

# Houston '92

APRIL 8

1992

WEDNESDAY

Dear Participants:

Welcome to Houston and to our sixth annual 'Coming Together - Working Together' Convention.

Sixth annual convention -- it's a strange feeling. I don't know whether to say, "My God, it's been six years already?" , or, "Only six years? It feels like sixty." So much has happened in such a short time, it's almost unbelievable. Six years ago IFGE was still just an idea, as was this convention. Six years ago Tapestry publications had not been developed and the Congress of Representatives did not exist. Six years ago the idea of bringing our people together to work for something other than a social event or a personal growth experience seemed like nothing more than a plausible impossibility. Now look at us. You, and more than 200 of your sisters and brothers, are here for the specific purpose of building our community and tending to our community's business. Suddenly, the 'Coming Together' convention, what seemed like an impossible dream just six years ago, is now one of the (if not the) most important event on our community's calendar. Yes, we have created something incredible, something historic, and you are part of it.

It's true, we are not going to spend much effort taking you shopping, or showing you a good time, or showing you how to dress or put on make-up. However, if you want to contribute to helping build a strong and

healthy community and a better world in which to live, if you feel proud and give your life an added sense of meaning, you have come to the right place.

It truly is an honor for me to be here with you, to share with you these extraordinary times, and to enthusiastically work with you during this exciting event.

Thank you for being here.

Merissa Sherrill Lynn  
Director, Houston '92

**Sponsored and Hosted by:**

**International Foundation for Gender Education**

**Gulf Coast Transgender Community**

**Tau Chi Chapter - Tri Ess**

**Boulton & Park Society**

**Delta Omega Chapter - Tri Ess**

## ACTIVITIES TODAY:

- 10-12 Business Meeting (Salon A&B)
- 12-2 Keynote Luncheon (G. Ballroom)
- 2-5 Finance Committee (Board Room)
- 7-12 Trinity Award Night (G. Ballroom)

## Voices In My Closet

*Sharon Ann Stuart*

It was last Saturday morning when I entered my walk-in closet and told them we were going to Houston for the IFGE "Coming Together, Working Together" meeting.

Them, you ask - who is them? Why my dresses, of course.

Perhaps you recall back in the seventies when people discovered they could talk to plants. Well, I was fourteen years old in 1955 when I discovered you could talk to dresses. And not only that - dresses could talk back.

Ah, 1955 - that was the year my mother bought the off-white chiffon cocktail dress with the pearl beaded bodice and the full layered skirt. She had the waist altered to fit her middle-aged figure, and on the way home from the dressmaker she made a point of warning me.

"This is a very nice and very expensive dress and I don't want you to touch it," mother said with just a hint of menace in her voice.

Mother's warning was not without purpose. You see she was talking to a fourteen-year-old boy who had been raiding her closets and dresser drawers for female attire since the age of four. And by the time I was five I was a confirmed transvestite and went on to become a notorious clothes criminal. No dress, however humble, let alone a cocktail dress that was "very nice and very expensive," was safe in the same house with me.

Sure enough, less than twenty-four hours later, mother's warning notwithstanding, there I was slipping that size eight cocktail dress over my head and trying to tug it into place around my size twelve torso.

Mother had announced a short trip to the grocery store for some necessities and I had wasted no time dressnapping that cocktail frock from its hanger in mother's closet.

Alas, the zipper jammed halfway up the middle of my back and mother's return from the grocery store was imminent. I was trapped in that dress unable to get in or out of it without moving that zipper.

Frantically I struggled to free myself. Like a circus contortionist I wriggled and squirmed and arched my

back - all to no avail. Nothing seemed to budge that stubborn zipper.

I uttered a curse under my breath and that is when it happened. The dress talked.

"Really, there's no need for profanity, you frightful boy," the voice said, speaking in the measured, dulcet tones of a refined lady.

"You're going to hurt me and tear my fabric, if you don't stop struggling," the voice continued.

I fell upon the bed in disbelief. My eyes scanned the room for a person - that voice had to have a body. But there was no one there. It was the cocktail dress talking to me.

"You can talk," I stammered. "How can a dress talk?"

"Of course I can talk you little ninny. All dresses can talk. We just don't do it much. They teach us at the factory to be seen and not heard."

"Well, please help me get your zipper unstuck," I said. "If mom catches me wearing you, I'll be in deep dutch for the next year."

"You should have thought of that before you took me off the hanger," the dress admonished me. "They warned us at the factory about you transvestites, but I never dreamed it would actually happen to me. Now look here young man, if you promise never to try me on again, I just might be able to relax enough to get my zipper moving. Ah, there - try it now."

