

CROSS-TALK

The Gender Community's News & Information Monthly

#49

\$7.00



ARE WE TOO QUICK TO ACCEPT?

THE BENJAMIN STANDARDS: SAFEGUARD FOR CONSUMERS & CAREGIVERS

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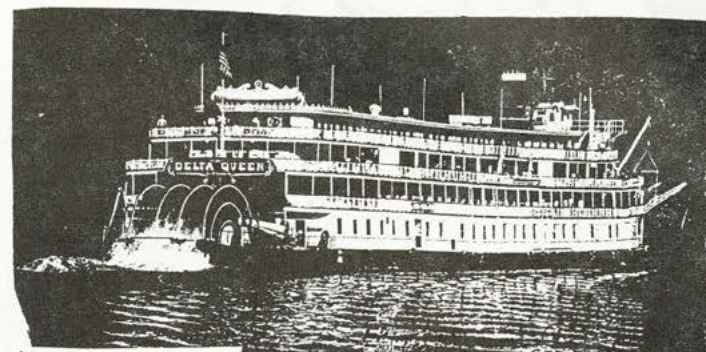
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CROSS-TALK

The Gender Community's News & Information Monthly

**NOVEMBER 1993
(ISSUE #49)**



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Cross-Talk (ISSN 1070-6852) is published monthly as an information and entertainment resource for the gender community. For subscription information, please see page 40. For information on advertising, please call (818) 776-8503.

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LOCALS
STUNNED

FROM ATHENS
FROM WASHINGTON

FROM
FROM

SAN FRANCISCO

The president of the Northern Ohio chapter of Tri-Ess has resigned, bringing to an end a protracted battle over the chapter's position on transsexual members.

Megan Parsons tendered her resignation at the September 11 meeting of Alpha Omega, according to the meeting minutes published in the chapter's newsletter *la femme Silhouette*. Parsons claimed that certain members usurped her ability to lead the chapter, but a vote of confidence taken at the meeting passed with only five votes and four abstentions. At issue was the question of allowing the founder of the chapter, Jennifer Higgins, to remain as a member of Alpha Omega even though she had announced her intent to pursue a transsexual course of action. Higgins, writing in *la femme Silhouette*, said "I had always known [Parsons] was in disagreement with Tri-Ess policy on transsexuals but I fully expected her to operate the chapter within the guidelines of our constitution regardless of her personal policies." Responding to Parsons' claim of members usurping her leadership, Higgins pointed out that the chapter's constitution requires all policies and activities to conform with Tri-Ess national policy. Parsons, after a vote at the May meeting approving the pursuit of Tri-Ess approval for transsexual membership, subsequently commented in the June newsletter that the chapter "had approved full membership for transsexuals and taken its first steps toward autonomy", making it appear that the chapter was defying Tri-Ess policy. Several Alpha Omega members "got nervous" after Parsons' announcement, according to Higgins.

Higgins pointed out that the chapter's constitution, which has been in effect essentially unchanged since 1988, would have become unconstitutional itself if Parsons' amendment (to allow full TS chapter membership) had passed.

Higgins says that although Tri-Ess does not allow full transsexual membership, she hoped that that might eventually change. However, she disagreed with Parsons' attempt to "force" the matter, in not operating within the chapter's constitution.

Alpha Omega vice-president Kristen Garret also tendered her resignation at the September 13 meeting, and has been temporarily replaced in that position by Charlotte [REDACTED]. The chapter announced that an emergency election would be held at the October meeting to fill the term of the presidency until March of next year.

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The national board of directors of Renaissance Education Association has lowered the requirements for organizations who wish to become affiliates.

The board decided to lower the minimum number of Renaissance members in an affiliate organization to three from five. Affiliates are still required to be non-profit, "open" organizations, and pay a one-time \$25 fee for a complete set of outreach bulletins, background papers, and affiliate chapter handbook developed by the national organization. Affiliates also receive a camera-ready copy of the Renaissance logo for use in stationery and newsletters.

Three organizations -- Carolina Trans-Sensual Alliance, Powder Puffs Of California, and Gulf Area Gender Alliance -- are presently considering affiliate status. Renaissance has three existing affiliates, as well as three full-fledged chapters in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

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A new set of standards of care for transsexualism, developed by the Health Law Project of the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP), has been released by ICTLEP Health Law Project Director Martine Aliana Rothblatt.

The new standards were developed in the wake of widespread dissatisfaction by many in the transsexual community with the Harry Benjamin International Standards of Care. The pending de-listing of transsexualism as a mental disorder in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostics and Statistical Manual* (DSM-IV) was also taken into account, according to Rothblatt.

Included in the ICTLEP standards is a requirement that a patient requesting surgery have undergone hormone therapy for at least one year prior to surgery; however, there is apparently no equivalent to the Benjamin Standards' one-year "real life test" (RLT). A standardized consent and waiver of liability form included with the ICTLEP standards, while acknowledging the hormone therapy requirement, also did not make reference to a RLT.

There has thus far been no reaction from the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association to the ICTLEP standards.

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Spouses/Partners International Conference for Education (SPICE), the Tri-Ess sponsored educational organization for the partners of crossdressers, has been invited to present the wives and partners program at the IFGE convention in March of next year, according to SPICE director Linda Peacock.

Writing in the SPICE newsletter *Sweetheart Connection*, Peacock says the SPICE board is

"currently working on the program and faculty", and hopes to have full details in the next newsletter.

The convention will take place in Portland, Ore., March 12 through 20.

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New telephone numbers have been announced for longtime gender community computer bulletin board Feminet.

After being off-line for almost a full weekend to allow for the laying down submersible marine phone and power cable, Feminet is now operating from sysop Beverly Copeland's sloop *Pyxis*, anchored approximately a quarter mile off Monterey Bay, Calif. New phone numbers are (408) 648-8734 for members, and (408) 648-8887 for new users.

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Northwest Gender Alliance (NWGA) has reaffirmed its commitment to transsexuals in the Portland (Ore.) area by forming a new TS sub-group.

According to a report in their newsletter of their September 7 board meeting, NWGA will maintain a list of TS members who will accept referrals from the main hotline and will sponsor a second monthly meeting for the operation of a TS peer support group. TS members would continue to hold full membership in NWGA, including access to its library, and would continue to receive its newsletter.

NWGA president Dana indicated that the board's action was intended to send a clear message to the local TS community that, although NWGA had drifted into a crossdresser orientation, it is still committed to serving all segments of the gender community. She also indicated that the Rose City Gender Center's requirement for certification of therapy has made it less accessible to "the person still trying to find him or herself". Dana said NWGA hopes to be able to better serve the TS community in the future.

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A interdisciplinary journal for persons working to end oppression on the basis of sexual identities has issued a call for articles from the gender community.

Empathy, edited by James T. Sears, Ph.D., which has been in publication for three years, intends to include articles by and about transgendered people in every future issue. Sears says he is looking for

HAVE YOU HAD A "REAL-LIFE" ADVENTURE THAT OTHERS CAN LEARN FROM?

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intelligently written articles on the ability to function in society without oppression regardless of sexual or gender identity.

AEGIS' Dallas Denny is acting as an acquisitions editor for the new semi-annual journal. Sears is the author of *Growing Up Gay In the South: Race, Gender, and Journeys of the Spirit*, and may be reached at P.O. Box 5085, Columbia SC 29250.

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IGTA UPDATE: We have made contact with the magazine *Kraximo* which represents a tiny Travesti group in Greece, operating as a satellite of the gay group in Athens. Editor Paulos Revenistis is looking for articles that show Tran identity as separate from gay identity; while he does not speak English, his non-Tran gay friend does. Please send any and all articles, newsletters, etc. to him directly at P.O. Box 4228, Athens 102 10 Greece.

Amnesty International's Jonathan Sugden was scheduled to be in Istanbul in September, looking into the Turkish GT group's situation, among other things. If he feels it necessary, he may try to get Demet Demir, whose plight I mentioned in **Cross-Talk** #36 over a year ago, out through consular assistance.

Contact has been established in Mexico and in Chile; the latter through Paz Errazuriz, a woman photojournalist who had an exhibition on Chilean Travesti three years ago in Australia. Both Mexico and Chile are working to establish Peruvian contact. There were 60 Travesti deaths reported in Peru last year.

GTA Latvia received a visit from Jenny Sand of FPE-NE earlier this year, but we still have difficulty making contact with individual members, which makes more difficult the task of obtaining resources to help them. (We have, thus far, not even been able to have contact with them via GTA Latvia leader Elga Remes.) We do know, from translation of an article in a Latvian sex newspaper I acquired, that there are at least ten TSs in that country awaiting surgery.

In Moscow, where Maggie Mankevich was profiled in *LadyLike* #16, she has now found a job with a famous actor/manager and attended rehearsals, but was temporarily laid off until a new show begins in September. Radio host Martin Reesink, who while at Moscow Radio was of great help to us, has now returned to Canada, and we are trying to locate him again.

My own mission to the Peoples' Republic of China was to take place sometime in October. (Although this appears in the November **Cross-Talk**, I am writing in late August and will miss the deadline for October's issue.) I will travel to China by way of Amsterdam, where I will meet with Professor Gooren and collect his data for the China presentation, as well as meet with Rachel Horsham, a TS activist from the U.K. who is presenting a court case in Strasbourg. I also plan stops in Germany, to collect data from the group there, and in Prague, where I hope to aid in the formation of a group there. (continued, page 18)



KYMBERLEIGH'S CLIPBOARD -- Kymberleigh Richards

Now that the highly charged political situation at the Tri-Ess chapter in northern Ohio has ended ("Newswire", page 2), I can finally break a self-imposed restriction -- due to my status as a member of the Tri-Ess national board of directors -- on editorializing about the situation.

Actually, I believe my waiting until now to comment may have been of more use than simply avoiding a conflict of interest or preventing internal information from becoming public knowledge, because while this situation was still playing itself out, I not only had continued access to correspondence, etc. to and from Tri-Ess national, I had the opportunity to talk several times with my good friend, Jennifer Higgins, around whom this whole controversy unfortunately revolved.

You see, this all started earlier this year when Jennifer decided that it might be more appropriate for her to pursue a transsexual course of action, and -- since Tri-Ess is known for being crossdresser-oriented -- she made the decision to resign both from the Tri-Ess board and from the Alpha Omega chapter. But, since Jennifer was one of the founders of that chapter (and its first president), the membership desperately wished her to remain. And the then-current president, Megan Parsons, came to the conclusion that the only way to keep Jennifer as a member was to force a change in Tri-Ess policy. (For the record, I spoke with Jennifer a couple of days before I wrote this, and she indicated that while Tri-Ess chairman Jane Ellen Fairfax offered her a "Friends of Tri-Ess" membership, she declined because she would not feel comfortable being a non-voting member. She still loves Tri-Ess, Jane Ellen, her sisters in Alpha Omega, and yours truly.)

While Jennifer feels that Megan acted irresponsibly in both overstepping her authority and in suggesting changes to the chapter's constitution which would have made it unconstitutional itself (see the "Newswire" article for details), this is **not** going to be an editorial blasting Megan, Jennifer, or anyone else for how they conducted themselves during this crisis.

No, this is going to be a commentary on overreaction.

As far as I know, the only validation of Jennifer Higgins being a transsexual is her statement, back in March, that she was "battling an inner crisis" and that "in [her] heart of hearts, [she] knew [she] was

not a crossdresser, but, in fact, a transsexual". (She reiterated those statements in an article she wrote in Alpha Omega's October newsletter, from which I quote her.) Again, as far as I am aware, Jennifer has done none of the things that place her under the accepted definition of the term "transsexual"; she has not entered a gender program for psychological and psychiatric evaluation, she has not begun hormone therapy, she has not begun a real-life test. She has simply declared "I believe I am a transsexual", and on that basis a six-month conflict began that went all the way to the Tri-Ess national board of directors and forced the resignation of both the president and vice president of a chapter ... all based on an unsupported statement by one individual!

I have, on many occasions, said that the language of our community is not only subject to constant redefinition as we learn more about how we operate, but also that the proliferation of media attention to the subjects of crossdressing, transgenderism, and transsexualism make it much easier for an individual who has some undefined transgendered feelings to find a term to describe his or herself.

Unfortunately, it's also easy for an individual to seize upon the **wrong** term.

I can understand how it happens. Someone tortured in his or her own mind about these feelings sees a talk show on television or reads an article in a supermarket tabloid ... or perhaps even finds a more serious and factual dissertation somewhere. As soon as this individual finds a word that **seems** to define his or her condition, that becomes the word to define his or her condition. Even if that term is misapplied in his or her case.

Now, that person gets the phone number of a gender community organization in his or her neighborhood and, with an outpouring of emotion that comes from finally having made contact, announces "I'm a (whatever)" to the person at the other end.

This is where the potential for damage comes in.

If the person declares "I'm a transsexual" and the person answering the hotline accepts that statement without further discussion or qualification, he or she will be treated as such by the group. In the case of Tri-Ess, that person might likely be tossed aside due to the "focused" (I prefer that term to "closed") nature of the organization.

What if the caller is **really** a crossdresser who has seized upon the wrong term to describe his or her gender orientation? Have we now turned away this individual based on a misconception? Have we then done this individual as disservice? Have we erroneously deprived our community of the participation of someone who might have made a valid contribution?

And if the organization in question is an "open" (non-focused) group, won't allowing that individual to misidentify him or herself at a meeting to the other members cause the other members to make the assumption that this newcomer is whatever he or she says? If the newcomer then gets information inappropriate to his or her true orientation, but correct for the stated orientation, will this individual drift away, feeling his or her needs are not being met? Have we, again, done both the individual and our community a disservice?

I believe we are too quick to take statements from individuals in our community at face value. I am reminded of Holly Cross' recent article *The Need For Open Groups* in **Cross-Talk** #45, in which she wrote "a great many of our sisters don't know that there ARE heterosexual TVs ... therefore, they figure they must be transsexual." Whenever the statement "I'm a transsexual" comes up in the first few minutes in a conversation with a newcomer -- and sometimes it comes in the first few sentences! -- my reaction is always "what makes you say that?". About three-quarters of the time, their justification actually proves that they are not TS, but actually a somewhat confused CD.

In the case of Tri-Ess, Alpha Omega, and Jennifer Higgins, it may eventually prove out that Jennifer is a TG. If that's the case, she is no more ineligible for membership than I. If, indeed, she is transsexual, it may well be that Tri-Ess itself will evolve to have a division that is TS-oriented.

But in the meantime, we must stop inadvertently doing harm by accepting everything at face value. The gender community is a complicated one, and we must do all we can to ensure that its members are not laboring under false pretenses. We must ensure that everyone comes to the proper life decisions for each individual's situation, without forcing them to stick with a term that may or may not be the right one for them.

We must be flexible in order to be compassionate.

"Cross-Talk" is now accessible via InterNet for your letters to the editor and other reader feedback.
Details, page 6.

COGITO ERGO FEM -- Anne

I was watching the Montel Williams show some time back; it must have been during "Sweeps Week" because the show was on transsexuals. The panel consisted of two pre-op TSs, the boyfriend (BF) of one of them, and one post-op TS of sixteen years. I will say that I was not overjoyed at the individuals that were there representing the transgendered communities, but that is not the point of this column.

During the show the issue of children came up and the TS whose BF was on the show said she'd adopt and the BF said he'd go along with that. Now, here's the kicker: the post-op TS said, "The courts won't allow it," meaning the courts will not allow transsexuals to adopt. Assuming this is true, I will continue on with this column.

Time was when gay couples could not adopt. They still can't, but now have ways around that. Single gay people can adopt, so just don't mention that "Bill" is living with you. Since homosexuality has been removed from the DSM as a mental disorder gays can now adopt in some states. Are transsexuals being denied the opportunity to adopt because as it stands now transsexuality is considered a mental disorder? Probably so.

