

The Transgenderist

MAY 1997

The Publication of Transgenderist Independence Club Albany, New York

Past The Costumes

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"I don't like it when people call me by my femme name when I am in boy clothes, even when I'm on-line. I'm not that person," noted one crossdresser. To him, he is only "her" when he puts on the suit, dons the costume.

There is no doubt that crossdressing is about clothes. Crossdressers see their outfits as costumes and crossdresser gatherings as akin to costume parties. A costume is a whimsical way of playing a stylized character, showing a part of us that is clearly just a persona and not a fully integrated person.

This costume phase of identity exploration is important to all people. Many of the outfits we wear during adolescence are costumes, abstracted and exaggerated displays of part of our character. We try these to help us explore various facets of ourselves by bringing that side to the front, playing with it, and seeing how people react.

After a while, though, we are expected to find costumes that represent us in a more whole way. We do change clothes based on what we are doing and what image we want to present, but the expectation is that the change will not be drastic, unless we are wearing a costume.

After all, no matter what clothes we choose to wear, we are always wearing a costume. It's simply that after wearing a well constructed outfit for a while, it feels natural, like it is an extension of us rather than just some facade that we put on to conceal part of who we are. In other words, a good outfit is organic, revealing parts of us in a comfortable, natural way, rather than concealing who we are in a crude and bold way.

All costumes are constructed, but the better constructed, the more they fit the shape of a wearer's body and soul, the more natural and elegant they look.

For people who pursue a path that transits gender lines, sooner or later they will probably choose to find an outfit that is not simply a costume that conceals, but a suit that reveals who they are. They will stop crossdressing, stop wearing clothes that they feel belong to someone else, and start simply wearing their own clothes, be it a tie or a dress. They will simply be who they are, no matter what they are wearing, always a transgendered person, in jeans or silk.

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TRANSCUSTODY CASE GETS NATIONAL ATTENTION

TransParent Fights to See Her Children

[St. Louis, MO : 7 April 1997] THE CASE of transgender parent Sharon Boyd, who was recently dealt a resounding setback in her battle to see her own children, has emerged as national news. A Missouri Court of Appeals held last month that Ms. Boyd constituted "an endangerment" to her own children, simply because of her transgender status. Her story was published Monday morning in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and quickly picked up by the AP wire service, and appeared in a number of newspapers nationwide. It was followed by a live interview on ABC Radio. [Post-Dispatch story follows.]

Leading Edge for an Assault on Gay Parents

Ms. Boyd's case has taken on added significance because of three bills introduced in the Missouri State Legislature. One of these, HB640, closely follows the ruling in Ms. Boyd's case, and would deny custody or adoption rights to anyone who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Another targeted directly at transparents, SB51, has already passed the Missouri Senate.

Remarked Ms. Boyd, "Gay groups have told me transparents 'aren't our problem.' But these bills prove that these fine-line distinctions are lost on the conservative right. As long as gay activists leave us as the exposed edges, right-wing groups are going to seize on us to attack parenting across the board. As far as they're concerned -- gay, bi, lesbian, transgender --we're all queer."

'Squeaky Clean' -- Army, Air Force, and Military Intelligence

Ms. Boyd's case is all the more remarkable because, although fundamentalist groups from the "Christian Coalition" to "Focus on the Family" have united against her, she is a self-described "squeaky clean" evangelical Christian herself, who met her ex-wife at a Bible study group. In addition, Ms. Boyd is an honor's graduate of the US Air Force Academy, who went on to serve in the Army, the Air Force, and military intelligence, before emerging as a much-decorated Major following 12 years of military service.

Ms. Boyd had initially been awarded visitation and joint legal custody by a lower court. However, with the backing of fundamentalist groups, her ex-wife successfully appealed the ruling. Ms. Boyd has described the recent decision against her by the State Court of Appeals as "discriminatory," and plans to appeal the case as long as her limited funds hold out. Her ex-wife has denied Ms. Boyd even telephone contact her two sons, aged 7 and 10, and she has had no contact with them since 1992.

Said Boyd, "I've lost out on precious, irreplaceable years of my children's lives. But this case isn't just about me: it's about the scores of transgender parents who are denied the most basic contact with their own children every year simply because they are gender-variant. We must start fighting back."