The zipper mysteriously slithered downward and in a trice I was free and the talking cocktail dress was back on its hanger and none the worse for wear.

So that is how I discovered talking dresses. And dresses and I have been talking ever since.

And so last Saturday, when I walked into my own closet and broke the news to "them" about Houston, the whole closet erupted into an excited chorus of dress babble.

"Oh please Sharon Ann, take me to Houston. I'm so bored being on this hanger," said the white linen.

CONTINUED PAGE 4

## Saving The Endangered Species

*Sharon Ann Stuart*

Is the male to female crossdresser as we have known him/her in the past thirty years an endangered species? Is it time to apply for protection from the U.S. Wildlife Service? Is every man who dares to wear dresses destined for a trip to Trinidad?

The above, and other timely questions of survival, were discussed at length in an afternoon presentation conducted by IFGE board member Linda Buten.

The program, entitled "Redefining the Crossdresser," explored the future of crossdressing in the nineties and its relationship or lack thereof with transsexual life patterns.

Buten reviewed the progress and changes in the crossdressing community over the past six years and noted that crossdressers emerging from the closet in earlier times once got excited about such issues as shaving their legs. Now, Buten explained, emerging crossdressers progress further in one day at an IFGE meeting than many of their predecessors did over a period of years. However, some leaders of the gender community have become concerned in recent months that too many crossdressers are moving toward transsexual surgery at too rapid a pace.

Buten and several other participants observed that transsexualism offers a definite goal and a new lifestyle whereas crossdressing alone is not an accepted career pattern or family lifestyle in our society. Crossdressers tend to gravitate toward transsexualism as a definitive solution to their social dilemma. Yet, casual observation suggests that some crossdressers seeking surgery may be doing so prematurely and without a sound basis.

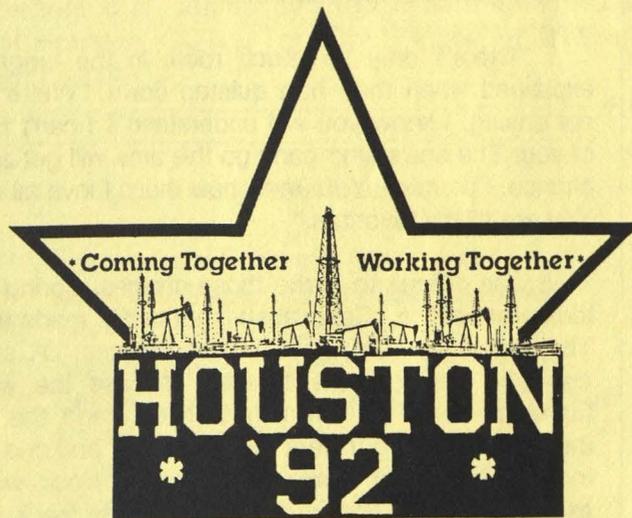
Without passing judgment on transsexualism as a life choice, Buten's program sought to focus on carving out new territory for the crossdresser in the 1990's and beyond. Several community leaders joined the discussion and spoke eloquently of their own experience and prospects.

## It Needs A Seminar to Introduce Us?

We're open for business - well, at least, we had an open evening. Unfortunately a little confusion over advance publicity meant that there were not many local residents present, and no (visible) representatives of "the media", but it was good to see a number of members of the local host organizations, as well as some professional counsellors and therapists.

It was great that we could all share the experiences of a number of our own community, and it is certain that everyone learned something of value - not least from the lively discussion that followed the initial more formal presentations. Perhaps the theme of this meeting should have been taken from La Cage Aux Folles - "I am what I am". (And as a further thought, I recall the quotation from a recent British book, *The Gender Paradox*, "I am not a label: I am a person"). Certainly this was the message that came across, and the message that we seek to pass on to that great unknowing (and ? uncaring) public out there. Perhaps we shall have the chance when the session is repeated on Friday. Meantime (remembering that we are not looking for a cure, as we are not suffering from a disease) - just 'keep takings the tablets, sisters !

*Anne Forrester*



### \*\*\*\*\* Program Change \*\*\*\*\*

The Program Committee Time has been changed. It is now meeting at 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM in the board room on Friday, April 9.

Time for the marketing committee has been changed, starting at 3:30 PM on Friday, April 9 instead of 2:00 PM as originally scheduled.

"Remember me, I'm just back from the dry cleaner," called the green coat dress, a veteran of the recent Texas "T" Party.

"I can make you look very sexy," said a slithery black velvet evening dress, speaking in Chinese with a translation by one of the bilingual dresses.