There is always a lag period between what science finds and how government reacts. Perhaps we are in such a lag period, but this does not mean that we should just sit back and wait. What must be done? First, transsexualism and transvestism should be reclassified in the DSM-IV so that they are not lumped in with sexual deviations, but instead recognized as conditions which can give rise to other psychological problems in no way threatening to others including children. Second, a lawsuit challenging such discrimination must be filed, go to trial, and be successfully argued.

Even today homosexuality is not universally tolerated, much less accepted. If it were we wouldn't see high concentrations of lesbians/gays in large urban areas which tend to be more tolerant of "alternate lifestyles". Still, things are better today for the gay than they were yesterday. If sexual orientation can be removed as an obstacle for adoption, I see no reason why gender orientation cannot also be removed; we simply must do the work to see that it happens.

This issue is of particular importance to the transsexual because reassignment surgery leaves the individual without the equipment to reproduce, yet many have very strong maternal and/or paternal instincts. Sacrificing one's reproductive

ability for the sake of one's mental health should not be exacerbated by society preventing those individuals from adopting and participating in child rearing. Many needy children are denied homes because currently our society sees fit to deny transsexuals the opportunity to open their homes and hearts to them.

Unfortunately things happen in life that set us back. Not long ago, a lesbian couple here in Los Angeles was indicted on charges of homicide when their infant daughter died of injuries allegedly inflicted by one or both of these women. The daughter was the product of artificial insemination of one of the women. I have no idea how many children are born to lesbian couples each year, but I'm sure most of them are living happy lives in good homes. Because of society's general xenophobia -- and specifically homophobia -- I am sure that some right wing types will try to make an issue of this and try to prevent lesbian couples from receiving artificial insemination to produce children. They will also try to use this to prevent gay couples from adopting children. They will, of course, turn a blind eye to the fact that thousands of children die each year from abuse in "traditional" homes.

The repercussions go beyond simply the issue of child rearing. They strike at a very difficult issue many transsexuals must deal with ... self-acceptance. If parenthood is ruled out by the fact of one's transsexuality and parenthood is very important to an individual TS, this means that that person must struggle with self-acceptance: Accept who they are and give up any hope of parenting or deny who they are in order to fulfill that one goal. Sure, there are other possibilities, but they all depend on the generosity of others, or more specifically another woman's womb. Caroline Cossey is fortunate that her sister, Pam, has volunteered to bear a child for her; most of us are not that lucky.

As it stands now, for any M2F transsexual to be able to have children in their life she would have to do so with a surrogate mother (unless she is married, and that is another can of worms). With the social climate being what it is, I think we will find that such surrogacies will be restricted to volunteers; that is, you won't be able to pay a woman for the use of her uterus, but she will be able to loan it to you. I personally can't imagine asking a friend to give up nearly a year of her life so that I can have a child. Sure, it could happen, but I wouldn't plan on it, nor should I have to. The courts could not deny custody of a child if it were the parent's genetic offspring, assuming that the

parent was otherwise fit.

Not long ago I had a discussion of this issue with a friend. This woman has three children. I had expressed my unhappiness in being faced with the choice of having children and denying myself or being myself and foregoing motherhood. She told me that a couple of her girlfriends could not have children, and I replied, "It bothers them too, doesn't it?" My friend just nodded. I could have children as a male, but then we get into the problems of surrogacy. Can't count on it.

Beyond the issue of transsexuals' right to parenthood, this question of whether or not to let them adopt goes to the heart of all transgendered peoples' struggle for acceptance. So long as society says that transsexuals cannot be fit parents, or just plain parents, it is saying that we are not fit members of society. Logically we would have to conclude that we are not acceptable to society as a whole, and we know that this is not true. The message is being sent, though. This is one message that we must debunk.

[Anne [redacted] may be contacted at P.O. Box 1251, Beverly Hills CA 90213.]



VOX POPULI ... Reader letters

There were no letters to the editor received for publication this month.

Vox Populi is the gender community's "town square" for the exchange of opinions and ideas. If you have a response to any editorial, news item, or article appearing in **Cross-Talk**, please feel free to contribute. Virtually all letters received will be published, subject to editing only for clarity, spelling/punctuation, and brevity. You may write us at P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365; fax us at (818) 347-4190; or send e-mail to "Kymmer" at the Cross Connection BBS, (818) 766-8887. You may also send InterNet e-mail to "kymmer@xconn.com", accessible from CompuServe, America OnLine, or any InterNet-accessible BBS.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In my "Kymberleigh's Clipboard" editorial for May, I used rumored expansion activities at Powder Puffs Of California, Neutral Corner, and Boulton & Park Society as the basis for my comments against what I termed "mega-groups". Although I attempted to use language that made it clear the aforementioned activities were nothing more than rumors, I find that -- months later -- there are still those who maintain that the perception (continued, next page)

NEWS!

The NewsQueen ... Paula Jordan [redacted]

LOCALS
STUNNED

FROM ATHENS,
WASHINGTON

SEATTLE

SAN FRANCISCO

Yes, gentle readers, the RuPaul media juggernaut roars on.

Can it be only three months ago that Ms. Sinclair offered the sisterly advice to Ms. Paul that she needed to spruce up her act and quit coasting on her heavy MTV rotation? Since then, that girl has been working!

The latest news is that Ms. Paul's record label, Tommy Boy Records, wanted to have the artist be the first ever to be nominated for a Grammy in two different **gender** categories in the same year -- top pop male vocalist and top pop female vocalist. But the recording academy said no dice, pick one. So Tommy Boy and Ms. Paul's management choose the male category. But not for the obvious reason that RuPaul is a male. As Tommy Boy publicist Laura Hynes explains, "He'd have a better chance in the male category. There's too many divas in the other category."

Shades of Wendy Carlos!

And here is the news that Ms. Paul has been signed by Walt Disney's book company, Hyperion, to do a photo autobiography. The publicity attending this announcement notes that Ms. Paul is not a mere drag queen; this is a woman of letters, having written an earlier book -- *New York Is a Big Black Greasy Ho*. We don't think you'll find it at B. Dalton.

But Ms. Paul isn't ready to give up the movies. "I want to do *Sister Act 2*, she told *Rolling Stone* magazine. "I'm the Schwarzenegger of the '90s."

In the same interview she answered the question that is burning on everyone's lips. "People always say, 'Should I call you a he or should I call you a she?' when it's like 'It don't matter, baby, just so long as you call me. You can call me he, you can call me she, or you can call me Regis and Kathie Lee.'"

VOX POPULI ... continued

was otherwise.

It was never my intent to paint these three organizations in a bad light, only to editorialize against the concept of groups expanding to a size where they might prove non-responsive to their local members' needs, and thus ineffectual. For the record, none of these three organizations have any plans to take such action.

If any reader misinterpreted the intent of my editorial as a result of my choice of words, I hope that this statement will sufficiently clarify the matter. -- KMR

Perhaps tiring of all the RuPaul hype, *Glamour* magazine recently published a photo of the singer next to a photo of Lassie and asked readers "what do these two have in common?" They are both female impersonators, the magazine said. True, but can think of a few other similarities as well.

But the most apt comment about Ms. Paul new visibility comes from Randy Barbado, the publicity man for Spike Lee's new movie *Crooklyn* ...

"Everybody else thinks it's a surprise that RuPaul is in Spike's movie, but we don't think so," Barbado said. "RuPaul will do everything. RuPaul is everything. RuPaul is pure product. He will do film, he will do music, he will do home shopping. RuPaul has legs. He's only just begun."

Don't say you haven't been warned.

□□□

We would be remiss, however, if we didn't acknowledge that Ms. Paul doesn't use her various platforms just for self-promotion. She also has a social conscience, and she isn't shy about stating her beliefs. Here are two ...

"I have pain, but why talk about that? And pain can be fun, too, I've cried my eyes out and wanted to end it all before. I hope everybody's gone that far because it makes life rich."

"So many children can't go home because their families won't accept them. Hopefully, my coming out and being who I am, I can shed some light on what the lifestyle is like, which is just like anybody else's."

□□□

Part of RuPaul's popularity may be explained by a quote from hip-hopper Prince Be of the group P.M. "Do I like men? No. Am I gay? I don't think so. But, I seen *The Crying Game*, and that girl's fly!"

□□□

Maybe actor Corey Haim is hoping for some of RuPaul's success. For the second time in two years, Haim has got up in drag for a movie role. Last year it was the theatrical release *Fast Getaway*, this year it was the Fox made-for-television movie *Just One of the Girls*.

Haim plays a high school student who dresses up as a girl to escape bullies, and then finds he is trapped in the role. The film -- originally to be titled *Boys Will be Girls* -- was produced by Gary Hoffman, who called it "Tootsie in high school."

And that's just what it was. All the while Haim's character professes his dislike of the masquerade,

he finds himself becoming a different -- and better -- person because of it. Even the bully dresses up to sneak into a girls-only dorm to visit Haim for whom he has developed a serious crush.

The movie had many homophobic gags based on the inverted gender role. But to its credit, the *schlemiels* say those lines. It would have been a better movie, though, if Haim tried wearing heels.

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About 20 years ago, a boy named William catapulted himself from a crummy childhood in the Bronx to a career as an international cabaret performer, part-time call girl, New Age healer, and intimate of artist Salvador Dali. International Chrysis died in 1990 at the age of 39 from cancer caused by seepage from her wax and silicone breast implants and from the numerous injections of street hormones.

Split is a new film that uses interviews with friends and colleagues, performance footage, and even home movies of William at the age of 14 to tell the story of an artist who used her own body as her canvas and who considers the way she lived as her medium. But the film also shows a show business egomaniac of limited gifts whose survival was based on relentless self promotion, outrageousness, and nerves of steel.

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Jeanne B and Xanthra Phillippa are two Canadian transsexuals who are fortunate enough to have a video about them produced while they are still alive. They did it themselves.

In *Gendertroublemakers*, B and Phillippa discuss their lives as transsexuals with great intensity, and they celebrate their struggle to assume their gender identities despite a woeful lack of understanding and support, especially from some quarters of the lesbian and gay community.

Phillippa also edits a 'zine called *Gender Trash From Hell*, which, like the video, challenges the "mainstream" gay culture.

For more information, write to Genderpress, Box 500-62, 552 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2E3, Canada.

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Does all this film and video production leave you eager to be a part of the excitement? Well, here's your chance. The producers of *A Natural Woman* hope to make a documentary that "confronts presumptions both about drag culture and transsexualism," and they want your financial, technical, and emotional support to make it happen.

The film will focus on candid interviews with "non-traditional women," their families, friends, and lovers. The subjects range from street prostitutes to lesbian activist social workers and

wealthy suburban entrepreneurs. Complementing the interviews will be "slice of life footage": Drag shows, working the street, clothes shopping, electrolysis appointments, and a day with the kids at an amusement park.

For more information, contact Steve Greenberg at 2261 Market Street, Suite 141, San Francisco, CA 94114.

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Georgina Beyer would be a fascinating subject for a documentary.

First, she was a popular drag performer in several clubs in Wellington and Auckland in New Zealand. Then she had a sex change and became a well-known movie and television actress. Her latest accomplishment was her election to the local borough council in a conservative New Zealand town of 6,000, making her the first known transsexual to be elected into New Zealand local government.

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Politics of another sort reared its ugly head in San Diego recently when a local female impersonator claimed that he was kicked out of an AIDS service organization because he does drag.

Robert "Tiny" Gibson, says he was asked to leave his job a vice president of Pets Are Wonderful Support (PAWS) because the organization that helps people with AIDS own pets wanted to butch up its image with the non-gay community. "I was told PAWS wanted a new image, that I was 'too gay,' 'too nelly' and 'not presentable to the straight community,'" he said at a press conference. Gibson's cause has been taken up by the San Diego Imperial Court.

But Rex Yule, PAWS president, and Treasurer Wayne Park say that it was news to them that Gibson was fired. They say he resigned in a huff because he was not chosen to ride on the PAWS float in the gay pride parade. PAWS Secretary Luis Gonzales -- also a female impersonator -- rode on the float. Reportedly, Gibson was also angry that he was denied the opportunity to appear in a PAWS promotional photo holding a dog.

Ms. Sinclair wonders if PAWS couldn't have at least arranged to have two bitches in the picture.

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Our crime blotter this month is short -- just three items.

First is an update on John W. Shannon, the former Acting Secretary of the Army who was arrested in August for shoplifting a woman's skirt and blouse from the PX at Fort Meyer in Arlington, Va.

Shannon confessed to the charge (but stood mute on the motive) and so he was placed in a first offender program that avoids criminal prosecution. As part of the program, he must attend support

WHAT'S ON THE TV TONIGHT?

Cartoons by Christine-Jane Wilson

A book of nearly 100 cartoons drawn by Christine-Jane Wilson. In the magazine 'Forum', editor Isabel Koprowski wrote: " -- the answer is not East-Enders, you'll be glad to hear, but delicious feminine clothing such as lacy bras, six inch stilettos and the sheerest of stockings."

"What's on the TV Tonight?" is a charming cartoon book depicting transvestites in a variety of amusing situations. Because it is the creation of a TV, none other than Christine-Jane Wilson, the editor of *The Glad Rag*, the book always laughs with, not at, transvestites. The author draws on her own experience, as well as her imagination, to produce cartoons showing the dreadfully embarrassing things that can happen to TVs, whether in social or family context. But it's not blushes all the way: some pages glow with the positive pride a cross-dresser may feel when found out unexpectedly.

"Transvestites will identify with the author and find the book reassuring as well as amusing. Everyone will be touched by the sensitivity and delicacy with which Christine-Jane treats the difficulties of being a TV."

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group meetings (for shoplifters, that is).

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There was no question about the motives of two men who recently showed up at a Los Angeles bank dressed as nurses, at least not after they shot an armored car guard and made off with an undisclosed sum.

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The nurses were lucky they didn't try that stunt at a convenience store in Beaumont, Tex., where the premises are protected by attack drag queens.

According to a story on the television show *Rescue 911*, a woman carrying a rifle in the store and threatening suicide was disarmed by a female impersonator who just happened to be there at the same time. Our heroine told police that she nearly slipped on her high heels and messed up the rescue.

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Finally, here is a factoid from the amazing world of biology. According to a psychology professor at Georgia State University, most guys may want testosterone, but having it in high levels doesn't make them happy. James Dabbs Jr. measured the testosterone level of many fraternity members at a college other than GSU and found that of the men with lower testosterone levels, 61.5 percent were smiling in their yearbook photos, while only 33.7 percent of the high level guys had happy faces.

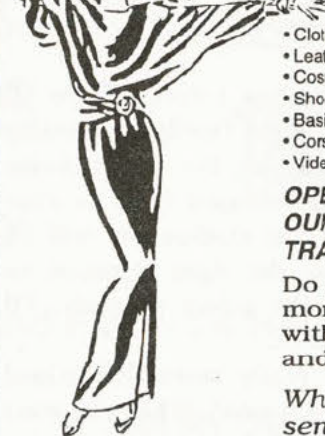
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Ms. Sinclair welcomes clippings about crossdressing from readers, even clips about the latest adventures of RuPaul. Send them -- along with the name and date of publication -- to her in care of *Cross-Talk*.

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THE MAKEUP MIRROR MATCHING MAKEUP COLORS TO SKIN TONE

by Valerie [REDACTED]

Dear Val: I read the columns in **Cross-Talk** recently about finding what season you are and what colors you should wear. Should I take my season into account when choosing eyeshadow colors? Does my season have anything to do with foundation shade or blush color?

