.

Male crossdressers shopping for women's clothing are all nervous. Instead of checking out the bargains they will be scanning the store to make sure no one they know spots them.

If a woman notices that her wardrobe is disappearing it's a safe bet her man is stealing it for his femme self.

Finally, if a woman notices that her razor gets dull after she has used it only once or twice then it's a good clue that her man is shaving his legs.

Let's deal with that last one first. Isn't it more of a clue that he's shaving his legs when you feel his leg stubble? I'm sure these little hints from the Examiner will help some TVs get caught but really, I

haven't been nervous while shopping for years. Instead it calms me down. (To shop is to live!) If you are stealing your girlfriends things and keeping them you're not just a crossdresser. You're an idiot!

To be fair, the article is well balanced for a tabloid and it does give some good information.

"Discovering their man is a crossdresser can drive some women into therapy, even divorce court, say experts. Others will actually grow even closer to their mixed up mates."

That was pretty accurate, except for that mixed up part and the article features a photo of Dame Edna so it can't be all bad but in general it's little "expert" hints are too general. It also fails to give any indication of where to go for more information. Marriette Allen's book is mentioned and the publisher's name is given but that the extent of it.

Thanks to Sharon from out there in Washington state for sending in the clipping. Hope the clues don't give her away to some avid Examiner reader.

FORCED TO BE FEMALE!

Sounds like the title of a sleazy TV novel but this one is a true story. Teri from South Jersey sent it in. (I know that for a fact.) The Courier Post ran a story in May about a drug offender in a halfway house in Newark who had been made to appear in crossdressing skits. He had to play female roles as part of an attempt to break his tough street image. He fled instead. Petticoat punishment anyone?

Integrity Inc. is the company that runs the halfway house program

and they defend their use of crossdressing skits as, "a kind of initiation into the outside." I guess it could be good if the participants want to move up to a new career, like street walking! But seriously folks, the misconceptions and ignorance in this story are enough to make you cry. (No...my mascara!)

First of all, the self image breaking aspects of the case. At one time drug rehab experts made addicts shave their heads, carry silly signs, wear diapers or women's clothing. This was supposed to make them see that their need for instant gratification through drugs is childish and silly. Of course they need to realize that their tough guy image is a mask and they are immature but as we all know, it's *not* silly to wear dresses. Most rehab experts have come to question the validity of this therapy.

It's obvious in this case that it doesn't work. The inmate who ran away did so after another inmate told him how nice he looked in a dress. Seems like he wasn't secure enough to have a laugh about it and head back to a sober life in the real world. He ran away and was arrested after a fight with police that got him shot in the leg. This was just three weeks before he was supposed to be released.

Why was it so awful for him? He told officials that he didn't want to be a homosexual. Big stupid point number two! Crossdressing and homosexuality. In the minds of the ignorant they go together and this guy was willing to risk being shot rather than return to this forced femininity. I think Integrity Inc. and their clients all need some education about sexuality and gender.

The runaway was acquitted on

charges that he assaulted the police officers who shot him. With that bullet scar on his leg I guess he'll never wear hot pants again. Integrity Inc. may be fired by the Corrections Department and most folks still think men who wear dresses are gay. And so it goes.

HIGHSCHOOL TS

Another from the land of sleazy book titles but again a true story. Qwonta Jones is the subject of this article in the Globe that was clipped and sent by tabloid and Renaissance News reader Sharon. Ms. Jones is a lovely eighteen year old, African-American student in Atlanta. According to the article she has been dressing as a girl since fourth grade and no one has realized that she is a he.

Give me the details you say. Qwonta appears to not only be a TS, she has thought of herself as female since childhood), but she may be somewhat hermaphroditic. Her breasts started to grow eighteen months ago and now she's a 34B. All I know is what I read and I guess it's possible.

Why the big article in the Globe if she's been living the fantasy life of every TV, passing in high school? Well, somehow that mean old prin-

cipal found out her secret and suspended her for five days. He further ordered this person who has been a female to everyone since fourth grade to go to the graduation ceremony dressed as a man. Say what? Here is yet another candidate for some education. Qwonta has vowed to attend the ceremony in a dress and her attitude is perfectly correct, "I'm not kooky and I'm not an idiot. I know what I want to do." Right on Ms. Jones!