"You could wear me to the Tiffany Awards Banquet," an old stand-by evening gown countered. "Remember all the good times we've had in the past."

"I loved Denver last year. Did you say we are staying at a Hilton Hotel?" a chatty green skirt suit wanted to know.

"Take me please, oh please take me," shrieked a prissy polka-dotted cotton frock with a lace collar. "It's going to be hot in Houston and I'm so light and airy."

"I guess you won't be needing us winter numbers," a red sweater dress said sadly. "I guess I'll just have to wait for Fantasia Fair or the Fall Harvest in Kansas City."

"I'd just love a trip to Houston," cooed a soft polyester print. "And I promise not to wrinkle even if you fold me up and put me in the suitcase."

"There's only so much room in the luggage," I explained when they had quieted down. "We're flying, not driving. I know you will understand if I can't take all of you. The one's who can't go this time will get another chance. I promise. You know how much I love all of you. You are all my favorites."

It was difficult to make those choices. Spring outfits took precedence. Several summer outfits made the cut. The skirt suits sent three representatives. A sweater and skirt combo were selected in case the weather turned cooler. Two evening dresses made the trip in their own special garment bag, one new, and one an old friend. The prissy polka-dotted cotton frock was put aside, however, and hung limply in the back of the closet pouting silently.

There were more than enough outfits to wear in Houston over the week-long stay.

That night as I lay in bed I could hear someone softly sobbing. The sound seemed to be coming from my closet. I went to see and sure enough it was the polka-dotted frock crying. She really is a very sensitive dress and just does not handle rejection well at all.

"I ought to take you straight to the Salvation Army," I told her in mock anger as I squeezed the polka-dotted frock into the garment bag with the two evening gowns who barely stirred in their sleep.

The next morning I made a last-minute run to Macy's for pantyhose. On the way past the Misses Better Dresses department I heard the sweet, musical voice of a flower print sun dress beckoning to me.

"Oh, won't you purchase me and take me off this horrid rack. I am 25 percent off and I'm a size fourteen. I'll make you feel so pretty. Quick now, get out your credit card. No need to try me on. I'm sure you can wear me."

How could I resist. When I introduced my latest acquisition to the dress bag there was some grumbling from the skirt suits who are a little stuck-up, but otherwise the new dress made friends easily.

And, when I return from Houston, there will be yet another voice coming from my closet.

Sharon Ann Stuart

FIRST  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON TRANSGENDER LAW AND  
EMPLOYMENT POLICY



AUGUST 26 - 30, 1992  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Sponsored by:  
Gulf Coast Transgender Community

**gctc**

For information brochure:  
Phyllis Randolph Frye, Attorney  
5707 Firenza, Houston, Texas 77035

*Houston 92*

APRIL 10

1992

FRIDAY

**Texas Legislator Keynotes IFGE Luncheon**

Six-term Texas state legislator Debra Danburg advised IFGE members interested in political reform to get involved in grass roots political work - stuffing envelopes and helping with the nitty gritty of political campaigns. Danburg also advised listeners to seek the assistance of legislators' staffs and to actively share their gender concerns and causes with elected representatives.

"We need your information and knowledge, if we are to properly address gender issues politically and legislatively," Danburg concluded.

At the same time the Bates College of Law graduate offered a discouraging assessment of her legislature's ability to initiate social reform in the areas of greatest concern to the gender community.

"Texas is a rural state, and our legislature is firmly controlled by the 'Bubbas,'" Danburg observed.

Given the power of the "good-old-bubba" network, Danburg indicated that just getting gender-neutral legislation was often the best she could hope for under the circumstances. Danburg shared her experiences with weight discrimination legislation and fair housing laws.

"Unfortunately the courts may be a better forum than legislatures for those seeking gender law reform," Danburg advised.

Danburg, who is a member of the Texas legislature's powerful State Affairs

Committee (described as the committee where most bills go to die) has shown a consistent interest and support for minority legislation causes throughout her career as the representative for District 137.

*Sharon Ann Stuart*

*Party - Party - Party*

Friday night festivities will include a benefit party for the AIDS Foundation with music by 'Tilt' starting at 9:00 pm in the Grand Ballroom. A \$10.00 donation is requested at the door. This benefit is presented by the Hostess Committee of Houston, GCTC, Tau Chi Chapter of Tri-Ess, and IFGE.

