

International
TRAN

Number 5 • July 1992

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In This Issue

International TranScript
Number 5, July 1992

Special Features

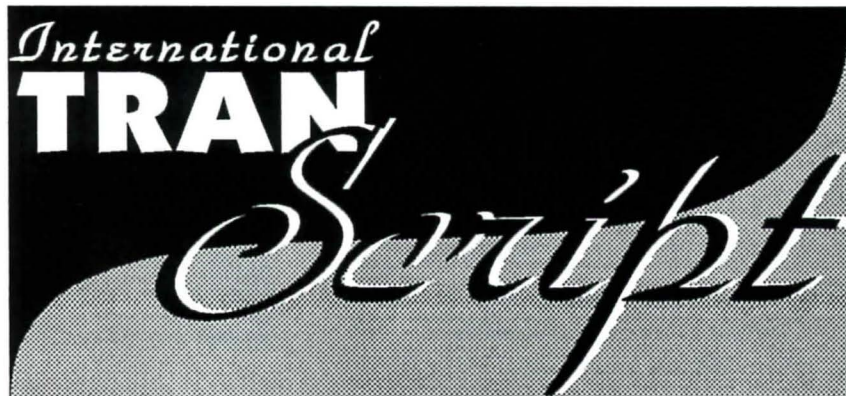
- 15 **Over There** Stacy Novak
Some thoughts and comments by our U.K. correspondent.
- 18 **Personal TranScript: A Cinderella Story** Billie Jean
While on assignment, Billie Jean Jones gets a BIG surprise.
- 21 **Photo Feature: Miss ETVC Cotillion**
ETVC does this every year and they know how to have fun.
- 28 **Zeitgeist** Claudia R.
How does the German Women's movement feel about TSs?
- 29 **O.W.W.S.M.M.** Linda Buten
Join this club and never worry about passing again.
- 30 **The Problem** Dallas Denny
Meet Laura Ann Sykes as we follow her escapades.



On the Cover: Miss ETVC 1992/93, Billie Jean Jones. Photo by Andrea Susan Mitchell.

Regular Features

- 4 Editorial JoAnn Roberts
- 7 Letters to the Editor
- 8 **Real Life: Doin' the Do** Maggie Morgan
- 11 **The Shopping Maven** JoAnn Roberts
- 13 **The Library Lady** Wendy K. Smith
- 16 **The Body Shop** Delia Van Maris, M.D.
- 27 **Commentary** Nikki Nash
- 37 **Queen of the Night** Angela Gardner
- 38 Resources
- 43 Hot Stuff



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Editorial

JoAnn Roberts

Define Indecent

The "dirty joke" goes — if it's in far enough, it's in decent. But this ain't no joke. A three-year, 1.1 billion dollar funding authorization for public radio and television was passed by Congress last month. The bill included an amendment that restricts "indecent" programming for *both* public and commercial television to the hours of midnight to six a.m.

The indecent programming amendment passed the Senate overwhelmingly at 93-3. Indecent is defined as "sexual or excretory activities or organs" in terms "patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards." No shit. Now, that sounds very reasonable, doesn't it? Except, I wonder, whose community will set the standards?

Generation Gaps

Some people have charged that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (which supplies about 14% of the money to PBS stations) had become too liberal, thus the restrictions. Others were offended by such language as "That sucks" and "You're a frecklebutt" on network programming. Clearly the verb "suck" and the noun "butt" have indecent meanings. Or do they? Depends on your generation. To anyone over 30, they probably do, but ask a teenager and you'll find there is no indecency implied or intended. It's in your head!

The author of the amendment is Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia who said, "children are increasingly exposed to the profanity, vulgarity, violence, and crudeness that are broadcast on our television screens." Yeah, it's called the Six-o'clock News.

Will It Hold Up In Court?

A lobbyist for public broadcasting stations noted that commercial

broadcasters will be waiting at the courthouse door the day it opens if the President signs this bill into law.

But the likelihood of the television restrictions being upheld are slight based on recent events in federal court involving the National Endowment for the Arts "decency clause."

U.S. District Judge A. Wallace Tashima struck down the clause as "too vague, too broadly worded and it violated the First and Fifth Amendments [of the Constitution]." The clause, appended by Congress to NEA funding (sound familiar?) said grants had to be assessed on "general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public."

In Loco Parentis

What really upsets me more than anything else is the way the government keeps deciding that I and my family need to be "protected" from certain ideas or forms of expression, that I am not capable of making decisions for myself. I particularly resent it when people like Senator Byrd assumes that I cannot or will not monitor what my children watch on television, look at in books, or listen to on the radio. I do not want to abdicate my responsibility as a parent to the U.S. Senate.

It's time we put a stop to this foolishness. Send a strong message to the U.S. Government in November. Vote every incumbent out of office. Vote for term limitations. Clean house. Elect every female candidate, if only to let the good ol' boys know that their days are numbered.

If we add our votes to those of the other disenfranchised minorities, we can make a difference. Let your voice be heard!

Contributors



Angela Gardner is our newest editor. Ms. Gardner is a co-founder of the Renaissance Education Association, Inc., and is its current Managing Director. Welcome Ange.

Nikki Nash is our general correspondent from the Southwest. Nikki has a knack for poetry and she doesn't let us down in this issue. Check it out.



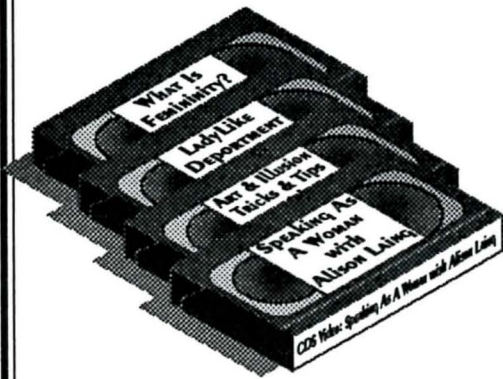
Wendy K. Smith is a southwestern transplant from New Mexico. She reviews the literature for ITS in every issue. She's an avid Sci-Fi fan and Comic Book freak.

Maggie Morgan has been through a lot in the last five years. She's living full-time as a woman and she's shares her Real Life experiences with you in every issue.



What can we say about Billie Jean that she hasn't already said somewhere, sometime, somewhen. Huh? Billie Jean is the editor/publisher of GenderFlex.

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- #4—What Is Femininity? Some say 90% of passing is your attitude. This tape explores the social construction of femininity. By Alison Laing, 45 minutes.

* Suggested Retail Price

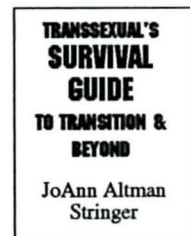
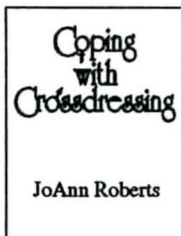


International TransScript Magazine

- #1: The Making of the Bridges to Beauty video; Interview with Diane Marlene of the Phoenix Society - \$8
- #2: Paris Is Burning photos/interview with Jennie Livingston - \$9
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Hairnets vs. Halos

Some of you will have read my article titled the *Death of Gender* (ITS #2, Jan. 1992). If you haven't, please go back and do so in order to be able to evaluate the contents of the article *Virginia: Your Hairnet's On Too Tight* by Rachel Jean Tracy (ITS#3, March 1992). I wonder how many persons who read my article would agree with this abusive attack on it and on me. I have no idea who Rachel Jean Tracy is, but I am glad I'm not her. I wouldn't want that much vitriol in me. I don't know who she thinks she is, but she is obviously entitled to wear a halo since she knows so much about so many important things that she can lecture others about them. However, I think she should readjust her halo. It is in great danger of falling off and getting lost or maybe it already has and wouldn't that be a pity? (or would it)

I am well aware that the so-called Gender Community is divided into two groups: (A) those who have little use for Virginia Prince, don't believe she has anything to say that is worth hearing, and feel that she is old, tired, out of touch and should, like an old soldier, just quietly fade away; and (B) those who feel that I have made significant contributions to the community over a 30 year period and who feel that while they don't always agree with me they still have some respect for me and know that regardless of my being nearly 80 years old, I am young, vibrant of spirit, very much alive and a very active part of the community. I am not about to fade away.

Tracy clearly belongs to camp A. Please understand that I am well aware that I don't know everything, that there are many others out there whose opinions about various matters differ from mine, and that I expect there will be disagreements between us. I realized when I wrote the article that not everyone would see the subject as I did. I further realized that the title of the piece, *The Death of*

Gender, would get everyone's attention and make them think about gender — that it was not a constant. It changes! I was merely attempting to call some of those changes and their possible ramifications to the reader's attention.

I thought it would be clear to intelligent readers, that I was talking about the visible evidences of gender, the differences between them and the fact that those differences were, to my observation, gradually fading away. It ought to be clear to most observers of the social scene that both males and females convey the message as to what they are by way of clothing, decoration, manners, attitudes and behaviors. It should also be clear that those same factors place limits on the individual because it is expected that he or she will exhibit the set of factors deemed socially appropriate for persons of their anatomical sex. Now, when either males or females feel constricted by those requirements, they have only one way out and that is to present to the world the visible manifestations prescribed for members of the other sex. And "visible" means what it says—those things that can be easily observed. This includes precisely the five areas mentioned above.

When there are considerable differences in these gender manifestations (They are not determinants as Tracy assumed) it is not difficult for an individual who feels constricted in one gender to adopt the manifestations of the other gender and thus send a message to others that he or she wishes to be regarded as a member of the new gender. Crossdressers do this when they put on heels, nylons, dresses, lipstick, femininely styled wigs, and act, talk and behave more or less the way born females do.

However, it must be realized as I indicated in the *Death...* article that males make this transition out of envy, admira-

tion and a desire to identify with women. They also have a desire to express those feelings, attitudes and behaviors which, while a real part of themselves, are out of place when manifested by a clearly male person. Thus he cannot express and experience them in masculine attire so he adopts the feminine gender manifestations to get out of this trap.

But when these external manifestations of masculinity and femininity begin to run together and blend, there are fewer and fewer ways in which members of either sex can express their dissatisfaction with the role society has put them in. While it is obviously true that gender is more than the jewelry and clothing that a person wears, the other part is internal and invisible. But gender, like sex, is largely a visual matter. Other people in the shopping mall or on the street make their judgments on the basis of the visible indicators of gender. I was only trying to make the point that the number of clearly visible differences is gradually being reduced. Thus there is less in the way of distinguishing indicators today than there used to be. And naturally if the process goes on we would arrive at a time when much of what we now use to identify a feminine person from a masculine person will be gone. That was what I mean by the "death" of gender, not the death of the psychological aspects of masculinity or femininity. In the last line of Tracy's article she refers to "...Prince's subjective gender-role theory about femininity's demise." The emphasis is mine because I said nothing about femininity's demise, only about its visible indications. (When you have to use one hand to keep your halo on your head it is hard to concentrate and understand

continued on page 45

Real Life:Doin' the Do

Living as a full-time female takes courage and lots of planning. Maggie lends some helpful insights.

Okay gang, it's time for some nuts-n-bolts talk. In previous columns, I've spoken at length about the philosophy behind living as a female, the fundamental questions of sex, gender, and identity that we all have to address, especially when contemplating living full-time. But I haven't yet tackled another, equally fundamental question: how do you actually go about creating your everyday female self?

You've done some of the basic work already, or you wouldn't be here. First and foremost, you've made the decision that crossing the gender line is something you have to do, need to do for your own emotional well-being. In many ways, that fact of acknowledging yourself is the toughest act of all. You've done a lot of work on creating your physical image and you're reasonably satisfied with what's staring back at you in your mirror.

Still, you know in your heart that you'll never pass in public, much less live comfortably as a female. Everyone's going to see beneath your

carefully constructed fantasy image to the male within. How can you develop a female persona that will express your needs and desires, and, at the same time, be acceptable to the world at large?

Here's Morgan's Rule One for Tran Success: accept yourself as you are. I can't tell you how many trans I've dealt with whose endless litany is "I can't pass, I can't pass." I've written to these people and traded photos. I've talked to them on the telephone. I've even met them face-to-face. Virtually without exception, they look perfectly fine and would easily pass anywhere. Still, it's "oh no, I could never pass."

What these people are really saying to me, and to themselves, is "I can't pass because I don't look like Michelle Pfeiffer," or Claudia Schiffer, or whichever actress/model is their current fantasy ideal. Well, who does? The last time I looked, women came in all shapes, sizes, and degrees of beauty. So do trans.

The fact that you'll never be mistaken for this year's supermodel shouldn't stand in your way of your feeling comfortable with yourself and putting your best face forward in public. Focus on your own look; the way that you can best bring out the woman in you based on what you have to work with. It doesn't matter if you're 6-foot-2 or built like a linebacker. You can pass, and you can be happy, provided you work with what you have and not what you wish you had.

I've already done a column on naming yourself, so I won't repeat myself, except to remind you to

choose carefully. Remember, once you're out for good, that is who you are, so find a name that really makes you happy. Also be mindful of applicable laws when obtaining credit cards or similar items that you can use under your femme name.

Volumes have been written about how to sit, stand, and move like a lady, but for my money, the best way to learn how to move as a woman is to watch women. Watch them sitting across from you on the train or the bus. Pay attention to the woman ahead of you in line at the bank. Look at how she stands, shifts her weight, uses her hands. Remember what you see and try to mimic it in front of your friendly mirror. You're not trying to come on like Miss America; you're trying to be natural, so don't worry about being perfect. What's important is to become comfortable in your movements.

Incidentally, if you don't look good crossing your legs, avoid doing it. It took me a major illness and a 40-pound weight loss before I could cross my legs decently. Believe me, it's not that important.

One of the most common misconceptions among trans concerns the "walk." I think the blame for this can be placed on most tran fiction. We've all read innumerable passages about trans being forced into so-called feminine "mincing" walks, tiny, delicate steps, suggesting bondage. Honestly, have you ever in your life seen a woman who walks like that? Particularly in this age of fitness, if there is any manner to a woman's walk, it's the "power stride," a confident, ath-

letic pace that illustrates "this woman means business." Yet the myth of "mincing" persists, even in the several How-To manuals I've seen.

The best teacher I have ever seen of feminine carriage is Paula Jordan Sinclair, who can do the power stride in four-inch heels and make you weep with envy. Since we don't all have access to Paula, the next best ideal for a confident feminine walk is, of all people, Jack Benny. I am not kidding. Jack's walk was so distinctively feminine that his longtime band leader, Phil Harris, once commented, "You know, you could put a dress on Jack and take him anywhere." (Did you ever see his impression of Gracie Allen?) To this day, if I find myself slumping or slouching in public, I think "Jack Benny" or whistle a few bars of his theme *Love In Bloom* and my body automatically straightens and my stride comes together. Pick up a video of one of his old shows. You'll see what I mean.

[Editor's Note: Ms. Sinclair's power stride and other feminine movements can be seen on the CDS video, *LadyLike* Deportment. See page 10 for a review.]

Having briefly mentioned Gracie Allen, I'm reminded of one of her personal quirks that serves as a good reminder regarding jewelry and other such decoration. Before leaving the house to go anywhere, even shopping, she'd check herself out in a mirror and remove one thing — a pin or a bracelet or some such bauble. Her rationale? She never wanted anyone to accuse her of being overdressed. You may be madly in love with your jewelry, but "less is more" is a reasonable rule to follow.

The same is true for makeup. Now, we trans have special needs owing to the nature of our existence, and frequently have to engage in all sorts of artifice in order to give our faces the proper feminine appearance. I'll leave the details on that to the experts. My point, though, is to remind you that everyday makeup is substantially different from the Hollywood looks you've probably been practicing. Once again, pay attention to the women you see in public. They don't have showgirl eyes or lashes out to there. Their eye shadow colors tend to be neutral, blush applied sparingly, and lipstick a muted shade ... the so-called "natural" look.

As you go along, you'll find yourself becoming comfortable with less and less makeup, until you discover the smallest amount you can use and still achieve satisfactory results. I found myself paring down my makeup kit for nearly a year before I got to my everyday look.