1996 InYourFace An on-line, news-only service for gender activism.

Transsexual Plans To Fight Custody Ruling She Contends Her Sons Need Her

By Tim Bryant

Of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Monday, April 7, 1997

A father who underwent a sex change and lost custody of two sons in the process says the boys should still have a relationship with the parent they will always know as Dad. "There are things only a parent can provide," said the father, now known as Sharon, in a recent interview. "That is unconditional love, guidance and wisdom. There is no reason I can't give that to my kids."

Sharon, who has had no direct contact with the boys since late 1992, said that the children - now 7 and 10 - needed both their parents. She plans to ask the Missouri Court of Appeals in St. Louis to reconsider its decision March 11 giving the boys' mother sole legal custody.

Hundreds of battles similar to Sharon's are waged nationwide each year, but nearly all are fought outside public view, a national advocate for transsexuals said.

"Most cases don't display the courage of Sharon, who was willing to go public," said Riki Anne Wilchins, executive director of Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, or Gender PAC, in New York. "Most people are quiet and well-behaved. Any attempt to go public is portrayed as unstable behavior. A lot of these cases are decided quietly."

Even so, such custody battles are seldom conducted "on a level playing field," she said. "Usually, the preferred mode of attack is to portray the transgender parent as, by definition, deviant and an endangerment to their own kids, even in the absence of any evidence to support the claim."

(Continued on page 3)

(Transsexual custody Continued from page 2)

In Sharon's case, the appeals court in St. Louis ruled that a St. Charles County Circuit Court judge must decide whether visits with Sharon would be in the boys' best interest. The appeals ruling overturned a joint-custody decision by another judge in St. Charles County in 1995.

"This is a unique situation, and it is imperative that evaluations of the parents and children are made prior to the children's face-to-face reunification with (their) father," wrote Judge Paul Simon. The boys' mother lives in St. Charles County. Sharon lives in suburban Washington.

"If you asked them, I know they would want to talk with me," Sharon said, referring to her sons. "I have never, ever presented myself to my children as anything other than their dad. I do not need my children's validation of myself as a woman."

Reconciliation Plan

Sharon acknowledged last week that both boys would need counseling before they could resume a relationship with their father. Sharon said her original plan for reconciliation with her sons called for phone calls and counseling leading up to visits. But she added: "There is very little I can't do with my kids today. All I want to do is be involved in their lives. I know they would recognize me as their dad. I would never do anything that would harm them. I just can't believe that them seeing me as a woman could distort their sense of reality."

(At the mother's request, the appeals court decided last year to use initials in identifying the parents. In Post-Dispatch stories, the paper used Karen as a pseudonym for the mother, also at her request, to protect the children's privacy.)

Sharon, 38, is a graduate of the Air Force Academy and a former officer in the Air Force and Army. She describes herself as "squeaky clean" and an evangelical Christian. Sharon and Karen met in a Bible study group in a town near the Air Force base in Missouri, where Sharon, who was a man at the time, was stationed. The couple married in 1983.

Karen has said the couple's relationship was always strained. In 1991, the father refused to go with his family to visit Karen's relatives. When Karen and the boys returned three weeks later, the father told Karen that he had spent the time living as a woman.

The couple separated in 1992. Sharon underwent a hair transplant, electrolysis, hormone treatments and psychotherapy. Karen filed for divorce. The father underwent sex-change surgery 71 days before the divorce trial. Sharon and Karen were divorced in St. Charles County in 1995. A judge there had given Karen primary custody of the boys but allowed Sharon unsupervised visits for two weeks in the summer and on alternate holidays.

Sharon never got to visit the boys. Karen's court petitions indicate that she believed visits would harm the children.

Boys Have Seen A Picture

The boys have seen a photocopy of a picture of Sharon taken after her sex-change operation, Sharon said. "I believe they still want to see me," she added. "I'm the same person. I'm better now because something with which I had been struggling has been

treated, and I'm over it now. These children aren't going to look at me and keel over dead."

Many people misunderstand gender dysphoria, or gender identity disorder, in which a person believes his or her anatomy and true gender are a mismatch. Transsexuals believe that their true gender is imprisoned in the body of the other gender. They regard their genitals with repugnance. It is estimated that 6,000 to 11,000 people have undergone sex-change surgery.

"This is a medical condition; there is nothing moral or immoral about it," said Sharon, adding that she was not a cross between "Uncle Miltie and Dennis Rodman."