Friday Activities

- 9-12 Transsexual Program (Rio Grand)
- 9-10 Adult Children of Alcoholics (Cozumel)
- 10-11:30 Wives Program (Mazatlan)
- 10-11:30 Nominations Committee (Board Room)
- 10-11:30 Estate Planning (**Cozumel**) (*room change*)
- 12-2 Keynote Speaker (Grand Ballroom)
- 2-5 Transsexual Program (Rio Grande)
- 2-5 Wives Program (Mazatlan)
- 2-3:30 Community Outreach (Cozumel)
- 2-3:30 Picking Your Profession (Salon A&B)
- 2-3:30 IFGE Programs Committee (Brd Room)
- 3:30-5 Marketing Committee (Board Room)
- 3:30-5 Creating a Group Newsletter (Cozumel)
- 3:30-5 Coming Out... (Salon A&B)
- 7-9 Introductory Seminar (Salon A&B)
- 7-... Party, Party, Party

## First Session of the Transsexual Program.

The first session of the Transsexual Program was a mixed group of 20 plus participants. Five female to male and fifteen male to female. There were six speakers; Christina Young, Barbara Mayo, Sister Mary Elizabeth, Yvonne Cook-Riley, Wendi Pierce and the gentle Dr. Ledins. The topics were WHO AM I, GENDER PERCEPTION and TRANSITION.

It was clear this was not a how to course in changing your sex. Instead it was a prescription for a journey into self awareness. The key elements to success are knowing who you are and being conscious of your feelings in relation to your current position on the journey to self resolution. There were plenty of stories, tips and suggestions to motivate the journey process.

Barbara Mayo stressed the necessity to find out who you are before making a commitment to change. Sister Mary Elizabeth talked about the TRAP of, "I've been a woman all my life" and SRS is the ultimate solution. Christina Young reminded us that we were on a train and it was important to get off at every station of gender transition and take a good look around before deciding to stay where you got off, take the train back a station or move forward to the next station. Yvonne Cook-Riley in her blue jeans, tee shirt and forceful approach reminded us that we live in a social world of gender perceptions; to succeed you have to be aware of the social comfort zone where both you and the world around you needs to be comfortable with your expression. Wendi Pierce challenged us to think about what, when, where and why gender. The gentle Dr. Ledins validated our necessity to take the trip with a quote, "my eyes could see no other way," then challenged us to integrate the elements of our being into a happy person. *Amanda Williams*

## *Fashion Show Friday*

Joan Bray and Joni's Fashions will present a Tea Room, Total Image, fashion show for your enjoyment during the Keynote luncheons on Thursday and Friday in the Grand Ballroom. Great fashions, good friends and fine food plus a wonderful keynote address, something not to be missed.

## How to: Public Speaking

They say that 'small is beautiful', and that certainly was the case with this early morning session. It was a pity that only ten people came (maybe because the Salons for two parallel sessions were reversed from those announced in the main program, and nobody had caught on), but this made for a helpful intimate atmosphere, with lots of interaction between speaker and spoken-to. Jheri Lee Summers is a consummate and experienced communicator, and she took this group of actual or would-be public speakers on a constructive and helpful guide through the three Ps of public speaking - Planning, Preparation and Practice.

Obviously, speaking to a wide variety of groups about gender topics, and especially about our community, is very different from speaking in a lot of other situations. Audiences may be specialized and with fixed attitudes - such as groups of police officers - or broadly based and with little but their prejudices and ignorance as background -such as any group of the general public. Clearly, different approaches are needed to meet the different situations, and methods of assessing and addressing these needs were very clearly laid out. Generally, audiences may be divided on a grid system into four categories - the talkers, who need to think about people; the doers, who need to concentrate on tasks; the counters who need to be directed to system and order; and the thinkers, who need to concentrate on ideas and concepts. In other words, the four questions the speaker must address are Who, What, How and Why? As most audiences that we would be dealing with will be mixtures of these four types, it is necessary to have a variety of shots in our speaking locker to fire at each target section of the audience as they appear.

If we are to become more widely understood and accepted as a community, communication with others is going to be increasingly vital. Sessions such as this will do much to ensure that we do get our message across in the most appropriate form, and that it has the best chance of being understood. Future Conventions should certainly aim to repeat this most valuable session.

*Anne Forrester*

## Congress Of Representatives Adopts Resolutions

The Congress of Representatives(COR), a loosely knit body of delegates from local and regional gender community organizations, met Thursday morning to confront the troubling issues of their own perceived ineffectiveness and COR's structural relationship with IFGE.

The meeting, which was ably chaired by newly elected IFGE board member Nancy Cole, got off to a stormy beginning as attendees squabbled over the agenda and whether or not COR was or was independent of IFGE and to what degree.

"Our leadership in the past has faltered," Alison Laing, the national representative of Renaissance said.