A word or two about hair: if you can possibly grow your own, do it. Once you're eating, sleeping, and going to the bathroom as a female, the last thing you want to worry about is wearing a wig. Furthermore, there are few things more depressing for someone trying to "think femme" than to take that hair off every night. If you must wear a wig, your everyday style should be as simple and easy to care for as possible. I recommend choosing some-

thing close to your natural color, because it will help you feel more like you. I decided very early on that I looked best in a long bob with bangs, and fortunately was able to grow my own hair (after two years) to match my wigs. If you're stuck for ideas, study those charts that illustrate facial shapes, and choose a style accordingly.

My standard line regarding wardrobe is "Don't wear your evening gown to take out the garbage." When I decide I was going to go full-time, one of the first things I realized was that I'd have to overhaul my clothing collection. I loaded up on simple separates in solid colors, determining which shades suited me best, then sticking to them. While my wardrobe has expanded, that principle hasn't changed. I also find myself making fewer "blind impulse" purchases; the kind that got stuck in the back of the closet and stayed there forever. Keep it simple — you'll look good and save money.

That's about it. I don't claim that anything I've suggested is foolproof — it's what works for me — but perhaps I've removed some of the apprehension you feel about coming out into the world. I know you can do it, so go get 'em! 🍀

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Thomas Hansen

The Shopping Maven

A guest reviewer looks at the new line of CDS No Frills videos.

I can't, in all good conscience, review my own video tapes, so I asked someone whom I know would be honest and dispassionate. Here, then, is the review of the CDS, No Frills Videos.

Product: CDS No Frills Videos
What Is Femininity?

LadyLike Deportment

Art & Illusion Tricks and Tips

Speaking As A Woman

Source: Creative Design Services, on sale at selected boutiques and bookstores.

Cost: \$35 per tape plus p&h

Time: 45 to 55 minutes

Rating: A+, exc. Femininity, B-

In four videos graciously released by CDS, three lovely and charming ladies take us on a gently nurturing tour of the delicate and decorous world of genteel femininity. The elegant Paula Jordan Sinclair offer discreet suggestions for *LadyLike Deportment*; stylish JoAnn Roberts tactfully approaches the topic of *Art & Illusion Tricks and Tips*; and the sweetly patient Alison Laing offers

helpful advice on *Speaking As A Woman* as well as heartfelt into answering the question, *What IS Femininity?* A truly entrancing trio, are they not?

Well, girls, that's about all the ladylike lingo this old broad can muster, so let's forget — at least for the moment — that this is a public forum. We'll sit around the kitchen table, kick off our heels, let down our hair, and chatter away like the old-fashioned gossips we really are.

As the elegant Ms. Sinclair points out, most women are not ladies, but in public at least, it is far easier for transgendered persons to act like a lady than like a woman. Why? For the simple reason that "lady" is a social construct, while "womanhood" derives from biology and genetics. The soft-spoken Ms. Laing seconds this notion when she acknowledges that the femininity she discusses is a stereotype that most women would prefer to modify significantly if not leave behind altogether.

But since ladylike behavior is indeed a means of gaining acceptance from the general public, if not of passing, the four lessons offered by our trio of experts are invaluable to all of us, particularly when they offer practical tips.

Paula Jordan Sinclair, looking much like Jane Russell in *The Fuzzy Pink Nightgown* (the only film in which our gal actually dyed her tresses blonde), focuses on *LadyLike Deportment*, which includes standing,

sitting, walking and what to do with those nervous hands. Angularity, she explains, is the key to success, along with constant self-reminders that a woman's center of gravity is different because of her breasts and that traditionally women occupy less space than men. Emphasizing her points with photos of fashion models as well as personal demonstrations, Paula encourages members of the audience to practice these precepts for the camera. Everyone has a fine time and most seem to listen well. Certainly their improvement should give us all the confidence to practice in front of our mirrors (a full-length mirror, Paula advises).

A single basic concept underlies each of the four major problem areas: when standing, do not fold your hands over your crotch; when sitting, keep your back straight and your knees together; when walking, move at the waist; and as for those pesky hands, fiddle with your purse, carry a fan, or simply resort to primping. The self-deprecating humor with which Paula demonstrates these principles makes them all the more memorable — and inspires the viewer to imitation.

Armed with all the right tools, JoAnn Roberts (who reminds me so much of Greer Garson in *Mrs. Miniver*) takes on the varied facets of make-up in a tape entitled *Art & Illusion Tricks and Tips*. Her first bit of advice is indeed practical: instead of relying exclusively on department or

drug stores, visit the nearest theatrical supply company in your area. Specialty items are more readily available as well as cheaper.

JoAnn tells us that the oval face, with eyes one eye-width apart, is the ideal of beauty that we should strive to achieve — with whatever tools of the trade will work. Her advice is replace all those applicators and sponges with a set of various-sized brushes, for they make blending all the easier.

Of particular interest was JoAnn's advice on covering the beard, which tends to be visible even after the closest shave. Try a primer of orange lipstick beneath your usual foundation. Why orange? Because on the color charts, orange is the opposite of blue (which the beard appears to be), and when the two colors interact, they cancel each other out. JoAnn also tells of a "Shave-Less" cream that men actually use to hide the five-o'clock-shadow. This lady knows her way around the theater and has perfected the details of illusion.

One word of warning: JoAnn states from the outset that her lesson is not for beginners. If you want basic advice on selecting and applying your foundation, look elsewhere. JoAnn's focus is specialty tricks for the experienced rather than introductory lessons for the virgin.

Alison Laing offers us two tapes: *Speaking As A Woman*, which focuses on disguising your manly baritone or tenor, and *What Is Femininity?*, a New-Age flight of philosophical fancy. I found her speech advice most practical, but I left my crystal at some lesbian/feminist concert in Maine and thus was ill equipped to deal with her mystic flights into new dimensions.

With the natural grace and dignity of Irene Dunne in *Back Street*, Alison admits that raising the pitch of one's voice is the hardest hurdle. But she conducts an instructive session of singing "Mary Had a Little Lamb," with each repetition forcing the voice a little bit higher. She also points out that the tight-lipped smile and the

Southern or British accent can help disguise the lower pitch. Men, Alison explains, use only three notes in their speech, while women usually employ five or more.

Vocabulary and sentence structure are also addressed. Pull out those deliciously polite words and avoid the crudely direct at any cost. As for your sentences, make them into questions, as if apologizing for offering your opinion in the first place. As Alison explains, this type of stereotypical speech is something that many women of today are struggling to overcome, but ladies are timeless — they never change.

To answer the question, *What Is Femininity?*, Alison has her audience suggest adjectives that they associate with the feminine. She then points out that if they are truly feminine, their opposites will be truly masculine. Watch out, she warns, for adjectives that are gender neutral, such as happy, for they can lead you into the mincing exaggerations of gay drag queens, who most certainly are not ladies.

"Alison In Wonderland" would make an appropriate subtitle for this tape as our fearless (please forgive the masculine adjective) hostess launches into the stratosphere, trading Irene Dunne for Shirley MacLaine. As a matter of fact, if the deliciously mystical Ms. Laing engaged in channeling, I am certain she would discover a previous incarnation during the time of Atlantis — perhaps as a princess, but at least as the chief lady-in-waiting. Such courtly demeanor, is it not?

Where but in this series of four tapes can you meet Jane Russell,



Greer Garson, Irene Dunne and Shirley MacLaine, all devoted to increasing *your* self-understanding and to promoting *your* welfare? Old Gloria was flying high after the nearly four hours of tender instruction, mightily impressed with the overall professionalism, not only of the presentations, but also the technical quality of the tapes themselves. You can't go wrong by investing in this set of self-improvement videos; they are genuinely unique in the market.

As a parting gesture, I will leave you with the sagacious advice of my Great Aunt Ignominia: "Act like a lady, and every gentleman will treat you as such. Only another lady will dare to call your bluff. If this should happen, scratch her eyes out — but never in the presence of a gentleman."

— Gloria Lee Mundi

[Ms. Mundi is Poetry Editor for the Renaissance News.] ♣

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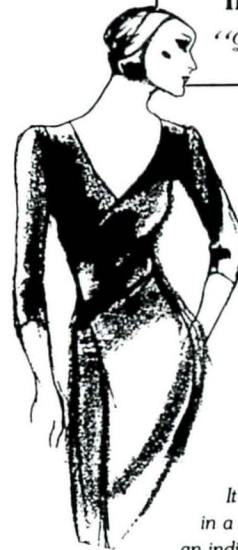
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Wendy K. Smith

THE Library Lady

The Wild Card virus, folk songs and a pre-op M-t-F transsexual in the comics makes a very interesting brew.

I have to admit to a prejudice this issue. I am, after all, from New Mexico and since most of the authors of the Wild Card series are from that state, reading their stories was a matter of local pride.

For those unfamiliar with the series, Wild Cards is a set of shared novels and story collections with the theme of what our world might be like if some people really did have superpowers. [The origins of the superpowers is the alien Wild Card virus. Ed.] One of the characters in the series is Cap'n Trips, a hippy superhero whose powers only work when he's high. Then he becomes one of five alternate personalities one of whom, Moonchild, is female.

Alas, though the good Cap'n is in the latest volume, Jokertown Shuffle, Moonchild is not. However, we do have a new character, the shape-changing Projectionist. In addition, one of the main characters of the series, Dr. Tachyon, is in deep trouble. Tachy's been caught off-guard and ambushed by his grandson, Blaise,

who combines total immaturity and selfishness with genuine evil. Blaise is a potentially more powerful telepath than his grandfather and his idea of sweet revenge is to trap Tachyon's mind in the very un-telepathic body of a young woman who had been Blaise's girlfriend. Both Tachyon and Blaise are extreme male chauvinists, so this is most distressing to Tachyon. To make matters worse [and a little kinky] Blaise has repeatedly raped the body that Tachyon inhabits and "she" is now pregnant. However, Tachyon is very resourceful and is determined not to be beaten. You'll have to read Wild Cards X: Double Solitaire to find out what happens.

I also have a prejudice in reviewing Picking The Ballad's Bones by Elizabeth Scarbrough. I love folk music and this series is about that subject. The basic plot has the Devil thinking that folk music helps people hang on in hard times, so he intends to regulate it out of existence. The only hope is a small band of folkies aided by an enchanted banjo and the occasional boost from the Debauchery Devil who kind of likes drunken singers and bawdy tunes. In this the second book of the series, the Debauchery Devil has cut a deal with the folkies. Our heroes and heroines have to go back in time and live through events that gave rise to the traditional Anglo-Scottish ballads. For every event they survive, they get seven songs back, but surviving isn't easy and the devil has switched their sexes in the trip back. Thus, man-hating, radical Anna Mae Gunn is stuck in the body and mind of a male

chauvinist pig, while womanizer Willie McKai is getting a whole different perspective on unwed pregnancy, up close and personal. Like I say, I'm prejudiced about Scarbrough's books, but I think you'll enjoy this one.

I'm very ambivalent about Baker Street. This is a comic book pastiche of Conan Doyle with a female punk rocker version of Holmes. Actually, under most circumstances, it's quite good. In issue #6, it is revealed that the lesbian lover of detective-heroine Sharon Ford, Samantha Neville is a pre-op male to female TS. Of course, by issue #8, Sam was also revealed as the serial killer, The Ripper, and was killed off by issue #9.

I'd like to say that the only nice thing about Sam's death is that the letters column is already being inundated with hate mail from fans who thought Sam was the most interesting character in the book. But I can't.

Much as I loath another TS Killer plot, this isn't Dressed To Kill or Silence of the Lambs. Sam's violence was directed at men who had attacked or brutalized women. Sam had lost all perspective to where a slap was as bad as rape, but her victims were neither helpless nor entirely guiltless.

Neither is Sam's death made into a triumph of good over evil. Her friends grieve. Her lover, Sharon, is devastated and guilt stricken. The scene with Sharon correcting Sam's mother who keeps referring to her "son" at the funeral was very touch-

continued on page 41

Jim Bridges

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Stacy Novak

Over There

Do TV's look in the mirror and fall in love with themselves? Do they fancy the women in the mirror more than their wife or partner? Do they try to model themselves on their favourite female or do they try to model their partner on how they would like themselves to be?

I ask these questions because so many wives and partners phone me in a distressed state, feeling threatened by their partner's crossdressing. I have noticed over the years that many of the "girls" attending my group [TransEssex] do not use much make-up, if any. It reminds me of the peacock; the male all glamorous, colourful and beautiful while the female is grey and dowdy.

So he paints his face and plucks his eyebrows, where is the threat? Unless he is obviously bisexual, any attention paid to him by another male will be taken lightly. He may feel flattered while dressed, receiving

compliments from another man. In fact, he may enjoy dancing with another man, but this is all part of the fantasy of being a woman.

Trannies, however, without realising it, can be very selfish towards their female partner. There must be a compromise if a successful relationship is to exist. It usually is like this; she marries the man of her dreams with hair on his body, masculine ways, and is shocked to find out differently.

It's no fun for a TV putting on a pair of sheer stockings over hairy legs, so very often one of the first things a woman loses on learning about her partner's crossdressing is her furry bear husband. It's almost as though he feels that "I've told her, now let's get this lot off". How do you handle this?

It's difficult, I know. Perhaps he could let his hair grow in for summer vacations.

For the TV - a good way of helping your partner to feel wanted is to remember when you buy your stockings, buy her a pair, too. Never let your partner feel neglected or unwanted and particularly never let her feel unglamorous. Try to share her problems and listen to her worries and fears. She may snap at times, try not to snap back. But do try to share as much as you can. She needs to be aware that you are aware of her.

If You're Visiting

Ann from Gaithersbury wrote to me asking if there was a particular area in London where the girls gathered. I wrote to explain it's more a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

There are various places where the girls get together, but not necessarily on a regular basis. In Earls Court, the Philbeach Hotel has a restaurant where, on a Saturday night, you could see a dozen or more crossdressers, and on other occasions only two. Madam JoJo's, in Brewer Street, Soho, is a gay piano bar where TVs are welcome, but once again it's hit or miss.

Anyone traveling to the UK should get in touch with me beforehand if they want to come to New TransEssex meetings as there are reasonably priced local motels where you can stay.

If the dates do not correspond with our meetings, we could arrange for a meeting at the Philbeach Hotel and bring some girls along for company. Essex is about 40 minutes train journey from London and about an hour and a half by car (this is easiest) but train and taxi will get you to New TransEssex meetings.

So don't forget, if you are coming over here, do get in touch.

Happy Dressing,
Stacy 🍷

The Body Shop

Diet tips to get in shape.

You'll look better in clothes (masculine or feminine) if you can become more slim than you are now, with adequate preservation of muscle mass. Achieving a svelte shape is simply a matter of common sense and discipline.

Everyone obviously has a diet, but yours may require some fine-tuning. You may need to commit yourself to a lifestyle change that is permanent. To "go on a diet" is, therefore, an inappropriate term. If you want to be pretty, to be more feminine, then you do what's necessary — that's all there is to it. Here again there are but a few basic principles:

✱ No alcohol! It's loaded with calories. Can you take a drink or two once in awhile? Absolutely. But, alcohol on a daily basis will not allow you to approach your goal.

✱ Don't add salt or sugar to anything. I don't insist on zero salt or sugar, but most Americans eat 4-5

times the daily salt they need. Once you kick the habit, you won't miss it.

✱ Don't eat fat, and you won't get fat. A platitude and an overstatement, but with a ring of truth. Look at it this way; butter, margarine, mayonnaise, whole milk, ham, pork, etc., all contain concentrated calories. A large amount of energy is released **if** the calories are burned. If not, the body stores those calories as fat. Worse than that, it accumulates in places like your coronary arteries, and clogs things up. One gram of fat contains almost twice the calories of a gram of protein or carbohydrate, so it follows that you can eat more food, and store less calories if you depend on protein and carbohydrates. The bonus is not only that you can eat more, but this is generally a good recommendation for improved health. Fruits, vegetables, pasta, potato (without the sour cream), rice — you get the idea. Most good diet books give detailed information on changing your intake.

✱ Don't use liquid protein diet systems. They can be dangerous, and deaths have been reported. Secondly, these systems are so boring you won't be able to continue for long. All your lost weight will return once you go back to old habits. More importantly, with severe diet restriction, the body gets panicky and revs up the storage mechanism as a safeguard. The result is an enhanced

ability to turn nutrients into fat. When you're hungry — *eat*. But eat celery, carrots, an apple, oatmeal, a bagel, or my favorite which is a cold pre-baked potato.

