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6-1994

**June 1994**

Buffalo Belles

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Vol. III No. VI

BUFFALO BELLES

JUNE 1994

Dear Sisters,

The May meeting got off to a bit of a shackle start. For only the second time I can recall, another group was using our facilities. A wedding was being held at 4:00. The same time we start to gather. Also, a church work crew was in and out about. Including our secondary meeting place. (For those whom have forgotten after to many years of wearing their wigs to tight, is upstairs, down on the end by the bathrooms).

By 5:30 the wedding party had left and we gathered in the parking lot before ventureing in and getting the meeting going. It does remind one of what a fine meeting place we do have. It will only be few months until we celebrate our second year of being. Only two conflicts in that time. Otherwise we have had our privacy in such a nice setting, which is so important to most of our members. We are indeed lucky to have such fine accomodations! Despite the slow start, we ended up with a good turn out. In attendance was Joan, Janice, Collean, Jackie & Yvette, Holly, Jenniffer, Kathy, Tammy, Jeanne, Dana, Francis [REDACTED], Linda, Rene and our newest member Tina.

A pleasant evening ensued, the pizza quickly devoured, and to soon, it was upon 11:00 and the evening came to end. Some were off to the night life of downtown, others just quietly into the rainy night. The picnic question hasn't bean resolved yet. It is agreed we hold one. Come on ladies! Loosen up those wigs! WHERE CAN WE HOLD IT!!!!!! We need a site!!! Come on, someone must know of a good place that can meet our needs. Or atlesst some of them.

What we are looking for seems to be: A public park type setting- one that offers easy access, preferably without a toll but... A specific shelter/ meeting place that is isolated to a degree from



the general park traffic, pedestrians, etc. A cabin at Alleghany?  
a cottage on a lake? Come on, think ladies! Or should we just hold  
it at our present meeting place? That has some merit also. Lets get  
going! -- Kathy, for Denise this month. Watch for Denise's return soon!

I would like to request your help.

I need material for this newsletter! The well is starting to run dry!  
When I somehow got the position of wench in the print shop and the  
lady of the stacks, I also got a big supply of old newsletters from  
which to borrow articles, cartoons, stories etc. But most of them  
have been printed. I do have a small supply of Janice's articles still,  
but they are so good, I ration them to only two pages/month. And they  
will run out this fall (of course, maybe we can get her to write some  
more! What she needs is a new mission. Afterall, she bills herself as  
going where no CD has before...).

So how about sharpening up a quill ladies? We all have a special piece  
of knowledge that we can share. We have all experimented with our  
appearances in so many ways that we each must have learned a trick or  
two or three... Help me out, help us all out. Colleen last month wrote  
about her breast forms.

How about you taking a turn? Hip padding-what do you use? Buy or make?  
Shaping foam rubber is hard. Know a trick to do it?

We all or most, wear wigs. What have you learned about their care?  
Washing, setting, styling tips would be nice. How do you pick a wig?  
How did you decide what color is best?

If not wigs, what do you know about hair. Facial shaving. Bleaching  
leg and arm hair. Razor type used. Plucking. Epilady. Get the idea?  
Color is a huge topic. Both in makeup and clothing. What tricks do you  
know? What was the best book you read on the subject? How do you  
coordinate the look?

Jewelry is gold as a topic! So many subjects. So little time! Sorry  
a commercial but bought Crying Game at video factory for \$13. the  
other day on the used rack. Jewelry!! What do you know? Where to buy?  
What store? Mail order? Guy in rain coat in parking lot? How do you  
get a fit? Cutting rings/bracklets? How do you make clip earrings not  
pinch so much? How about those nails that we love to show off with  
those rings? Polishes? Keeping natural ones long, strong and discreet?  
Repairing? Removeing. etc etc.

Clothing is almost our mantra. Where, how, when, do you shop How  
about sizing. Has anyone ever bought a one size fits all and  
Does anyone sew? Mail order sources? And with clothing, ther  
Accessories.....

These subjects that I have just suggested are for the external woman.  
How about the woman within? How are YOU doing? How are you feeling?  
What do you think about our little group? How are we doing? What  
are we doing right? What's needing change? Any new things we should  
be doing? Anyone ever doodle a cartoon? Write a poem?