TS EDUCATION IN ACTION

Speaking of transexuals, the Gender Identity Center of Colorado, Inc., is putting together a documentary photography exhibit and book about transexuals. The Transformation Project will document the lives of transexuals and replace damaging mythology with real life stories. Through this non-

Book Nook

Lee Eiscovitz

I recently read two books by Carol S. Pearson: *The Hero Within* and *Awakening the Heroes Within*, both of which are in our Renaissance Library, thanks to the generosity of Michelle [REDACTED]. The "Awakening" book builds on the ideas introduced in *The Hero Within*, though both books can be read independently of each other.

Pearson has provided us with very readable and thought-provoking discussions of the basic developmental issues in our life journey as a whole. The aim of such a journey is the development of a sense of self embodying an ego and a soul. It is this developmental process which is explained in the books and which serves as a useful backdrop for anyone wishing to reflect on his or her own gender journey. Moreover, both books contain self-assessment tests and exercises to aid the reader in determining some of his or her developmental stages.

In the final section of the "Awakening" book, the author deals with the issue of gender, that is, with the masculine and feminine in each of us, but the discussion never deals with the phenomenon of transgenderism. A discussion of androgyny is the closest the author gets. Nevertheless, these two books do form the basis for much reflection and discussion of the place of crossdressing (from transvestism to transsexualism) in our lives.

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threatening format people will be able to develop empathy for transexuals and learn about their life long struggle to be who they are.

The two-year project is being sponsored by the GIC and is being coordinated by Barbara Millman, a photographer and friend of the transgendered community. They are currently pursuing grants and could use any financial support that they can get.

If you wish to contribute you can send a check made out to GIC-Transformation Project to Gender Identity Center, Inc., 3715 West 32nd Ave., Denver, CO 80211. If you request they will put you on the project mailing list. Contact the GIC for further information.

LAST WORDS

In September M.O.T.G. will be celebrating their third anniversary. Congratulations! Let's hope there are many more for M.O.T.G. and Renaissance. The girls are planning another trip to the Bra and Girdle Factory in October so contact them if you would like to go along for the buying spree.

Atlantic City is the home of gambling on the Jersey shore but the casinos have more competition than those Native Americans up the

coast. The South Jersey Chapter not only offers 50/50's to folks attending their meetings, now they bring you SUPER 50/50's. That's right friends, step right up! You could win the money for a new dress, a Renaissance membership! You can't win unless you play. Winners of the South Jersey 50/50 have been known to go into hiding in Florida so no one bothers them asking for hand outs and loans. Guess they can afford it.

That's it for August. Here's hoping the dog days don't get as bad as July's heat wave. See you at the pool darlings.

Letters...

Dear Editor:

In the July issue of the Renaissance News, JoAnn Roberts wrote that the price for the 1993 Fantasia Fair is "over \$2100 for a single in a fancy room for 10 days." She did not mention that the more typical lower priced fare is only \$1025 double occupancy, in one of Provincetown's many charming Inns including a very nice continental breakfast every morning. While she did mention that the price includes five lunches, three banquets, and the Fashion Show, the Follies and the Fantasy ball, she left out the two receptions with hors d'oeuvre, the barbecue at the newly estab-

lished "Country Western Barbecue Nite," a free PhotoArt (by Helen Strong) reception at one of P'town's finest Art Galleries, the \$5.00 credit for Sunday brunch and the after Follies midnight buffet. Attendees can also go to several joint community/FanFair activities at very modest additional costs such as the Town and Gown dinner at the Unitarian Meeting Church (for only \$7.00) or a wine tasting at the Wine & Art Cabaret (for a \$5.00 "donation") at the Provincetown Art Museum.

When it is all added up, Fantasia Fair is a bargain! It is unlike any other convention or weekend where the attendees are usually "closeted" in one place. Fantasia Fair is a living experience in a charming, accepting, open community. It may appear to be expensive, but I would gladly exchange one day in Provincetown for any two days in a hotel.