✱ Under no circumstances should you go on a diet characterized by severe carbohydrate restriction. This causes you to: (1) deplete sugar (glycogen stores), (2) breakdown fat, then (3) breakdown protein (as in muscle). As you break down muscle and fat you will get acidotic and ketotic — acids and ketones are by-products of this catabolic process. (You may also fail a drunk driving Breathalyzer test.—Ed.) Such a state is akin to starvation or uncontrolled diabetes. Since you will be nauseated, you will experience no hunger. Not only will you be on your way to becoming a skeleton, you will be so weak you will not be able to exercise. There's nothing good about this and it can be life-threatening.

Let's assume you're enthused and want to get started. You've made the commitment to be conscious of what you eat, maybe even to the point of keeping a diary. I'm assuming that you're reasonably healthy and don't have a chronic condition that may cause problems, and are not on medication. Consultation with your physician may be prudent anyway, but co-existent diagnoses or chronic therapy virtually demands it. I'm also assuming that you have at least some


modicum of aerobic activity. If not, begin with walking or swimming at your own pace. In Florida, octogenarians patrol the malls in mobs before the workday begins. Anybody, at any age, can begin walking and see benefit with minimal chance of injury. If elderly folks can hike 3-5 miles daily, so can you.

Next, really stick to a low fat, high carbohydrate diet. It may drive you nuts and you may not stick it out, but it will point up problems you may have with intake. In the morning eat all the fruit you want, oatmeal, even yogurt. Bagels are excellent and relatively sweet, even with nothing on them. Same rules apply for lunch. Eat if you're hungry, and only the right things. For dinner, really chow down on the salad — heavy on the vinegar, little or no oil. Steam loads of vegetables, but eat them when still crunchy. Have a monster baked potato, but don't slather it with the bad stuff. Chicken (broiled, no skin), fish (broiled or baked) come next. No red meat for awhile. Rice and pasta are great, but no butter or additives with concentrated calories. In other words, there's no limitation on how much you can eat.

Two of the difficult foods to get over may be alcohol and coffee. Both will make you hungry, and alcohol is the prototype for concentrated calories. On the other hand, a cup of black coffee in the afternoon may satisfy and refresh you. Learn to drink coffee black. All coffee creamers contain fat; the ones with coconut oil are the worst. Remember, **ALL FAT IS BAD**. The hype that we should worry only about cholesterol is misplaced. All fats taken by mouth are concentrated calories.

You'll be amazed at the craving for bacon, steak, fried chicken, oil on your salad, sour cream on your potato. You'll also be amazed that it passes quickly. After the initial shock, you'll discover you were eating out of habit. Change the routine, change the habit. It's as simple as that. Soon you can add things here and there. If you can get through this for 17 days, i.e., 2 weeks and 3 weekends, then you're over the hump.

The 17-day rule is a good one that I learned from a professional baseball player. He worried about the tendency to "have a few beers" every night while on the road, and the high rate of drug/alcohol abuse in professional athletes. Like most of us, he enjoyed a drink in the evening. To test for signs of dependency, however, he would occasionally declare a 17-day moratorium (2 weeks, 3 weekends); no alcohol, no excuses. The cravings for the first 3 days are disturbing, but not totally physiological. The psychological craving for food and drink can be abated with behavior modification. I modify my behavior by going to the gym... and that's where we're going next time. See you there. ☛



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A Cinderella Story

*The 1992/93 Miss
ETVC Cotillion as told
in the inimitable style of
Billie Jean Jones*

Once upon a time, not so long ago, and not too far away in the Constellation of California, there lived a little girl who was about six foot tall in her stockinged feet. While she was a tall girl, and a bit over thirty years old, she was still a "little girl" because she had been a boy and a man for over forty years. So she was an adolescent girl, and she was a somewhat mature man, also. And while fifteen years may seem like more than a "bit" over thirty, she didn't think so.

As it happened, she had unfurled from the darkness of her cocoon, tested her wings and began displaying her colors on Earth date 17 November 1990. Less than a year later she flew to the "wrong" coast and alighted in Provincetown Massachusetts in order to attend the seventeenth annual Fantasia Fair. While there, she interfaced with a variety of other creatures similar to herself; that is to say, she found herself in the company of a great number of changelings in various stages of transformation. For ten days they congregated in rainbow hues and flashed their colors to the sun, and to the moon and stars. She only had one mild regret. Her son and his musical friends were to record the music for a song she had written and send her the tape so she could sing at a special event called "The

FanFair Follies." Owing to her distorted sense of time, the tape arrived after the Follies. Otherwise, she had a great time.

She flew back to the "left" coast and resumed her schedule of writing every day, eating, sleeping, visiting, and displaying her colors. As it happened, she was considering an article about an annual event called the "Miss ETVC Cotillion," for a magazine. While she had never been to a Cotillion before, she was a member of ETVC, the sponsoring organization, which was also located in the Constellation of California. ETVC maintained a monthly cycle of socials in the Big City by the Bay, and in November of 1991, while fluttering about with the other butterflies, moths, and changelings in various stages, she found out the auditions for the "Talent" portion of the Cotillion would occur in three days. Intrigued at the possibility of writing about the Cotillion from an insider's perspective (and finally performing her song), she decided to audition as a "prospective contestant." She returned to her nest, mildly concerned with her lack of talent, but determined to proceed. (Now it must be noted that she had never even thought of entering a *Pageant*; nor had she ever publicly performed one of her songs. Additionally, she wanted to revise her song's music.) They finished revising the tape late Saturday night.

Early Sunday morning, she unfurled, groomed herself and took off for the sparkling Big City by the Bay. On the way, she rehearsed her song for the first time, singing and memorizing the words while the tape played over and over and over:

*"A lotta people in this world
Don't know if they're a boy or a girl
They're living double - it's really hard
Ya gotta carry two ID cards..."*

She arrived, entered, met the other changeling aspirants, watched and listened to the auditions, and performed her song while holding the lyrics in shaking hands.

*"...travel under moon and stars
Sit in corners in hide-away bars
While people treat you like—
you're from Mars.
Hey, hey now—
Why they do like they do?"*

Afterward, she and the others had to wait outside while the decisions were being made. Thus began the Bond-of-Eight, for there were eight aspirants to the title. In the little circle outside, they shivered in the shadow of the day while warming to each other until they were called back inside and informed that all had "passed the audition."

And so it was that Pammela, Evette, Deirdre, Leslie, Lauren, Summer, Shawna, and Billie Jean became contestants for Miss ETVC 1992/93.

While returning to her nest from the audition, Billie Jean reflected on what she had learned so far—the contestants would be judged in four segments: The Interview, which would occur a week before the Cotillion; the Talent, Activewear, and Evening Gown segments which would be judged at the actual Cotillion. She tried to imagine what the next six weeks would be like, and decided that "contestant" wasn't the correct word, for she could visualize that over the next six weeks they would all share and help one another prepare.

When she returned, she called her

son, whom she often called "Sunny-Boy" but whose name was Jesse James, and informed him of the results. He was happy and promised to redo the music again, which she wanted to rearrange one more time. Then she called her daughter, whom she often called "Dodder" but whose name was Cinderella, and they blabbed and laughed about the wonders of the Universe also. Cinderella offered to share her studio apartment the weekend of the Cotillion with Billie Jean, as her apartment was in the sparkling Big City by the Bay, and Billie Jean's apartment was located on the surface of a somewhat barren asteroid known as Sacramento, which she occasionally called "Sacra-demento" owing to its peculiar mix of beings, many of whom claimed to work for the State Government, which as anyone knows, hasn't worked for some time.

Each weekend brought new challenges to the Bond-of-Eight, which actually consisted of a Circle-of-Nine, including the Cotillion Director, Stephanie, and sometimes Ten, when Laurie, spouse to Deirdre, assisted. A Feminine Image Consultant worked with the changelings as regards their presentations, and helped coach them in preparation of The Interview. A former Miss Gay Universe worked with everyone as regards their performing, walking and modelling.

Subsequently, the Circle proceeded on its own to practice and perfect their actions, timing and presentations.

Meanwhile, the planet wobbled on, deeper into its winter orbit phase with holidays flashing by and only a few frantic shopping days left before the Cotillion, which was to be held on Earth date 11 January 1992.

Time and space began to inevitably coincide on 5 January when all the aspirants arrived for their Interviews with the three judges, who consisted of an Image Consultant; a Professor of Theatrical Makeup; and a former Empress/stellar Drag Queen. Each aspirant had to interview with each of the judges, a process which took several hours. Afterward, they were informed



Billie Jean Jones, Miss ETVC for 1992/92

a fifth, non-judged segment had been added: each was to be "presented" during the opening number, which required them to be escorted on stage by one of the dancers, then go stand cheerfully in the background. This also required an additional outfit, which was agreed to be "business wear." Thereafter followed four days of madness as each aspirant scrambled to pull together every item (of which there were hundreds) necessary for the Cotillion.

On 10 January, all the aspirants,

except Summer, flocked into the Big City by the Bay for their first Dress Rehearsal at the California Club, location of the Cotillion. Billie Jean's boyfriend arrived at Cinderella's apartment with enough stuff for a weeks' stay, transformed to herself, kissed Dodder farewell and flitted off to join her sisters at the Club. There they had to rehearse the opening number for the first time, which took a long time because of

continued on next page

Personal TranScript...

confusion as to how to stage the entrance and when to move to the back of the stage. Finally, after two hours, the aspirants raced into the backstage dressing room and rapidly proceeded to shed clothing willie-nillie, and jam on their activewear wardrobe while being timed: Tic-Toc, time's up.

Let's join the changelings lining up backstage where they're wondering if they have everything on, and one by one, presenting themselves across the stage, zigging onto the runway, and zagging back in their most graceful, yet athletic and active way. "One more time," the Director directs as the first starts to slip into the dressing room for the next wardrobe change. And so we see the line moving forward but it always has six people in it, and when one leaves the front, another joins the end until Stephanie calls: "Okay, change!" And the changelings respond instantly, thudding into the dressing room on rubber soled feet amidst shouts and giggles, they begin flinging articles of activewear thither and yon while the clock says, "Tic-Toc" but no one hears it for they are operating at warp speed and even that is too slow.

"Clickity-clackity," their heels tap as they gather in the wings, talking and laughing among themselves.

"Quiet, please," Stephanie says. "Give your tapes to Earl the Pearl and line up in order." And so they do. And Earl the Pearl plays the tapes one by one as they rehearse their talent, except for Lauren who plays her own guitar, and Pammela who does a stand-up comedy routine. As for the others, Deirdre does a belly dance, Leslie does a modern dance, Evette and Shawna lip synch, Billie Jean sings. "One more time," Stephanie cajoles. The sound is adjusted. The lights are adjusted, and a dozen volunteers continue setting up staging, tables and chairs, decorations, and the myriad details required to accommodate hundreds of people who will fill the club to standing room only.

"Okay, change!" Stephanie directs, and the clattering and giggles recede

from stage right as Earl cues the music for the Evening Gown segment. In the dressing room, the changelings are squeezing into gorgeous gowns and adding makeup while filling the room with melodies that sway from one end to the other, back and forth, swirling round and drifting out to the main floor, where the worker bees are buzzing out the door, into the night, happy to be done with their double-shift day.

"Hey, what happened to the food?" a voice among the returning aspirants demands over the cacophony of tapping heels, rustling gowns and chitter-chatter. For the aspirants had been promised a buffet dinner, but the volunteers had already ravaged the spread, leaving scarcely a crumb. "Oh dear," Stephanie sighs, "I'll treat you to dinner after we're through." Which takes another hour, plus the time to change again, at which time we find a Circle-of-Nine click-click-clicking the midnight streets of the Big City by the Bay six blocks to an all-night Asian restaurant, where they happily repast before gliding into the nightscape.

Cinderella is still awake when Billie Jean enters at 1:45 AM. "How'd it go, Dud?" she asks, for she often calls her dad "Dud," which she claims is short for "Dude."

"It took forever and they ate all the feedbag, so we went to Asian Joe's."

"That's a greasy spoon; the only thing good is it stays open all night."

"Precisely. How was work?"

"I blew it off after three hours—I made my hundred and fifty dollars and I just didn't feel like being there any more—they had enough strippers anyway and I got a headache; I think I'm getting early PMS. That suit looks nice, kind of a Dianne Sawyer look."

"Thanks, Dodder. I gotta go take my face off."

Billie Jean undresses, erases her face, anoints it with vitamin E creme, stretches into pantyhose to protect her legmakeup, and slides into Cinderella's bed where they talk until too late, and after four hours sleep, she wakes up too early.

It is a bright sun-shiny day in the Big City by the Bay as Billie Jean wakes Cinderella with a cup of coffee, kisses her good-bye, and leaves for the noon rehearsal. On the way, she wonders whether Mrs. Billie Jean will arrive before the rehearsal or after, "Hope she doesn't get lost," she thinks.

All the aspirants, except Summer, arrive in their boy-guise, and Stephanie informs them all that Summer has dropped out. Mrs. Billie Jean, whose name is Rosemarie, arrives and takes pictures of the changelings in their boy clothes while they are rehearsing in high heels. The noon rehearsal drags into mid-afternoon, at which time they abandon it, and the aspirants depart to transform and eat, although there is little time left before the Cotillion.

In Cinderella's apartment, Billie Jean decides there is not enough time to shower or nap, and begins carefully scraping facial epidermis in the bathroom. In the kitchen, Cinderella and Rosemarie crack open cold beers and begin playing poker while trading stories and raunchy jokes. Billie Jean can't hear what they're saying, only their raucous laughter above the stereo, on which Cinderella is playing "Wimmins Music." An hour passes and a semi-nude changeling with half-a-face on enters the kitchen where the two rowdies are rocking out to Play That Funky Music White Boy.

"Wanna a beer, Dud?"

"No thanks, just water."

"We were just laughing about you being in the bathroom getting pretty while we were out here drinking beer and playing poker."

"So you're making fun of me, hey? Sexiest pigs."

"Hey bitch, just bring us the bottle of champagne and hurry up."

"Oh, look at that face, Cin," Rosemarie teases as Billie Jean opens the bottle with an exaggerated pout and disappears.

Billie Jean completes her face and touches up her leg makeup in the bath-

continued on page 26

Miss ETVC



At left: the contestants, et al.,
(Top row, l. to r.) Summer,
Lauren, Billie Jean, Diedre &
Pammela.
(Bottom row, l. to r.) Stephanie
(director), Evette, Leslie &
Shawna.
(Photo by PS Photography)



At right: the entertainment,
The Fabulous Foxes (l. to r.)
Joanne, Diahanna & Zia.

Photos by David Swanson except as noted.

Cotillion

Miss ESTOC



Left: Lauren in the Active Wear Competition



Right: Deidre, bellydance for talent competition

Highlights

Right: Shawna, as Patti LaBelle for talent competition



Left: Evette receives Miss Congeniality

More



Left – Lauren in Talent Competition, singing in her own voice an original song, *They're Only Words*.

Below – The five finalists (from l. to r.): Shawna, Billie Jean, Lauren, Leslie, & Pammela.

Miss TBOC



Highlights

Right – Eva Davis, former Miss Gay Universe. Eva coached the girls.

Below – The winners, (from l. to r.): Leslie, 2nd runner-up; Billie Jean, Miss ETVC; & Lauren, 1st runner-up.



Cotillion

Miss F&OC



"Dodder" and "Dud," a.k.a. Cinderella & Billie Jean



The contestants before transformation.
See if you can match them up with their photos on page 21.
(Photo by PS Photography)

room, emerges and begins dressing. The giggling girls wobble away from the table where they have been putting on their faces, and finish dressing.

"How much time, dear?" Rosemarie asks while buttoning her pants.

"None."

And they all depart, for the day is dark, the hour is late, and the Cotillion is upon us.

Golden light washes down the front steps of the California Club and spills into the street, reflecting off the multi-hued beings streaming toward the promise of warmth. Inside, the hall is filling with changelings and guests who are flashing their colors; with performers who will entertain; with volunteers who will staff the concessions, the lighting, the sound, and the stage.