"I'm a person with high moral standards," she said. "I'm an intelligent person."

Gender PAC submitted a brief in favor of Sharon in her appeals case. The recently formed group is a coalition of about a dozen organizations, including the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Wilchins said Gender PAC pushed in Congress for the rights of transgender people and might consider a similar lobbying effort before the Missouri Legislature.

On a personal level, Sharon said she was disappointed by the opposition to her having a relationship with her sons. "People who don't even know me have reacted emotionally to my situation and are patting themselves on the back and thinking they are doing good," she said. "I love my kids. That's really what this is about."

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(Costumes Continued from page 1)

At this point, they will feel no dissonance when someone calls them by name whatever they are wearing. They will feel the nuances of the range of their own gender in any clothes, be it admiring some beautiful jewelry or feeling the power of a hot car. This is what we expect of people, that they find a way to express and admire both the feminine and the masculine, in themselves or in the world, without having to be dressed a certain way.

To transgendered people who have gone past the costume stage of transgender, being with people still in it can be frustrating. Crossdressers assume that if they are a man in a costume, then every other person born male who wears a dress must also be a man in a costume. Many must assume this for their own peace of mind, for if they believe that transformation is pos-

“...no matter what clothes we choose to wear, we are always wearing a costume.”

sible, that one can cross gender lines to where dresses feel natural, then it may happen to them.

This phenomenon is not limited to crossdressers who love women. Even crossdressers who love men, drag queens, usually think of themselves as in costume, and not in their own clothes. This is often phrased by dividing up the wardrobe into "his clothes" and "her clothes," even if they are all worn by the same human. When someone asks if "Biff" or "Suzy" will be coming tonight, simply denoting the clothes that one person might wear, they are firmly entrenched in the costume mindset.

Being able to tote out various persona and play them to discover new parts of ourselves is a good thing. I knew one gal who had different personas and names depending on the hair color she wore. I thought this was a great idea, but many people saw it as weird -- people who had no problem with the difference between Rob and Champagne being if the same person

was wearing added hair or not.

"Do you really leave your house and go to church like that?" asked the same crossdresser who doesn't like to be called the "wrong" name based on clothes. Yes, I do. I see the clothes that I wear as my clothes, not crossdressing at all, just another form of expression -- like the difference between wearing jeans and a suit.

I want to be seen as an integrated person. I worked long and hard to come to that place of comfort, and it can still be difficult for me. But when men in costumes insist on seeing me as a man in a costume, even to the point of calling me by an old name five years after I chose a gender neutral name, I rattle. I run to the women, who, unless they also are committed to the belief that men cannot transform to keep their man in place, often see me as not wearing a costume, as simply expressing who I am.

And that, after all these years, is what I want to do.

Arlene Istar C.A.C. C.S.W.

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The Day I Stopped Crossdressing

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I stopped crossdressing today. I got up and put on a skirt & a blouse. As Holly Boswell says, these weren't my mother's clothes I was wearing, they were mine. I didn't dress in some costume or folly, no special occasion. I just woke up and put on my own clothes. My clothes on my body. That's not crossdressing.

Crossdressing is a term that presumes that it is wrong for people of one sex to wear clothing assigned to another sex. It assumes that clothing is somehow sex linked, as if a dress is specific only to those with XX

chromosomes.

We know that clothing is not linked directly to physical sex. Clothing is a social trait, conveying messages of status, power and role. Because we have been taught to link status, power and role to sex, we assume that clothing is also linked to sex. It is actually linked to gender, our system of role definition that is primarily based on sex.

There are other ways of defining role. We might define by occupation, and in this case, for example, plumbers would always dress alike, no matter what sex they are. Or we may define by ethnic heritage, so that Scots all wore skirts, no matter what sex they are. But our primary separation in this heterosexist culture is by sex.

We come by being a heterosexist culture quite reasonably. Once we stopped being hunter-gathers, we needed lots of children to toil in the fields. This mass of population was good, and as we shifted into a consumer culture, we needed people to work and to buy products. We needed a market. With this pressure on procreation, we focused on ways to get men and women to breed, becoming a heterosexist culture.

But things are changing. We are in an era of working smarter, not harder. Brute labor and masses of population aren't the answer anymore. We need to focus on changing to a culture of thought, one focused not on grunt work, but on brain power. We see the problems of large masses of people living without means all

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Transgenderist's Independence Club (TGIC) is a nonprofit, educational, non-sexual social support group for persons wishing to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of gender, including crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends.