-- Melissa, Oregon

Dear Melissa: I'm so glad you brought up the question of seasons because your palette of colors often depends on who does your color analysis. What really matters is whether you look better in goldtones or silvertones, and that's easy for you to check yourself. With no makeup on, hold a piece of silver cloth under your skin. If it reveals the blemishes, wrinkles, etc., try a piece of gold cloth and see which minimizes the flaws in your skin.

If it's the silver, then you'll look better in blue tones; if the gold, then orange tones are right for you. Now the reason I bring all this up is because clothing color has a direct effect on what eyeshadow colors will look good on you, and you need to keep in mind whether you're a silver (cool) or gold (warm) when you choose clothing colors. Every color, even black, has a cool tone or a warm tone to it. (The exception is white which, because it's really no color, is neutral.) You might even want to carry the silver or gold cloth with you to choose clothing colors which have those cool or warm tones. Just hold the cloth up to the articles of clothing and it should be obvious which look better against the cloth.

While your palette of eyeshadow colors will be all from either the cool or the warm family (depending on whether you're silver or gold), the actual choice of what colors to wear will be based both on your eye color and the color of the clothes you will be wearing. The key is having the right selection to choose from and blending the colors properly. I'll discuss that in detail next month.

Foundation and blush are really more determined by your skintone than your "season". What you want to do when choosing a foundation color is find a shade that most closely matches the skin color of your face and neck. If there's a difference, find a shade that blends between the two, but always choose a foundation color that is closer to the

lighter of your two skin tones.

Blush is what really gives color to your face, and while your selection of color here will be based to some degree on whether you're cool or warm, it will also depend on what clothing colors you're wearing, your eyeshadow palette, and the shade of your foundation. Here, the most important thing to remember is that your blush colors need to be understated and natural for daytime wear, with just a hint of color. Save the intense contrasts of blush color for dramatic nighttime looks.

Dear Val: When you wrote about matching your makeup colors to your complexion type, I couldn't help but think that there have to be some colors that would work for everybody. Are there? And how would we find these "go-with-everything" makeup colors?

-- Judi, California

Dear Judi: Without a doubt, foundation and blush must be matched to skin tone. But, you can try different colored eyeshadows that may not be in the same tone. If you want to experiment with colors that you're attracted to, but are not on your palette, place the color over your eyeliner or as close around the eyes as possible. The more you extend the color beyond the eyelids, the more it needs to blend with your skin tone. You might like the effect, or you might not. The only way, when going outside the colors that are best for your skin tone, is by trial and error.

[Valerie [REDACTED] is a California licensed cosmetology instructor and owner of Hair To Wear Wigs in Torrance, Calif. You may write her with questions about makeup at 1716 Andreo Ave., Torrance 90501; or if you live in or plan to visit the Los Angeles area, you may call her at (310) 320-5015. Questions of general interest will be answered in this column.]

YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. Write us at P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365, fax us at (818) 347-4190, or send InterNet NetMail to "kymmer@xconn.com".

MS. BINTHAR DUNDAT: TIPS ON PASSING COMING OUT

by Lynette [REDACTED]

All crossdressers sooner or later have a debut, or "coming out", and few if any have it easy. This month's tips are for those who as yet have not made it.

TIP 1. Join a support group. By far the easiest way to "come out" is to become a member of a group of like minded individuals and then join them at one of their meetings. This is generally a relatively easy procedure because all the members and especially the committee have had the experience of coming out themselves and are genuinely interested in assisting others to do so. Most groups have private changing facilities. The surroundings of their venues are almost always secure and private.

To those of you who have had little or no experience in public dressing these groups have established members who are experts in makeup and dressing for trans-people. New members are able request help to finish their presentations or even to plan for the evening. Dressing is the object

of most groups but is not essential and members are encouraged to attend even if they are for any reason unable to dress.

The format of most groups' evenings varies, but generally follows a basic pattern of an 8:00pm start with refreshments and quiet conversation, followed by an activity or entertainment of interest to the group which could include or be followed by supper. Finishing time is usually between midnight and 2:00am.

TIP 2. If you are relatively confident in your ability to come out in some other place my second tip is to visit one of the clubs, coffee lounges or bars that are frequented by other trans-people. The owners will generally make you welcome and will protect your interests if you are just coming out. It's a good idea to go with a friend because single persons are considered prime pick up targets and maybe this label is worth avoiding.

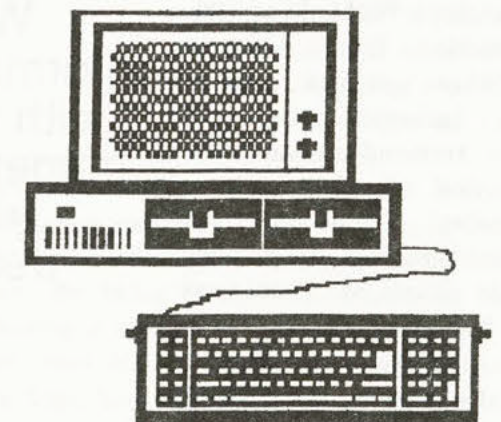
TIP 3. Be serious about dressing and don't come out at a party.

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WHAT IF A HUSBAND-TO-BE CROSSDRESSES?

by Roger E. Peo, Ph.D.

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

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

For the majority of crossdressers, crossdressing is a necessary part of their personality. Withholding this information from someone with whom you plan to spend many intimate years can create tremendous stress. A great deal of effort is spent "inventing" reasons for certain behaviors or avoiding certain situations. There may also be anger because it is felt -- rightly or wrongly -- that this woman is inhibiting an integral part of your personality. Any anger can come out in a wide variety of ways, none of which are pleasant.

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

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

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

What can the woman in this situation do? Her fiancé has been honest with her but his disclosure is creating turmoil within her. She has begun by asking some questions about his crossdressing and whether or not his desire might return. She is also honest in realizing that this behavior is upsetting to her. Her choices are tough. To terminate the relationship because his crossdressing might return

and she couldn't handle it or stay and deal with the crossdressing should it return.

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

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

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

[You may contact Dr. Peo at P.O. Box 3445, Poughkeepsie NY 12603 or by phone at (914) [REDACTED]. All communications are kept confidential. Copyright 1993 by Roger E. Peo, Ph.D. This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter if Dr. Peo's name and address appear with it. Other publications must obtain written approval from Dr. Peo. A copy of any reprint must be sent to Dr. Peo.]

HAVE YOU ASKED A FRIEND TO SUBSCRIBE TO Cross-Talk?

SEX IN A GENDER-GIFTED RELATIONSHIP

by Linda Peacock

One of the most painful aspects for some women who are involved with a gender-gifted man is the sexual side of the relationship, and how, if at all, the crossdressing fits into it. I think that this is such a personal thing, that there cannot be a generalized right or wrong; rather, each couple must individually confront and deal with it.

One of my dear friends, Janie Hutton, is an extraordinarily open-minded woman. Her capacity for loving is amazing, and it surrounds the lucky recipient. Janie married her crossdressing husband last January, and as she had been married previously to a crossdresser and widowed, I would have to say she has had some experience in dealing with the sexual issues in such a marriage. Janie presented a "Bedroom Issues" program at SPICE last July, and during it, she shared her own personal experiences and thoughts.

One of the most thought provoking comments she made was that the most powerful, electrifying sexual experience of her life was when she willingly allowed her husband to act out his number-one crossdressing

fantasy -- it turned out to be just as fantastic for her as it was for him.

As I said, Janie is an extraordinary woman, and her openness about her husband's sexual needs is extraordinary. However, what is right for Janie does not necessarily mean it is right for me, or for you.

We all want to have electrifying, fantastic sexual experiences, but not all of us can deal with the idea of a man in feminine clothing in bed with us. One of the things you will read and hear over and over again is that often a woman fears that she may have lesbian tendencies if she goes to bed with her partner dressed as a woman, and even worse, that she could be turned on by this man in that state. Every article and book I have read emphatically states that this is not true and the majority of women in this situation are not lesbian, nor have those tendencies, and should rid themselves of this fear.

If we confront this fear and dissolve it, it still brings us to the fact that many of us still have partners who want to wear lingerie to bed and make love. So many of us have been reared to expect our husbands to be macho men, very virile, dominating in bed, bringing us to mindless orgasms. They must be hairy, muscular, so very manly. Instead, we find ourselves in bed with a man who has shaved that wonderful body hair off, who often would rather be dominated than domineering, and who is wearing a lacy nightgown or sexy little number that you would much rather be wearing. He's probably wearing a wig and all his makeup, too.

It goes against everything we have been raised to expect in a man, and I can't blame any woman for going into major shock, and total sexual turn-off.

On the other hand, are we, as women, tuned into our own bodies and needs, and do we understand that our sexual satisfaction rest solely with ourselves? This means reaching a level of maturity and sense of self-esteem, and it means changing everything our mothers taught us about being a woman.

I personally believe that one reason that a woman cannot stand her partner to be crossdressed in bed is because she is relying too much on his ability to arouse her. By being in bed crossdressed, he is already making a statement that it excites him, and if he knows that his female partner doesn't like it, it shows a huge lack of sensitivity to her needs, as well as being tremendously selfish. To the female partner, it's as though he is saying, "You are not alluring enough to attract me, so I need to have the turn-on of wearing my lingerie in order to reach satisfaction." It really sounds very cruel, even a type of abuse.

However, again, I think it is going to depend on the man. It may be that he finds his partner very alluring, very desirable, but the dressing adds spice to it all, making it all the more exciting for him. It does not necessarily mean at all that he does not find you, his partner, exciting. And if you have a

Not all of us can deal with the idea of a man in feminine clothing in bed with us.

reasonably communicative relationship, you can just ask him about it. Hopefully, he will honestly answer you.

If your husband or partner is a loving man, sensitive to your needs, then he will be honest about it. And if you find that he does find you attractive, then it should put your fears to rest -- believe him! If your husband is generally abusive to you, dishonest or unloving, then you might well believe that he is only being turned on by the lingerie, not you, and that you are only a vessel for his sexual outlet. It is not making love at all -- it is simply a physical act devoid of any feelings of love or desire or compassion for his partner.

If this is the case, I urge you to seek counseling as soon as you can -- you are being deprived of everything you deserve as a woman, and you need to find out why you are allowing it to go on. I think you need to learn to like yourself, see yourself as the special, wonderful, desirable woman you are inside.

If you can communicate in your relationship with your partner, and he tells you he does indeed want you, then you both need to be very honest with each other about what your individual needs are. Tell him that it doesn't turn you on when he's in bed dressed, that it makes you feel undesirable, and as though he is finding excitement in his dressing, and not in you. Talk about what **you** need but then be willing to talk about his needs, too. Try to come to some compromise that will be satisfying to the both of you. Be willing to be open about your fantasies, and

utilize your fantasies. In a loving and warm relationship, honestly extends right into the bed, and you should be able to share those interesting thoughts that excite you. Offer to live out one of his fantasies in return for him making your fantasy come true. Find inventive ways to give each other pleasure, allow the intimacy of the mind and heart to blend with the intimacy of the body.

I think it is rare to find a woman such as Janie who takes his excitement and turns it into her excitement, too. However, you need to know that Janie's husband is equally concerned about her needs and is constantly trying to find ways to give her this happiness.

Again, it is a two-way street, not a one-way. A one-way street only gets you to where you are going, but you can't use it to come back. So it is in a relationship -- if only one partner is finding satisfaction, then there is no way to get back. Both partners need to be satisfied, both need to care about the other, both need to be in tune with the other's needs.

Don't let yourself be caught on that one-way street. Demand that you receive the happiness you deserve -- only you, and you alone have the capability of finding true satisfaction in your relationship with your partner -- if you don't let him know how you feel or what you need, he'll never know. And he needs to know!

[Linda Peacock is the director for wives' and partners' concerns on the Tri-Ess board of directors and publishes the Sweetheart Connection newsletter. She may be reached at P.O. Box 7241, Tallahassee FL 32314.]

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THE BEARDED LADY

FORMING A MORE PERFECT UNION

by Ricky

Illustration by Rita

Transvestites of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your pants! Throw off the chains of convention and proudly wear your chains of gold and silver! Strike while your irons are hot! Join with your Sisters today in forming the International Ladies Garment Wearers Union!

Yes my Sisters, you must suffer no more in silence in your motel rooms and closets. Demand entrance to the sweater shop run by the ILGWU. Do not skirt the issue but join the thousands of your sisters who will never know the pains of labor in the birth

In the bad old days of yore powerful men and corporations forced weak and unorganized workers to toil at slave wages in dark factories. These poor, unorganized workers had little choice but to bear the brunt of this mistreatment. It was not until energetic and enlightened leaders started the Union Movement that these conditions were changed for the better. The American Federation of Labor, United Mine Workers, and yes, our namesake the International Ladies Garment Workers Union brought these oppressed men to the attention of a heretofore uncaring society and brought about Great Change.

In much the same way other minorities in our society, the Blacks, Hispanics, Women and Gays, have found that organization, solidarity, and publicity are the key to reform. Now the time has come for all transvestites to break out of their closets, get a good close shave, and join the Union!

Membership requirements are easily fulfilled and benefits substantial. Simply forward the price of your next dress to the ILGWU and it will be placed in our Union Strike Fund. It will remain there, to the great interest of your leaders, until our first demonstration. This demonstration will be a march on Washington to demand

our rights as part time women. The Union Strike Fund will supply each sister with a pair of high heels suitable for marching and a tastefully decorated picket sign. Since we will have prepared the way with lobbying by our own PAC, the Federated Associated League Supporting Imitation Effeminate Sisters (FALSIES), we expect a rousing greeting as we strut through the hallowed halls of Congress in our finest. There are tentative plans for a sit down strike so please no miniskirts.

So strike up the band, sing the praises of pantyhose and join the IGLWU today! You have nothing to lose but your sanity!

[Originally published in Cross-Talk #29 (October 1991).]



of this noble cause. As with the unions of tradesmen before us we shall join together and triumph!

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WHAT'S ON THE TV TONIGHT?

by Christine-Jane

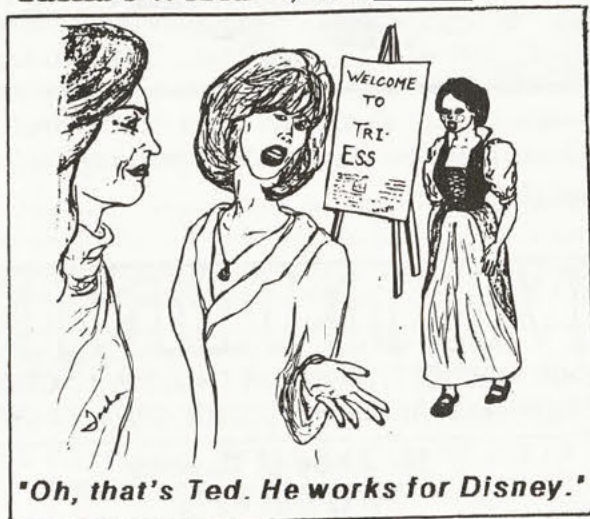
here in the (un)real world by Nancy



THE PASSING SCENE by Kay



Tasha's World by Tasha



THIS MONTH, we welcome Christine-Jane Wilson to the comics page with selected cartoons from her book *What's On The TV Tonight?*. The complete collection is available from her by mail order; see the advertisement on page 9 of this month's issue.

An important note: The comics and cartoons appearing on this page are copyrighted separately by their creators, and may not be reproduced -- even in non-profit organization publications -- without their consent.

VIRGIN VIEWS BY VIRGINIA

A NOVEL BIOLOGICAL/SOCIAL EXPLANATION FOR CD'ING

by Virginia Prince, Ph.D.