Arriving in the farthest dressing room, Billie Jean enters the Circle, which almost seems tangible when they are all together, and joins in the weaving of it, even though it has grown larger and more complicated due to the addition of two "sponsors," one for Leslie, one for Lauren. They are having their makeup and hair done by professionals; Laurie is helping Deirdre, and Shawna's lover is helping her; Evette, Pammela and Billie Jean help each other.

Rosemarie enters the Circle with a box of long-stem red roses for Billie Jean, and a kiss. The card reads: "To the most beautiful woman I know." They hug and hold each other.

"Okay, line up!" Stephanie directs, and the changelings take one last look and file out. In the darkness of stage right they whisper in hushed tones as the music swells and rises: *Let the Pageant begin!*

One by one they are brought on stage by a white-gloved hand that appears between the closed curtains like a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat. On stage the multi-colored lights are bright, the dancers shimmer and shine, twirling and spinning in unison as the Circle rapidly expands to include everyone inside the Castle, for by now, the California Club has been completely transformed and is under the protec-

continued on page 44

Nikki Nash

If I Were A Woman

If I were a woman
 I'd spend my days
 trying on clothes
 in different ways,

painting my nails,
 doing my hair,
 shaving my legs,
 and body hair.

I'd pierce my ears
 and pluck my brow,
 (and hook my bra,
 if I knew how...)

I'd change my voice
 and shrink my feet,
 and only salads
 I would eat.

I'd try on undies,
 cool and sheer

and seldom drink
 a fattening beer.
 (I'm sure they'd think
 that I was queer!)

I'd depilate
 my useless beard
 and wear perfume
 like daddy feared.

I'd start to wear
 real slinky dresses
 to compliment
 my new long tresses.

But I'd also have
 to get a job
 to earn less money
 than Ted and Bob.
 (and endure the hassles
 of macho slobs.)

ZEITGEIST

How does the Women's Movement in Germany feel about Transsexuals?

The relationship of the German women's liberation movement towards transsexuals is much like that of other ignorant-minded. They think there is no difference between transsexuals and transvestites.

Hella von Sinnen (a well known television-hostess, who is herself openly a lesbian) calls transvestites actors. She talks of "men who copy the cliché of being a woman." The *Frauenzeitung*, published in Hamburg, has analysed how the woman's scene deals with this issue. They recognize that people with a transsexual past are not to be confused with crossdressers. Women don't really accept the transsexuals in their movement yet, but see their inclusion as an issue of suppression and of defining new borders. Its comparable to earlier discussions about racism. (Understand that in the German language there is no distinction between sex and gender. Both are referred to under "Geschlecht.")

Interestingly, the women want an end to the sex "system." For the

premise of transsexualism to hold, there must be a rigid sex system, with exactly two sexes and everyone knows which one they belong to. If a man does not fit into this scheme it calls up great confusion and uncertainty. The behavior patterns for how to deal with people who we cannot definitely determine as 'male' or 'female' are missing. When in doubt, it is simpler to assume someone is a male, because, ironically, it seems in society that far fewer females are offended by this than males would be of the reverse assumption.

How then do we recognize a male or female? We cannot rely on physical distinguishing characteristics. Some male body-builders have more of a bust than some genetic females. Also hair on the upper lip can be seen on a few women. Clothes and hair styles don't give any clues. Therefore, we build up a perceptivity for movements and attitude, for voice, speech, and the style of communication. The standard sex system claims a clear distinction between male and female..

Consequently, reassignment surgery is an attempt to resolve the conflicts between physical sex and gender identity, based on these characteristics, behaviors, feelings, etc. The women's movement realizes that the reassignment operation is consistent with this rigid definition of sex and that Transsexuality is, as well, an adaptation of the traditional standards of sexual behavior.

This gives an interesting thought to the idea of breaking down the rigid sex system: why should there be only two genders? The allocation of gender is not physical. Why must everyone have a definite sex/gender? Why is it not possible for someone to decide to have no gender? Why is it not possible to be androgynous, both masculine and feminine at the same time? Even more interesting is they questions of gay or lesbian lifestyles based on presentation of gender.

I think this article shows interesting points on the position of the womens liberation movement with the phenomenon of transsexualism. In addition to dealing with transsexuality, other ideas have been opened that could be to our advantage. Most German transgender gender support groups have little contact with gay, lesbian or women's liberation groups, although we do benefit from the advances these groups have made. But there is no regular exchange of information nor inter-group cooperation. That has as much to do with the local nature of the transgender groups as anything else. But, with the formation of a national group for transsexuals there is hope that better contact, on a national basis, will occur and that we can better integrate the experiences of the different groups.

Claudia ✪

Linda Buten

O.W.W.S.M.M.

Do people think you're "man in a dress?" Join O.W.W.S.M.M. and solve that problem.

Do you enjoy playing the role of girl, woman, lady or even Bimbo? Do you want to mingle in the crowd without anyone suspecting your true sex? Would you enjoy trips to the ladies restroom, the locker room?

These and many other questions can be answered "Yes" and you too can become an elite member of the O.W.W.S.M.M. if you act now. Just what do these letters stand for you ask? Why, the **Organization for Women Who are Sometimes Mistaken for Men**, of course.

Let's examine some of the advantages of belonging to this prestigious group over existing choices.

So, you want to go shopping while at the Texas "T" Party. Until now, your choices were to brave it alone or go with Cynthia Phillips. Just because she's the real thing, doesn't mean this will be a pleasant adventure. I bet she doesn't even take you to one shoe store that sells pumps in a size 13 with a 6-inch heel. I can see it now, she'll try to

talk you out of that short mini-skirt you want so badly, or that low cut top to show off your boobs you've worked so hard to create.

It would be nice to hope that people would look at the group of you and, seeing Cynthia first, say "The girl in front is cute, but her friends are sure big and ugly." At least you'd pass. But, that's not the case. Instead, they say, "I wonder if that girl knows there is a pack of transvestites following her?"

Yes folks, you're gonna stand out like a sore thumb. People will giggle and laugh, names will be called, and you may even be denied use of the women's bathroom and changing room. Are you going out to shop or entertain strangers?

Well now, thanks to Linda, the group known as the **Organization for Women Who are Sometimes Mistaken for Men**, has been founded. The idea is so simple, it's amazing that no one has come up with it till now. Instead of trying to get all crossdressers to look and pass as everyday women, you reverse the logic and try to get the group to stand out in the crowd. There's no better way than to have everyone wear a large badge with o.w.w.s.m.m. across it. In smaller print one can spell out the meaning of the letters and your name. Anyone who spots you will read the badge and say, "If I looked like that, I'd join too."

Now, some examples of what may happen to a member of o.w.w.s.m.m.

who plans a full day of shopping:

You are in need of a makeover, so you approach the cosmetics counter. The sales lady sees your 5 o'clock shadow, but she also sees the name of your group. Her fears are calmed as she realizes that you are not some perverted old man, but a real woman, just like her, who has had to put up with some problem facial hair. You are treated with dignity and respect and you walk away feeling great with your new face.

You stop in the wig department. You want to try on the platinum blonde showgirl wig you saw in the window. As you expose your bald head, a shriek is heard from across the room, "Eeek, a man!" But your sales lady knows the other patron has made a terrible mistake because she saw your o.w.w.s.m.m. badge as you entered. The other person has been asked to leave and you are given a 50% discount on your purchase.

You want to be fitted with a new bra. In the lingerie department, a cute blonde takes you back for a private fitting. She has seen your badge and she subconsciously assumes you have some abnormal hormone imbalance. Now, when she sees you with your top off, she won't be asking embarrassing questions like, "I see you have no boob," or "Gee, you have quite a few hairs on your chest." You are given consideration and courtesy as you make your selections.

continued on page 46

Chapter 1

Doc Symmons told me I should write everything down. "Don't worry about the grammar, Laura Ann," he said. "Don't worry about the spelling. Don't go worrying about getting everything in the right order. Don't try for the Pulitzer. Just make sure you get everything on paper. You don't have to show it to me or anyone else. But it would be a great tragedy if the world were to miss out on your story."

He was kidding, I think. About the tragedy, I mean. With Doc Symmons, it's some times hard to tell.

Doc is small-town crazy, which is more acceptable than big-city crazy, so he's let to run around loose, and shops at K-Mart and everything— although maybe he should be the one on the couch and I should be pretending to listen to his woes, instead of him pretending to

The Problem

listen to mine. But he's the one with the office in the mall and that cold-fish red-headed receptionist that he shares with the rest of the doctors in the suite, and I'm the one who has to work her skinny butt off to make ends meet. Even though I'm normal and Doc is as loony as the Cocoa Puff bird.

Not that Doc isn't good at what he does. No, even though he's what Bobbo Joe calls a talkin' doctor (as opposed to a doin' doctor), he's worth his fee, for he's helping me come to a decision about my "problem." Besides, I've yet

A serialized novel

to pay him eighty-five dollars. By the time that hotsy-totsy redhead finishes punching forty-two numbers into the hiccupping Casio calculator on her desk, I pay only twelve dollars and fifty cents. I don't know where the other seventy-two fifty comes from. Out of the redhead's pocketbook, I would guess, from the expression on her face.

I'll bet she isn't red-headed you-know-where.

I'm in the shower. Now, that may seem like a strange place to start a manuscript, but according to Doc, the shower is the only place where I come face-to-face (in a manner of speaking) with my "problem." It seems as good a place to begin as any.

You'll notice that I put quotation marks around the word "problem." I've noticed that writers do that when they use a word that doesn't really fit what they're trying to say. I used quotation marks because I'm still not sure I do have a problem. Everyone else

thinks so, of course, so indeed I may have a problem, with no quote marks.

My Problem stares at me with its Cyclopean eye. That's the way I'll start off when I revise this. This draft will never do, for I'm putting things down as I think of them; I'll need to go back through and decide what will stay and what will go. Besides, the notebook is damp from the steam in the bathroom. It makes the paper wrinkle.

My Problem stares at me with its Cyclopean eye. It is a problem (or a "problem") of anatomy, but one that is really irrelevant to all but me and those with whom I choose to share it. Yet, it's surprising how everyone is so preoccupied with (Doc would say "fixated on") my Problem. People who have never seen it and will never, ever see it seem to think it's the most significant thing about me.

Doc has never laid eyes on it. Like the others, he takes it as a matter of faith that it exists as part of my body. Most of the people who are worried about it have never beheld it. In fact, in my entire life, fewer than a dozen people have seen it.

No, that's not true, for I was forgetting about that wretched episode last summer at job camp, where everyone up to and including the lieutenant governor had to come take a gander at it, once they realized that I had it. But aside from that, only the doctor who delivered me (and I guess his nurse) and my ma and my pa and my three older sisters. Maybe a baby sitter or two. And of course, Mary June Cunningham.

And then there's Johnny Ray, with whom I played doctor when I was five and he was six— at his insistence, I might add. Now, one might think I would have been inclined to play doctor with a little girl, but there was no little girl handy, and besides, I had seen my mother's and I seen my sisters', and I had changed my sister Lucinda's baby girl's diapers. No, I had seen little girls. What I hadn't seen was a little boy's, and when I saw Johnny Ray's and realized that his was the same as mine, I knew that something was bad wrong

with my body. It made me want to throw up. It didn't help matters when Johnny Ray's Pa caught us red-handed, so-to-speak, for he took us to my ma and pa and Johnny Ray and me both got called perverts and threatened with hellfire and eternal damnation for our mortal souls. It seemed like a big fuss for such a couple of little things.

That episode didn't affect Johnny's life very much— it didn't seem to, anyway— but it sure as hell put a brand on me. If Pa hadn't much use for me before, he had even less after Albert Ray, standing in our front yard in a sleeveless t-shirt which exposed the tattoos he had got in Singapore when he was in the Navy, worked up a good sweat swearing about our perfidious behavior, for which, of course, I was blamed. Now, Johnny Ray's Daddy had no room to talk, for I found out years later that tattoos notwithstanding, he was a closet case himself. Neither did Pa, who was not exactly famous for keeping his pecker in his pants, either. But with them against me, and with Johnny insisting that I had made him do it, and with my very demeanor shouting deviancy at them, it was no wonder that I was the one who was blamed, who was damned forever after in the eyes of my father, that man of men.

My Problem rarely shows itself these days, keeping itself tucked firmly out of harm's way, except for those rare occasions when biology asserts itself, and it stirs about and threatens to rise to the attack.

I'd better rein in here and circle my horses. Pardon the cowboy talk. It comes from reading too many westerns, which I find laying around the house after Pa gets through with them. Whenever I pick one up and read it, I tend to get rambunctious, and if I don't watch myself, I talk Louis L'Amour or Zane Grey for a few days. I walk around on the balls of my feet, looking at people out of the corners of my eyes and squinting into the sun, like Clint Eastwood in a spaghetti western. And I just finished reading a Max Brand paperback. Anyway— in common parlance, I'm putting the cart before the

horse. First things first.

My name is Laura Ann Sykes. It is also Leroy Amos Sykes. I was born with the second; I go by the first. I have the looks and demeanor and disposition of a Laura, and I have the history and sex organs of a Leroy. I am unfortunately still legally a Leroy. I've a petition for name change, but Judge Crater (no relation to the one who disappeared) won't sign it 'cause Pa told him he would break both his legs if he ever did, and Judge Wilkins won't sign it even without any threats, because of that time out on the lake when he had a sudden attack of the middle-age crazies and tried to get my britches down and I got mad and grabbed the paddle and chased him right out of the boat.

My life is miserable because I'm stuck somewhere between being a girl and being a boy. I live in a small town where everyone knows everyone else, and I just can't seem to escape my past. My family calls me Leroy and my friends mostly call me Laura. At school I get called Laura and Leroy and sissy and faggot and every other name in the book.

No one would ever suspect that there is a Leroy somewhere under my skirts, for I am about five-six, with a good figure. I have big blue eyes and long brown hair and a pretty face and a soprano voice. Thanks to the miracle of science, everything about me is just what you would expect in a seventeen-year-old girl. Except for the Problem. I make a point of not telling folks about it, but they find out soon enough, for I'm a major topic of conversation in the town.

People who don't know treat me just like they would any other girl. Once they find out, there is a difference in the way they act towards me. Women get funny about me using the ladies' room, and guys get distant. The ones who have been attracted to me are trouble. More than once I have had boys get ugly with me after they found out.

Johnny Ray, having learned nothing from that experience so many years

continued next page

The Problem...

ago, is still exposing me. I think he follows me in his car, awaiting an opportunity to expose and endanger me. It happened as recently as last Saturday. "Yep," he said to my date of the evening, while I was in the ladies' room. "Leroy sure do make one good-lookin' girl, don't he?" When I got back to the table, my date was gone. No explanation, no nothing. He was just gone. He didn't even settle the check. I paid it without complaining; it was better than having him stick around to make a scene. The waitress, who had been nice, stared at me. She looked like she wanted to say something unkind, but I was mad enough to chew nails, and I guess she could tell it, for she kept her mouth shut.

I know Johnny Ray was responsible, for as I was walking to my car, he drove up in his Jetta, staying just out or throwing range, and stuck his head out the window and told me what he had done.

Even before he and I played doctor-and-nurse in the ravine, Johnny was fascinated with me. He has always stared at me like I was a snake or something. In grade school, he would sit one row over and one desk behind me, and I would feel his hot eyes on me throughout the day. He has become more and more hateful of late; in fact, it got much worse about the time I blossomed into puberty. Although I have never done anything to Johnny (not counting the milk, which I did only in self-defense), I have become his enemy, and he my nemesis. If not for Johnny continually reminding everyone about my Problem, I believe most folks would accept me as a girl.

Johnny Ray and Doc Symmons are typical of this town. I don't think there's anyone normal hereabouts. Mom is a hypochondriac, an over-the-counter junkie, a woman who lies in bed surrounded by empty cans of Coke and unfolded BC and Goody's and Stanback powder papers, attempting to run the household by sheer vocal power. I'm her favorite target, "Goddamn it, Leroy," her three favorite words. She calls me Leroy and not Laura and "he" and not "she" but gives me pure-D hell if I don't get up supper and don't keep the house clean enough to suit her.