If anyone would like more information on Fantasia Fair, they may call (207) 621-0858, or write Fantasia Fair Ltd. 405 Western Ave., Suite 345, South Portland, ME 04106 or contact me directly.

Alison Laing
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p.s. The real expense of Fantasia

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Fair might be in your wardrobe; there are literally dozens of venues, each offering a new opportunity for a change of costume. But if you want to, you can spend each day in jeans and sneakers.

Dear Angela,

On the subject of Maury Povich:

Povich has also had as a guest on at least two occasions a transsexual show girl from Las Vegas named Janna (Jana?). After the first appearance, she was fired from her job, which prompted Maury to bring her on again as a form of protest. She was subsequently rehired, one might say in part due to Povich's efforts on her behalf.

And yes, Povich has stated repeatedly that he was not going to have "those [our] kinds" of people on his show.

Here's the kicker, and I hope you get as much of a kick out of this information as I have since first reading about it many years ago.

Maury Povich's father is the former sports editor of the Washington Post. He's still alive and apparently still does an occasional column for the Post. Back in the mid-1970's a Chicago Tribune sportswriter named Jerome Holtzman put together an oral history of interviews with noted elderly sportswriters which was published and may still be in print called *No Cheering in the Pressbox*. I lost my copy years ago, but it was a somewhat notable work, and can probably still be found in libraries and bookstores.

The opening paragraphs of Povich Sr.'s chapter recount how he was once featured in *Who's Who among American Women*. Povich Sr. was born and raised in a corner

of Maine where the name "Shirley" was quite commonly given to male children. Skipping ahead a few years (I don't remember exactly what year it happened), one day Povich received a letter in the mail congratulating him on being such a prominent woman in a decidedly — at that time almost exclusively — male profession, and announcing the fact that "she" had the honor of being chosen for the latest edition of *Who's Who*. Povich later wrote back and cleared up the misunderstanding. It's possible that they had him

confused with a woman named Shirley Fischler, who covered hockey during the 60's and 70's for one of the New York dailies.

Perhaps Povich's (Maury's) stance on the transgendered issue is due to the fact that he's spent 50-some years introducing his father Shirley to his friends. Although considering some of his past work in the media, he does not strike me as a man who embarrasses very easily.

Hope you enjoyed it.

Sincere best wishes,

Karen Anne Baumgardner

✂ CLIP AND SAVE TIPS

WOOL—Hand wash wool only if it specifically says "washable" on the label. Never put any wool garment in the washer unless the label definitely states "machine washable" and even then never rub the garment. Never use warm or hot water and always rinse well but quickly. All other wools should be dry cleaned. If any ironing is needed it should be done with a press pad and light pressure. To remove lint or animal hair from wool garments try the upholstery attachment of your vacuum cleaner on a low to medium setting.

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MGN Becomes Renaissance Affiliate

On July 11, 1993, the Metropolitan Gender Network, a New York City based transgendered support group, became the third organization to affiliate with the National Renaissance Education Association, Inc. More important than the fee and administrative to become an affiliate, MGN is to be commended for their commitment to be a fully open, not for profit, support group serving the transgendered community, the primary criteria for affiliation.

MGN meets on the second Sunday of the month, currently at 3:00 P.M. in a meeting room of a lower Manhattan community church on 35th Street. Last month, the guest program speaker was Renaissance National Director of Outreach, Alison Laing, who conducted a workshop on "Developing Your

Feminine Persona." It was also Alison's pleasure to welcome the group as they made the decision to complete the actions necessary for affiliation. During the second portion of the meeting, Linda Walker, MGN leader, facilitated a lively discussion on activism in the community.

If you are thinking of attending an MGN meeting, call (201) 794-1665 Ext. 332 for general information; or Ext. 331 for the information on the next meeting or other upcoming events. The success of the group has brought with it continued growth and they are looking for more spacious accommodations.