Many people have tried to find a biological cause or explanation for crossdressing. Everybody knows a little about hormones and genetics and, since they also know a little about the kinds of characteristics that are mediated by genes or hormones, it seems most reasonable to them to attribute crossdressing to some biological factor. If one could be found it would relieve them of the responsibility of their own actions. "I can't help crossdressing, it's in my genes", or "there was some foul-up in my hormones prenatally that made me a crossdresser" are two very common cop-outs.

This escape from responsibility is also what drives some to attribute their behavior to such abstract ideas as astrology "the stars made me do it", or to reincarnation -- "I can't help it, I was a woman in my past life and some of it is still with me", or "I am destined to be a woman in my next life and this is just a little preparation for it."

But however intriguing it is to some, there is not one bit of evidence to date that a behavior like crossdressing, which is essentially psychosocial in nature, has a biological origin. Something may be discovered sometime in the future, but it is unknown as of now. But here is an interesting idea that recently occurred to me which is biological in nature and indirectly might help explain crossdressing behavior.

It should be obvious to everyone that in all mammals, birds, reptiles and in many fish the method of reproduction is for the male to insert his penis into the reproductive tract of the female and deposit his sperm inside her. To perform this act correctly and at the right time there must be programs in his brain which tell him what to do, when to do it and how to do it. Humans, being mammals too, reproduce the same way. Thus it follows that humans have those same programs in their heads.

The only difference is that humans, being thinking

creatures, can think about it and decide to change their activities, partners and circumstances according to their feelings at the time. Thus we can think of these programs as the urge to get "inside" of the female. But humans have gender in addition to sex. Thus they have a sex drive to "get inside a female" but it occurs to me that maybe some of us have carried that drive over into the field of gender and have an urge to get inside the feminine gender. This we can do when we adopt the exterior

manifestations of womanhood which is to say gender.

I daresay that one of the greatest desires of a heterosexual crossdresser would be to be able to have sex with a female while dressed as a girl/woman himself. This would be a complete merging of himself with his loved one on both sexual and genderal levels at the same time. This is a very rare experience, of course, because it is generally opposed by the female since she has her own needs for a

procreative experience with a male. But the fact that it is such a commonplace desire on the part of crossdressers means that it has some basis in fact.

Another aspect of the same desire is that nearly all crossdressers yearn to "be" a bride sometime. Many manage to buy a bridal gown and veil to wear before the mirror so they can see themselves in the most feminine way possible. The rash of renewing vows among married crossdressers in which both parties wear bridal gowns is another manifestation of the same "urge to merge" with the female/feminine.

The external manifestations of gender are, of course, the visible appearance of an individual ... that is to say, the clothes, shoes, hairstyles, makeup, jewelry, etc. Added to this is the physical shape and bodily motions. Since all of these can, to a considerable degree be imitated by male persons, doing so is the process of getting "inside" femininity. So I am led to wonder whether the urge to

There is not one bit of evidence to date that crossdressing, which is essentially psychosocial in nature, has a biological origin.

crossdress is not at a deep level an urge to get inside of womanliness and thus be part of it just as the urge to copulate is a manifestation of the sexual urge to get inside the female's body and thus be a part of her for the moment and in a larger sense to be part of the baby that might result. This is quite an unorthodox idea in a day when everyone is looking at either genes or hormones as the explanation for any sort of unusual behavior. But I am not proposing this as a new theory about crossdressing but simply as an interesting concept. I am just suggesting that since femaleness and femininity are two aspects of the same total person, it is possible that the male urge to get inside the female can also be manifested on a gender level by an urge to get inside womanliness, by way of getting inside her clothes, appearance, and behavior. Kick it around a while and see how it sounds after you have thought about it for a time.

IGTA UPDATE ... continued from page 3

From there, I will travel to Moscow and (hopefully) fly to Beijing.

My return will be via Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Bangladesh, and New Delhi, hoping to find Hijara groups. Then to Istanbul, Athens, Milano, and Paris before returning home. I hope to form the beginning of a Orient/Asia network of enhanced contacts and new groups in some ten hitherto closed countries.

As always, we get little or no support from the established groups in the U.K. or U.S., so any contribution to funding our work will be greatly appreciated. In the U.S., you may contribute via Creative Design Services, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia PA 19406, and funds will be routed to me wherever I may be at the moment.

-- Phaedra Kelly

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#45 (July '93) contains Kymberleigh Richards' insights on living three years as a TG, reasons why "open" groups are vital to the community, why there's no "cure" for crossdressing, how to handle telling a spouse.

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THE BENJAMIN STANDARDS OF CARE: A SAFEGUARD FOR CONSUMERS AND CAREGIVERS

by Dallas Denny

Last November, Sophia Pastel, a transgendered woman from Norfolk, Virginia, came to Atlanta for treatment. The "treatment" she sought was one which fell squarely in the medical realm: Introduction of a foreign substance under the skin. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration considers the procedure she was seeking so dangerous that it has outlawed its use, even by physicians.

In some cookie-cutter Atlanta motel room, Sophia Pastel died moments after receiving a subcutaneous injection of liquid silicone from a "practitioner" whose only qualification was that he had a syringe and enough money to buy a tube of industrial-grade silicone in a hardware or auto parts store.

Sophia isn't around to tell us if she has any regrets,

organization composed entirely of psychologists, psychiatrists, surgeons, endocrinologists, and other caregivers, proposed minimal standards of care for hormonal and surgical treatment of persons with gender dysphoria. These Standards of Care were introduced because HBGDA members were concerned by the human misery which was being caused by the unregulated treatment of transsexual persons.

The Standards of Care have been periodically revised, most recently in 1990, and remain the commonly accepted professional standards for treatment. They are a safeguard for both caregivers and consumers. For the physician or mental health professional, their principles and standards provide consensual guidelines for hormonal and surgical treatment. Following the

The Standards were introduced because HBGDA members were concerned by the human misery which was being caused by misguided treatment of TS persons.

or if she had enough facts to make an informed choice about the treatment she had elected to receive. But there are a considerable number of individuals, both male and female, who are around to tell the world loudly and abrasively that they have great regrets about having had genital reassignment surgery. One of their primary gripes is that they did not realize what they were getting into.

There are other sources of dissatisfaction with the surgical treatment of transsexualism. Sometimes physicians become disenchanted and proclaim their disgust with the treatment process. Jon Meyer, who was the head of the Gender Identity Clinic at Johns Hopkins University did just that. His feelings on the subject were so strong that they affected his objectivity. His 1979 paper with Donna Reter was a model for bad science, incorporating faulty assumptions, poor sampling techniques, invalid measures, and contrived criteria for the "success" of surgical intervention in transsexualism. And yet its impact was dramatic, as it led to a domino-like closing of dozens of gender clinics.

Also in 1979, the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., an

guidelines protects caregivers to some extent from malpractice claims by making them aware of and prohibiting poor practice. For instance, Standard 7 requires peer review before sex reassignment surgery, and Standard 12 makes it unethical to overcharge. For the consumer, the Standards place some restrictions on treatment. Most importantly, they provide a clear path to sex reassignment surgery, progressing from physically noninvasive treatments such as therapy through more intrusive (and dangerous) treatments, with the irreversible procedure of sex reassignment surgery being at the end of the treatment process, after a period during which the individual must have lived and worked or gone to school full-time in the chosen gender for a minimum of one year.

By following this path, it is possible for the individual, at any point up until the final surgery, to return to the gender of original assignment with the least possible disruption and the fewest possible irreversible physical changes. For instance, an individual in therapy can decide prior to initiating hormonal treatment to remain in the original gender with all physical characteristics intact. A genetic male who has taken female hormones for

some time can return to the original gender role with at worst some residual breast development which can be disguised by clothing or removed surgically. Hormonal therapy causes a number of permanent physical changes in genetic females, but even so, it is generally possible to return to the female role. Until the individual is actually anesthetized for sex reassignment surgery, it is possible to return to the original gender role. And perhaps more importantly, it is possible to halt the process at any point before going under the knife. In other words, the Standards of Care allow a variety of transgenderal alternatives short of complete sex reassignment. They allow the individual to explore these alternative methods of expression, progressing as he or she sees fit, and stopping at any point in which he or she feels comfortable.

Most importantly, by their requirement for a period of full-time living, the Standards acknowledge that it is not genitals which make men and women, but gender identity and gender role. Men and women are not created by the surgeon's lancet, but by their life circumstances as men and women.

Surgery and hormonal treatment are merely options which some people choose to help them by altering their bodies to conform with their chosen gender roles. Surgery, or lack of it, does not affect the ability to perform in a gender role in any important way other than sexually. The genital area is, after all, customarily covered by clothing, and the genitalia of others are taken as a matter of faith. Unless we are changing the diapers of other individuals, or are intimately involved with them, we assume they have a particular set of genitals which correspond with their gender role. It is for this reason that Donald Laub has called sex reassignment surgery gender confirmation surgery. It is a private affair that provides the individual with personal satisfaction, but has little other impact. When one has been functioning for some time as a man or as a woman, genital surgery is unlikely to lead to regrets. In other circumstances, the risks are grave.

I would be the last to claim that the Standards of Care are perfect. Certainly, they are flawed. They do not, for instance, provide suggestions for an optimal level of treatment, nor do they sufficiently address the differential needs of male-to-female and female-to-male persons. Certainly, they have been abused by caregivers, who have in some circumstances withheld them from consumers and

in others used them as a sword to wave over the heads of often desperate men and women. Certainly, by the very fact that they impose requirements on the individual, they have caused some human misery. Certainly, they were formulated without sufficient input from transgendered persons. But I would argue that the misery they have caused has been offset by more than an order of magnitude by the human misery they have saved.

The fact of the matter is that the desire to change one's sex is often a transient phenomenon. It can arise secondary to transvestic fetishism or homosexuality, as a consequence of temporal lobe lesions or epilepsy, as the result of psychosis, and because of feelings of inadequacy in the original gender role. It may be present only during periods of stress. The desire for hormonal and surgical treatment can decrease in intensity or even

Men and women are not created by the surgeon, but by their life experiences as men and women.

disappear because of reductions in the level of male hormones, because of life changes, or when anticonvulsant or anti-psychotic medications are administered.

Significantly, most people who are transsexual opt for a variety of reasons **not** to seek sex reassignment. Some feel obligations to family, friends, community, and career which outstrip their felt obligations to themselves. Some cite religious reasons. Others feel that their physical characteristics would make for an uncomfortable and stigmatized life in the other gender. Yet others lack the courage or the financial ability. And of those who actually set out to seek sex reassignment, most do not make it even to a period of crossliving, no matter how transsexual they feel themselves to be. I have heard estimates from leaders of support groups, and it has been my personal experience also, that as many as 80 or 90 percent who begin the journey either abandon it completely or stop some place along the way -- and rarely because of obstacles placed before them by the treatment community.

Many end up exploring and settling in gender space well away from the gender box marked transsexualism. And yet many of these people at some point or the other want and actively seek sex reassignment surgery. If surgery was available on

demand -- if one could walk off the street, place one's money on the table, and check into the hospital for an immediate operation, the potential for regret would be enormous. This is exactly the situation that the Standards of Care were designed to prevent. I would argue that they have done a remarkably good job.

The vagaries and obstacles of sex reassignment tend to politicize transsexual people. Few escape unscathed. Most are burned somewhere along the way. I myself bear some scars, most of them from men and women who were trying to do what was in my best interest, but who got it absolutely wrong. I have a strong belief that one's body is one's own property, to do with what one will. I particularly believe that one's gender is a matter of personal choice, and not an appropriate decision

Before giving hormonal therapy or performing genital surgery, caregivers must be reasonably sure they are not damaging the patient.

for anyone else to make. And yet there is also the matter of access to medical treatment. In our society, we are safeguarded from unscrupulous and incompetent medical practitioners, much as we are protected from bad drivers and unsuitable neighbors by traffic and zoning laws. And medical caregivers themselves are sworn to do no harm. They are in violation of the most basic tenets of their profession if they provide treatment which they feel is against the best interest of the patient. Aye, and there's the rub, for caregivers **are** subject to homophobia, transphobia, sexism, racism, and all of the other "ism"s that plague society. But before giving hormonal therapy, and especially before performing genital surgery, they must be reasonably sure that they are not damaging the patient. In the case of transsexualism, this puts the physician in the unenviable position of being a social worker, something he or she is not trained or emotionally equipped to do. My belief is that this is the battleground, or, more politely, the negotiating table, on which the interest of the individual is balanced against the interest of society and the interest of the caregiver. It is here that compromise must be sought, so that the most people with gender dysphoria can be helped, and the fewest harmed. It is here that a balance must be found, here that consumers must come together with

helping professionals and provide new and better guidelines to supplant or augment the Standards of Care.

This brings me to Christine [Tayleur]'s belief that hormones and sex reassignment surgery should be available on demand. I think that would be a terrible mistake. I do not doubt that there is a great deal of human unhappiness in the Tenderloin. The Tenderloin has, after all, been a center for such for more than 100 years. I'm sure that there, and elsewhere, there are transgendered persons who are unable to meet even the minimal requirements of the Standards of Care, who cannot get together the funds to see a therapist for the ninety days required to obtain a letter authorizing hormonal therapy, or who, even if therapy were free of charge, could not, because of substance abuse or mental health problems, manage to show up on time for appointments. I'm sure there are people who are caught somewhere between masculine and feminine presentations, unpassable in either gender, who are forced into prostitution or drug-dealing by an uncaring and unfeeling society that will

not allow them access to legitimate work because of a gender-ambiguous appearance. I am sure there are many who cannot afford therapists' fees.

I can understand the frustration of seeing so many lives squandered, so many people lost in process, stuck in place. I see it nearly every day in my own work. Yet I would argue that the main problem of these people in the Tenderloin, or most of them, anyway, is **not** gender dysphoria, and that giving them free access to hormonal and surgical procedures would be harming many more of them than it would help. The dysfunctionality of most of these people is not in my opinion due to transsexualism, which does not, after all, automatically render all transsexual people dysfunctional (consider how many transsexual physicians, airline pilots, computer engineers, and business owners there are). No, the dysfunction is more often due to alcoholism, to drug addiction, to immature and inadequate personalities, and it is here that effort should be expended to rehabilitate. Treating the transsexualism will not automatically clear up all of the other life problems, but when the individual is coping with other aspects of life, he or she will be more likely to be able to deal with gender dysphoria.

I am not in favor of waiving the counseling requirement for these people and giving them

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hormonal treatment *ad lib*. Most of them have little notion of how hormones will affect their bodies and their minds, of their options in life, of what transsexualism is and is not. How, then, can they give informed consent? My answer is that they can't. Giving them treatment without informed consent would be gross malpractice on the part of any physician or of any mental health professional providing authorization for hormonal therapy. And the complexities of what sex reassignment will hold in store for them cannot be communicated in one thirty-minute session; they need to explore their lives and feelings at depth with a mental health professional. And it goes without saying that I am opposed to surgery on demand.

Providing someone with treatment which will ultimately make them unhappy is far more cruel and uncaring than placing minimal requirements on them on the front end. My belief is that much more damage will be done by opening the candy store than is presently being done by requiring contact with a therapist. Allowing someone under the influence of drugs or alcohol, someone who is psychotic, someone who is not thinking clearly to make life- and body-altering decisions is like giving a child a loaded gun. They cannot make informed choice, cannot give informed consent.