Laing introduced a resolution, seconded by JoAnn Roberts, Transient Affinity representative, which outlined three purposes for the COR as follows:

1. Provide a communications link between and among our various organizations and IFGE.
2. Provide recommendations to IFGE, and among our own organizations, for programs, projects, and policies to be implemented. Such recommendations may include social, educational and political activities.
3. Provide a forum for discussion of ideas, policies and programs affecting our community at large.

Laing's resolution also specifies that COR is not a committee or any part of the IFGE board; not a legislative body; does not make rules; and does not implement programs or projects of its own.

The resolution with minor amendments was adopted by those assembled.

The resolution also called for the election of officers for COR to serve through next year's annual meeting. Laing was elected to serve as COR's Chair and Linda Phillips was selected as

Vice-Chair. Vicki Mansfield will serve as the group's recording secretary.

An IFGE board member will serve as the liaison to COR and that person will be selected by the IFGE board.

At the meeting's conclusion both COR attendees and IFGE representatives felt the storm clouds had passed and everyone was looking forward to renewed effort and cooperation in the coming year.

"With a new leadership in place, the COR should be able to reach the goal of serving both our own organizations and IFGE more effectively," Laing said.

Sharon Ann Stuart

## Skirting the Issue

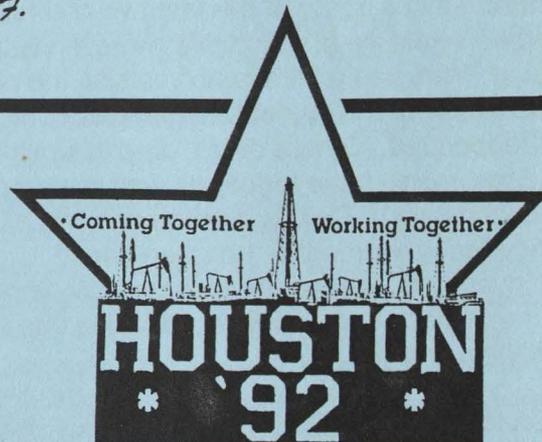
- At breakfast:

"Well, if I've got two personalities, why shouldn't I really enjoy myself and have three or four ?"

- and at Tuesday's open session:

"Whatever happened to the 'redneck' image of Texas ?" "Well, you know they say that everything in Texas is larger than everywhere else. That also applies to everything they say about Texas'."

*A.F.*



PRESENTING I.F.G.E.'s Sixth Annual

## Who the hell do you think you are ?

No, I'm not asking; just quoting one of the useful phrases used by Alison Laing in her presentation on 'How to speak like a woman'. Alison has long studied the one problem that most besets crossdressers and transsexuals when they first venture out in public. Do you pretend to be mute, or do you do something about your voice ?

Male and female voices actually overlap quite considerably in terms of pitch; it is in other details such as vocabulary, use of adjectives, attention to grammar, and a general politeness that distinguish the speech of most women (at any rate, the stereotypical ones that we mostly tend to emulate) from that of men. As people tend to see and hear what they expect to see and hear, unless you come out with a deep bass voice there is a good chance that someone who looks like a woman will be mistaken for one, as long as they can produce a reasonable voice; and as a 'decoy', an accent - be it English, deep south, or any other - tends to further distract the listener.

The other main difference between the voices of the two sexes is in melody. Men tend to speak in a monotone, whereas women speak in a more musical manner, raising and lowering the pitch not only from word to word but also within many words: hence the sentence "Who the Hell do you think you are ?". Men will say just that, in a flat monotone, maybe only raising or lowering the pitch at the last word. Women, on the other hand, will not only omit the words "the Hell" (inappropriate to a feminine style of speech) but they will stress and accent several of the words, and will alter the pitch throughout, generally raising it in a query at the last two or three words. Not only did we practice this, we even went on to sing "Mary had a little lamb", raising the pitch by a semitone or thereby each time, until some dropped out. (Others didn't 'drop in' until several tones up: we have tenors as well as baritones amongst us !). Finally, Alison considered the physical movements - hand and head movements, the fact that women talk with total eye contact, and generally sit facing one another while doing so.

Undoubtedly, 'speaking like a woman' calls for a lot of practice, but like any other art it can be

learned, and improved upon. Sessions like this are an invaluable part of putting across the total image - both to ourselves as well as to others.