Including the three Renaissance chapters, MGN now makes six organizations in four states that are affiliated with Renaissance. Several other groups are investigating the

possibilities of affiliation as the advantages of networking and declaration of being an open group become apparent. Organizations interested in more information concerning affiliation should contact Alison Laing through the national office, Renaissance Education Association, Inc., Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406.



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Hot • BUZZ

JoAnn Roberts

"Some people think they are generous because they give away free advice."

It's August and it's hot, so settle back and cool off with this month's Hot Buzz!

The early buzz from Eurofantasia, held in Ebeltøft, Denmark, this past May, says the event was a qualified success. About 50 people attended, representing almost 15 different countries. The daytime activities were great, according to firsthand reports, but the town rolled up its sidewalks at night leaving little or nothing to do. Fortunately the American delegation entertained the "troops" with guitars and lots of singing. One "song" they didn't want to hear, though, was the one "sung" by Merissa Sherrill Lynn of the International Foundation for Gender Education. Apparently, Lynn's keynote speech offended many of the attendees, especially those from Germany.

What's the best selling nail polish in the U.S.? Depends what part of the country you come from. Some examples... New York, Clairins Beige Naturel... Dallas, Chanel Coco Pink... Los Angeles, Revlon PinkNude... Miami, Chanel Coco Beige... Boston, Chanel French Pink.

Another new-old product is Chanel's Lip Basics, a powder lip liner and gloss in a compact. The matte liner is applied with a wet brush and the gloss applied over the liner. It's been done before.

Birthdays this month: Jerry Garcia, Pete O'Toole, Lucille Ball, Joe Jackson, Alfred Hitchcock, Gary Larson, Robert DeNiro, H.P. Lovecraft, Ray Bradbury, Elvis Costello, and Sean Connery.

Fall fashions (yes, sweetie, Fall) are a mixed-bag of recycled ideas, or *récup*, as they say in Française. There's a little bit of everything from Stone Age to 70's retro (ugh!). The stylists are leaving it up to you to figure out what looks good together. The key piece, all seem to agree,

is a long, fitted jacket. There's everything from velvet frock coats to very practical, wearable, flattering styles. Some jackets are long in front, some in the back, but the essential elements are long and fitted... The long vs. short skirt-debate is skirted this Fall with pants, loose and baggy, slim and body hugging, belled, pleated, fitted, knitted, plain or fancy... One element of fashion that has never gone out of style is being emphasized for Fall and that's a tailored white shirt... Proponents of short skirts refuse to be rebuffed and they found support from Yves Saint Laurent who will have short skirts in stores this Fall. Thankfully, last year's Olive Oyl look was nowhere to be seen. Lagerfeld, Westwood and Karan all showed just-to-the-knee skirts... If you are wearing a short skirt this Fall, you'll stay warm in a long coat. New styles were almost to the ankle. Most are fitted and full cut, with military and princess styles in the lead. Capes are buzzing as well... As for color, this is a no-brainer, black is the only one you'll need (Hey, they don't call me the Black Queen for nothing). Of course, all black can be boring, dahling, so splash on a little claret, loden or navy, then get out that white tailored shirt.

For the cerebral part of you, your bookshelf must sport the latest in sex-brain research (it helps if you've read them, too, dear). The buzz is about *The Sexual Brain* by researcher/author Simon LeVay (\$22.50). LeVay is the scientist that discovered the differences between hetero- and homosexual brains. This book is very broad in scope and attempts to explain LeVay's thesis that human sexual behavior is rooted in biological mechanisms. The other buzz is about *Behavioral Endocrinology*, edited by Becker, Breedlove and Crews (\$37.50). I know this sounds like a real snore, but anyone interested in how hormones affect humans needs to read this book. Both books are available from MIT Press, 55 Hayward St., Cambridge, MA 02142.