The Standards of Care may have been put together by well-educated, middle-aged white males with incomes in the upper five figures, and most of whom were heterosexual, but that does not automatically mean that they are sexist, racist, classist, homophobic, or transphobic, as Christine claims. The Standards of Care are, when properly interpreted, not difficult to understand, and despite the roar that might arise from the Tenderloin from this statement, not difficult to comply with. Nor is there great expense involved. Like any other of life's endeavors, transsexualism requires individual initiative. Helping transsexual people should not consist of the gender dysphoric equivalent of bottle-feeding, but of providing them with opportunities to work and play in safety and dignity, without fear of physical attack or harassment, in a community which will allow them to make a legitimate living, and with information which will let them make informed choices. The rest is up to the Sophia Pastels of the world.

[Copyright 1993 by Dallas Denny. Originally published in Transsexual News Telegraph as a counterpoint to an article by Christine Tayleur.]

CROSSDRESSING AND SCI-FI CONVENTIONS

by Janice [REDACTED]

When my friend stopped at the entrance to the hotel lobby it felt like a tractor beam suddenly came into existence. I had to enter a word of caution not to show the apprehension and nervousness that was obviously present. My friend was as skittish as a matter/anti-matter intermix chamber ready for a cold restart.

I quickly and quietly told my friend a few facts of life: we would more than likely be stared at, pointed at, and talked about. You might hear laughs and giggles behind our back that you immediately think is directed at us. Some of the more courageous (or so they believe) on a dare from their friends, or if they've had a few drinks too many, will come directly up to you and ask how you can make a public spectacle of yourself and what do you get out of this.

Before continuing the conversation or going any further into the lobby I asked the Prime Question. "Is this what you really want to do? Remember, you have as much right to be here as these so-called normal individuals. Not all the statements directed at you will be negative or derogatory. Ignore the laughs since they could be for anything, such as a simple joke, and not directed at the way we are dressed. If someone comes up to you to try to instigate a conversation you can just ignore him or her and continue on your way. The IDIC philosophy covers what we are doing here and you know as well as I do what that acronym stands for."

The answer was a while in coming as I patiently waited, but eventually it came. "Yes, I worked a long time on this outfit and this makeup and I want to do it. I have fantasized about it for the last two weeks ... I see how you carry yourself and the way you don't seem to worry about these mundanes.

How do you do it?"

"The only thing I say to myself when these new situations arrive is damn the photon torpedoes, ahead warp factor two. You have to factor in what you want versus the worst case scenario. If you want to change your mind, now is the time. Once we go through the door, you can't call Scotty to beam you out of here." I then asked, "Do we proceed ahead or do we apply the retros and back out of here?"

Eventually the decision came, as if dragged out of a black hole. "Make it so. Let's go," and all of a sudden I was left standing alone in the doorway. I quickly caught up and exclaimed, "I said warp factor two, not eight ... slow down and take it easy." I was thinking as we went down the few steps and across the lobby how small of a distance this was to me whereas to my friend, it probably looked longer than a light year.

It was less than two minutes later that we entered the convention area and I didn't have to ask my friend any questions since the smile was all the answer that was needed.

While waiting in the registration line I mentioned that if the desire was there later on in the day we could make a trip to Wildside where we could remove these male science fiction costumes and I could put on my female uniform from the original *Star Trek* series and we could fix up a fantasy outfit for my friend and then come back to the convention. I could see the thoughts going through my friend's head and the smile gradually coming to the forefront.

Footnote: The above story is not true, although many of the conversations have taken place some time in the past in a slightly different context. The bottom line premise is correct: I have seen more stares, and have heard more laughs and snickers from mundanes at a *Star Trek* or Science Fiction Convention than from these same normal individuals at a group of fashionably dressed CDs in a hotel lobby. And if you are wondering if I have ever gone to a convention in the above female uniform, the answer is yes.

And for you non-Trekkers out there -- The acronym IDIC stands for Infinite Diversification in Infinite Combination, of which I am one, as we all are of this diversification and combination in this beautiful universe of ours.

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COMING OUT TO THE FAMILY

by Laurie

Forty-two years old, finally admitted to yourself that you're into crossdressing, and how do you tell Mama? Carefully, that's how! Being almost six hours by car from Mother's place, the telephone offered a good cop-out from a face-to-face showdown. So I called, said a local theater was running a TV show (my mother had enjoyed the TV/TS shows in Manhattan years ago) and the patrons were invited to join in the festivities. I would be Elvira.

Mom (funny how we don't outgrow these things; Grandma is still Nana) said we shouldn't make fun of these people by mimicking them or mocking them. Very strongly worded. Was she defending their lifestyle, or trying to dissuade me from tasting the fruits of femininity? More insecurity.

Months go by, still got to test the waters again. How about Sis, thirty-seven and difficult to shock with anything? Another phone call -- much safer than standing there in front of them, you can't see the smirks and scowls, even if you can still hear.

Dial the phone, a familiar voice, sounds like my sister. I start to tell my story of a repressed, now released, love for girlic stuff, when something isn't right. Sounds like my sister, but giggles like her daughter. Oops! It is her daughter, with a fourteen year old voice that copies her mother! Luckily, I hadn't gotten to the sensitive stuff. This shakes me; should I ask for Marie, or claim that it's a wrong number? Too late, my niece is yelling out, "it's Uncle L". "Marie, please", I meekly ask.

As I sweated, Marie came to the phone. "Hi." "Bye," I thought, but managed to hang in there.

Think quick. So I told my sister "I had a secret, could she keep one, and never tell." "Sure." Sigh of relief. "No matter how odd or unnatural?" "Yup." The burden was lifted.

As nonchalantly as possible, "I have joined a transvestite club." Silence. More silence. Lots of silence. Time to run -- or hang up first?

Hesitantly, words came through the receiver. "Transvestite? ... You mean you're going to have it cut off? What do you mean?"

Well, I explained transvestite versus transsexual, briefly. A big laugh of relief from my sister, "My brother dresses up!" Now we were communicating!

She next asked if I dressed outside, repeated four times. She was shocked. I had done the undo-able,

I had unbalanced the reckless, adventuresome and "I've seen everything" half of my families' children. Finishing up (she had to dress for work, no doubt imagining her brother struggling also with pantyhose and slips), she promised to call in a few days.

Weeks go by, no calls. Had my sister been shaken to the quick? Was she succumbing to waves of disgust? Was she building up her used underwear as a CARE package?

Christmas Day, I call Mom. "I love you, you know", enters the conversation a few too many times. Something's up. Yes, Sis had blabbed. Mom knew. Silent fear.

My Mom threw in the TV stuff, at varied and short intervals. "She didn't care what I did", was the message that came through. Wasn't that a nice Xmas present. "No opinion" is better than condemnation.

Everything went so well, I thought. "Your brother-in-law says you're too tall to be a woman." Did I hear Mom right? "Your sister says your legs aren't good enough." Huh? "Very few guys like tall

Most crossdressers fear condemnation and exile ... I was starting to fear social acceptance!

girls, although Sal is dating the La Nan sisters." Was my hearing going? Indifference is okay, acceptance would be great, but matter-of-fact inclusion in the general gossip pool???

Well, I guess everyone knows now, even my nieces and nephews. "Hey, Aunt L. is on the phone!" raced through my mind as the probable new exclamation when my niece answered the phone. My mother actually asked me to bring along my "new" clothes. My sister said my new hobby simplified her Christmas and birthday shopping for me, since they had run out of "male" type things. ("38B bra's and 40 panties, please").

Most crossdressers fear condemnation and exile; I was starting to fear social acceptance! Sometimes the world seems crazy, but this was topsy-turvy, like in those odd movies you see on TV every once in a blue moon. Things are so great you can't stand the atmosphere, cause they don't seem "natural".

People are acting contrary to what you expect.

Closer to the home front, my wife's two daughters

learned of my "need to crossdress", and thought it splendid. "They always thought I was special", both said. In fact, one daughter wanted to go shopping with me, especially for short skirts -- she told me to lose weight by exercising, so I'd fit into the available lace tight sizes.

My mother's only self-conscious thought was that she had tried dresses on me when I was two, cause I looked so girlish (curls and soft skin) and she wondered what a daughter would have looked like. When Mom first heard, she thought back to that "dress-up" day in 1952, as a possible cause.

My sister thought I was finally coming to grips with repressed drives, originating with an unadventurous teen life, and being a youthful male in a female-dominated family.

Now that the family knows (my wife's mother "loves" my TV nature, as one of her acquaintances is contemplating "The Operation"), the last frontiers are work and "The Street". A fellow worker commented today that I must be well along the sex change route, after I asked for Christine

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Jorgensen's bio for my birthday, in the office.

Wouldn't a world be nice in which men could wear dresses, nylons, earrings, and makeup to office work, and not be deemed insane (without my wig, I look sort of "butch")? There are women who dress like men, without frontal verbal assaults at work, or even snide behind-the-back commentary. Using the bathrooms might be touchy -- but I've seen unisex lavatories in some municipal office buildings, if memory serves well.

In my particular case, the "conflict" between male clothes, male action for a living and a heart of varying gender feelings naturally results in some weird behavior, and a macabre sense of humor. What could be so much weirder about a dress and other female attire, compared to now? The key is how serious one is, I guess, because it can't be viewed as an outrageous stunt designed to create chaos in the workplace, but the seriousness must be tempered with a lively sense of humor. People should view things as a natural course of action running through to the conclusion, perhaps in my case.

Back in reality, I am a far way from gaining minority (female) employment status at work, and "The Street" looms as a far more immediate threat -- in between home and work lurks physical threats. But it is fun to fantasize about getting into the middle of those female gossip rings, after all these years of wishing. And having full membership in the office women's Trenchcoat and Umbrella Walking-in-the-Rain Society, as a fully (leg) shaved participant -- even though I frown on nylons, dresses, white socks and sneakers as a combination.

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ARE YOU A SEXIST?

by Laura [REDACTED]

Most of us are past the obvious sexism of the 1940's, 50's and 60's. We now realize that many of the older attitudes about men and women are simply not based in fact, but have we truly eliminated our discriminatory attitudes about Sex and Gender?

Here is a simple test you can try: Take 4 pieces of paper and write "MAN" on one, "WOMAN" on the second, "MALE" on the third and "FEMALE" on the fourth. Now carefully arrange these four pieces of paper into their two most appropriate pairs.

If you paired them as MAN with MALE and WOMAN with FEMALE you are sexist in your thinking. You have expressed the rigid concept of Manhood as a male thing and Womanhood as the sole premise of females. This particular attitude is the main reason that transsexuals and transgenderists are seen in such low esteem in our society.

To further explore this kind of sexism, pair MAN

Transgender identity has been a known feature of mankind since the dawn of history.

with FEMALE and WOMAN with MALE and look at the pieces of paper for a while. Looks wrong to you, doesn't it? Maybe it even makes you feel a bit uncomfortable?

However, if you paired MAN with WOMAN and MALE with FEMALE you may well have escaped the sexist idea that our gender identity is somehow connected to our sex organs.

Man and woman describe **gender identity**.

Male and female describe **genital sex**.

Transgender Identity has been a known feature of mankind since the dawn of recorded history. Both Hippocrates and Philo wrote of males who adopted all nature of the women around them (now known as transgenderists) and also described some who carried this to the point of genital amputation (now called transsexuals). Transgendered people have been known in every culture on earth; in Africa we were *Serrer*, in India they call us *Hijras* and Native North Americans call us *Berdache*.

In recent years transgender identity has been depicted as a mental illness or -- in some research -- a sexual perversion. However, genetic research

has begun to uncover exciting new information which thoroughly discredits the traditional mental illness model of transsexuality and transgenderism. Recently published research is beginning to reveal the true causes of transgender identity to be a combination of genetics and foetal hormonal balances. When the right combination of events occurs a transgendered child is born. This same research also tells us this possibility, although rare, occurs naturally and well within reproductive norms.

We now know there are three independent elements involved in a person's overall sex/gender identity:

Sex: The genitals -- Maleness or Femaleness.

Gender: One's intrinsic sense of Manhood or Womanhood.

Orientation: The choice of sex partners.

Scientists are just now learning what the transgendered have known all along:

Transgendered males are women, transgendered females are men, and ... we are born to it.

Anyone who experiences a conflict between Sex and Gender, cross-lives in some structured way, is using other-sex hormones to alter their appearance

and rejects the mental illness (Transsexualism) model of their sex/gender identities is welcome to call themselves a Transgenderist.

Transgenderism is a lifetime progression that presents itself in several phases which are common to almost all transgenderists. The most usual progression is as follows:

Childhood Awareness. Most transgenderists report that they were aware of some sort of cross-gendered identity at very young ages. Mostly these early emanations display themselves as male children who proclaim themselves as girls, or female children who proclaim themselves as boys. This can often occur as early as two or three years of age. Adults most often report this as "having always known".

Going In. This is the slow acquiescence to the pressures of society. It is the entrance into a state of denial we call the "Closet". During the Going In time we will slowly be learning to act out the behaviors sociotypically ascribed to our genital sex. We become a little boy because we have a penis or a little girl because we have a vagina and we do it

to please those around us. We are usually quite well closeted by the time we start school and can often completely hide our true-genders.

Passing. The time we spend in the closet. This is a time when our behaviors match those socially dictated as being consistent with our physical sex. We actually try our best to be "just like everybody else" and will deny transgender identity. For us this is an enforced denial of who we really are and represents an abnormal state that is the source of inner turmoil and social problems. We often persist with this well into middle age.

Coming Out. Our re-emergence from the closet as honest people and our rediscovery of our transsexualism. It is the recovery from a prolonged denial and the first step in regaining our mental health. Coming out is the return to our normal state of life, a state of transgender identity. Depending on closeting pressures we can begin this phase anytime in life.

Presenting. Presenting is the search for counseling and advice. This is the most unstable part of our process. We have just Come Out and usually have not reached self-understanding or inner peace yet. Most transgender suicides happen during this time and they most often happen in reaction to the inability to locate positive support services.

Transition. This is the adjustmental phase. During this time we are changing our lifestyles to conform to our inner sense of gender. Males will begin life as women, females will begin life as men. Often this takes five or ten years and can be marked by repeated failures. Most human rights problems we have will come up during this time. We are routinely fired from careers, evicted from our homes and refused all sorts of services we had access to before beginning Transition.

Cross-Living. For most of us this is the end of the fight, we now have our lifestyles sorted out and are seeking to live a quiet life. We will be cross-living in

some structured way, often as the result of making many compromises. To some degree, Males will be socially integrated as women, females will be living as men.

These are not sharply defined steps, but are rather points in a lifetime continuum. Each phase has no distinct beginning or end.

We don't all go through all the phases, and we don't all go through them in this order. Coming Out and Presenting often occur in reverse order to how I have listed them, sometimes they occur together. In some rare cases the Going In, Passing, and Coming Out is skipped and the person gets to cross-live their whole life.

There is an important distinction that must be made, and that is the fine line that separates transgenderists from transsexuals.

Transgenderists are Men born to female bodies or Women born to male bodies. The issue is gender identity. Transgenderists are not Transvestites or Homosexuals. Many live unremarkable lives as members of their opposite sex. Most transgenderists don't present for clinical assessments, unless they decide to seek sex-change surgery.

Transsexuals are a subset of transgenderists, with the same gender identity issues, but they additionally feel a compelling need to become a member of the opposite sex. Most transsexuals despise their genitals. Many cross-live full time. About half will have a surgical "sex-change".

[Laura [REDACTED] is the director of TransEqual, a gender community-oriented human rights organization in Canada.]

Cross-Talk is now accessible by InterNet for letters to the editor, address changes and suggestions. Send NetMail to "kymmer@xconn.com".

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THE SHOPPING MAVEN

by JoAnn Roberts

Products: Slimmer Slip, #59477, Breast Enhancers, #59808, Tulle Pantyhose, #34371
Source: Frederick's of Hollywood Mail Order, P.O. Box 229, Hollywood CA 90028-0229
Cost: \$54 (slip), \$198 (enhancers), \$16 (pantyhose)
Ratings: Varied

I've reported before on these Lycra spandex slips that help slim and control the figure. As I recall, the last time I recommended that you bypass the one offered by Frederick's. Well, ladies, this Queen has the right to change her mind and Frederick's has a new offering that is tops.