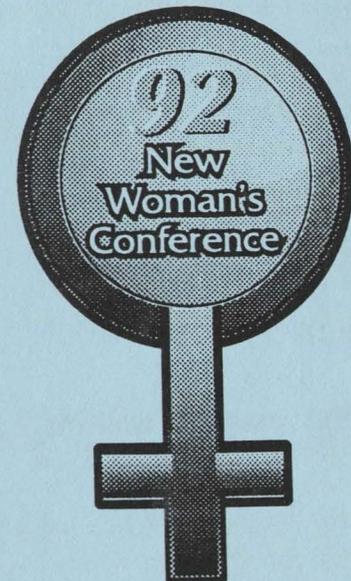
*Anne Forrester*

## Saturday 4/11/92

- 9-12 TS M-F Programs (Rio Grande)
- 9-12 TS F-M Programs (San Miguel)
- 9-10 Hair Removal (Cozumel)
- 10-11 Native American (Salon A&B)
- 10-12 Peggy Rudd (Mazatlan)
- 2-3 The Bed Room (Mazatlan)
- 2-3 Planning an Annual Program (Cozumel)
- 2-3 Religion (Salon A&B)
- 3-5 Q&A Linda Philips (Mazatlan)
- 3-5 Keeping Members (Cozumel)
- 3-5 Living as a Woman (Salon A&B)
- 8-12 VP Award (Grand Ballroom)

The  
New  
Woman  
Caucus  
presents

The  
Second  
Annual  
New  
Woman's  
Conference



SEPTEMBER 10th - 13th, 1992  
ESSEX, MA

# Houston 92

APRIL 11

1992

SATURDAY

## NAOMI'S KEYNOTE SPEECH

Keynote speaker at Friday's luncheon, Naomi Owen, is always good value for money (and if anyone wants to know hope to capture an audience in 30 seconds flat, just listen to her!). However, having captured us with a selection of witticisms that had the audience eating out of her hand (and falling out of their seats), Naomi took the past, present and future of IFGE into her hands for a review, and a little crystal-ball gazing. IFGE was chartered around six years ago and, in good academic and religious tradition, she saw the seventh year as opportunity for a sabbatical, not of rest but of review and looking forward - a chance to review our 'Hits' and our 'Misses', as well as to express some personal wishes for the future.

Amongst our 'Hits' Naomi noted the very existence of IFGE, with its own identity, image and staff; its conversion from an embryonic organisation into a smooth-running professional set-up; the publication of Tapestry - undoubtedly the best publication of its sort anywhere; the Coming Together conventions, that bring our community together as one; the documenting of a resource pool of talents amongst our community; and the beginnings of a focussing on important major issues for the future, especially in respect of fund raising. (CONTINUED Page 4)

### Saturday 4/11/92

- |       |                                      |
|-------|--------------------------------------|
| 9-12  | TS M-F Programs (Rio Grande)         |
| 9-12  | TS F-M Programs (San Miguel)         |
| 9-10  | Hair Removal (Cozumel)               |
| 10-11 | Native American (Salon A&B)          |
| 10-12 | Peggy Rudd (Mazatlan)                |
| 2-3   | The Bed Room (Mazatlan)              |
| 2-3   | Planning an Annual Program (Cozumel) |
| 2-3   | Religion (Salon A&B)                 |
| 3-5   | Q&A Linda Philips (Mazatlan)         |
| 3-5   | Keeping Members (Cozumel)            |
| 3-5   | Living as a Woman (Salon A&B)        |
| 8-12  | VP Award (Grand Ballroom)            |

## Winslow Street Fund Grants Announced

The Winslow Street Fund Trustees have announced five grants totalling \$1,500.

**GCTC and Phyllis Frye** for the First Annual Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy - \$500.

**IFGE** - Accounting, Record Keeping, and Fund Raising software - \$300.

**J2CP** - computer bulletin board scanner - \$300.

**Dr. Sheila Kirk** - Teenage Research Project - \$200.

**Dr. Richard Doctor** - Research Project - \$200.

## Winslow Street Fund Helps Community Grow

The Winslow Street Fund is the permanent endowment fund of IFGE. IFGE is a tax exempt organization under IRC section 501(c)(3). All gifts and donations to IFGE, and to the Winslow Street Fund, or to any special fund of IFGE are tax deductible.

The Winslow Street Fund, which is governed by an independent Board of Trustees approved by the IFGE Board of Directors, is designed to ensure the long-term stability of our community and IFGE. The fund's Board of Trustees is responsible for all policy decisions, investments and grant decisions.

Winslow Street Fund trustees participating at the convention this year are Laura Smiley, Chair, Laura Caldwell, Abby Saypen, Wilma Young and Michele Miles.

The Winslow Street Fund accepts gifts and donations of cash, property, stocks, bonds, life insurance policies, etc. Donations may be made currently or through your will, the creation of a trust, or other estate planning document.