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PROGRAM/EVENTS -

The Transgenderist is the newsletter of TGIC, published monthly and mailed First Class to members, prospective members, friends, professionals, and exchange publications.

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Readers are invited to submit articles relevant to the Transgendered Community for consideration. You may bring or mail typed pages for publication to the TGIC clubroom. Format should follow that shown in the current newsletter. You may also e-mail the articles to Jeeena@AOL.COM. The article should be part of the body of the e-mail. If you must attach a file please save it in ASCII format.

Regular Meetings are held every Thursday at the TGIC Club Room on Central Avenue in Albany, 7:30 - 10pm. Some come earlier and stay later, but it is wise to call if you are not a Keyholder or if it is your first visit. Come dressed either way, meet and talk with friends.

Many continue to socialize at one of the local night spots after the meetings.

(I Stopped Crossdressing Continued from page 5)

over the world. The need to copiously procreate is declining.

And with that, the need to focus attention on heterosexist stereotypes, dividing people by sex to build a structure for desire is also changing. We reject sexual harassment, move towards unlocking the potential for thought in us all, rather than simply the raw urge to breed. Our gender system is breaking down under its own weight, a victim of the outdated need for a focus on childbearing.

So our roles change. Boundaries change. The hard and fast rules about what a man should be, what a woman should be change. We have seen these changes since the 1960's and the women's movement, a backlash itself against the social pressures of the

“The essence of transgender behavior: a moving away from crossdressing and into a wider range of expression”

1950's designed to push women out of their 1940's wartime jobs and back into the home for the "baby-boom."

And my role changes. I was taught to wear clothing appropriate to the gender role "man," one I was assigned to by virtue of my having a penis. I became a crossdresser, putting on clothing that the culture has assigned to the gender "woman" as a costume. I retained the characteristic behaviors of a "man" as I wore the clothing of another gender role. Putting on these outfits was ceremonial, potent, a powerful symbolic gesture, showing layers otherwise unrevealed.

But I am to the point where I no longer see the donning of clothing assigned to the gender "women" as ceremonial. Rather, I see it as just another option in my daily dressing. Pants, skirt, whatever. It isn't just gender deceivers that wear padding and plastic hair.

I spent many years trying to come to grips with the concept of deceit that is inherent in "passing" as an-

other sex. But all of those questions go away when the only point is having a much more open wardrobe. You merely express who you are, and people take you for what they take you for. You don't work to pass, just to look good and pleasant. This is the essence of transgender behavior, a moving away from crossdressing and into simply a wider range of expression. No matter what your genitals, it is possible to wear a dress for normal, not just for ceremonial, occasions.

There are issues in this expression. Others may not feel comfortable if you are not anchored in a heterosexist role. People may make assumptions about you that are disdainful and inaccurate. One needs to be strong and clear in themselves to effectively open their manifestation options. I know that people outside the gender community can see me as a person, no matter what my expression.

So the day I stopped crossdressing was the day that putting on a skirt no longer felt odd, the day it just felt right and proper. It was the day that rather than wearing clothes that are contrary to my gender, I found the clothes that were appropriate to my gender, to who I am. While, in the context of sex role stereotyping, I may still be dressing inappropriately for my sex, I am not dressing cross-gender, not cross-dressing.

I am connected with all humans, many of whom find limits to their full expression in gender roles. Any barrier can separate us, make us believe more in our differences than our sameness. It is believing in the separations that oppresses us, limits all of us. I am the same as crossdressers, the same as feminists, the same as rednecks, the same as all humans. Our diversity is flavor, not substance.

People do respond to the way we look, and it is all right to look any way that expresses who we are. Skirts and heels or jeans and boots, we create our own image, our own identity. We are who we are, and we can show that to the world, must show that to the world.

We all must be able to break the barriers of gender limits that stop us. One way to do that is to stop crossdressing and to just be yourself, whoever that is - and whatever that wears.

Who Am I Really?

by Melodie [REDACTED]

As I was watching Xena, Warrior Princess (Saturday nights at 11:30 on CBS) some nagging thoughts occurred to me and I drew some conclusions.