How about a report on a convention you have attended. How about a  
story of the most embarrassing time you have had while dressed.-I'm  
sure most of us got "caught" one time or the other. How did you explain  
away your behavior? Perhaps you can write about family relations.  
How you told your beloved. Or how you have avoided telling! Damn dear!  
I fell into that chemical vat at work today again that removes my  
hair!

The whole point of this is that we are all unique. We all have had  
common experiences but each of us has their own special way of dealing  
with our predicament. What is yours.

Submit it in any written form you choose. It doesn't have to be a  
letter perfect example of writing. What counts are your thoughts and  
knowledge. It can be a paragraph or two. Or pages. Type it if possible,  
if not I'll do it for you. I can even make a spelling change or two  
if needed. So the next time you are out on the veranda sipping mint  
julieps take a note pad along and start writing. Otherwise the newsletter  
will be filled with reprints of makeup, style tips, etc that I glean  
from magazines etc.

Kathy

On a personal note, does anyone have a broken Pana-sonic wet & dry  
razor model ES865? Mine is fine. The charger is shot. Need a 1.4 volt  
charger. One of those small wall types used in so many electronic  
devices today. I can adapt the unit if I could get one of proper voltage.

A review of who does what may be helpfull on occaisson. I never seem to  
remember to give this out.

President-Denise [REDACTED] 7954 Transit Rd. S197, Williamsville 14221

Membership applications and records, meeting place coordinator,  
chief cook and bottle washer. Our leader

Vivcepresident and Treasurer Janice [REDACTED] PO 1701, Amherst 14226

Handles the money/checkbook. Our most "public" member, does new  
member interviews, outreach. "Goes where no CD has before"

Newsletter, librarian Kathy [REDACTED] PO 361 Amherst NY 14226

the wench in the printshop. future super model



Just in case you hadn't noticed, the blending of gender is becoming PD (Politically Desirable). Girls as boys and vice versa on the runways (Calvin Klein's waifs, Todd Oldham's statuesque sex bombs). A President who's shed more tears and given out more hugs (to both sexes) than Barbara Bush did during her whole White House tenure. A First Lady with the power and poise to legislate. Men looking like (and in some cases becoming) women in movies—*The Crying Game*, *Orlando*, and *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*. Madonna in a Gaultier suit. Axl Rose in a skirt. The return of Boy George complete with caftan, and Pat from *Saturday Night Live* in the most politically correct guise of all—that of the androgyne.

Fiction or social commentary? Whatever it is, the desire to step beyond the gender boundaries is as visceral as it is visual. And defying the limitations of gender is certainly not new: "In our society it's impossible to relate unless you know a person's gender. And since we have always valued masculinity, women have been forced to dress and act as males in order to gain power," says Holly Devor, Ph.D., author of *Gender Blending: Confronting the Limits of Duality*. Examples? How about Joan of Arc for starters? Margaret Thatcher might not have worn a Brooks Brothers three-piece, but she wasn't called the Iron Lady for nothing. Fictional heroines didn't have it any easier: Shakespeare's Portia (*Merchant of Venice*), Viola (*Twelfth Night*), and Rosalind (*As You Like It*) all had to disguise their sex to gain approval and control. Even women writers like George Sand, George Eliot, and the Brontë sisters were forced to conceal their true identities in order to publish. For latter-day women making their first raid on the boardroom during the '80s, the dress-for-success formula meant linebacker shoulder pads and a ballsy attitude to match.

But what we're seeing in the '90s is possibly the prologue to a totally different story, the closing chapter of which might just be that gender doesn't necessarily have to equal ability. And that's where androgyny comes in. Taken from the Greek *andro*, "male," and *gyny*, "female," androgyny meant just that, someone in possession of both sets of sexual organs—a hermaphrodite. Today androgyny is an ideal that is tantamount to sexual ambiguity, a redistribution of power and, above all, freedom. "Androgyny is utopian. Desexing everyone would enable a redistribution of power since everything we do is decided upon by gender," says Warren Farrell, Ph.D., author of the forthcoming *The Myth of Male Power*.