Another book buzz concerns *In A Time Of Fallen Heroes: The Recreation of Masculinity* by R. William Betcher, Ph.D., M.D. and William S. Pollack, Ph.D., Atheneum Press. In this book the authors propose that undesirable masculine traits can be transformed rather than eliminated. Thus, aggression is transformed into courage, while a lust for power is moved over to authority to get things done, etc. I often feel that my crossdressing has helped me transform some of my undesirable masculine traits into better masculine traits. That's one reason I feel that those who deride *anything* masculine are missing at least 50% of the story. When I see a person refer to their masculine persona as their evil twin and the like, I really feel sorry for that person because they've not learned to transform the "evil" into "good."

There's buzz 'bout tattoos. Tattoos have always seemed so exotic and "forbidden", yet they are more popular today than ever. A decent sized tattoo will run you between \$50 and \$60. Of course, you can always get a temporary tattoo that goes on with water and comes off with baby oil. I like these myself and they do look real. But, if you want a really temporary tattoo, take a look at CK hosiery by Calvin Klein or Berkshire's line for pantyhose with a "tattoo" on the right ankle. The CK are available only in skin tones, while the Berkshire also come in sheer black. Price: \$8.50 to \$13.50.

Eyeliner trick — line your eye with a pen liner or a wet-cake liner and let it dry. Then dip a small brush into a matte shadow the same color as your liner and trace it over the line you drew, patting the shadow into the line. The line will not smudge or flake off until you wash it off.

QuikBuzz: Maybelline Great Lash Mascara, with a cultlike following, is now available in a waterproof style. You can't miss this gem in its distinctive pink and green container... Be environmentally

Hot • Buzz

correct and fashionable at the same time when you use Origins Kohl Mine Coloring Sticks. They're soybean based and come in six shades... Cover Girl Ultimate Finish Liquid Powder Make-Up gives a flawless finish in a flash and it's only \$5.95.

Now you can do wax at home with salon-style results if you use Nair Natural Wax Hair Removal Strips. Just smooth them on and pull (ouch!). Only \$4.99

Looking for just the right wrist or ankle bracelet but (a) you can't find the right length, and/or (b) you don't want to spend a small fortune? Well, well, my babies, you need to find one of those "Chains By The Inch" vendors. Most of these chains are 14 carat gold layered over a base metal and the better quality chains have a lifetime warranty that the gold will not wear off. Typical prices are \$1.00 to \$1.50 an inch.

Cosmo's discovered what every guy (and TV) already knew. Men goes bonkers over women with long hair. Sure, short hair is easier to tend, but long hair is sexy, and that's one reason they make wigs!

A reader sent me the cover from the June 28th New Yorker. It shows a feminine face getting ready to shave off a beard. Can anyone tell me what the cover story was about?

As we fade from Summer into Fall, take a look at these shimmery shadows: Revlon Sun Gold Shimmer... Christian Dior Ombre Express #557... Prescriptives' Hot Pink and Canary... and, finally, Lancôme Rose Nuance.

Max Factor International has done a makeup makeover on its own makeup line. They have new colors, new cases and new formulas too. Check it out.

The "hacks" are hackin' at the DSM again. The DSM is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric As-

sociation. In one sense, it is their dictionary of mental disorders. I've seen at least two articles recently that take the DSM to task because of a perceived oppression of transgendered people. I guess some people just can't read and some will never learn, while others don't want to learn. The DSM does not oppress anyone. It is people who misuse the DSM who do the oppressing. Gawd! Should we do away with dictionaries, too?

Jamie Fay [redacted] of San Jose, Calif., wrote to ask what is it about "Secret" deodorant that makes it "made for a woman." Advertising, Jamie. The ads "say" that "Secret" is pH-balanced for a woman's body, but I've used this product and nothing untoward happened.

Another reader, Dee from New York, wrote and sent me photos from the early part of the century that showed both males and females crossdressed. There was one photo from 1920 showing a "Bachelor Club" that put on a "Womanless Wedding" complete with bride and bridesmaids. Seems this was a common

"event" back then. Anyone know anything about similar events?

The Masters & Johnson Institute and Research Venture Group Inc. have teamed up to create and market an "infomercial" and an Audiotext "900" phone line to provide "competent and professional" information on human sexuality. Vewy intewesting, but it's been done.