*Sharon Ann Stuart*

## LEGAL ISSUES

This session in the TS program sought to address the legal problems faced by transexuals, but many of the issues covered are of equal concern to transgenderists and even crossdressers. Phyllis Randolph Fry set the tone by hammering home the message that as members of the gender community nobody has ANY legal rights or protection against discrimination. Actually, as the session progressed it became clear that not only does the situation differ from State to State, but also that it frequently depends on the reactions of the individuals who interpret the law - be they judges or simply clerks - and that although one can do a certain amount oneself, legal advice is generally essential. The only real solution to this problem is to get the law changed - lobby politicians, lawyers, anyone who is in a position to act.

Sister Mary Elizabeth reinforced this message, stressing that only by our own personal action can we change the law. Problems of changing your name, and getting new birth certificates and passports in the new name can only be solved, as the Gay community have solved many of theirs, by direct action; but this is best done by seeking changes in the law to end ALL discrimination, and not just that against the gender community.

(On a personal note, as a British member of the INTERNATIONAL Federation for Gender Education, I had to note that this session was restricted entirely to the American legal position. In Britain, for example, although a birth certificate can never be changed, change of name is simple, either under common law or as a 'do it yourself' legal procedure, and issue of new drivers' licences and passports follows with no further trouble. Perhaps someone should undertake a formal comparative study of the legal position in different countries. It could be valuable evidence when persuading legislators to make changes in any their own legal codes).

*Anne Forrester*

## CREATING A GROUP NEWSLETTER

One of the most important things we have to do as a community is communicate - whether it be to others or amongst ourselves, and the Group Newsletter is one form of communication that sooner or later, and in one way or another, we might all get involved in. This session attracted Editors, contributors and others responsible for a variety of Newsletters (including this one!), and JoAnn Roberts went in logical order through the principles of all the various stages of design, content and reproduction.

Not everyone has access to the most up to date technology, but whether working with a typewriter or with the latest DTP package and Postscript laser printers, certain concepts remain constant. Use of standard paper sizes, carefully thought-out page layouts and suitable typefaces all help to put across the right image. Of course, all of this is useless if one does not have suitable material, and this might come from a number of sources, but a general appeal for writers is less profitable than seeking volunteers to write particular items. However, these submissions must then be carefully edited and proof read before they can go into print.

Layout can be done either by the good old scissors and paste method, or electronically, but the principles remain the same, and there was an interesting discussion on ways and means of getting good reproduction of photographs - not the easiest aspect of small-scale publishing. Finally, of course, one has to choose a method of printing that balances needs with cost.

As each of the participants in this session was involved in Newsletter production of one sort or another, it was a real working session, of actual practical value to all who attended it.

*Anne Forrester*

## MIRACLES ON DEMAND

We all know that Dr Sheila Kirk is an eminent physician - but did you know that she is also an unusually accomplished surgeon and magician? With one twist of a sentence she performed reassignment surgery at Friday's Luncheon when introducing an F-to-M guest as M-to-F. Then later she demonstrated her magical powers when she performed a verbal transmutation of the Ballroom into a Balloon. Maybe she should be appointed as our official Fairy Godmother!).

The Congress of Representatives will meet immediately following the JoAnn Roberts "Finding and Keeping Members" seminar (allegedly at 5:00 P.M.) on Saturday in the Comuzel Room to discuss and approve statements of direction and purpose.

### **MAGGIE - Intergroup Communications**

MAGGIE (Midwest Area Gender Group Information Exchange) is an organizational concept to maximize inter group coordination and support while minimizing the resources and energy necessary to accomplish meet these needs. This is a loose confederation of groups, within "reasonable" driving distance of each other, in which decisions are by consensus, permanent officers do not exist, and bylaws are absolutely minimal (purpose, goals, and bi-laws fit comfortably on a single page. That this concept was created by people who already had too much to do is obvious--this is a great example of the KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid!) principle that we all need to practice to maximize what we can accomplish.

MAGGIE provides a number of benefits, based on a few basic simple projects; a common calendar, a press kit (for distribution to professionals) that includes information about each group, and about MAGGIE, and quarterly meetings of the MAGGIE reps who identify projects to be worked on, as well as support the pooling and exchange of resources and talent.

The calendar encourages the groups to plan, increases meeting and event attendance, and cross fertilizes ideas throughout the groups among other benefits. The groups also have a simplified mechanism to share resources, including both library materials and human resources.