The catalog touts this undergarment as providing an "instant hour-glass figure" and while that is indulging in a little advertising hype, this slip does offer the most sturdy support I have yet to encounter. I noticed the difference as soon as I opened the package. This is no fly-weight garment. I had a little difficulty getting it on because I ordered a size smaller than I normally would. Nevertheless, once in place, I turned sideways and looked in the mirror. Lo and behold, that little "pooch" I can never seem to lose just below my waist was about as flat as can be. This thing really works!

In addition to the heavy construction, there is a rubberized band all along the top edge to help keep it in place. This band caused some of the difficulty in getting the garment on correctly, but once in place it didn't move. And that's another nice feature of this slip. It can be worn strapless, with shoulder straps, or as a halter, making it a versatile addition to one's lingerie drawer. Those of you who are long through the torso will be pleased to know that this slip has an adjustable snap panel in the built-in cotton panty. This will fit just about everyone.

Fifty-four dollars may seem like a lot of money, but I've spent more than triple that looking for the "right" slip, and believe me, this is it. The Slimmer Slip comes in black and (ugh!) white, sizes S-M-L-XL. By the way, these days sizes 12-14 are considered Large, while XL is 16-18. **Rating: A +**

Along with the Slimmer Slip I ordered two more "new" products from the Frederick's catalog.

Frederick's is offering a breast enhancer that looks great in the catalog, so I ordered a pair to see how they compare to other breast forms.

Immediately on opening the package, I was

disappointed. These are not really breast forms, and to be fair to Frederick's, they are not advertised as such. These are truly breast enhancers. They look and feel much like the typical silicone gel breast forms, but these forms actually are designed to fit over breast tissue that's already there, thus enhancing, or filling-out a small bustline. The backs of the forms are concave to fit over the natural breast tissue. The forms can also be worn in a special bra sold by Frederick's for \$26.

I ordered the largest forms available (36) and they were still pretty small. The catalog suggests they will add about a cup size to your bust. I found the forms too flimsy to wear in a soft cup, underwire bar (my standard bra), and they are very light so there is almost no bounce to them.

If you are on hormones and growing your own, these may help to fill out your bra, but, overall, these are no substitute for a good pair of prosthetic breast forms like those from Camp, Mirage, or Melody. Save your money. **Rating: C**

I have this special costume I sometimes wear at my Pocono weekend Costume Party and on Halloween. It's a cocktail waitress outfit a la Playboy Bunny style with a high-cut brief and fishnet hose. So, I was intrigued by the baby fishnet seamed pantyhose offered by Frederick's.

Once again, I was disappointed almost immediately. The catalog says the hose are made of nylon in the legs and nylon/Lycra in the panty. The hose bagged pretty badly in the legs and the panty offered no support whatever. I had ordered Average/Tall for 5'4" to 5'10", up to 130-65 lbs. Now, I am a big girl (Size 14) but short (5'6"), so I can just imagine what these would look like on a woman my height.

Again, save your money. At \$16 a pair, Donna Karan's baby fishnets (sans seams) are a better buy at \$11-\$12 a pair and much more fashionable. **Rating: F**

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NATIONAL PUBLICATION REVIEW

by Kimberleigh Richards

A new book from Creative Design Services constitutes the latest effort at reconciling transgendered behavior with Christian beliefs.

The Cross & The Crossdresser is billed as the personal reflections of author Vanessa S., but the book also includes a number of references from such diverse sources as the Prince-Bentler survey of 1972, David Payne's 1985 dissertation on the book of Deuteronomy; and Virginia Prince's *The Transvestite and His Wife*.

The book is sectioned off into chapters on the phenomenon of crossdressing, socio-cultural perspectives, and possible Christian responses to crossdressing. Unfortunately, I found many areas where the discussion became too thin to be of real value, and I also disagree with the author's stated position that a discussion of crossdressing does not include transsexuals and transgenderists (the latter especially, since it is a logical extension of crossdressing).

This slim (48 pages) book is a decent attempt to cover the subject, but unfortunately the subject can't be done justice in this short a book. To be honest, you'd be better off checking your local library for some of the titles Vanessa lists in the back.

[*The Cross & The Crossdresser*, Creative Design Services, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia PA 19406.]



As predicted in this column several months ago, Sandy Thomas has rebounded strongly from a forced hiatus in publishing earlier this year. Her latest, *My Sister's Shadow* by Lauren Wood, is evidence that Sandy has not lost her touch in choosing fiction that will appeal to a wide spectrum of the crossdressing community.

This book has as its basic plot line the pending marriage of a young man's twin sister. She refuses to give up her successful career in the cosmetics business to marry her rich and handsome boyfriend, and, since the wedding is scheduled right after an important extended business trip to Europe, she asks her twin brother to impersonate her for several weeks so that her fiance won't realize she's away on business. Well, to make a long story short, Tom impersonates Tammy so well that he even stands in for her at the wedding when her flight is delayed returning to the U.S.

There's a great plot twist at that point, but if you think I'm going to reveal it and spoil your fun, you're crazy.

If you don't buy any other story this year, buy this one. You'll love it.

[*My Sister's Shadow*, Sandy Thomas, P.O. Box 2309, Capistrano Beach CA 92624.]



A new book on dominance and submission (D&S) has, surprisingly, painted a realistic picture of how crossdressing sometimes plays a part in this sexual behavior.

Different Loving: an exploration of the world of sexual dominance and submission devotes one 22 page chapter to "Transgenderism", beginning with the honest statement that a sizeable number of transgendered people do not engage in D&S. It then provides a reasonably accurate lexicon of the terminology of the gender community (my only complaint: the use of the word "transgenderism" to identify both transsexualism and crossdressing), and a brief discussion of both transvestism and transsexualism and possible causes and behavior patterns before devoting the second half of the chapter to interviews with Roger Peo and a "transgenderist" (actually a crossdresser, based on the content of the interview).

The following chapter, "Playing on the Gender Line in D&S", discusses how transgendered behaviors and lifestyles can be used in D&S. It includes interviews with two other crossdressers, the partner of a crossdresser, and a master and slave who use crossdressing occasionally in their playing. This chapter sprinkles additional comments from Dr. Peo throughout as well.

Aside from the misuse of the terms "transgenderist" and "transgenderism", this book makes an honest effort to show how a portion of our community uses crossdressing and gender roleplaying in D&S. The book's not worth having only for that reason, but if you are interested in the subject overall, it's at least properly presented here.

[*Different Loving: an exploration of the world of sexual dominance and submission* by Gloria G. Brame, William D. Brame, and Jon Jacobs. Villard Books; available at mainstream bookstores.]



This will be my final "National Publication Review" column. Next month, Paula Jordan [redacted] will review Nan Goldin's book *The Other Side: 1972-1992*, and beginning in January, I will be concentrating on the alternative press ('zines), and hopefully expose our readers to some smaller, lesser-known sources of entertainment and information about gender issues and lifestyles.

**"CROSS-TALK" COSTS
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A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER

by Chrystine [REDACTED]

As a crossdresser, have you ever been stared at, felt conspicuous and out of place? As much as we would like society to understand us, there are some individuals that never will. As we strive to find our acceptance within ourselves and our community, we also struggle to find our place in the world. At times we lose our perspective of the world at large's view of our experience. Our own analysis, definitions, social or emotional issues can block the vision of how it appears to an onlooker. We expect the world to understand and accept us. But, do we ever try to understand them?

Imagine sitting in a restaurant with your family, when in walks a man dressed in a full set of armor. Wouldn't you think him to be more than a little strange? Would you jab the person next to you and

While at first this story may seem strange to you, the analogy should quickly become clear.

say "hey look!?" Would you make some snide remark to your spouse, or to him? I would like to relate a story about an imaginary friend of mine. While at first his story may seem strange to you, the analogy should quickly become clear.

His name is Mister Henry Wilkinson. However, he treats the title of "Mister" with distaste and prefers to be called "Sir" Henry Wilkinson. Since a very young age Henry recognized that he was different from the other boys in the neighborhood. While they were concerned with trading cards and driveway basketball, Henry had a secret wish. Henry wanted to be a knight. But afraid of rejection and ridicule, he shared his wish with no one. His parents had bought a suit of armor at an auction and stored it in the attic. Almost daily Henry would find an excuse to get away and sneak to the attic to try on the armor. At first it was too large for Henry to actually wear but he would try on the different pieces and admire himself in a small mirror propped on a chair. These adventures were always shrouded in the fear of discovery and followed by tremendous guilt. Part of Henry

wanted to be normal, yet his longing to be a knight was even stronger.

Every Halloween Henry would deck himself out in his chivalrous finery. He was glad for even a brief opportunity to show Sir Henry to the world. As the years went by Henry grew and so did his compulsion. By the time Henry was in college the armor fit quite well. It felt so good to wear, that it was nearly impossible to take it off. He would wear the chain mail under his normal street clothes. Soon he had acquired several suits of armor as well as collecting magazine articles and books about people that had become knights. Henry tried to live a normal life. He was well on his way to a good career when he married.

Marriage was a struggle. The tension of Henry's secret was kept barely beneath the surface. Then in a matter of moments he saw his entire life explode and fall to pieces around him. His wife came home early from a shopping trip. Henry stood there in the middle of the bedroom decked in sheet metal from head to

toe. There was nowhere to hide and no way to deny it, Henry's fantasies were exposed. His wife, already dismayed by the lack of closeness in the relationship, left him. She refused to deal with such abnormal behavior.

Shortly there after Henry threw caution to the wind, and began living full-time as Sir Henry. Some people were rude when Henry would visit the theater or market. Most people, though, were simply distant. A few were curious. Amazingly there were a handful that actually seemed to understand. He discovered some restaurants and clubs that featured medieval atmosphere and entertainment and made friends in the community.

His employer was not receptive to Henry coming to work in full dress, and terminated him. After numerous interviews he found an employer that did accept him for who he was. Henry has also found a lady that accepts the chivalry as an important part of his personality. Her loving and caring along with the support of the community has given Henry the stability to rebuild his life. Henry knows who he is, and believes he is the best person he can be.

The people that take the time (continued, next page)

NewsQueen Extra: MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL STILL SCENE OF CONTROVERSY

by Paula Jordan [REDACTED]

The organizers of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival were at it again in August. Enforcing the policy of allowing only "women born women" to attend the week-long festival in Walhalla, Mich., organizers evicted four post-op transsexuals from the festival grounds.

Festival co-producer Barbara Price said the incident is the same old story -- men wanting to take over something that's just for women.

"The festival defines what constitutes a woman -- women who were born women," Price said, "not male-to-female transsexuals."

Rica Fredrickson, one of the transsexuals who was asked to leave, disagrees. "I certainly feel my identity was female from a very early age," she said.

She said that she and four other transsexuals attended four days of the festival without incident before they were told to get out. But Price said that from the outset women complained. "People would say, 'There's a gay man attending a workshop, there's a gay man in drag.' It was upsetting to women."

The other transsexuals included Wendi Kaiser, Janis Walworth, Davina Anne Gabriel, and Nancy Burkholder, whose eviction from the 1991 festival prompted the publication of the "women-born-women" policy.

Fredrickson wants the policy changed, or it organizers won't change it, at least rephrase it to say transsexual women are excluded.

"I think a code word like that ('women-born-women') is insulting to transsexual women," she said. "It defines us by exclusion, sort of like 'family values' excludes gay male and lesbian family structures."

A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER ... continued

to get acquainted with Henry know what a wonderful person he is. But he may never get away from strange looks when he goes grocery shopping. There will always be someone to point at him and whisper. But even an occasional child saying "Mommy, look! There's a man in a suit of armor ..." no longer shakes Henry's self-image. Sir Henry Wilkinson lives and loves.

We also wear armor of one type or another. Substitute satin or silk for the steel and the story hits close to home.

Remember, to the outside world we may be strange, but that does not prevent us from being happy.

[Originally published in Cross-Talk #31 (December 1991).]



NATIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

November 10-14, 1993: Tri-Ess "Holiday En Femme", Burbank CA. Event open only to Tri-Ess members or heterosexual crossdressers. Host chapters: Alpha, Omega Chi, Tri-Chi. Details from Holiday En Femme, 1757-D W. Carson St. #306, Torrance CA 90501.

February 25-27, 1994: 6th Annual "Texas 'T' Party", San Antonio TX, sponsored by Boulton & Park Society. Information from P.O. Box 700042, San Antonio 78270.

March 12-20, 1994: International Foundation for Gender Education "Coming Together-Working Together" convention, Portland OR. Information from IFGE, P.O. Box 367, Wayland MA 01778.

April 27-May 1, 1994: "California Dreamin'", Burbank CA, sponsored by Powder Puffs Of California and Neutral Corner. Details from P.O. Box 1088, Yorba Linda CA 92686 or by calling (714) 779-9013.

May 19-22, 1994: "Paradise in the Poconos", Canadensis PA, sponsored by Creative Design Services. Information from CDS, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia PA 19406, or by calling (215) 640-9449.

October 4-7, 1994: "Dignity Cruise V", steamboating aboard the historic Delta Queen. Details from Peggy Rudd, 1811 Crutchfield, Katy TX 77449 or by calling (713) 347-6563.

September 15-18, 1994: "Paradise in the Poconos", Canadensis PA. See May 19-22 listing.

(Please send information on national gender community events to Cross-Talk, P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365.)

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Some people pay so much attention to their reputation that they lose their character.

Hello babies! It's dressin' weather out there, so let's get out and have some fun! Hope I got to see you at Southern Comfort. The Queen has been busy, busy, busy. We shot three new videos for CDS (hormones, cosmetic surgery, and couples), published a new book (*The Cross & The Crossdresser*) and are finalizing the 1994 edition of *Who's Who & Resource Guide*. Phew! Meanwhile, others have been busy too.

The International Conference on Transgender Law & Employment Policy has published a brochure entitled *Health Law Standards of Care for Transsexualism*. (What, transvestites don't need health care?) Anyway, the brochure elaborates five standards in lieu of the Benjamin Standards. Hopefully, I can convince our editrix to publish these proposed new standards. But basically they represent both hormone therapy and reassignment surgery on-demand, which I feel is a mistake. I hope the ICTL&EP folks will gather feedback, especially from some physicians, and review the standards again next year.

Last March at the IFGE convention, the board acted to create a Strategic Planning Committee which has been working and meeting throughout the year. That committee is ready to make some of its work public by holding Focus Group meetings at various events. The purpose of a Focus Group is to get input from a selected segment of a population. The opinions collected at these Focus Groups will be worked into the IFGE Strategic Plan.

Okay, now some really important stuff -- A new "look" for Fall makeup is a healthy, metallic glow (Yes, metallic!). Thanks to a new array of sheer sparkly powders, the look is glowing, not gaudy. Check out Borghese's Titian Taupe, Stagelight's Ice Capades Rose, or Dior's Naive Rose. For evening try Stagelight's Special Effects Gold, or Dior's Goldleaf Couture Color. Sweep onto brow bone, or dust on shoulders and cleavage. Hot!

The Midwestern floods are but memories past for those of us in the East and West, but I'll bet you never thought about our sisters who might have kept their "treasures" in a trunk in the basement.

I'm willing to guess that a lot of folks lost clothes, wigs and whatever. If you know a sister who lost belongings in the floods, ask if you can help her replace anything. You make her feel better and you'll feel better.