As men and women have found more choices open to them, it appears that gender reversals are becoming more commonplace. Ignoring the fact that technology has now made it possible to switch your birth sexual characteristics for at least the appearance of those of the other gender, I think it is interesting to consider not the possibility of change from male to female or the cause of your particular gender dysphoria, but those societal (and social) influences which may also have played a role in your "as you are now" lifestyle.

Most people are aware that for several centuries in American and most other societies, women have been subjugated, denigrated and often treated as property, even though in actuality, many women controlled the important decisions or aspects of a couple's life. Since the "women's movement" began, the struggle has gradually evolved into a slightly more visible "women in control" society. Men no longer have vital controlling interests in the earnings department, but also have begun to surrender the very characteristics that had traditionally differentiated them from women, to wit: men as the breadwinners, men as the providers, men as the ones who make sexual conquests, men as the ones to whom women look for guidance, protection and the creation of new human beings, at least as far as conception is concerned. Now with implanted remotely fertilized ova and the latest in cloning, even procreation is out the window. All of the traditional roles have been altered by technology. Most of the traditional givens no longer apply.

All men are no longer providers. Women protect the home and family more often than men, who are often off trying to earn more money to keep themselves in sexual servitude. Women frequently earn more money than their mates (not always.) But women have tighter support groups (of other women.) Men don't communicate that way. Women know instinctively or through awareness provided by the media where to go to find support and services and know how to network or make use of the invisible "sisterhood." Men, on the other hand, frequently flounder when seeking marriage or other counselors.

So, as women have become stronger and erected more barriers between the sexes (sexual harassment actions, etc.) men have chosen, consciously or otherwise, courses of action which either made them weaker or more accommodating, or, in the case of transsexual or transgendered persons, have led them to attempt to become more like the "gender empowered." If you're on the borderline of male, or bi-sexual, and you've been on the receiving end of or have experienced a harassment situation, this might be enough to push you over the edge into a place you never thought you'd be; or maybe you just want to see what it looks like from "their" side; or maybe you feel if you can associate with women as a woman (in other words, if you "pass"), then maybe you'll finally solve

the eternal riddle: What makes women tick? or some variation thereof, and thus become more effective as a human in this world.

I've always thought, after having considerable experience with somewhat "damaged" women, that I would be better than a lot of women in presenting a female image. I'm sure others have thought the same thing.

To sum up--aside from gender genetic and developmental mistakes, and aside from feelings and longings which may be no more than wanting to get in touch with your feminine side, there may be actual cultural and societal pressures which have taken away from maleness as an archetype, and as a result created a vacuum which seems to want to be filled with an idealized femaleness that you in your particular situation consciously or subconsciously are convinced you can fill. It ain't that simple, of course. But just maybe, at least to some extent, you're just filling a gap--making the whole gender equation balance out. Don't dismiss it out of hand, think about it.

As women have become more visibly dominant, some totally frustrated men have responded more aggressively. We've all seen the increased violence against both women and TV/TS people. But the others (if they don't have their heads up their butt) have reacted by becoming gentler, more submissive. One way to become more submissive is by becoming a "woman", at least in one's perception. And technology has made it possible to almost become that woman.

Now! Are you where you are for the right reasons, or what? And does it matter? Your responses and reactions to this essay are earnestly solicited. Melodie [REDACTED]

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Tracy Oppelt

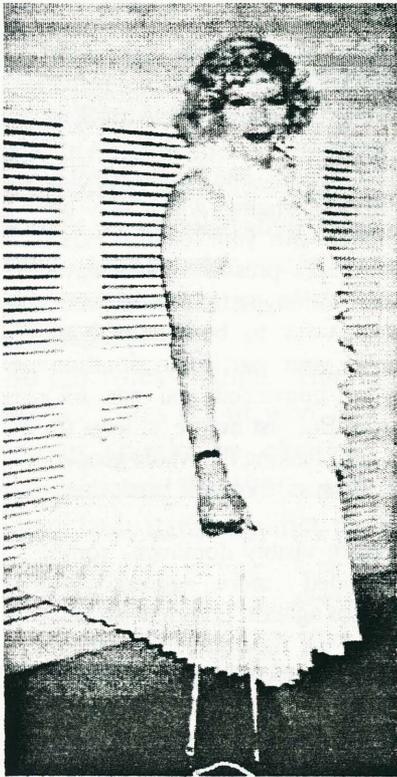
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OBITUARY



It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Rose, a long time member of TGIC. Rose suffered a heart attack and died April 13, 1997. A service was held April 21, 1997 near her home.