Pa is a long-haul driver, a man proud of his conquests of late middle-aged waitresses in truck stops in places like Iowa and North Dakota. He's even proud of the trouble he's having with what he calls his prostitute gland. He considers it a manly disease, unlike that of his brother Bob, who had breast cancer. It was a source of amusement and bemusement to Pa until Bob ruined things by up and dying of it.

Lucinda, Marinda, and Clorinda, my older sisters, are the three evil stepsisters from Cinderella. I used to wish that my fairy godmother would arrive and save me from them, but what actually happened was that they grew up and got married and moved out on their own. They bother me now only on occasion, when they visit. Tammy Mae, the youngest, showed up unexpectedly when I was eight years old, the same as I am now. I halfway keep expecting Ma to make love to Pa in a big pile of pain-reliever papers and pull another baby out of her

hat, but of course she can't, 'cause she's had a hysterectomy, for which I am thankful because if she hadn't I would no doubt be a boy instead of a girl.

Tammy Mae, precocious child that she is, has a lesbian crush on me — much to my chagrin, for my lesbian relationship with Mary June Cunningham is more than I can stand. "Get rid of your Problem," Tammy Mae cooed to me last week. "Get rid of it, and we'll run away and leave this crazy place."

I would like nothing better than to be rid of my Problem, which I consider nothing more than a tumor, but Mary June is fascinated by it, and I just know that she would leave me if I got it cut off. I'm hanging onto it for her, even though having it makes it kind of hard to have a normal lesbian relationship. Doc Symmons says there's no hurry, but that I should do what makes me happy and not what makes Mary June happy. It's to help me decide what to do about my Problem that I'm writing all of this down.

My Problem stares at me with its Cyclopean eye. Little Leroy, Junior. Out of sight, out of mind. I tuck him away and pull on my white uniform and go out the door to work, to the truck stop, where a thousand carbon copies of my pa wink at me and ask me out and try to get me interested in their Problems.

Chapter 2

All dressed in white, starched, clean, I feel like a nurse. White shoes, white stockings, white dress. White panties,



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white bra. White. I want to minister to the sick, to wipe sweat away from fevered brows. What I do is slop the hogs. By the end of the shift, the white will be marred by gravy and ketchup and thousand island dressing stains. I'll go home smelling like a hamburger. I'll make everyone hungry. "Damn it, Leroy," Mom will yell. "Git out of that waitress dress and into a pair of britches and take that makeup off. It makes you look like a tramp. And get busy in the kitchen. Your Pa will be home any time now and he'll want his supper waitin'."

But that's 10 hours away. Today, Saturday, is my favorite day at the truck stop, because I start with the sunrise, pushing coffee on bleary-eyed semi drivers and the breakfast bar on blue-haired ladies on the way to Florida with their bald-headed husbands. The new hot bar takes most of the work out of breakfast. It's a wonder, the way folks put it away when they pay four ninety-nine for all they can eat. They go right for the high-cost foods, too, piling thin strips of bacon high on their plates, lining link sausages up like sardines, stacking slices of ham, peppering their eggs, ladling gravy over sausage patties, smothering their pancakes with syrup and butter, coming back time and time again to fill their tiny glasses with orange juice. They load themselves up with cholesterol and starch and fat and sugar and caffeine until I wonder how they make it to the cash register without having a stroke or a heart attack.

Until I tear the breakfast bar down after lunch, there's not much to do but keep the line stocked and clean up after the messiest eaters. I'm not allowed to ring up customers, on account of I've not been here six months yet. It's the third truck stop I've worked at. The third truck stop I've had to work at. I keep ranging further afield, as the rumors of Leroy, Jr. keep pursuing me (with Johnny playing the part of the winged messenger). After what happened on Tuesday evening, it seems unlikely I'll ever be ringing up customers here. And this time, it wasn't even

Johnny Ray's fault. I was in the walk-in cooler, stretching up for a tray of sliced cucumbers for the salad bar when I got grabbed from behind. It was Mr. DiPoulo, the area supervisor, a dirty little Greek man who thinks too much about what he calls the Big Nasty. He got more than he bargained for, for he encountered my Problem. Now, most men don't really care— not so long as they get theirs, if you know what I mean—but Mr. DiPee, he just backed away with this frightened look on his face. I half-expected him to make the sign of the cross at me, as if I were a vampire or something. He just stood there white-faced, and I said, "I won't tell if you won't," and he gulped and nodded his head and reached behind him and got the door of the walk-in open and slipped out. He won't tell, either, but I know how these things work. The manager will start finding fault with little things that I do, or maybe I'll be blamed for something that I didn't do, and I'll be looking for a job again. It's happened before.

Bobbo Joe, the Paiute Indian short-order cook, has a permanent hard-on for me. Maybe it's just that he has a permanent hard-on and it's usually pointed in my direction. He's furiously jealous of the truckers who call me Hon and leave big tips and pinch my fanny every now and again. When he thinks a driver is getting fresh, he puts Visine in his food, which causes the driver great distress about a hundred miles down the road. Bobbo would lose his job if Mr. DiPoulo or Murray, the manager found out about it. But I don't tell and Bobbo doesn't tell, and the truckers don't associate being sick with their food— or at least don't think they've been Visined, for if they did they would drive their rigs back to the truck stop and kick the shit out of Bobbo Joe, who, although he stands six feet and nine inches tall, is little more than a boy and would probably just stand there and let them kick his ass.

I make lots of tips working here on Saturday and Sunday and three nights a week. I've filled all the drawers under my waterbed with quarters and half-dollars and dollar bills, and I have more than

four thousand dollars in a CD account. It's my surgery money, my kitty account. I probably have enough to do something about my Problem, except that I've put plans on hold in that department on account of Mary June Cunningham.

You'll notice I've been capitalizing the word Problem. Sometimes writers do that, too. I like it better than the quote marks, so whether I'm speaking of it as a problem or as a "problem," from now on I'll call it a Problem.

Anyway, I could go overseas for surgery (it's cheaper there), and then I would be a whole woman, but if I did then M.J. would leave me and I would be heartbroken. I love Mary June and she loves my Problem. She wants it to get big and hard so I can push it into her body like a man pushes into a woman. That isn't likely to happen, because of the hormones I take, but sometimes it does stir around a bit, and it gets her all excited. I don't like her touching it— after all, it's not supposed to even be there, but I love M.J. and want to make her happy, and so I let her do what she wants to with it, even though I hate it and wish it were gone.

I can't believe I'm writing this down.

All the rest of the time except when Mary June is trying to get me to use it on her, I wish the Problem was gone. I wish it would screw off so I could keep it in my pocketbook along with my keys and compact and mascara and wallet. I wish that when Mary June wanted it, I could just dig it out of my purse and go into the bathroom and attach it.

Well, there's one other time when I would wear it, and that's when I am in the woods and there isn't a toilet handy. I would wear it then. And maybe, just maybe, I would put it on in secret every now and again, just because the way I look I'm not supposed to have it. And if it would get big and hard, maybe I would whip old Leroy, Jr. out every once in a while and shock the church ladies. Maybe I would show it to Bobbo and tell him it just grew there overnight. Maybe I would let the next truck driver who tries to feel me up put his hand there and get a surprise. Maybe. But mostly, it would

continued on next page

The Problem...

just sit in my purse, awaiting a legitimate use, and I would have the other thing, the female thing, all the rest of the time. And I would use it, too.

You wouldn't think truckers would be such big eaters of greens. After lunch I tear down the breakfast bar and set up the salad bar. It makes me smile to see a two-hundred pound man making a meal of lettuce and radishes and bean sprouts.

You wouldn't think truckers would be romantic, either, but they are, some of them. Archie Salesmin, who hauls screen doors from Gary, Indiana to Hollywood, Florida, brings me a red rose every time he comes through on the way south, and a white or yellow one when he comes through on the way north. He wants me to go out with him, but I'm afraid to on account of incompatible anatomies. The Problem, raising its ugly head again. Its Cyclopean eye. God only knows what he would do when he found out. So I just smile and take the roses and give Gary, Indiana a hug, being careful to keep my chest a handsbreadth from his so he won't get any ideas, and thank him, and three days later, he's back with another rose. I don't know, maybe the hug keeps him going. The roses sure help me to keep going.

A florid-faced, bald-headed married man from Oregon is flirting with me, telling me I'm pretty, hinting that he has something to show me up in the sleeper of his truck. Bobbo Joe isn't missing nothing, and thirty minutes from now, that trucker will be looking for a com-mode. Not knowing this, he shovels down his spaghetti and meatballs and tetrahydrozoline and winks at me. Bobbo stands in the kitchen with his hands out of sight and looks at me through the food window. He holds up a paper plate. A severed finger lies there, gore trickling out, only it's not gore, but cocktail sauce, and the finger, which is sticking through a hole he has cut in the plate underneath all that cocktail sauce, is still securely attached to Bobbo's hamlike hand.

Bobbo has a bag of tricks like Felix the Cat's. You wouldn't think about an Indian being a practical joker, but he's the

world's worst. He's only been got once, and that was by Murray Lockett, the manager, on payday, about a month ago. Bobbo had a new trick, and he was trying it on everyone. He would ask someone to get out a dollar bill. They would, and he would tell them to find on it the name of a famous movie and a brand of cigarettes. When they gave up, he would grab the dollar and tear it in two and holler "Half and Half and Gone With the Wind" and toss the pieces away and laugh like a hyena. After a dozen employees and customers had come to Murray to borrow the Scotch tape to hold their dollars together, he had asked someone why they wanted the tape and found out what Bobbo was up to. He'd waited until payday, and then cashed Bobbo's check, like always. Bobbo had clocked out and gone in the bathroom to fix his duck-ass, leaving his jacket on the counter, like he always does. Murray picked up the jacket and got Bobbo's wallet. He took out a twenty dollar bill and made me go to the cash register and get twenty ones. I hurried, so that Bobbo wouldn't be out of the necessary room before I got back—not that there was much danger of that, 'cause friend Bobbo has a fifteen-minute DA. Murray took all those ones and put them in the money clip in his front pocket and took off for the dining room.

Bobbo came out of the bathroom and was putting on his jacket when Murray came bursting into the kitchen and said, "I hear you got a trick, a good one. Show it to me." Bobbo said sure, give him a dollar. Murray did, but when Bobbo got to the part when he says "Half and Half and Gone With the Wind," he stopped and told Murray that he couldn't do it to him. Murray told him to go ahead, if it was a good trick. Bobbo tore the dollar apart and threw it and laughed like a fool.

Murray—and this is the part that killed me, only I couldn't laugh, 'cause Bobbo would have known something was up—Murray just stood there looking puzzled and then shook his head and said, "I didn't quite get that. Show me again," and took another of Bobbo's dollar bills from his money clip. Bobbo pointed at the two halves on the floor

and asked Murray wasn't he going to pick them up and Murray waved his hand and said, "Later. I'm concentrating on learning this. Here. Show me again."

Well, Bobbo stood there tearing up dollars until there was a big pile of them on the floor, with Murray saying, "One more time. I think I've almost got it." When Bobbo tore up the last bill, Murray just turned and walked away. Bobbo hollered after him wasn't he going to pick up his money, but Murray just kept walking.

Well, when I told Bobbo whose money he had torn up and thrown all over the kitchen, he went white under his red skin. He was so shook up that if I hadn't of helped him match them up, he would have never got those dollars all taped together. Then, to make matters worse, he tried to pay for some coffee to go with one of them and Murray came up and told him he couldn't take that dollar as there appeared to be something wrong with it and it might be counterfeit.

Bobbo couldn't get back at Murray, on account of him being the boss, but he was mad at me for standing there not saying anything. One night about a week later, he kept disappearing. No one seemed to know where he was going. When I got off at midnight, I found out what he had been doing. He had gone out maybe four or five times an hour and thrown a five-gallon bucket of water on my car—which would have been no big deal, except that it was about five degrees outside. The tires were bulged out from the weight of the ice and I couldn't get the key in the lock. I had to carry buckets of hot water out and pour them over the door until I could get the key in the lock and get in the car and start it. While it warmed up, I sat in a White Freightliner with a man called Max and let him play with my breasts. I told Bobbo about it, but it was too late for the Visine, as Max was about four states gone by that time.

I wonder what Bobbo Joe would do if he found out about Leroy, Jr.

Chapter 3

School is okay because I spend most of the day in a gifted program, studying science and math and art and stuff. They

tell me I'm a genius, and I suppose maybe I am, for I'm the only one I know who has singlehandedly changed herself from a boy into a girl. Laura Ann Sykes, Nobel Prize winner in the new category, Self-Initiated Sex Change. Thank you, thank you.

In most of my classes, I am allowed to be a girl. I'm not supposed to wear skirts or dresses, but I started in my junior year, and no one seemed to mind. But Miss Leoretta MacKenzie, my English teacher, is a stone bitch, and makes me change to slacks when I come to her class, and calls me Mr. Sykes. She's got no eyebrows.

"Please read your poem aloud, Mr. Sykes," she says. A loud snicker comes from Johnny Ray's direction.

"Mr. Sykes!" she snaps. I blink my eyes. "I'm sorry, Miss MacKenzie," I say. "I didn't realize you meant me." It was halfway true. As I don't fancy myself much of a Leroy, the name just sort of washes over me without sticking. Miss MacKenzie is aware of this, and she knows that using the name Laura Ann will get my attention right away, but she has a moral compunction against calling me by my rightful name. She was so hateful on the first day of school that I showed up the next day with my eyebrows shaved off and drawn on with black pencil just like she does and my hair up in a bun like hers and she dragged me down to Mr. Mendez's office on account of it. Mr. Mendez is the principal and he looked at me and then at Miss MacKenzie and then at me again. "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," I said, and got sent home for three days. MacKenzie has had it in for me ever since, and so I get picked on a lot in her class. Today, she tells me to read the poem I picked for the class assignment.

"I have seen the best minds of my generation..." I begin, and she goes white underneath her warpaint.

"Stop!" she cries, and I know I am one step away from saying hello to Mr. Mendez. "I won't allow that filth read in class!" She snatches up the little red book and waves it in the air. "This poem," she tells the class, "was written by a homosexual man, a pedophile, a degenerate who was taken to court on

obscenity charges."

"He won," I say dryly. "The name of the poem is 'Howl,' by Allen Ginsberg," I add, so that everyone can write it down and try to find a copy as soon as school is out. "I got it at Mills Bookstore."

"Mr. Sykes," she says, "Please accompany me to the principal's office."

"You wouldn't like the ending anyway," I tell the class, and go with her.

Mr. Mendez is not happy to see me, but he will not suspend me. We have an agreement of sorts. "Miss Sykes," he says, after the MacKenzie has run down, "you will remain after school for one hour every day this week and next."

"His name is Leroy, Mr. Mendez," says Miss Mac. "Calling him Laura or Miss Sykes is giving in to his delusion that he is a girl."

Mr. Mendez glances at three boys from shop class, sitting uneasily in folding chairs in the waiting area. They are there to present him with a lamp made from a bowling pin. Every year the shop class gives him a lamp made from a bowling pin. I wonder where he keeps them all. He gets up and pulls his office door to so they won't hear. "Damn it, MacKenzie, this child is not psychologically a boy. He has been dressing like a girl all through high school. For better or worse, in three months she'll be out of here. It serves no purpose to cause him distress by refusing to call her by the name she chooses, he chooses, she chooses."

Mr. Mendez is not naturally so liberal; he comes about his opinions the hard way. On the first day of the ninth grade, I had found myself in his office.

"Very clever disguise, Sykes," he said to Elizabeth Fenner, who was there to see him about working in the school office. Liz turned white and gave a sort of sob and ran out into the hallway.

"I'm Laura Ann Sykes," I told him.

He stared at me and then took me into his office and closed the door. "Your name," he told me, "is Leroy Sykes."

"Legally, maybe," I said. "Only 'cause my pa has one judge all tied up and hamstrung and the other is mad at me."

"Be that as it may, and regardless of what they let you do in junior high, you

will dress as a boy at all times. Trousers. Shirts. Socks. You will wear no makeup. No jewelry. I'm not going to make you cut your hair, but I do expect you not to tease it up so. You will use the boys' bathroom. You will take physical education with the rest of the boys." He looked at my folder. "Scratch that. I see you're down for swimming instead of gym. You will wear a boy's bathing suit. You will use the boy's locker room. Do you understand me?"