I was reading about Clinton's Health Reform and there was this sidebar that discussed what would not be covered by the new national health plan. In case you wondered if they forgot about us, they didn't. Sex Reassignment Surgery and cosmetic surgery in general will not be covered. ICTL&EP please note. "Plus ca change, cela meme chose."

The "best" Fashions for Fall are a black, double-breasted jacket (military cut if you can wear it) ... velvet (really BIG this Fall) leggings ... velvet halter dress for evening ... and a push-up bra. Suggested bra for the moment is a nylon/Lycra number from Felina.

We don't get no respect! Ten female Fashion editors at Elle were asked what pieces of clothing were hot for Fall and six of them said they were going to buy men's clothing. Mind you, not men's-cut women's wear, but men's store men's clothes, like Donna Karan for Men and a little boy's suit from Brooks Brothers. Then, adding insult to injury, October *Mademoiselle* does a feature spread showing those waifish little women, all wearing men's clothes. It's a pedophile's fantasy. Now imagine what would happen if one of us in male drag wandered into, oh say, Chanel, and tried to order a women's suit.

Get real! How long should pantyhose last? According to a poll taken by *Glamour*, "forever" was the most common answer. But that wish was put to rest by hosiery experts. Sheer evening hosiery lasts about 3 days, daytime hosiery lasts about 6 and opaque hose can last up to 5 months, if you take care of them. Anymore than that and you're getting a bargain. However, it makes you stop and think about how much it really costs to wear a pair of \$12 glittery hose for one evening.

I received a letter from one of the S.S. (Supercilious Sister) Gender Nazis, as I often do. She said that I publically dissed her by taking a shot at her in this column. The way I see it, people deserve respect when the following two conditions

have been met: (a) they earn it, and (b) they give respect to others. Often, they fulfill "a" but not "b." They become so self-involved they seem to forget about the community's needs and focus only on their own ego-feeding.

Packable, wearable clothes are just what the busy transgendered jet-setter needs. Norma Kamali and Donna Karan (pricey) have designed sets of clothes that travel very nicely. One of the nicer combos was offered on QVC cable. Randolph Duke's Five Easy Pieces consists of cotton-Lycra skirt, tee-shirt, bodysuit, stretch pants and scarf, all for \$79, in black, of course.

Tama Janowitz is causing a bit of a stir, again. The author of *The Male Crossdressing Club*, which has little or nothing to do with transvestites, has been "outed" as a transsexual. One of those rumor-rags checked out Tama's mom's biography in one of those *Who's Who* and guess what. Mrs. Janowitz didn't have no girls, but she did have two sons, one named Thomas. Tama has admitted in the past that she once submitted a screenplay under the "pseudonym" of Thomas Janowitz. What makes this all so very funny and ironic is Janowitz's interview in the September issue of *Elle*. Tama is quoted as saying, "Humiliating, and yet somehow a secret joy: to be able to upset people simply by wearing the wrong clothes." Hmmm!

Matte foundations are HOT for Fall and Origins has eighteen shades in three consistencies, Some, More, and Most coverage. Some of us need More and most need Most. They also have coordinating pressed and loose powders.

Making a big splash at Barney's in New York is twenty-year old Poppy King and her new line of lipsticks in two collections Virtue and Deadly Sins. Check out these names: Decadence, Vanity, Avarice, Indolence, Lust and Envy. Wild! Poppy was expelled from school at twelve for being "so different that I would never amount to anything." Sounds like some folks we know.

One of the videos we shot in September was on cosmetic surgery. There's a real interest in what can be done to achieve a more youthful, androgynous look. One of the most "popular" procedures today is liposuction. In fact, it has replaced the nose-job as the most common

MOVING? Please send your new address six to eight weeks in advance to P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365. Include your four-digit subscriber number.

cosmetic surgery. A lip-suck, as they're called in the trade, can remove as much as two liters of fat cells from the body. Current techniques avoid the use of general anesthesia and two liters is the absolute limit to minimize risk. All this beauty isn't cheap, either. A lip-suck to the stomach can cost between \$2,000 and \$8,000. That ain't chicken fat.

Now this sounds interesting! The Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase will open a show in October called *Empty Dress: Clothing as Surrogate in Recent Art*. It's an exhibition of dresses, bras, etc., that takes ready-to-wear as works of art out of the closet. The displays range from real clothing you could wear to sculptures of clothes (my fave is the chrome plated long-line bra) in an attempt to explore how clothes reveal sexual identity. (Now you see where this is going.) Themes range from crossdressing to uniformity of mind. *Empty Dress* will be at the Neuberger until January 2, and then will tour North America through 1995. Call Independent Curators Inc. at 212-254-8200 to find out if *Empty Dress* will be coming to your city. *Empty Dress* reminds me of a song I once heard, *The Empty Brassiere*, or *You Left Me Breastless*.

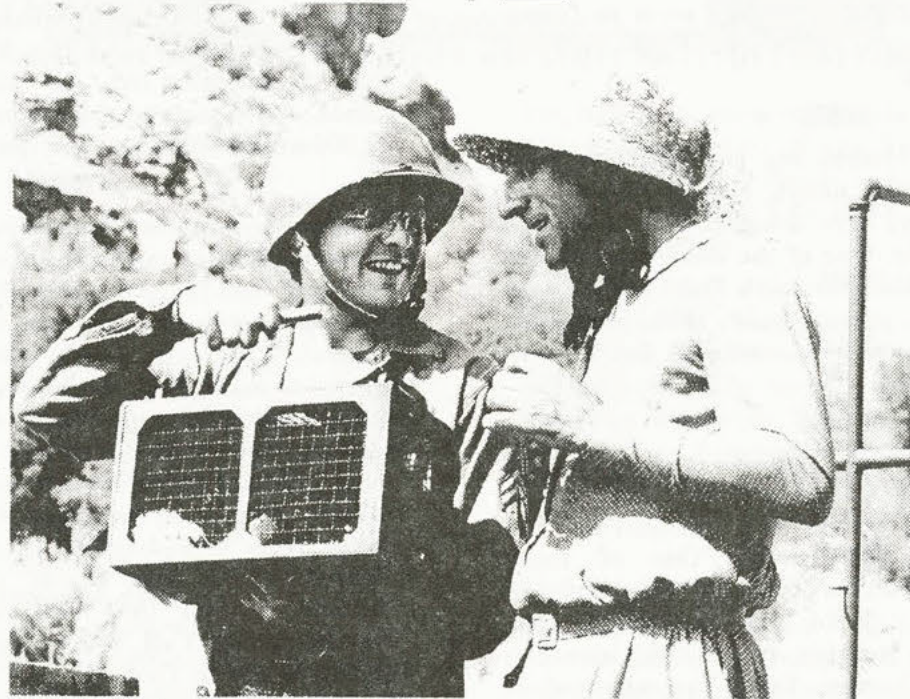
Maybe some of you saw the little news item about the civilian head of the U.S. Army who was arrested for shoplifting women's clothes from a Base Exchange. For those who follow this kind of thing (shoplifting, that is), what was stolen was no surprise. The three most common items shoplifted by men are: alcohol, cigarettes, and (ta da!) women's clothes. Now think about that. The first two aren't even remotely related to the last. Perhaps, if more men were open about their crossdressing and society were more tolerant of the behavior, we could eliminate an entire class of shoplifting! Boggles the mind. (Source: FBI)

If you were at Southern Comfort and saw me on Saturday night, you might have thought my dress looked familiar. It's the same dress that the new Miss America wore for her evening gown competition. (You always knew the Queen of Prussia had impeccable taste.) I'm sure Miss America bought her dress, but mine was made by Lorraine of "The Occasional Woman. She's a marvel. I took a picture of the dress from a magazine ad last August and gave it to her. She made the dress sans pattern! If you'd like custom made to order clothes, call 215-352-0248.

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GREAT MOMENTS IN TV HISTORY

by Ralph [REDACTED]



9/21/76: Radar (Gary Burghoff, left) and Klinger (Jamie Farr) fight to take a few of their favorite things along when the 4077th is evacuated, on the fifth-season premiere of *M*A*S*H*, CBS.



4/1/80: Lenny and Squiggy (Michael McKean, center, and David L. Lander, left) done feminine attire in an effort to deal with a tough bunch of girls who now belong to Laverne and Shirley's old club on *Laverne & Shirley*, ABC.

Ralph [REDACTED]'s books *Drag Gags* and *Drag Gags Return*, each featuring old movie photos showing female impersonation, with fictional humorous captions added and identified by actor, title, studio, and year, are available for \$7.95 each plus \$2.05 shipping and handling (Calif. residents add 68 cents sales tax) from Ralph [REDACTED] Communications, 1330 Bush St. #4H, San Francisco CA 94109. Credit card orders, call (800) 637-2256.



OTHER POINTS OF VIEW

THE "RELIGION" OF THE GENDER COMMUNITY

by Cynthia Phillips

I see with dismay so much division in the gender community. When Linda and I came back into the community a few years ago, we expected all the problems we had seen thirty years ago to be solved. We know now that was a utopian dream.

Do you think it possible to compare the gender community to organized religion? Does that strike you as a strange comparison?

Most of us have faith in God. How to exercise that faith is a personal matter.

Think of the many different ways people find to express their belief in a supreme being. The list of the world's religions is too long to even think of listing. The world's various religions have at least reached a rather uneasy truce. We no longer force people to accept our religion: We may try to

people! This, of course, is said in jest. One does find a number of different practices in the gender community. Just as it would be a mistake to try and lump all the religions together, it is probably a mistake to think it is possible -- recognizing this vast diversity -- for our people to ever get together to work toward a common goal.

In fact, we seem to have a number of disagreements which I suppose could be compared to the Holy Wars the Christian world had with everybody they felt were different and thereby unholy. I hope you understand that so much of the problem then -- as is the problem in the gender community today -- is simply a matter of male pride and that ongoing problem ... too much testosterone!

You very seldom see women start wars. We know how to deal with one another. Women may not always like one another, but we see no sense in beating each other with weapons or words trying to convince each other we are right. Women see no sense in this. We are

It is probably a mistake to think it is possible for our people to ever work toward a common goal.

convince others that ours is the only true religion, but we usually let others worship whatever deity they wish without much comment from us.

Someone told me once that there are as many different reasons to express oneself as a transgendered person as there are transgendered

able to sit down and talk things over.

For a community which claims it wants to be recognized as the opposite of what the world would have it be, the attitudes of the people in this community hardly reflect that desire. I have seen more male posturing in this community than I ever saw when my husband ran a salvage yard and dealt with nothing but men.

What would it take to unite all these different gender community inhabitants?

Would it be better to admit the differences that exist in this community and let those people that are different express their differences in their own way? Or will we continue to insist we are basically the same, then become disappointed in someone when they refuse to see things our way?

[Reprinted with permission from Gender Euphoria, Boulton & Park Society, San Antonio, TX.]

The new *Cross-Talk* style book is now available for those wishing to submit articles for publication. To receive a copy, send a #10 SASE to P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365.

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HOTLINES

These hotlines are run by non-profit organizations, and may not be answered "live" at all times as a result. Listings followed by % are for groups known to be sexually-oriented; listings followed by # are for primarily TS-oriented groups; listings followed by @ are for heterosexual TV/CDs only. Most other listings are for "open" (both TV/CD and TS) groups. While we make every effort to keep this listing updated, phone numbers may change without notice. If you find an incorrect listing, please let us know!

NEW ENGLAND REGION:

CD Network, Rochester: (716) 251-2132
Chi Delta Mu Chapter Tri-Ess, NYC: (201) 663-0772 @
Cross Dressers International, NYC: (212) 321-2302
East Coast F2M Group, Cambridge: (413) 584-7616 #
Eulenspiegel Society, NYC: (212) 477-6588 %
Expressing Our Nature, Syracuse: (315) 475-5611
Gender Identity Program, NYC: (212) 969-0888 #
Girls' Night Out, NYC: (212) 794-1665 ext 202
Int'l. Foundation for Gender Education: (617) 894-8340
Long Island Femme Expression: (516) 538-5304
Metropolitan Gender Network, NYC: (718) 461-9050
My Choice, Baltimore: (410) 732-4546
Outreach Institute, N. Portland: (207) 775-0858
Renaissance Education Ass'n.: (215) 630-1437
Renaissance Greater Philadelphia Chapter: (215) 946-8887
Renaissance LSV Chapter, Harrisburg: (717) 780-1578
Renaissance S. Jersey Chapter: (609) 641-3782
Tiffany Club, Boston: (617) 891-9325
Transgenderists Independence Club, Albany: (518) 436-4513
Transpitt, Pittsburgh: (412) 781-0257
Washington-Baltimore Alliance: (301) 277-5475
XX (Twenty) Club, Hartford: (203) 646-8651 #

THE SOUTH:

American Educational Gender Info. Service: (404) 939-0244
Atlanta Gender Explorations: (404) 962-3118 #
Black Rose, Arlington: (301) 369-7667 %
Carolina Trans-Sensual Alliance, Charlotte: (704) 551-8838
GDA North Carolina: (704) 642-1914
Gender Information Network, Gainesville: (904) 332-8178
Montgomery Institute, Augusta: (404) 603-9426 #
M.O.R.E., Ft. Lauderdale: (305) 966-2138
Mu Sigma Chapter Tri-Ess, Arkansas: (501) 972-1826 @
Phi Epsilon Mu Chapter Tri-Ess, Central FL: (407) 677-9540 @
Phoenix, Asheville: (704) 259-9428
Reality, Orlando: (407) 425-4527 #
Serenity, Hollywood: (305) 436-9477
Starburst, Tampa-St. Petersburg: (813) 685-9254
TransGender Educational Ass'n, Arlington: (301) 949-3822
Virginia's Secret, Richmond: (804) 741-1187

MIDWEST & VICINITY:

Central Illinois Gender Assoc.: (309) 444-9918
Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Chicago: (708) 364-9514 @
Chicago Gender Society: (708) 749-1202
City of Lakes Crossgender Comm., Minn'pls: (612) 229-3613
Cross-Port, Cincinnati: (513) 474-9557
Crossroads, Detroit: (313) 537-3267
Crystal Club, Columbus: (614) 224-1165
Gender Dysphoria Support, Shawnee Mss'n: (913) 371-0658 #
Indiana Crossdressers Society, Indianapolis: (317) 894-8109
Iowa Artistry, Cedar Rapids: (319) 842-2654
Minnesota Freedom of Gender Expression: (612) 220-9072
N.G.D.O., Detroit: (313) 842-5258 #
Quad-City Society for Sex. Ed., Davenport: (319) 324-9641
St. Louis Gender Foundation: (314) 567-8615
Sunday Society, Chicago: (312) 252-7024

SOUTHWEST/MOUNTAINREGION:

Alpha Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Amarillo: (806) 359-7714 @
Bluebonnet Coalition, San Antonio: (210) 656-4163
Boulton & Park Society, San Antonio: (210) 545-3668
CrossDressers International, Tulsa: (918) 582-6643
Delta Omega Chapter Tri-Ess, Dallas: (817) 261-3253 @
First Saturday, El Paso: (505) 434-5144
Gender Crisis Help Line, Tucson: (602) 293-3456
Gender Identity Center, Denver: (303) 458-5378
Gulf Coast Transgender Community, Houston: (713) 780-4282
Heart of Texas Gender Alliance, Austin: (210) 438-7604
Help Me ... Accept Me, Dallas: (214) 404-1926
ReCast, Dallas: (214) 641-4842 #
Second Image, Austin: (512) 778-5460
TS Peer Support, Houston: (713) 333-2278 #
Tau Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Houston: (713) 988-8064 @
Tri-Plex Gender Association, Waco: (817) 867-1077
West Texas Gender Alliance, San Angelo: (915) 944-1381

PACIFIC NORTHWEST:

Emerald City, Seattle: (206) 284-1071
Northwest Gender Alliance, Portland: (503) 774-8463
Rose City Gender Center, Portland: (503) 230-1036
Salmacis Feminist Social Society, Eugene: (503) 688-4282
Transsexual Lesbians & Friends, Seattle: (206) 292-1037 #

THE WEST COAST (CA & HI):

Alpha Chapter Tri-Ess, Los Angeles: (213) 876-6141 @
Androgyny, Santa Monica: (213) 467-8317
CHIC, Los Angeles: (818) 766-0520 @
Diablo Valley Girls, Concord: (510) 849-4112
Educational TV Channel, San Francisco: (510) 549-2665
Hawaii Transgendered Outreach, Honolulu: (808) 923-4270
Neutral Corner, San Diego: (619) 685-3696
Powder Puffs Of California, Anaheim: (714) 779-9013
Rainbow Gender Association, San Jose: (408) 984-4044
Sacramento Gender Association: (916) 482-7742
Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess) Nat'l.: (209) 688-9246 @
Swan's Inner Sorority, San Jose: (408) 297-1423

CANADA:

Club Met, Montreal: (514) 528-8874
Entre Femme, Quebec: (418) 529-1132 #
F.A.T.E., Vancouver: (604) 254-9591
Gender Mosaic, Ottawa: (613) 749-5203
Illusions Social Club, Calgary: (403) 486-9661
Monarch Social Club, Ontario: (416) 949-6602

(International hotlines appear on page 39.)