Brian D'Amato, an artist and author of the novel *Beauty*, draws a direct parallel between the cyberpunk movement and androgyny. "Androgyny is futuristic. Think of sci-fi 'androids.' They're desexed and robotic, but there's a machine-like purity about them that the technology-obsessed youth of today are into." With the revival of '60s and '70s mores of rebellion, it's possible that the androgynous look that we are seeing on the streets is the manifestation of a desire for freedom. Any discussion of gender would be incomplete without the nature/

nurture debate, which has raged throughout the ages. The body of evidence certainly leans toward nurture. Even Freud, a legendary misogynist, said that "it is not always easy to distinguish between what is due to the influence of sexual unktion and what to social training." Elaine A. Draper, Ph.D., assistant professor of sociology at the University of Southern California, agrees: "From a historical and cross-cultural viewpoint, there is an incredibly strong indication that the intrinsic differences between man and woman are minimal—they are actually learned." In her early work, Sandra Bem, Ph.D., professor of psychology and women's studies at Cornell University, explored ways of creating genderless environments within which to raise her children. Her basic premise was that whether you're a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, it doesn't need to matter unless and until you want to make a baby. She and her husband shared household tasks, gave her children gender-specific toys regardless of their sex (dolls and trucks), doctored books, and censored television programs.

In a graphic example of the liberations from and restrictions on possessing or not possessing a narrow biological view of sex, Bem recounts the story of how her son Jeremy naively decided to wear barrettes to school. In an attempt to contradict a boy who claimed that because Jeremy was wearing barrettes he must be a girl, the incensed child pulled down his pants to end the debate. The response of the other boy? "Everybody has a penis; only girls wear barrettes." "We live in a heavily gender-stereotyped society, based on what public opinion thinks is male or female," says Bem.

The fusing of male and female symbolism is something that rock stars and actors and actresses have become adept at recognizing as the recipe for worldwide, longstanding success. In other words, icons must be all things to all people. In her book *Vested Interests*, Marjorie Garber compares Laurence Olivier to Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich in his sexual ambiguity. Of Elvis Presley, she says he ran the gamut in his career from androgyne to transsexual, and, of course, she doesn't leave out Liberace, either. According to D'Amato, Michael Jackson's sexually ambiguous appearance and performance is a reflection of his desire to be almost deitylike in his "asexuality." What's the moonwalk if it isn't walking on air? asks D'Amato. The list of gender-blending superstars is endless: Madonna, Annie Lennox, k.d. lang, Mick Jagger, David Bowie, Axl Rose, George Michael, Freddie Mercury, Morrissey. Even the deeply "male" members of heavy-metal bands have long hair and sport eyeliner and lipstick.

But if celebrity status and the initial problems Shakespeare experienced in making his all-male cast as convincingly female as possible paved the way for acceptance of male and female gender blurring onstage, it's movies that have stirred the current sexual controversy. What began as an interesting comic vehicle with Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon in *Some Like It Hot*, Julie Andrews in *Victor, Victoria*, and Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie* climaxed with rather more serious overtones in the Oscar-winning *The Crying Game* and in what promises to be the cult movie of the year, Sally Potter's *Orlando*.

Androgyny is topical because the sexes are confused. No one knows who is responsible for anything anymore. Everything is up for grabs," says Potter. She should know. She spent the last four years convincing backers that she could make visual sense of Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel of the same name. The book propagates Woolf's belief that to be male equals power, but that to be a "complete" individual one should possess female and male traits in equal number. To illustrate the premise, the character of Orlando (played brilliantly in the film by actress Tilda Swinton) lives for 300 years and changes sex halfway through. At the end of the movie, having been disinherited because of her sex, Orlando emerges penniless but powerful and happy, complete with daughter. (Here Potter employs dramatic license: In the book, Orlando has a son. "It's the way Woolf would have liked to see it. I think she betrayed her better instincts by giving Orlando a son," says Potter.)

If *Orlando* intellectualizes the androgyny debate, then *The Crying Game* addresses gender confusion and just who and what determines whether we are male or female. Transsexualism—the condition in which an individual feels and thinks as one sex but finds herself or himself trapped biologically within the body of another—has long held a morbid fascination for mainstream America. When tennis star Renée Richards went public with her story in the '70s, she caused a sensation. And men who become women and vice versa with the help of surgery and hormone therapy are the stuff of daytime talk shows.