The press kit allows more successful contact with professionals by presenting a professional image and demonstrating the existence of a successful large area demonstration. Successful contact with health professionals has been an issue throughout the community. The press kit can also be used with various retailers to gain support for our organizations.  
(CONTINUED on Page 4)

### **Fund Raising Comes To The Fore**

IFGE's Fund Raising Committee, chaired by newly elected board member Laura Smiley, has met several times this week to develop new strategies for raising much needed financial support within the gender community.

"IFGE's effectiveness in serving the varied needs of the gender community will depend on the committee's ability to develop financial resources within the community itself," Smiley says.

The committee's previous efforts to generate additional funds through foundation grants have not borne fruit after a concerted year-long effort. The committee will continue to seek funding from selected "high probability" foundation targets. However, less emphasis will be placed on this strategy while other methods for fund raising will receive more attention in the coming year.

"We cannot anticipate significant income from foundation grants unless our Community is willing to show positive support," Smiley states.

In the months to come the committee will use quarterly newsletters, space in Tapestry, and other opportunities to report to the community regarding the disposition of current funds as well as to inform everyone what future funding needs will be.

"We must be accountable to the community for the money we have collected and spent," Smiley states. "At the same time we will be telling people what is needed to meet IFGE's and the community's program needs in the future," Smiley adds.

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*The following does not reflect the editorial staffs opinion:*

#### **Quote of the Day:**

"Is it true that Texas is a suburb of Alaska?"

*S. Kirk*

## Naomi's Keynote Speech

Continued From Page 1

Amongst our 'Misses', however, were the existence of a degree of sniping and griping on the part of some sections of the community - a successful attempt at shooting ourselves in the foot. "It's OK to disagree", said Naomi, "but being disagreeable is another matter". She also felt that we were not getting enough out of our Board of Directors, most of whom work hard when elected but a few of whom then sit back and put little into the organisation - and the rest of the

Board do little about this. Finally, Naomi felt that the the Congress of Representatives had hitherto been virtually dormant. She felt that it must give feedback to the Board of Directors of IFGE concerning what it feels needs to be done, and also act as a source of communication from IFGE to the individual Groups - while resisting the temptation to tell them what to do.

Finally, Naomi expressed some wishes for the future. Firstly, she hoped that IFGE could find a new home - premises with adequate facilities for meetings, a gift shop, office accomodation, storage and display, so that we may put forward the right image to the public. Secondly, the watchword must be 'Quality service'. We have made huge progress, but there is still a long way to go. We have many talents, and we must harness them to best effect. Thirdly, we must find more outlets for Tapestry; places other than the 'Adult' bookstores, and using the many thousands of ordinary bookstores, etc. Fourthly we

need to find new sources of regular income. All of what we need will cost money, and contributions presently fluctuate wildly. Finally, expressing what we all feel, Naomi's wish was for good health and happiness to Merissa, Yvonne, and the others who keep IFGE running, so that they may continue with the excellent work that they do.

Naomi, you are yourself an inspiration to us all.

*Anne Forrester*

## MAGGIE

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The quarterly meetings are chaired by the host organization, and are operated under the host organizations rules or bi-laws. Meetings move to a different group each quarter. These meetings offer the opportunity to share ideas, plan joint events, as well as offering opportunities to mentor your members to take more responsibility in the organization without throwing them into something that seems overwhelming.

In all a MAGGIE type of organization offers an excellent opportunity to support and grow local organization, support the creation of new organizations, mentor the growth of members, and in general improve the quality of life in our communities, all with minimal resources and energy. For more information contact Jennifer Richards / c/o St. Louis Gender Foundation / P.O. Box 9433 / St. Louis, MO. 63177

*Annie*

## Fund Raising...

(Continued From Page 3)

The committee will rely heavily on direct mail solicitation as before, but will also develop new strategies. For example, the committee is investigating the possibility of initiating joint fund raising projects with local organizations and sharing the receipts. The committee also hopes to encourage members to designate contributions through their local United Way campaigns.

In some cases United Way contributions are doubled when employers match the employee's contribution. Members who wish to give in this way should contact the IFGE office to obtain the IFGE tax number. United Way uses this tax number to allocate the donor's contribution to IFGE.

Smiley has authored a Special Report entitled "Charitable Giving and Methods and Tax Benefits for the benefit of: IFGE and the Winslow Street Fund." The report, which is being published and distributed by IFGE, provides detailed guidance for donors who wish to designate IFGE as a beneficiary of their personal estate.

Smiley presented a program entitled "Charitable Giving and the Gender Community" to a small audience in the Cozumel Room on Friday morning.

Members who are interested in obtaining a copy of the Special Report on charitable giving should contact the IFGE office.

*Sharon Ann Stuart*