Rose was a person who was living in the present moment, her openness and confidence allowed others to get to know her quite easily.

I first met Rose in 1994 shortly after joining TGIC and was impressed by her carefree attitude.

I remember the time she told me that she had been shopping at the mall when three teenage girls spotted her and started giggling. Instead of ignoring them or running off, Rose approached them and engaged them in conversation. The girls, startled by this unexpected interaction had many questions. "Why are you wearing a dress?", they queried. "Because its fun", Rose replied.

Rose showered them with her warmth and glow and treated them with respect, answering their questions honestly and openly and in so doing performed a service for everyone. The teenagers learned respect for another human being regardless of appearance, race, age, gender. Other crossdressers can take a lesson in knowing that if you are true to yourself, you can overcome any fear.

Rose was an inspiration to all and she will be missed by all. Condolences go out to her family and all who knew her.

gina

STARS REVIEW

I met Gina Marie at TGIC, and after a quick bout of her closeamania, we showed up on time -- not the best idea.

The setting was the Lakehouse, decorated with a fabulous stage with mock flames, enormous silver curtain and stairs for a fabulous entry. The stage was part of the Mr. Empire State Leather contest, held there by STARS the night before.

There were at least 150 people there. The show was divided into two parts. The first started at 3:30, and consisted of the amazing Capital Pride Singers, 30 voices strong, including our own Robin [redacted], singing three moving songs. Their concert in June, a benefit for Our Brothers Keeper, will feature tunes from Broadway, and if the emplosive ovation from a moved audience is any indication, it will be an exiting, exhilarating and moving night.

The next performers, Christine Mathews (an earnest lesbian singer), a young girl with an amazing voice who sang "Hey Big Spender," and two other songs and could have used some drag queen lessons to go with the beautiful voice.

There was also a synth duo who made four songs all seem the same, and a black girl who wailed to taped tracks were interspersed with many apologies and excuses. It was slow going.

About 5:15, a 5 minute break was called. The beer had run out by this time.

About 5:45, the queens took the stage, in a show masterminded by Hazel, and with Dave DiSisto behind the audio board. Hazel did some bad Madonna. She then screwed the pooch by bringing up four of the Capital City Kickers line dance club from Longhorns to stomp around to two country songs.

Finally, around 6, The Glam Girls, Chita, Viva and Iodine took the stage next, with a superbly choreographed rendition of "We Are Family, all in matched fringe dresses, black, red and Viva in white with enormous platforms.

Glam performs once a month at Waterworks, and last month the show was on Friday April 18.

Chita stayed out, and made the audience throb to "Proud Mary," making her red fringe dance. Chita, also known as Miss Sherry Love, also hosted drag night at Power Company on April 25.

Miss Maxxi Padd was up next, vamping to the boys and pumping it out. Maxi was also up later with a nice ballad. Maxxi often performs at Clinton Street Pub, which has again scheduled their Spring Drag show to coincide with the SSS meeting in Schenectady on Saturday April 19. Maxxi had a blowout with her dress, but any fag who can fix a Harley can fix a zipper with a little superglue and a blowtorch.

Dana Mathews performed twice, with incredible drama

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CORRECTION

Last month my computer did some very strange things and somehow cut out a large portion of Winnie's letter to a crossdresser who wrote her asking for advice. Here is her letter in its entirety. Apologies to Winnie. Gina

Dear Friend,

Sorry for the delay in answering your letter, but I've been mulling over what I might write to you - it's difficult without knowing more details of your situation, such as marital status, etc.

I have seen a transvestite fetishist defined as someone who cross dresses for the purpose of sexual gratification and, from your letter, assume this may apply to you. There is nothing inherently wrong with this, except for the distress you say it causes. I would guess that part of the distress is feelings of guilt and shame, peaking after climax when you take off the lingerie, due to the apparent incongruence of performing a male function in female attire. You must recognize that these feelings are foisted upon you by a society that relegates moral authority, especially in sexual matters, to religious leaders who depend for their livelihood on promoting feelings of guilt for all sorts of sins - put cash in the collection plate if you want to go to heaven. Hope I have not offended you, but I'm very cynical about religion.