I snapped my bubble gun and bent over and ran my hand up and down my stockinged calf like I had seen Andrea Ammonds, the school tease, do. The effect was not wasted on Mendez. He swallowed hard and tugged at his collar. I straightened up and looked at him coolly. "Mr. Mendez, let me make something clear. There is only one part of my body that makes me a boy. I look like a girl without makeup on. Without jewelry. In boy clothes. I sound like a girl. I smell like a girl. Because I am a girl."

He continued to look uncomfortable. "Nevertheless, you will do as I have said."

I grinned at him. "The boys' bathroom?" I got up and opened the door and made a clucking sound at two boys who were walking down the hall. They stopped and stuck their heads into the office. "Mr. Mendez tells me I gotta use the boys' room. Either of you interested in comin' along to see whether I'm a pointer or a setter? After that, we'll run along to the gym and you can see me in the pool, topless."

They grabbed my arm and started to hustle me off down the hall, and the boys from shop class, who were there that year, too, forgot all about their lamp made from a bowling pin and came along behind. That did it. Mr. Mendez ran after us and grabbed me and brought me back into his office. He and I had obtained an uneasy truce that day; I was allowed to be me, so long as I did not actually wear a skirt or a dress and was not deliberately outrageous with my makeup or hair or behavior. I was not to use either the boys' or girls' restrooms; instead, I was given a key to the faculty

continued next page

The Problem. . .

lounge so I could use the one-seater in there. All-in-all, I couldn't have asked for more. Sure, he had sent me home for three days for sassing Miss MacKenzie, but that was because of my smart mouth and my cheap shot at her. For the most part, I had lived up to my end of the bargain, and he to his. Now, he was reading her the riot act.

"Leoretta, it avails us nothing to persecute this child. Please take her back and try, just try, to teach her a little English. Call her by whatever name she wants. It won't hurt anything. Be a teacher. Teach. And you—" he looked at me heavily—"If I hear of you doing anything else to antagonize Miss MacKenzie, I will require you to cut your hair before returning to school."

Well, I could have had it lots worse. Having to stay after school is no fun, but it beats having to explain to Pa why I got suspended. Pa is a liberal man with a belt or a razor strap.

Every day at lunchtime, Johnny Ray sits down across the table from me and eats his food and part of mine. He's done it since third grade. His Jetsons lunch box long ago gave way to an Igloo Lunchmate which would hold even Jethro Bodine's meal. Johnny is a big eater—he was even when we were playing doctor in the ravine behind the playground. At five-six and three hundred pounds, Johnny has turned into a real four-by-four. He was always chubby, but something has happened in the past year or so to make him puff up like a marshmallow man. It's my fault that he's as big as he is, and if he should up and kick off like Uncle Bob, why, I would feel right guilty about it.

Johnny Ray is just a miserable person. He could sit anywhere in the lunchroom, but he delights in tormenting me, keeping my friends away. I think he lives vicariously through me, for he always wants to know who I've seen and what I've done. And about two years ago, he turned nasty—his interest took on sexual overtones. He stared lurking about in the bushes and trying to rape me, and nearly succeeding. That's when I decided I had

to do something about him.

Johnny looks at me like he looks at other girls, but he calls me Leroy. He gets worse and worse. "Howdy, Lee-roy," he says now. "That big Injun got any idea about the surprise you keep in your pants?" His cheeks are rosy, like two apples. He keeps his hair cut short in a burr, but he is looking more and more like a girl. It worries him, and it's why he's getting so fat—to cover up his breasts, which came out of nowhere last year and which keep getting bigger and which embarrass him to death in gym class.

Johnny eats fast, all business. Like he has done every schoolday since we were in the third grade, he picks up my carton of milk and drinks it dry. He is always messing in my food, too. Today, he reaches into my salad and picks up a piece of carrot and licks the ranch dressing off it and puts in his mouth like a cigarette. I push the plate away from me with both hands, and he falls to, devouring what I have left unfinished.

Isigh. If Johnny has discovered where I work, he will have spread the news about my Problem. I dread the thought of going to work and facing the music. "That's between me and Bobbo Joe," I tell him.

"That boy got some kind infatuation with you," Johnny leers.

"Don't you dare be hanging out at that truck stop," I tell him. "I'm already driving far enough as it is without you getting me fired so I'll have to go further."

"Them truck drivers," he muses. "Do they kiss on you and stuff?"

"Johnny Ray, you mind your affairs and I'll mind mine."

"Do you play with your titties?"

I look at him. "Do you play with yours?"

That gets him. He turns red in the face and gets up and staggers off.

Johnny's mother has had him to the doctor, who can't figure out why he's developing in the way he's developing. I know; the reason is in my purse.

When I was thirteen years old, Ma started having hot flashes. It was a miserable time around the house, with her bitching and moaning and telling us

how lucky men (meaning me and Pa) were to not have the change of life. Doc Johnson put her in the hospital and took out her female organs and ordered up some little purple pills for her. Since they weren't pain pills and didn't do anything for her nerves, she soon forgot about them. But I knew that they were female hormones. I went to the library at the state university and found a big reference book that told about all kinds of medicine and read up on estrogens and what they did, and right then and there I decided that they were for me. I was carrying one of her pills in a baggie in my pocket so that I could match it up with the pictures in the book. I went right into the men's room and into the stall and sat there and swallowed that pill. My hand was shaking so badly that I almost dropped it.

About a month later, I took the empty bottle to the pharmacist, and he refilled it. After a while, I guess, he knew it wasn't Ma that was taking the pills, but he didn't say anything; he just kept refilling the prescription. It was hard to find money to keep myself in medicine, but after I ran out one time and the physical wheels started spinning in the opposite direction, towards boyhood, I always managed to find the money. Mostly, I babysat or did housework, but I've not been above mowing yards or weeding gardens or doing other hot and sweaty work to pay for the magic that I found in that bottle. When I turned sixteen I went to work as a waitress, and that solved my money problems.

Now, thirteen year-old-boys don't look all that different from thirteen-year-old girls, at least if they haven't gone into puberty. I hadn't. I had a high voice and not even a single pubic hair. Within a month or so after I started taking Ma's pills, I went into adolescence, only it wasn't boy-type changes I went through, but girl-like changes. Because of the way I had dressed and acted and worn my hair, I had sometimes been thought to be a girl, but six months after I started taking those pills, there wasn't any doubt what I was. My hips swelled up and my nipples got tender and my waist drew in and I plumb turned into a young

Angela Gardner

Queen of the Night

Come explore the East Coast club scene with our new editor.

All dressed up and no where to go? This column will help you out... out the door and down the street... to party! Since I live on the East Coast, I'll start my bi-monthly tour of the "IN" spots in the hippest spot on the EC, New York.

The club scene in New York City changes monthly, sometimes weekly. A club that welcomes crossdressers one month may go through a management change and adopt a No-CD policy overnight. Clubs that do welcome crossdressers may have certain nights when the crowd is more accepting than others. It's a good idea to call a club before you go.

As I strike the keys of my trusty word processor, the place to be in the Limelight. This converted church as Sixth Ave. and Twentieth St. has been around for years. One of its founding owners was Andy Warhol. Way back in the old days, when I had just stopped wearing hair from K-Mart, the Limelight was the first mostly-straight club I ever went to in a dress. Since those days, the tides of

hipness have waxed and waned at the Limelight. One evening, about four years ago, some friends and I were turned away, but things are shifting again and I have been welcomed at the door and admitted ahead of people waiting at the rope.

Wednesday night is "Disco 2000" at the Limelight. It's a night with the theme "anything goes." The mixed crowd of straight, gay, TV, TS and the unidentified wear it all, from black club-clothes to the outre attire of "Dan, the Naked Man" who lives up to his name (with the exception of platform heels, a charming hat and some wisps of diaphanous fabric). The crowd arrives late and parties till around four in the a.m. The large dance floor in the main part of the church pumps with house and industrial music. Fashion shows and special appearances by recording artists and rising stars are featured on a stage that sits where the altar used to be. Voyeurs can watch the action on the dance floor and get a closer look at the dancers suspended from the ceiling in go-go cages by climbing up to the encircling balconies.

After a stroll around the main dance floor, I usually stop by the Ladies Room to freshen up. Sometimes the drag queens out-number the real women by better than two to one. Jennifer, the prettiest ladies room attendant I know oversees the scene in the bathroom. If you stop by, say hello and if you use any of her cosmetics and beauty aids, be sure to leave a generous tip.

With my beauty bolstered, I drift to the back of the club. Downstairs, in the old chapel, is a club within the

club. A DJ spins oldies from the eighties like Madonna, the B-52s, Prince and other danceable pop. There is a large bar presided over by one of New York's most theatrical drags — Miss Olympia. One night her lips were glowing chartreuse in the black lights. This area is mostly gays, crossdressers and the hippest straights — no Guidos allowed!

If you exit from the rear of the chapel you find many little rooms with small dance floors and places to sit and make out. I haven't seen them all but I've snaked my way through the maze to find the VIP room located in the church's old library. The VIP room used to be all comfy seating with background music but they've changed it into another dance floor where VIPs can get away from the lesser folks for some privacy. Fortunately your party dress and pumps make you an important enough person to enter this inner sanctum.

The activity is about the same on Friday night when the theme is "Mea Culpa." There are more of every kind or person there on Fridays and it's plenty crowded on Wednesdays.

Well, that's all the space I get for this issue. In closing, here's a word about the long awaited re-opening of the best TV nightspot in New York City, Club Edelweiss. Back in November they closed with a promise to open soon at a new location, right across from the Limelight on twentieth. The club is still not open, but it has a lovely awning! They also have an info number, 212•255•2829, with a recording that assured me the club will open in the near future. Til then, I'll see you in the clubs. ♣

Resources

Resource listings are free. If you'd like your group or business listed. Please let us know. This list is accurate at the time of publication. Please send an SASE when writing to these folks.

• National Organizations •

International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778, Publishes *TV/TS Tapestry*. Reprints and books on TV/TS subjects, other info. 617-899-2212.

Outreach Institute, 405 Western Ave., Suite 345, So. Portland, ME 04106. General TV/TS information for personal and professional use. Hard to find books.

Renaissance Education Association, Inc., Box 552, King of Prussia, PA 19406, 215-630-1437, \$12 associates fee includes monthly newsletter. Background Papers on TV/TS issues for personal and professional use. Speakers Bureau. Inquire about new chapters.

Society for the Second Self (SSS), Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275. Organization for Hetero-TV's only. Publishes "Femme Mirror." See chapters listed below.

• Organizations by State •

City, Name, Address, Zip

Alabama

Huntsville, Sigma Rho

Gamma, Box 16174, 35802

Arizona

Tempe, Alpha-Zeta, Box 24459, 85285

Tempe, A Rose, Box 24623, 85285-4623

California

Anaheim, PPOC, Box 9091, 92812

Concord, DVG, Box 272885, 94527

Duarte, CHIC (f), Box 562, 91010

L.A., Androgyny, PO Box 480740, 90048

L.A., Alpha SSS (f), Box 36091, 90036

Sacramento, Sacto. Gender Assoc., Box 215456, 95821

San Diego, Neutral Corner, Box 12581, 92112

San Francisco, ETVG, Box 426486, 94142-64861

San Jose, Rainbow Gender Assoc., Box 700730, 95170

Connecticut

Farmington, Conn. Outreach Soc, Box 163, 06034

Hartford, The XX Club, (TS), PO Box 387, 06141-0387

Colorado

Denver, Gender Identity Center Inc., 3715 West 32nd Ave, 80211

Northern & Southern Colo., call 303-458-5378

Florida

Hollywood, Serenity, Box 307, 33022

Miami, Animas, Box 420309, 33242

Winter Park, Phi Epsilon Mu, Box 3261, 32790

Georgia

Atlanta, Sigma Epsilon, Box 250481, 30325

Decatur, AEGIS (TS), Box 33724, 30033-0724

Hawaii

Honolulu, Hawaii TG Outreach, 777 Kapiolani Blvd., Ste 3114, 96813

Illinois

Chicago, Chicago Gender Society, Box 578005, 60657

Washington, Centr Ill. Gender Assoc., Box 126, 61517

Wood Dale, Chi Chapter, Box 40, 60191

Indiana

Indianapolis, IXE, Box 20710, 46220

Iowa

Cedar Rapids, Iowa Artistry, Box 75, 52406-0075

Kansas

Kechi, Wichita Transgender Alliance. Box 315, 67067

Overland Park, Crossdressers & Friends, Box 4092, 66204

Shawnee Mission, Gender Dysphoria, Box 15561, 66215

Louisiana

New Orleans, Tri Delta Chi, Box 870213, 70187

Massachusetts

Woburn, Tiffany Club, Box 2283, 01888

Worcester, Images (TS), 2 Hathaway St., 01610

Michigan

Grand Rapids, IME W. Michigan, Box 1153, 49501

Royal Oak, Crossroads, Box 1245, 48068

Warren, Up Town Girls, 21823 Van Dyke, 48089

Minnesota

Minneapolis, CLCC, Box 16265, 55416

St. Paul, MFGG, Box 17945, 55117

Mississippi

Jackson, Beta Chi, Box 31253, 39206

Missouri

Belton, Kappa Gamma Mu, Box 98, 64012

St. Louis, St. Louis Gender Found'n, Box 9433, 63117

Nebraska

Council Bluffs, RCGA, Box 680, 51502

New Mexico

Albuquerque, Fiesta!, 8200 Montgomery NE #241, 87109

New Jersey

Mays Landing, Renaissance SJ, Box 189, 08330

Red Bank, MOTG, Renaissance Affil., Box 8243, 07701

Teaneck, The Gathering (TS), PO Box 284, 07666

Trenton, Sigma Nu Rho, Box 9255, 08650

New York

Albany, TGIC, Box 13604, 12212

Brooklyn, GNO, Box 369, 11235

Hempstead, LIFE, Box 31, 11551

Mountainville, Chi Delta Mu, Box 93, 10953

New York City, CDI, PO Box 29, 10021

New York City, MetroGender, Box 45, 561 Hudson St., 10014

Rochester, CD•Network, Box 92055, 14692

Syracuse, EON Inc., 523 W. Onondaga St., 13204

Tillson, Transgender Network, Box 177, 12486-0177

North Carolina

Charlotte, CTA, PO Box 25100, Ste 188, 28229-5100

Charlotte, Kappa Beta, Box 12101, 28220

Ohio

Cincinnati, Cross-Port, Box 12701, 45212

Elyria, Alpha-Omega, Box 954, 44036

Parma, Paradise Club, Box 29564, 44129

Reynoldsburg, Crystal Club, Box 287, 43068

Oregon

Portland, NW Gender Alliance, Box 4928, 97208.