To repeat the QwikieQwiz from last month: What recurring role does Karen Johnson play in *Star Trek, the Next Generation*. The first correct answer received by mail at CDS-QQ, PO Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406, wins a free CDS video of their choice. I'll give the answer next month. Speaking of ST:TNG, has anyone noticed a change in Odo on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*? His face seems a lot smoother than earlier in the season. I could use that in my next video!

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Laine Alexander

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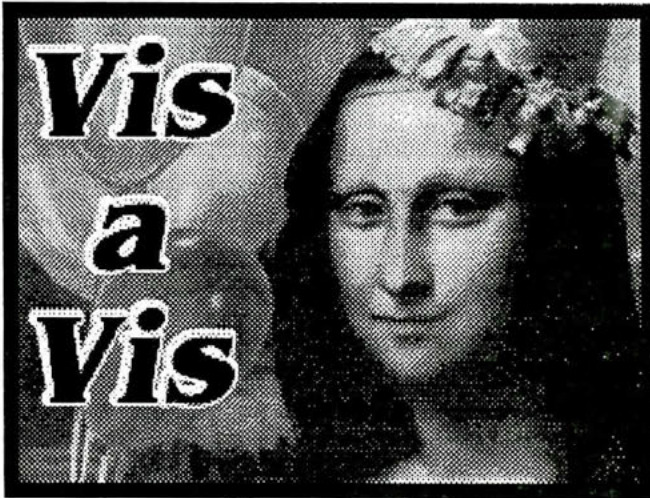
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Guest columnist: Dina Amberle

[Brenda Davidson will return to Vis a Vis in the Fall. Ed.]

LIKE SHOOTING FISH IN A BARREL

The original concept of the Vis A Vis column was really a stroke of genius, if you think about it. At times we feel a little isolated even in our fairly large and strong group of 100-plus members. After all, we're supposed to be a 'community' and there are other groups out there in different parts of the country doing the same thing we're doing. So we can keep tabs on them by skimming their newsletters and comparing notes, stealing their good ideas, or trashing their bad ones.

Brenda Davidson's been doing this now for several months and, as someone who's seen some of these group newsletters myself, I am certain that after this penance Brenda will travel straight to heaven when she shuffles off her mortal (but nonetheless divine) coil.

And she's done a heck of a job pointing out some of the good things she finds. But let's face it: it's simple perverse human nature that makes it more enjoyable to read about the missteps and hypocrisies she uncovers. Each month a new batch of ammo arrives from groups around the country. Sometimes it seems like it might be too easy – like shooting fish in a barrel...

Take for instance this next item:

GOOD FOR THE GANDER; VERBOTEN FOR THE GOOSE

Jane Kamper Bentley is the Secretary and editor of

the San Francisco-area ETVC group's newsletter. She wrote a first-person article in the section of the ETVC news for wives and significant others.

Jane recounted how she had been a married crossdresser who desired to go full-time as a woman. This put some strain on the marriage [my understatement] when his wife objected and the marriage ended in divorce. After the divorce, Jane did indeed live full-time as a woman, continued with her counseling therapy, and began taking female hormones to make her transition as complete as possible.

After some time, Ms. Bentley met a woman who not only accepted her transgenderism but enjoyed it. The new woman in Jane's life became so interested in the transgendered lifestyle that she began crossdressing as a man and they went out together as a role-reversed couple. Apparently, the new girlfriend was a heck of a crossdresser in her, uh, his own right and people always commented on how realistically she transformed herself. This outpouring of positive reinforcement made Jane's significant other feel great and added a dimension to her life probably not unlike the way Ms. Bentley felt when she was crossdressed and received compliments.

There was only one problem with this idyllic transgendered romance. Jane Kamper Bentley, full-time crossdresser, secretary of a transgender support group, HATED IT! Jane wrote in her article that she felt cheated by and hostile towards his girlfriend when she crossdresses. You see, Jane writes, it would be different if her friend's crossdressing was as crucial in her life as Jane's own crossdressing is. But since Jane's crossdressing is more important as measured by Jane's own ruler, well, then something's gotta give and this relationship ain't big enough for two crossdressers.