So, dump the guilt, relax and enjoy your undies. There may be a downside in that some fetishists become totally dependent on their fetish for sexual performance, a disadvantage if your partner is not appreciative. Those who submit to certain bondage practices designed to intensify sexual pleasure may find themselves dependent on the services of a dominatrix. If you do not wish this to happen to you, you should consider decoupling enjoyment of the clothes from strong sexual arousal. Strategies for accomplishing this rely on the physical impossibility of maintaining arousal for hours on end. Some guys regularly wear ladies' lingerie under their business suits or work clothes, and find this satisfactory.

The other alternative, which I personally recommend, is to overcome fetishism by becoming a complete cross-dresser. If you love lingerie, you'll surely like dresses, high heels, makeup, wigs, and jewelry, too. These things diffuse the good feelings all over one's body and prevent undue fixation on any one particular item of apparel. To obtain the benefit of decoupling, you should plan to stay dressed up for a long time, at least a day. If you have an "accident", don't get disgusted with yourself and take the clothes off, clean up and stay dressed. Especially, if you have an "accident" while trying on clothes in a store, please have the decency to buy the clothes. Some previously friendly stores have turned away crossdressers after finding dresses smeared with ejaculate left in the changing room.

My interest in women's clothes started with admiration of nicely dressed girls, a natural instinct. I wondered what it felt like to wear such clothes, and decided to find out by experiment, which I thought might also help me to better understand women. Yes, the clothes felt as good as they looked! I began with lingerie and jewelry, things that a guy might buy for a

"girlfriend." While putting the undies on, thinking about women elicited arousal as an automatic response, an unwanted though not entirely unpleasant side effect, ending with climax and feelings of shame. If I had consulted a psychologist at this stage, I might have been mis-diagnosed as a fetishist, though I have never crossed the slippery slope onto the operating table. However, one can stop at whatever level where one feels most comfortable. TGIC includes members of all stripes. Pay us a visit soon and get other opinions.

We know of no one who has been "cured" of cross-dressing, though the urge may become dormant for long periods and diminish with age. However, if anyone has managed to "kick the habit", it is unlikely that they would ever admit to having cross-dressed, so we really don't know for certain.

Sincerely, Winnie, 1/20/97

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
☆ (Continued from page 8) ☆
☆ and power, from a serious flirtation with a handsome man ☆
☆ who came to tip her, with the tips going to charity, to an ☆
☆ emotional breakdown that was breathtaking to watch. ☆
☆ Iodine Glam did two Bette Midler tunes with precision, fun, ☆
☆ verve and beauty, showing that brilliant talent once again. ☆
☆ You may remember her as Iodine UMBER, Miss Clinton ☆
☆ Street Pub. ☆
☆ Oh, and Viva Glam did something too. Well, Gina liked her ☆
☆ look, but Gina was crying not because of the performance, ☆
☆ but because the one roll of film she brought seemed to have ☆
☆ broken sprockets, so she missed pictures. ☆
☆ We had to leave at 6:45. We had been there for 3 hours and ☆
☆ 45 minutes, and the MC, by now changed into a lovely leather ☆
☆ tuxedo with damatian collar and gold rhinestone cuffs, was ☆
☆ introducing Gary Aldrich, a local opera singer. More was to ☆
☆ come. ☆
☆ In short, it seemed like people were uncomfortable being ☆
☆ queer and funny too early, and honestly, while the looks and ☆
☆ stage and performances were great, there was very little ☆
☆ laughter and much of that was very cliché. The show needed ☆
☆ a big butch or funny fag to keep things moving, but the ☆
☆ beginning was sanitized for your protection, as non queer as ☆
☆ Smallbany gets. ☆
☆ The girls did move the audience, with lots of participation, ☆
☆ and lots of tips. Seeing Iodine fly back out of the audience ☆
☆ onto the stage to hit her mark in 4" heels was truly ☆
☆ impressive. ☆
☆ The show was fun and colorful, but the slow pace, excuses, ☆
☆ sanitized beginning and lack of fresh humor was a bit ☆
☆ disconcerting. There is talent in Smallbany and people they ☆
☆ are free to let it rip, it is beautiful to see. ☆
☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

ALBANY PRIDE PARADE
Washington Park Lakehouse
June 21, 1997
MUSIC IN THE PARK AT 10:30
PARADE BEGINS 12 NOON

CALENDAR AND EVENTS

TGIC MEETINGS

- May 1 The World Is Red: A Mayday Salute
 May 8 Yet Another Chrysis: Drag Mom's Day
 May 15 Cupcake, Sweetie?: The PTA Bake Sale
 May 22 **COMMITTEE REPORTS** Live From Smallbany:
 Applause To Anchorwomen
 May 29 An Evening In Paris: Prom Night
 June 5 Just Drew It: An Homage To Mimi
 June 12 Howdy Cowgirl! Trans-West-Ites Forever!
 June 19 **COMMITTEE REPORTS** Dancing In The
 Twilight: The Longest Day
 June 26 Always A Bridesmaid. . .