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Pennsylvania

Harrisburg/York, Renaissance LSV Box 2122, 17105
Phila., Renaissance GP, Box 530, Bensalem, 19020
Pittsburgh, TransPitt, Box 3214, 15230

Puerto Rico

Bayamon, Found'n for Adv. Puerto Rico Sisters, Calle 2, #288, Forrest Hills, 00959

Texas

Alief, Tau Chi, Box 1105, 77411
Arlington, Delta Omega, Box 1021, 76004

Bulverde, Eta Tau, Box 17, 78163

Houston, Gulf Coast TV Chapter, Box 90335, 77090

Riesel, TriPlex Gender Assoc., Box 381, 76682

San Angelo, Heart of Texas NW, Box 30413, 76903

San Antonio, B&P Society, Box 700042, 78270-0042

Utah

Salt Lake City, Alpha Rho Provesta, Box 26711, 84126

Virginia

Arlington, DCEA, Box 16036, 22215

Richmond, Virginia's Secret, Box 34631, 23234

West Virginia

Huntington, Trans-WV, Box 2322, WV 25724

Washington

Seattle, Emerald City, Box 31318, 98103

Wyoming

Call 303-458-5378

•Canadian•

Cornbury Society, Box 3745, Vancouver, B.C. V6B-3Z1

Gender Mosaic, Box 7421, Ottawa, Ontario, K1L-8E4
Monarch Social Club, Mississauga A Box 386, Mississauga, Ontario L5A 3A1
Canadian Crossdressers' Club Inc., 429C Dundas St. E, Toronto, Ont., M5A-2A9

•Overseas•

Australia, Seahorse Society, GPO Box 2337V, Melbourne, Victoria

Australia, Elaine Barrie Project, Box 405, Altona, Victoria 3018

Denmark, FPE-NE, Boks 192, DK-2600, Glostrup

England, TransEssex, Box 3, Basildon, Essex, SS14-1PT

England, Rose's Club, Box 339, Sheffield, S1-3SX

France, Assoc. Beaumont Con-inentale, 2rue des Charpentiers, 68270 Wittenheim

Germany, Transidentitas, Postfach 10 10 46, 6050 Offenbach

New Zealand, TransCare, PO Box 2983, Wellington

Norway, FPE-NE, Postboks 1968 Vika N 0125, Oslo 1

Scotland, ADF Editorial Svcs, Rullochvenus House, Lumphanan, Aberdeenshire, AB31-4RN,

South Africa, Phoenix Society, Box 21163, 7502 De Tigger

Sweden, FPE-NE, Box 11107, S-500, 11 Boras

Sherman Oaks, Lydia's TV Fashions, 13837 Ventura Blvd., Suite 2, 91423

Tustin, Versatile Fashions, Box 1051, 92681

Colorado
Denver, Energy Expressions (transform'ns) 303-733-4328

Connecticut
Greenwich & New Haven, Jane Doyle Electrology, 203-869-2323 or 203-734-5408

Illinois
Chicago, Divine Abundance, PO Box 148432, 60614

Massachusetts
Waltham, Vernon's, 386-EF Moody St., 02254

New York
NYC, Mardi Gras Boutique, 400 W. 14th St. at 8th Ave.

Pennsylvania
Jenkintown, Laine Alexander Image Consult, 215-635-8858

Upper Darby, Marilyn's Wigs, 215-446-0799

Virginia
Arlington, Baroness Prod'ns, CD Services, 202-686-4774

Arlington, Jacqueline Urania, CD Services, 301-499-4297

Falls Church, Feminine Mystique, 202-686-4853

Canada
Toronto, Wildside, TV Boutique, 416-864-0420

Owen Sound, FantasyLand, TV Boutique, 274 8th St. E., Box 682, Ontario, N4K-5R4

•Recurring Events•

Be All You Can Be Weekend, '93 in Chicago in early June, contact Paradise Club, Crossroads, Trans-Pitt or Chi.
California Dreamin, in the Los Angeles area in early June, contact PPOC.

Esprit, in the Northwest in late May, contact NWGA or Emerald City.

Fantasia Fair, up to 10 days, late October, in Provincetown, Mass. Contact the Outreach Institute.

IFGE Convention, once a year in March/April, '93 in Philadelphia, '94 in Seattle. Contact I.F.G.E.

On The Scene Nite, 2nd. Saturday each month at the Queen Mary, Studio City, Calif. (818) 506-5619.

Paradise in the Poconos, 4days/3nights, in May and in September, in the Pa. Poconos. Contact CDS.

Southern Comfort, in early October in Atlanta, Ga., contact Sigma Epsilon.

Texas "T" Party, in late February in San Antonio, Tex., contact B&P Society.

Tiffany Club Spring/Fall Provincetown Outings, twice a year in Oct & June. Contact Tiffany Club.

•Gender Dysphoria Programs

Minnesota

Minneapolis, Eli Coleman, Ph.D., 1300 S. 2nd St., Ste 180, 55454, (612) 625-1500



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The Problem...

woman— except that I had the aforementioned Problem. I had been hoping that it would sort of dwindle away and leave me with the other thing, but it persisted in staying the same while everything else was changing.

One night at the supper table I announced that I had changed my name to Laura Ann and that I was a girl. Pa leaned across the table and smacked me with the back of his hand and told me to go to my room. I lay on the bed and cried for a while. When I finally wound down, I sat up, and there on my dresser was one of Pa's paperback westerns. The cover showed a bunch of indians in warpaint, dancing around a fire. I stared at it for a long, long time, and then piled all my boys' clothes, including the ones I was wearing, on the bed and gathered up the sheet around them and threw them out

the window. I jumped out after them, stark naked, and dragged them into the back yard and siphoned some gasoline from Pa's Buick and used the cigarette lighter to set a piece of paper aflame. I walked over and stooped and set the clothes afire. By the time Pa noticed the flames and came running out of the house, the flames were ten feet high. Everything was burned to cinders.

I got a good larruping, but the next morning, when I showed up at breakfast in a pink blouse and girls' jeans (Clorinda's castoffs), little was said. I never wore boys' clothes again. Any that showed up I razored into confetti or burned. I would get whipped and warned never to do it again, but I continued, and after a while, Ma stopped buying them.

Pa thrashed me when I got after my eyebrows, and again when I had my ears pierced, and more than once for wearing dresses and skirts, and they threw away

my hormone pills whenever they could find them, and once Ma snuck into my room and cut off all my hair, which just made me look like a bald-headed girl. They had me to the family doctor, who was at a loss about what was going on and just said that I must be a hermaphrodite—the word he used was 'morphodite. The principal of the junior high, from which I had been suspended for refusing to cut my hair, told them to take me to Doc Symmons, the shrink, who I've been seeing ever since. That was all they could think to do, and at his recommendation, they've pretty much let me be a girl— not that they have much choice about it, 'cause I am what I am and I want what I want.

It was funny how people reacted to the change. Folks who I met for the first time saw nothing unusual about me and

continued next page

The Problem...

treated me like any other girl. When I went back to school after summer vacation, wearing a skirt and makeup and with my hair permed, people didn't even recognize me, and treated me like a girl. They were shocked when they found out who I was. I looked so much like a girl that even the ones who were hateful tended to forget I wasn't one. After a while, everyone got so they pretty much took my appearance for granted, but most people refused to call me Laura Ann or refer to me with female pronouns. I believe things would have eventually worked out if it hadn't been for the everpresent Johnny Ray, keeping things stirred up.

In my purse I carry a little mortar and pestle that I borrowed from chemistry class. Every morning, just before lunch, I go into the stall in the girls' room and take two of the little purple pills and grind them up into powder and pour the powder into one of Mom's Goody papers. When I get to the lunchroom, I empty the paper into my milk and stir it with my straw so that everything dissolves. As I am finishing my meal, Johnny comes into the lunchroom and drinks the milk. Invariably. He never forgets. Five days a week, for more than a year now, he has been getting enough female hormones to feminize a tree stump.

Johnny Ray is going through the same kinds of changes that I did, and it's scaring him to death. He's eating like a pig to cover up his chest, trying to keep anyone from finding out about it. He doesn't have any idea why it's happening. He hates it, but if he hadn't started trying to rape me, I wouldn't have to put pills in my milk (which he has no right stealing, anyway), and he would grow up to be a man instead of whatever it is I am turning him into.

I should probably hate myself for what I've done to Johnny Ray, but I don't. He's getting exactly what he deserves. It's just deserts for the miserable things he's done to me over the years.

... to be continued.

Library Lady ...

ing and authentic. We also learn that contrary to what everyone has assumed, it was Sam who took in Sharon and saved her life.

I'm going to be a long time forgiving these guys for killing Sam off, but I'll also be thankful to them for creating her in the first place.

Now, to our honorable mention category. These are books and stories that do not have a transgendered theme but that nevertheless have at least one character or scene that is of interest to transgendered people. This issue's nominee is *The Nanotech Chronicles* by Michael Flynn.

The hook here is nanotechnology, the idea of using programmed molecules to create or restructure things on an atomic level. Flynn uses the idea of employing nanotech manipulation of DNA to rebuild human bodies. In one horrifying story in this collection, a grief-stricken scientist saves a bag-lady from death and then proceeds to transform her into his dead wife.

In *The Warehouse*, a group of young street punks seek out an illegal house of transformation. One of them has himself made over into a woman, only to be brutalized by his "friends."

Enough fiction! On to history. I am pleased to report that an English translation of Magnus Hirschfield's *Die Transvestiten* (*The Transvestites*) is now available. For those of you who have never heard of Herr Doktor Hirschfield, he's the man who invented the word "transvestite" in this book first published in 1910. Hirschfield was also one of the pioneers of both modern sexology and gay liberation. Himself an admitted homosexual, and a reputed cross-dresser, he tirelessly put himself on the line for the legal rights of gays in Imperial Germany, only to be finally driven out by the Nazis.

The Transvestites was his seminal work on crossdressers, gay and straight. At its publication, it was a

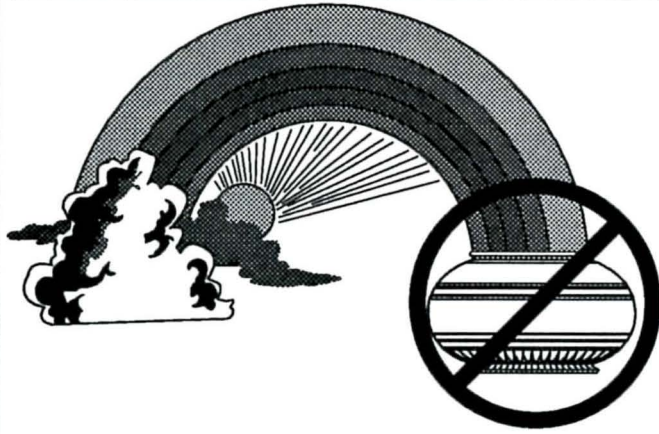
landmark. Granted that after all this time, some of his theories are out of date, but the case histories detailing the lives of both male and female transvestites and transsexuals offer an invaluable perspective. For that matter, one account of a TV's afternoon out as a woman in Berlin in 1909 sounds a lot like some of my experiences in Albuquerque in 1989. Then there's the autobiographical passages from Ulrich von Lichtenstein, a medieval German knight who — I swear this is historical fact — ran around dressed as the goddess Venus and challenging every knight he met to a duel.

Finally, for this installment, we look at *Dressing Smart* by Pamela Satran. The book is billed as a "thinking woman's guide to style." I prefer to think of it as an advanced course in dressing.

The book is divided into sections covering work, men, money, shopping, sex and kids as they affect women's fashion. Each section includes at least one interview with a working woman about her clothes, and one or more emotional issues, such as little girls' addiction to frilly lace, the power of lingerie, and why some clothes make you feel more successful.

This book won't tell you how to find your dress size or what color goes with what. What it will give you is the 6-foot pediatrician in Florida to the 5-foot 2-inch newspaper editor/mother in St. Louis, talking about what they really wear for their work and lives and why; how to spot a truly great pair of dress pumps when you see them; really frank discussion of why you hate to shop; how to survive 109 degree day in style; why you should never wear dangling earrings around two-year-olds; and why men never notice their girlfriend's clothes.

In short, it may just tell you more about how to approach dressing as an authentic woman than any other source you are likely to find. ♣



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Hot Stuff

- Take a hint from days gone by for summer makeup — smoky steel gray eyeshadow, ebony mascara & fire engine red lipstick applied over lightly tanned skin looks gorgeous.
- With the return of Batman to the silver screen in the Return of Batman, every femme will want to emulate the fatale of Michelle Pfeiffer who looks most felicitous in her catsuit as Cat Woman. In fact, catsuits seem to be a really hot fashion item this season, but only if you have a to-die-for body.
- There is little that can add more beauty to a face than a winning smile and the secret to a winning smile is white teeth. Hence the explosion of teeth whiteners on the market. The FDA is reviewing all peroxide based whiteners. The fed says these products are drugs while the manufacturers say they're cosmetics.
- A makeup artist friend mentioned using blush as an eyeshadow. The FDA (are they here again?) says this is a no-no! The materials used in most blushes are not approved for the eye area. There are exceptions, however (aren't there always exceptions!?) — Estée Lauder Just Blush Eye & Cheek Powder, Clinique Beyond Blusher and Max Factor Shadow Sweep.
- It's a simple law of thermodynamics darlings. If calories OUT are greater than calories IN, you lose weight. Well, it's not quite that simple, but you get the idea. So, what does it take to lose one pound of Ugly Fat? — about 3000 calories. Know how long it takes to burn 3000 calories? Here are some typical exercises and their burn rate in calories per hour: Swimming — 450, Bicycling — 350, Tennis — 300, Rollerblading — 300 to 500, Walking — 250. Phew!
- "Avoid hormones, get implants" seemed really good advice less than a year ago. But now the FDA (are they still here?) says silicone breast implants are no-no's too. What's a guy-girl to do? Not to panic, sweetums. The saline filled prostheses are still available and approved by the fed.
- Many of our girls opt for electrolysis regardless of their status as a TV or TS. It just beats shaving all to hell. But there are some drawbacks to electrolysis. It takes a long time. It can be painful. Only a small area can be done at one time. About 50% of treated hair will grow back after one treatment. And, rates can vary widely from \$40/hour to over \$100/hour.
- Do you dress your age? Here's some thought on hot styles. Mini skirts — perfect if you're 20, okay if you're 30, pushin' it if you're 40. But, if you've got nice legs and it's not too short, go for it. Leather — the Biker look is okay for 20's, but 30's and 40's should strive for a more classic style, like leather slacks and a sweater. Spandex — you need to have the body for this material. A catsuit is fine in your 20's, but older women should opt for leggings and long sweaters. Some clothes are so classic they have no age limit: a sheath dress, blazer, white shoes, trousers and loafers.
- Chocaholics Rejoice! Mars Candy has introduced a lite version of one of their most popular candy bars. The Milky Way II has 25% fewer calories than a regular Milky Way. But tasters say the new bar tastes as good as the original.
- It ain't Valentine's Day but the Cupid's Bow is on every woman's lips. With all the yakkity-yak about implants (silicone and otherwise) Lip Plump from Henri Bendel could be the lift you've been looking for — it's supposed to fill in creases and contours temporarily.
- Can't decide what the right skirt length is? Norma Kamali has the answer, three lengths: sixteen inches (tres short), twenty inches (apres knee), and thirty-four (mid-calf). On the other hand Geoffrey Beene says "short" for everything. Mr. Beene doesn't have to bend over in a skirt though, does he ladies?
- Avon Calling? Nope, it's the other way 'round. Now you can order Avon cosmetics by mail, phone, fax, or thru their reps. Just call 1-800-858-8000 and Avon will send you their new catalog — then it's up to you.
- I wanna know who in the hell pays \$500 for a tank dress?
- The executive woman wears a certain scent and a certain nail color — if "executive" is your style, then try White Linen, Navy or Colors de Benetton perfume with Maybelline Creme Soda, Lancome Coquille Rosé or Clarion's Sea Shell nail colors.
- Gender bias exists, even when it's not specifically mentioned, according to a study by Mykol Hamilton at Centre College in Kentucky. Doc. Hamilton showed that even when men heard gender-neutral language they tended to supply the bias themselves, masculine, of course.
- A study performed by the RAND think-tank and published in the May Journal of Sex Research (Quad-S) indicates that even though 1 in 8 men had 1 or more homosexual experiences, only 1 in 22 thought of himself as bisexual. Hell, we coulda told 'em that. How many times have you met a TV that swears he's straight but gets it in with another guy.
- Listen to this! Good looking women may have a difficult time in the job market. Recruiters are concerned about sexual harassment lawsuits. Now that's "lookism" at it's worst.
- Oh, oh! First Sinead O'Connor. Now Sigourney Weaver. If this trend catches on we're in trouble. Weaver went near-bald for ALIEN³ and look where it got her character. Quickie quiz: What is Ripley's first name? First correct answer in the ITS mailbox wins a prize. I have no idea what, but it'll be nice.

Personal TranScript...

tion of a Magic Spell, Royal Guards, and a surrounding moat.

As the curtain closes on the high-kicking dancers and changelings cheerfully frozen in the background, a thunderous cheer vibrates through the Castle. "Click-click, clatter-clatter, thud-thud," is all the changeling hear as they race into the dressing room, oblivious to everything other than changing their wings. And in too little time they hear: "Line up!" And they do so while tying shoe laces, adjusting headbands, whispering and giggling among themselves. One by one they are introduced and sashay across the stage, zigging and zagging and returning to the dressing room, where they fling off their Activewear colors and scramble into Talent costumes, adding makeup and accessories under the watchful face of the clock: "Tick-Toc, never stop."