GRACE AND LACE LETTER
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WHY I PLAY GTR

by Selena Anne Shephard

My need to express beauty; my need to be beautiful...

My need for the exotic,

the wild,

the savage,

the furious,

the unbridled,

the tempestuous...

My need for whimsy and bemusement...

My need for

symmetry

balance

proportion

harmony

MY NEED FOR DISCIPLINE AND DEFINITION...

My need to be

on the cutting edge,

to be creative,

to let my imagination soar

& see what comes of it...

My Need To Defy The Gods...



READER PROFILES

To respond to an ad without an address: Seal your correspondence in a stamped envelope and write the subscriber number IN PENCIL on the front. Then place the envelope(s) in a larger envelope and mail to **Cross-Talk**, P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365. If you are a subscriber, please write your subscriber number with your address on the larger envelope and your forwarding will be free. Non-subscribers, please include \$1.00 per letter to be forwarded.

Anaheim, CA: Stephanie [redacted], 31: I am a cabinetmaker and photographer. Have not yet been to any events; I have just made my first trip out to a nightclub and I am looking to become more involved in the gender community. #1478

Bakersfield, CA: Chrys, employed in marketing, and consider myself a writer. I regularly write for trade publications and have had numerous pieces published in **Cross-Talk**. I am currently working on an epic-fantasy (dragons, magic potions, etc.). I like long walks and long talks and would enjoy corresponding with those with similar interests. #1144 Chrystine [redacted], P.O. Box 60089, Bakersfield, CA 93386-0089

Daly City, CA: Brenda, 44, single, living in Bay Area. Novice dresser, not out in public yet. Looking for friends and tips. Would love to hear from you. #1452 Brenda [redacted], P.O. Box 2361, Daly City CA 94017

Downey, CA: Desirey, 33, receptionist/clerk. I play a trumpet and just graduated from square dance callers' school; would like to start a square dance club for crossdressers (maybe call it "Crossdancers"?). I've been out to clubs and meetings and enjoy sports of all kinds. Engaged. #1527

Glendale, CA: Brenda [redacted] self-employed professional and pre-op TS. Looking for new friends and/or significant other to share life with. Interests include reading, music, golf and skiing. If you would like to know someone like myself or just share a friendship, write -- I don't bite! #1465

LaVerne, CA: Gwendolyn [redacted], 26: I am an artist and illustrator. Enjoy reading, Macintosh computers, AD&D, and a wonderful relationship with a very supportive wife. Enjoy corresponding with others in the gender community. #1445

Redondo Beach, CA: Diva, looking for musicians to form a crossdressing rock/alternative band! #1201 D.P. [redacted] P.O. Box 207, Redondo Beach CA 90277

San Francisco, CA: Ayme, 36, M2F TS, living and working as a woman for the last two years. Tall, attractive, feminine, sexy. Confident and comfortable in any social situation. Interests in Macintosh desktop publishing, music, dining and dancing. Seeks male or female friends. #1186

Santa Ana, CA: Susan, 45, in business part-time. Enjoy sports, reading, chess and war games. Always dressed at home. Interested in hearing from others; also would like to have a serious relationship with a woman who understands me. #1323

Santa Clarita, CA: Bonnie, 40+, love tennis, golf, shopping, cooking, being Bonnie. Been out in public three times dressed and love it. Mother dressed me as a girl when I was a young boy (she always wanted a girl). Will write to all. #1248 Bonnie [redacted], P.O. Box 801416, Santa Clarita CA 91380-1416

South Pasadena, CA: Christy, an educator and professionally involved with human diversity issues, especially the Berdache tradition. I'm going through my transformation, electrolysis, counseling and such, and am very interested in developing friendships with women, caring professionals and persons like myself for companionship and support. #1122 Christy [redacted] P.O. Box 3402, South Pasadena, CA 91031-6402

Sun Valley, CA: Laura, 43. I am an electrologist, pre-op and full-time TS, 5'8", 128 lbs.m blonde, blue eyes. Love: Christ, my two dogs, hang gliding, walks, company, Bible study, baking, movies, and hugs. Looking for more friends to visit

and have over for dinner at my house. #1486

Van Nuys, CA: Melissa, 44, electronic tech (repair VCRs, stereos, etc.). My passions are music, dressing, shopping, good talkradio. Guitar player for the past 25 years. I love a good 12-step program, the whole gender community, the hell I plan to raise over the next 20 years. I love kids and dogs and I send money home. #1469

West Hollywood, CA: Michelle, 37, SWM, Bi, 5'11"/150 lbs. TV since 11 years old, attending CD clubs last two years. Writer. Other interests photography, film and cinema. Would enjoy meeting other 30-something TVs, possibly for social outings *en femme*. #1355

Yucca Valley, CA: Elizabeth, 54, currently residing in Southern California. Work as a Supply Specialist. Interests include painting and bicycling. I've been away from our lifestyle for a number of years, so my experience level is re-learning it all. Would love to attend some of the national events in the future. Relationships none, divorced. #1506

Kittredge, CO: Ashley [redacted], married, age 45, works in the financial planning field. Wife does not approve; been dressing for 40 years. Little chance to get out, but would correspond with others who have learned to manage the voice problem. #1553

Avon, CT: Michelle [redacted] MWM, hetero, 5'10", 170 lbs., blue eyes, dark brown hair, '50s, very passable. Member Tiffany Club, co-founder of Connecticut Outreach Society (COS), participant P-Town outings, program chairlady of COS, director/founder of COS Couples Club. Wife is accepting and started COS wives support group. Interested in corresponding with and meeting other honest, caring, passable CDs or couples. Interests include theater, music (jazz, classical and oldies), travel, cross-country skiing, swimming, boating and water sports. #1457 Michelle [redacted] P.O. Box 679, Avon, CT 06001

Heyburn, ID: Patience [redacted], 41. I have been attending some of the monthly meetings of the Salt Lake City group and really enjoyed them. I have been a small business owner working with industry, but I have a dream of going back to school and getting into counselling. I am single, enjoy life, and love and appreciate the feminine person I really am. #1305

Shreveport, LA: Jeri, 51, MWM. Travel throughout the South and only have an opportunity to dress when I travel. Would like to correspond and meet other CDs throughout the South. Attended Texas "T", enjoy all sports and music, and enjoy going out dressed when travelling. #1546 Jeri [redacted] P.O. Box 38048, Shreveport LA 71133

Aurora, MN: Lynda, SWM, mid-30s, craftsman in design and building equipment, 20 years of all types of mechanical maintenance. Loves photography, martial arts, reading and writing science fiction. Degree in Art. Spend about 50% of my time *en femme*. Would love to correspond with anyone wishing to receive mail from a caring person. #1329

Kansas City, MO: Barrie, married, age 46. Hobbies include photography, writing, playing several sports, collecting antiques. Go to movies, dinner, dancing, shopping as Barrie. Member of Tri-Ess, RCGA (Omaha), and Sigma Nu Rho. Travel in Midwest. Love to hear from sisters. Let's exchange photos. I answer all correspondence. #1203 Barrie [redacted] P.O. Box 412948, Kansas City MO 64141

Roslyn Heights, NY: Jane, 34, married, Northern Italian. 5'7"/135 lbs. LIFE and Tri-Ess memberships (2 years). Also subscribe to *Renaissance News*. Interests: Travel, photography, sportscars, nature, skiing, gardening, music, dance, theater, swimming, art and earth sciences. Go out dressed day and night; dress flamboyantly as a guy when not working (Danskins, stirrups, parachute pants, jumpsuits, accessories). Travel throughout the US regularly. Lived in and love California, which I visit as often as possible. I am anxious to correspond with other TV sisters who would be interested in doing the same. #1348 J. [redacted] P.O. Box 484, Roslyn Heights NY 11577-0484

Trotwood, OH: Fran, senior citizen living in SW Ohio, retired. Interested in most outdoor sports, writing and photography. Out of the closet once, years ago, but now in a small community and spouse not supportive. #1489

Portland, OR: Michelle, 33, SBM, TV, hetero, 5'9"/160 lbs. Fun, sensitive and sincere, attractive, never been married (but lucky, have five sisters). I enjoy a full feminine figure, and love all things feminine! Have enjoyed crossdressing in the closet all my life: It's time for a change! Looking for CDs/TVs to go out with and help me pass in public. Would enjoy meeting other thirty-something CDs and TVs for social outings *en femme*. #1529 M. [redacted] P.O. Box 9310, Portland OR 97207

Irving, TX: Bernice, Texas girl, mature, not old. Come to California often. Do gatherings frequently (Texas "T", California Dreamin', Esprit, Be-All, Southern Comfort, Fall Harvest, Law Conference, Holiday En Femme). Enjoy all T-community members. I am approaching a TG/TS status. A slow writer, so would appreciate phone number and time if possible. #1450 B.J. [redacted] P.O. Box 140932, Irving TX 75014

Amelia, VA: Laura, pre-op TS accountant wishes to correspond and/or meet with other TVs/TSs. I am 52, 5'7", 115 lbs., and wear size 6 clothing. I am interested in photography, collecting '50s rock & roll records, and dressing as my feminine self whenever possible. #1523

Merry Point, VA: Samantha [redacted], 76 (going on 50), MWM, retired engineer. Interests: Amateur radio, Rotary, sailing, woodcarving. Attended "Holiday En Femme" in Chicago, "Coming Together" in Houston, "Southern Comfort", "Fall Harvest". Member of Virginia's Secret, DCEA, IFGE, Tri-Ess. Editor of "Secrets", newsletter for Virginia's Secret. Out of the closet since June 1991 and making up for lost time. #1416 T.W. [redacted] P.O. Box 73, Merry Point VA 22513

Seattle, WA: Rose C'est La Vie, neophyte CD, seeking friendship, guidance and amusement. Divorced, 40, and just now learning the art of dressing. Interests include art (read art history, collect Northwest art), baseball, literature and music. I am a lawyer, taking a landscaping class, and write short stories. #1521 J. [redacted] P.O. Box 2346, Seattle WA 98101

Subscribers are entitled to a free 50-word reader profile in this section. Please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a profile form if you cannot locate the form you were sent previously.

If you submitted a profile with an address but it was not published: Our policy is to publish only post office box addresses. If you rent a box at a private mail receiving agency and your box address is a street address, we require confirmation of the address. Please send us a business card from the agency or a photocopy of their yellow pages ad for verification.



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INTERNATIONAL HOTLINES

U.K.:

Beaumont Society, London: 081-756-1782
Gender Dysphoria Trust, London: 0323-641100 #
GenTrust, London: 071-730-7453
Liverbirds, Liverpool: 051-709-4745
New TransEssex: 0268-583761
Rose's, Sheffield: 0742-342870
Scottish TV/TS Group, Edinburgh: 031-556-4049

GERMANY:

Transidentitas, Offenbach: 069.800.10.08
Transvestitengruppe, Berlin: 030.882.23.70
TV Club Hamburg: 040.250.13.13

OTHER OVERSEAS:

Belfast Butterfly, Rep. of Ireland: (0232) 322 023
De Stichting Reborn, Netherlands: 31104503469
Seahorse Society of NSW, Australia: 02-569 6239
Khusra, Pakistan: 05921 6158
Transline Hedesthia, New Zealand: (09) 763-523

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No, we aren't advocating stealing a copy from your local retailer, or walking off with a friend's copy when you go over to visit, or liberating your support group's library copy at the next meeting. First -- if you're not already a subscriber to **Cross-Talk** -- use the form on page 40 and order your subscription.

Next, write your four-digit subscriber number (it's on the mailing label, in the upper left corner) to the right of our address on the page 40 form.

Now, make as many copies as you want of page 40 and pass them out to your friends in the gender community.

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Every month, "Cross-Talk" contains numerous articles of interest to the gender community and those interested in gender issues, including reprints from the many newsletters of support groups worldwide, but *without* gossip, sexually-oriented material or references, or so-called "passing" stories. We have been providing this informational and educational resource to the gender community since 1988, and now "Cross-Talk" is bigger and better than ever!

"Cross-Talk" is published by members of the gender community, with total concern for our subscribers' privacy and security. Our mailing list is kept completely confidential, and each month's issue is mailed in a plain brown envelope with only our P.O. Box return address. There is nothing -- not even our name -- on the outside of the envelope giving any clue as to the contents.

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FROM SANDY THOMAS

I wanted to make the "A DAUGHTER" series a TV FICTION CLASSIC because it is so good. One editor said, "The best ever written!" Since it was sooooo long, I made it a TV SERIALS, "FORCED TO BE A DAUGHTER", "LEARNING TO BE A DAUGHTER", and "BECOMING A DAUGHTER." There are over twenty illustrations drawn just for this story!!! It's a three part story of a boy that is sentenced to nine months as a daughter. Sure to be a favorite!

Contemporary TV Fiction # 13 is "THE BOY WHO BLOSSOMED". It's the story of a boy that goes to live with his aunt, then goes to work in her flower shop. Many at the shop mistake him for a girl which causes him a lot of trouble. Illustrated!!

Contemporary TV Fiction # 14 is "MY SISTER'S SHADOW." A wonderful story of a brother who fills in for his sister... at her wedding rehearsal and more!!! Great!

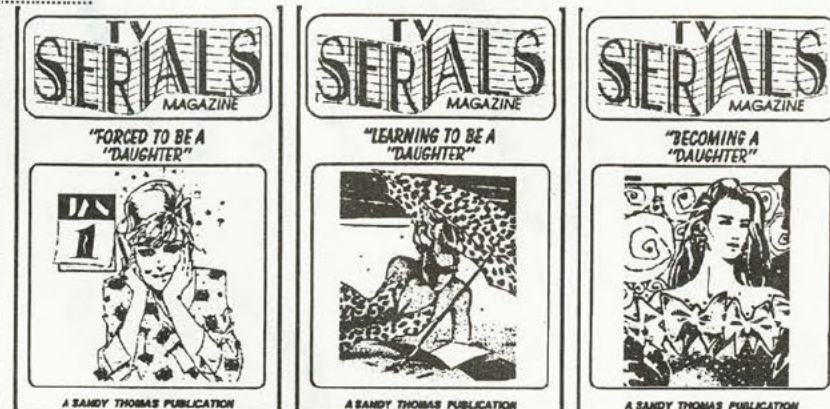
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