BECOME AN IFGE MEMBER

The International Foundation for Gender Education is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Basic membership is \$25 per year. Subscriptions to Transgender Tapestry are \$40. Brochures and forms are available in the TGIC Club Room. Call or write to:

IFGE (617) 899-2212
 PO Box 229
 Waltham, MA 02154-0229

The I.F.G.E. Internet version of Transgender Tapestry
<http://www.tiac.net/users/dba/ifge/ifge.htm>

ANONYMOUS HIV ANTIBODY TESTING

Your regional HIV Counseling and Testing Program provides free HIV counseling and antibody testing, support and referral. No names will be asked.
 (NYS Health Department) Albany Area:
 (518) 486-1595 or 1-800-962-5065.

TGIC-On-line

All transgendered people are invited to join TGIC On-Line, an informal e-mail network sponsored by Transgenderist Independence Club (TGIC). Messages exchanged on TGIC-On-line focus on events of interest to transgendered people in a region from Lake Placid to Newburg. If you are interested in joining the network, or want more information about TGIC, send an e mail message to:

tgic-request@hartebeest.com with any subject line and in the message body, the text: **JOIN TGIC**
STOP

(Please note: **JOIN TGIC** must be on line 1. **STOP** must be on line 2.)

You will receive an automated acknowledgment (Journal) of your request, which must be approved with the list moderator.

MAJOR COMING EVENTS

- May 4,5,6, 1997 -First Annual Gender PAC Political Conference (Free) Washington, DC
 Riki Wilchins [REDACTED] New York,
 NY10014 212-645-1753 EMAIL-
 RIKI@pipeline.com
- May 10, 1997 **BENEFIT "A Night At La Cage IV**
 featuring "Guys and Dolls" 518-462-6138,
 extension 55.
- May 21-25, 1997 - **ESPIRIT 95** Port Angeles, WA Esprit
 95 P.O. Box 873 Kirkland, WA 98083
- May 29-June 1, 1997 **CRUCIBLE - A FESTIVAL OF**
TRANSGENDER SPIRITUALITY
 ancient Alchemical practice, Spirituality
 and transgender Cauldron Farm, 12
 Simond Hill Rd., Hubbardston, MA 01452.
 Contact: Raven at (508) 928-4198,
- June 4-8, 1997 - **BE ALL YOU CAN BE** Chicago, IL
 Naomi Owne P.O. Box10240 Chicago, IL
 60610
- June 19-22-1997- **Second International Congress on**
Sex and Gender Issues- King of Prussia,
 PA. Guest Speaker: Kate Bornstein.
 Contact JoAnn Roberts, Ph.D., P.O. Box
 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406
 610-640-9449 email:
congrs2@cdspub.com
- June 21, 1997 **ALBANY PRIDE PARADE** 25th
 anniversary of CDG&LCC.
- July 16-20, 1997 **FIFTH ANNUAL SPOUSES**
PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE FOR EDUCATION
 (SPICE) Peggy Rudd P. O. Box 5304
 Katy, TX 77491 915-343-1953 (Mary
 Jane)melpeg@phoenix.com
www.pmpub.com
- July 26-30, 1997 19th **NATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY**
HEALTH CONFERENCE AND
NATIONAL AIDS/HIV FORUM Radisson
 Hotel, Atlanta, GA NLGHA 97 Conference
 P.O. Box 33022 Washington, DC 20033

TRI-ESS MEETINGS IN SCHENECTADY

The Lambda Chi Lambda chapter of Tri-Ess holds meetings the third Saturday of the month at "YOURS", a bar at 145 Barrett St. Schenectady. Meetings are at 7PM. Come anytime after 5pm and use facilities to change. Next meeting is May 17.