You'd almost think the whole thing was written tongue-in-cheek because if there is a purer example of hypocritical rationalization, then I defy anyone to find it.

*There once was a TV named Jane
Who believed there was nothing to gain
by going out with a girl
who appeared to the world
Like a guy. I mean, that's just a pain!*

GOOD CENSORS VS. BAD CENSORS

Censorship and discrimination were always thought to have been the method by which a majority trampled the rights of minority groups. But lately many minority groups have picked up the cudgels of censorship and discrimination to espouse their viewpoints or keep competing minorities at bay. It is both distressing and ironic to see these types of behaviors from groups of a supposedly "liberal" bent.

Feminists want to censor pornography because they don't like it; homosexual groups have tried to suppress films they didn't like; Some African-American leaders have been openly anti-Semitic in their remarks to followers; and so many religious groups have preached exclusionary gospels and un-Christian attitudes that it's become a cliché.

The maddening thing about the censorship issue in particular is that oftentimes the groups are fighting censorship of "their" art while calling for censorship of the other guys' art when they feel it threatens them. Of course, it's all couched in high-minded pronouncements but the hypocrisy is there for anyone to see. Gays became very vocal about "bad" censorship during the Mapplethorpe controversy but have a track record of trying to shout down any portrayal of the gay lifestyle that doesn't meet their approval. Feminists will openly call for censoring the multi-billion dollar pornography industry (including relatively tame girlie magazines) because they "exploit" women, yet demand that women be represented proportionally in all sorts of endeavors so that their views are respected. I guess you just have to "respect" the "right" views to gain complete feminist support.

Within our own particular sphere of interest, there have been instances of tension between transsexuals and crossdressers; the larger gay community and the stereotyped drag queens; the genetically female lesbians and the transsexual lesbians; the "open" groups and the "closed" groups.

The transgendered community is still small enough – and weak enough – so that we haven't driven down this road yet. But there are indications of misguided thinking lurking in the minds of some. Remember the Texas 'T' Party ban on facial hair for anyone crossdressed? And I was once at a Tri-Ess group where one attendee shuddered at the mention of Renaissance (the support group, not the cultural epoch) because "they have gays and bi's and everything running around over there." How can a member of a misunderstood minority like ours be so close-

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Sessions held Mondays & Wednesdays from 7:30 to 9:30 PM. \$25 per person per two-hour session. Advance registration required. Write: Human Dimensions, PO Box 471, Willow Grove, PA 19090 or call 215-657-1560.

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mindful about someone else's differentness?

What drives an oppressed minority—who should be espousing as much freedom and understanding between people and groups as possible—to start drawing boundaries and moving to squash the freedoms of others? Part of it may be a siege mentality that creeps in after constant battle with a much-larger opponent. And part of it, I'm convinced, has to do with the individual power trips of some minority group movers and shakers. Group leadership positions draw the humanitarians but also the power hungry, the people with axes to grind.

From some people and organizations we expect wrong-headedness. (See Brenda's rundown of white hate groups in last month's columns.) We can ignore it, or laugh it off, or mobilize against it ourselves. But if even the good guys can fall into the traps of censorship and discrimination, then we must be ready to point it out.

✂ CLIP AND SAVE TIPS ✂

SILK—If the label says it's hand washable do so gently and then rinse quickly in cool water. To extract the excess water after rinsing, place the garment between two towels and roll. Never throw your silk blouse in the dryer. If it's still damp after ironing, which must be done on the reverse side while the fabric is evenly damp, then give your hair dryer a try. Set it on low heat and low speed and hold it about six inches from the fabric. Dry clean all deep colors, prints and blends with cotton, wool or rayon. Bacteria from perspiration will attack silk fibers. It's organic, remember. Spiders spin it from their bodily fluids. To keep your body bacteria from attacking flush out problem areas with a little water to which you have added a few drops of ammonia.

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SHOPPING WITH JACKIE

by Jackie [redacted]

Shopping in your local stores is still the cheapest and best way to get what you need. However, catalog purchasing can save time, and get you things not available in regular stores.