One by one they perform their routines in the dazzling spotlights, virtually blind to the celebrants in the cavernous darkness, for the changelings are wrapped in an Inner Circle within The Circle. One by one they finish, gracefully exit, and dash madly into the dressing room, "Click-click, clatter-clatter, ha-ha, chatter-chatter." The very air is charged with a swirling dance of molecules that provide inspiration, and a helping hand whenever a changeling finds a stubborn zipper, a broken nail, an impossible clasp. All problems have a solution, the changelings are ready and lining up, but Time, that relative quality, has stopped.

The unfolding spectacle of the whole Pageant, from which the changelings have been insulated—the intervening acts; the introductions of celebrities; the Debutante presentations—has brought them to: The Intermission.

Billie Jean slips out of the inner Circle and wanders through the Castle among the colorful and exotic revelers. She realizes that she has missed the "show." Several people tell her it has been wonderful; she finds many "old

friends" and they exchange greetings, and a few tell her that her pink house slippers do not go with her gorgeous gown. A hand closes on her arm: "There you are." She is led back to the dressing room by an emissary of Stephanie, who says, "Don't wander off."

The changelings line up and one by one they slink and strut across the stage and pose; out the runway and pose; turn and pose; exit. They remain in their gowns during a series of performances, and are brought back on stage as a group one more time to enthusiastic applause. The curtains close, the changelings group backstage for individual awards.

Curtain opens, and the judges award Talent to Lauren, Best Legs (Activewear) to Billie Jean. The changelings select Evette as Miss Congeniality. Lights out.

The final five have been selected and are announced: Pammela, Leslie, Lauren, Shawna, Billie Jean. The Castle is rocking with whoops and cheers. Each takes her place, lining up on stage, and holding hands nervously, they realize the Circle has become smaller but the Bond remains. One by one they are called to select a sealed envelope containing a Final Question from the judges. Each answers and returns to The Line of Five. The judges pass judgement and forward a folded sheet of paper to the Mistress of Ceremonies who reads it and announces: "Second runner up, Leslie!" And the Line of Five is broken as Leslie steps forward, receives a huge bouquet of roses amidst waves of applause, cheers and whistles. She returns, and the MC announces: "First runner up, Lauren!" And again the Castle explodes in raucous accord. Lauren returns, the Castle quiets, the MC announces: "And the new Miss ETVC is— Billie Jean!"

A thunderous wave of applause, cheers, and shrieks rises from the heart of the Castle and cascades over a stunned changeling who manages to reach the podium and be crowned, laden with a huge bouquet along with a scepter, and is nudged to walk out the runway in an explosion of strobe lights,

to be received as Miss ETVC 92/93.

Frantic photographers gather the three at center stage as a crowd of Castle celebrants surges forward and fills the space. Billie Jean sees Cinderella and Rosemarie, both covered with lipstick, arms wrapped around each other and laughing madly. She waves them over and they all embrace, laughing and babbling in the flashing lights.

Aftermath

After a million photographs and a long line of revelers parading congratulations, Miss ETVC changes into a little black cocktail dress, and with Rosemarie and Cinderella, departs the nearly deserted Castle, which is being returned to its former status as the California Club, for the 26th floor suite that has been rented for an After Cotillion Party. There, the Circle reunites, much pizza arrives, several bottles of champagne are opened, and all is consumed with great gusto. Many brightly colored gift bags containing treasures appear and are presented to each of the changelings. Congratulations, much good cheer and conversation is abundant for all who flow in and out of the remaining vestiges of the Magic Spell.

At 2 AM, Cinderella retires to the bedroom with a headache. Later, Rosemarie guides Billie Jean to the picture windows overlooking the lights and silhouettes of the Big City by the Bay, and says: "Look." And they gaze at the lights and shapes that stretch to the glistening bay, "Tonight, you own this City." "I am but a tiny part," Billie Jean answers holding a giddy Rosemarie.

And even later, after waking Cinderella, as they are gathering their treasures and belongings to depart, someone asks: "So, Billie Jean, what do you do in real life?"

Pausing for a moment, Miss ETVC finds the answer: "This is my real life."

"My name is Billie Jean

Living dreams is my main scene

I can do the dishes and laundry, too

—To my own self, I try to be true.

I have a hope here deep in my heart,

May all of you find—

Light in the Dark!" ❁

Letters...

what you are trying to read, so perhaps I shouldn't blame her.)

This demise might be bad news for today's crossdresser but there is an upside to it; simultaneously with the reduction of visible [gender] differences, we would be eliminating the sociological expectations and requirements too. When that occurs, we would end up just being human beings not boys/men and girls/women, though naturally we would remain males and females.

I hope the above may explain more clearly what I thought I had said in the first article.

I expected there would be those who disagreed. What I didn't expect was a mean spirited, vitriolic, accusative attack on me personally. A difference of opinion is to be expected and should be taken in good part by anyone who writes for a publication. But the validity of that difference is obscured when it is intertwined with a personal attack on the motives, experiences, intelligence and good intentions of the original author.

I expect I should apologize to the reader for going into so many of the points that Tracy made and I shouldn't bore the reader by trying to counteract all the ridiculous accusations made against me. But how would you react to an out and out attack against you and all that you had done and had stood for? While I don't want to give Tracy further ammunition for the accusations, I can't refrain from stating that I have written more, lectured more, published more and educated more on this same dichotomy, not to speak of having lived it more, than she will probably do in her lifetime. It is a little presumptuous for a person who doesn't indicate anything about her age, status, education, type of person — TV, TG, TS or whatever — to set herself up as such an authority that she can try to destroy the life work of someone else.

I want the reader to know that I do not regard myself as a "sacred cow." I have not asserted myself to be an authority, I simply think I have some important things to say and I say them. If others

regard me as an authority, and it is nice to know that some do, that is their statement not mine. Do any of the above quotes have any place in a simple, calm, dispassionate statement of a difference of opinion about my article? I think not. They are hurtful, insulting, virulent, vituperative, accusative and destructive of my reputation and position in this culture. I want you to know that not only are they untrue but they're expressions of personal animosity. I resent them deeply and I also resent that the Editor of this publication saw fit to give such a personal diatribe space in an otherwise above-board publication. I know that my friends in this culture will recognize the unfairness of much of the above, but what hurts is that many younger and newer members of it will read this drivel and believe that it properly describes me. I have given more years of service to this culture than anyone else and certainly more than Tracy ever will and to be pilloried like this in a public forum is both disgraceful and unfair.

If you have read both my *Death...* piece and the *Hairnet...* piece, I would like to get your opinion on both pieces. I am not asking for you to take sides or to support me, I would simply like your unbiased comments on both articles — either pro or con. My address is: Virginia Prince, Box 36091, Los Angeles, CA 90036.

[*Editor's Comment: It was not the intention of this magazine to engage in a personal assault on Virginia Prince, but to present an opposing view to some of her observations. We regret the pain and embarrassment to Dr. Prince caused by the article in question.*]

An Open Letter to Virginia

Yes, Virginia, we DO love you. No, you don't know who I am. We had lunch together in Houston but you were involved in a very meaningful discussion with JoAnn Roberts. We exchanged words several times in the Lobby Bar, touched in the reception line at the banquet and exchanged glances at breakfast on Sunday.

We love you because you challenge us to look at ourselves both individually and at the various segments of our com-

munity and ask questions about direction, identity, and what we really think. [Whether] I agree with your suggestions is of no matter. Am I bigendered? Maybe, maybe not. Some people have commented about your ideas in public press. They are challenging you back and it creates a healthy environment for all of us to grow and learn from those who are more experienced and educated.

Virginia... please continue to be Virginia. You started this community long before many of us were born and in an entirely different era. You have seen many changes and helped make a lot of them by being a mover and a shaker. Please continue to challenge us and don't be offended if we like to challenge you back and look at a different perspective.

Yes, Virginia, we do love you and I will be at the IFGE convention when you celebrate your 100th birthday.

S. Kristine James

Cross-Dressers International, PA

Caveman Mentality

Congratulations on having an interview with Tula. I was hoping you'd get the chance. I would caution her and others to watch out for which person you want to be on a talk-show with. I watched her on Donahue and thought that things went well. I've watched many talk shows where the guests were not treated fairly or the guests were poor examples of the TV-TS Community. One TV wore an outlandish outfit and exhibited very unusual ideas. Another was treated on Sally Jesse Raphael with Sally's typical "heighten and exploit the emotion" approach and it seems that almost none of these talk shows truly does the community justice. Trouble is, the real people we want to reach and change are the people who are farthest from civilized, refined thinking. I refer to the Neanderthal, that sub-primate among us who needs the most education. These bigoted, prejudiced, ignorant, conformist, misguided sons and daughters of apathy are the reason why civilization has progressed so slowly. Neanderthals,

continued on next page

Letters...

like the British Courts, won't let Tula express herself legally as the female she now is and always was.

Sincerely,
Pandora, CT

Move Over Ross Perot

This message affirms and — with consideration of transsexual concerns — expands the theme of the Archonist Epistle (ITS#3, March 1992). Our emerging Coalition offers (a) a broad and substantial platform incorporating transsexual concerns and (b) a symbolic candidate for President of the United States. We solicit the votes of readers of this publication for “Cheryl Andrea Bruhn.”

We represent the middle-class Multipartisan Coalition. Director Nelson is a Democratic Activist. Director Fischer is a Republican. Director Knaus is Regent of the Archonist Club. While we, like others, must censure various antics of some transsexuals and of many homosexuals, *we advocate decent treatment for properly acting persons of all categories.* We believe many readers of this publication share many concerns of the Multipartisan Coalition. We invite your support.

The middle-class is under siege! Politicians legislate increases in their salaries and their benefits. The Jewish lobby demands more and more for Israel. At our expense, undisciplined elements produce children whom they cannot support. AIDS-generating promiscuity, recently illustrated by “Uncle Eddie” Savits of Philadelphia, threatens us with additional costs of enormous magnitude. Many lobbies propose programs for which we must assume the burdens. Our resources are not infinite. We must present objections.

Beyond the fiscal concern, we also have values, beliefs and convictions. We can offer moral and ethical objections to various behaviors which translate into costs for taxpayers. While we do not seek the imposition of our morality upon others, we legitimately insist that they *NOT* burden us with the costs of their immorality. We are experiencing a rap-

ing of our sensibilities and our finances.

The Coalition also *recognizes — and opposes — societal mistreatment of properly behaving transsexuals.* We note that during an appearance on Donahue in 1991 Ms. Marjory Lorsch reported, “discrimination, harassment, and hostility.” We observe that — while known homosexuals sit, along with dishonest “normals,” in Congress, in state legislatures and on city councils — qualified transsexuals do not receive nominations for public office. In that regard, in November of 1992, a vote for “Cheryl Andrea Bruhn” for President will be a vote for constructive change.

Of course, our platform emphasizes issues of broader concern. We demand serious attention to our national debt, to the eventual consequences of unmanageable debt, and to the accordant need for fiscal sanity in government. We oppose aid to Israel and support Palestinian rights. We advocate proper constraints upon (1) irresponsible procreation by those who cannot support children and upon (2) AIDS transmitting promiscuity, heterosexual and homosexual, with particular attention to the likes of “Uncle Eddie” Savitz. We favor de-emphasis of sports in high schools, in colleges, and in broader society. As needs arise, we shall assume positions on other issues.

We anticipate that some may accuse us of “bigotry,” even “quasi-fascism.” We reject such allegations. We are standing for valid principles and for our rights.

Archonist Knaus now assumes the label of “lesbian-oriented transsexual” — without romantic interests in men and with an aversion to promiscuity. “She” assumes the role of “Cheryl Andrea Bruhn” and of candidate. “She” affirms the platform of the Coalition and the principles of the Archonists.

Democrat Nelson and Republican Fischer are normal, straight, family-oriented taxpayers. As members of the middle-class, they seek protection of their legitimate interests. They support “Cheryl Andrea” and the stated platform of the Coalition. Because they remain friends and political associates of a “lesbian-oriented transsexual,” they cannot qualify as “bigots,” or as “Nazis,” or as

“deviate bashers.”

The Coalition is not seeking and does not desire donations. We merely request votes for “Cheryl Andrea” and for the declared platform.

Although we reserve the right of actual selection, we shall seriously consider various suggestions for a candidate for Vice President.

Floyd. R. Nelson, Democratic Dir.
William L. Knaus, Archonist Regent
Geo. L. Fischer, Republican Dir.
St. Paul, MN

Got something to say but those other magazines think you're too controversial? Well, we'll probably think you're too tame, but send us your letter anyway. We want to know what you're thinking out there.

Address your letter To The Editor, c/o ITS, PO Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406-1263.

Q.W.W.S.M.M. . .

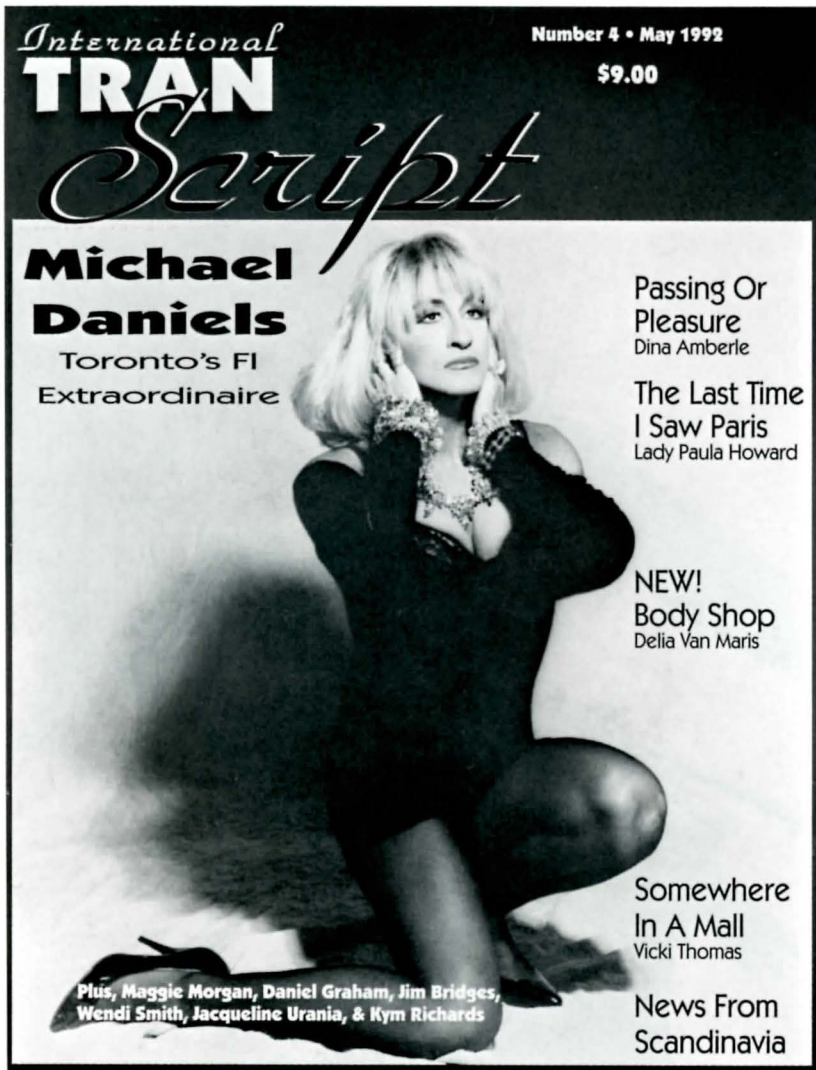
You choose a mini dress of your liking and you approach the petite sales lady as to where the dressing rooms are. Even though you're almost seven feet tall, 325 pounds and have a voice like a bassoon, the helpful clerk sees your badge and directs you accordingly. In case you still see some doubt in her eyes, you may throw in something like, “Could you also direct me to the Stayfree Maxi Pads.” This should ease her mind.

Yes, folks, if you come shopping with us, you can look or dress anyway you wish and no one will suspect a thing. Sure, there may be some whispers, but they'll be saying things like, “If I hadn't seen the badge myself, I too would have mistaken those ladies for men.”

In fact, the badge works so well that if you buy something for your wife, you'll have a hard time convincing the sales person that you're not a lesbian! ♀

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