Catalogs that cater to crossdressers usually cost you about \$20.00. Other regular catalogs generally are free for the asking. Free is always better for me since \$20.00 will buy me something nice to wear and catalogs don't fit well. Also TV catalog merchandise usually costs us more. For example, one of the better TV catalogs' advertises a nice padded girdle (to give us hips and fanny) for \$49.95 plus shipping of \$6.95 for a total of \$56.90. The same padded girdle is available from (are you ready for this?) Dr. Leonard's Health Care Catalog, on

sale for \$14.99 (regular \$22.95) or just the fanny enhancer for \$12.99. Shipping is also based on price and in this case is \$2.95, for a total of \$17.90, a savings of \$39.00. Wow – that's a new dress or money still in the bank. They also have breast pads (\$5.99 up), regular girdles (\$7.95 up), wigs (\$39.00 up) and other things the crossdresser wants and needs. Interested, call (718) 766-0010 for a FREE catalog or send a card to 74-20th St., Brooklyn, NY 11232. Let me know how you make out.

High heel shoes. Where do I get size 13? 14? 15? at a price I can afford. Try the Leslie Shoe Company, PO Box 48, Rogers City, MI 49779-9968. A card will bring you a free catalog. In a hurry, telephone (517) 734-4030 8.00 A.M. to mid-

night. Most of their heels are 5", cost less than \$50.00 and have a flat \$6.00 shipping fee regardless of the number of shoes you buy. Quality at a fair price. Shoes are also available from Frederick's of Hollywood, for about the same price, but not as great a selection. (By the way, Frederick's now has a plus size collection of clothing at reasonable prices.) Frederick's catalog is available free by calling (800) 323-9525 or a card to Box 229, Hollywood, CA 90099-0164. Another source is Lane Bryant. Their shoes are available in sizes to 12 and 13 for around \$24.00 and up. Sales are frequent and well-priced. A FREE catalog takes a call (800) 477-7070 or a card to Box 8301, Indianapolis, IN 46283-8301.

Until next time, Happy Shopping.

ODE TO A PAIR OF GUNBOATS

Painfully poor podiatric poetry

*Oh, I think that I shall never find,
a pair of feet as huge as mine.*

*Slim and dainty these dogs are not,
a whopping 12WW, and sister, that's a lot.*

*At The Woods, I see tootsies so small,
unlike mine since I'm so damn tall.*

*I feel such envy 'cause I remember when,
this girl could actually wear a size 10.
I search the catalogs for large footwear,
but they only go up to 11. Lord, the despair.*

*Then, salvation erased my ugly frown,
on the day that Lane Bryant was found.
Joy returned, I was lifted from the dumps,
when I ordered gunboat sized pumps.*

*And now at meetings, I finally feel great,
in shoes that don't make my poor feet ache.*

Jessica Charlene Brandon

(**RADIO** -continued from page 1)

Magazine, the old Evening Magazine show on KYW-TV, and we were mentioned on WIP when we wrote to Angelo after his turn in drag last year. Since you're fairly new to the area, I just want you to know that we are legit – or at least as legit as an organization of men who dress up as women can be.

As my blurb in the newsletter pointed out, you really missed the best part of the experience of dressing as a woman when you opted for sneakers rather than a pair of high heels. As any red-blooded male knows: high heels make the woman. Next time – there will be a next time, won't there? – treat yourself to the high-heeled experience and find out what it's like to be 6'4" just like that knucklehead Charles.

I'm enclosing a photo of myself for you. I'll be happy to help you get

ready for your next appearance *en femme* if you really want to make a splash at the McDonald's some afternoon.

I really enjoy your show, your sense of humor, and manner in handling callers. If you mention this over the air, please schedule it between 1:30 and 2:00 since that's when I am definitely listening.

Take care and best wishes on your continued success..

Sincerely,
Dina Amberle

OK girls, we almost gave up on the Classified idea. We coaxed, we cajoled. We got no response. Not exactly a member of the community though. But she is a certified addictions counselor.

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