In *The Crying Game*, when Fergus discovers that the woman he is in love with, Dil, is unquestionably male, the majority of the audience shares his alarm. (Full frontal shock value: 10.) The fact that even after the discovery Fergus still feels intense affection for Dil is pivotal to the story. How could a man look, act, and "think" so convincingly female? And more poignant for the men in the audience: Would they, too, have been taken in? "We have all been given such a narrow sexual path to walk. What *The Crying Game* has done is show that affection and sexuality are about a lot more than gender. And that, even on a superficial level, to be restricted by biology in terms of who you love and how you dress can be painful and limiting," says Martha Gross, clinical instructor in psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

There are no figures that record how many Americans feel they are trapped in the wrong body. "You can't draw blood or do a biopsy. This is entirely defined by psychiatric parameters," says Judy Van Maasdam, coordinator of the Gender Dysphoria Program in Palo Alto, CA. But to assume that the character of Dil is an anomaly would be a mistake. Since 1979 there have reportedly been between 7000 and 12,000 sex-change operations in America—50 percent

As the gender debates intensify, what's also surfacing is a challenge to the belief that there are only two sexes. Anne

Fausto-Sterling, Ph.D., a geneticist and professor of medical science at Brown University, recently put forth the case that there may be as many as five biological sexes. Fausto-Sterling says that there are three major subgroups—hermaphrodites who possess one testis and one ovary, male pseudohermaphrodites who have testes and some aspects of female genitalia but no ovaries, and female pseudohermaphrodites who have ovaries and some aspects of male genitalia but lack testes. In some cases, Fausto-Sterling explains, individuals may be able to have sex naturally with both women and men because of their biological makeup. The most alarming of Fausto-Sterling's assertions is her claim that most intersexual babies are "surgically altered" at birth so that they may live a "normal" heterosexual life.

What makes Fausto-Sterling's case especially topical is that she advocates a new approach to transsexuality that is central to the whole gender issue. What if society stopped mandating the control of intersexual bodies, she asks, and medical knowledge were to intervene only at the age of reason? Fausto-Sterling's utopian ideal is not unlike the utopia of androgyny, wherein society stops trying to maintain a two-party sexual system. It's not likely to be a smooth transition, she acknowledges, given that our culture has yet to come to terms with the ancient and relatively uncomplicated reality of homosexual love.

It's the labeling and pigeonholing that so often accompany deviation from gender norms that make most experts dubious about the value of extending gender subgroups. "People fear the unknown. Where gender is concerned, they need to know exactly what someone is," says one professor of psychology. A perfect example is the confusion over the links between homosexuality, transsexuality, and androgyny. "The plot-line that dares not speak its name [in *The Crying Game*] is homosexuality," sniffed Alex Ross in *The New Republic*. Score one for the school of gender neuroses. When Oscar Wilde, Proust, Woolf, and even Coleridge promoted androgyny as the creative ideal, they knew not what they did. "Gender confusion has nothing to do with sexual preference," says Alice Webb, the executive director of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. "It points out that transsexuals do not become homosexual and that, in many cases, transvestites tend to be fetishists who get turned on by wearing women's clothes. There's also a good deal of research to suggest that the majority of transvestites are not even gay. Not everyone agrees with Webb's viewpoint. "Initially, cross-dressing may be a form of eroticism, but ultimately it's more of an expression of how men feel trapped by their masculine roles," says Holly Devor.

So where does the rising tide of gender hysteria leave us? Is androgyny a hapless ideal? Or does it actually have some merits in a society where both sexes are increasingly playing with gender? In an attempt to help bridge the gulf of misunderstanding between the sexes, more and more companies are hiring experts to run seminars on gender awareness. When pushed, most of these multimillion-dollar corporations (including 3M, US West, and Motorola) will admit to hoping to increase productivity (and, at the base level, to minimize the possibility of sexual-harassment lawsuits). According to Anthony Ipsaro, an organizational consultant, the model of androgyny is extremely valuable in the workplace. "Men feel threatened by the female work force because they're being asked to share their power. We try to explain that a merging of female and male sensibilities and values would be profitable. Men are too achievement-oriented; they don't understand how to enjoy life outside of the workplace. That's what's killing them."

But isn't what Ipsaro is saying part of the gender-labeling problem, not the solution? When men are aggressive it may be bad for their health, but it's good for their image. When women exhibit the same qualities, they're hardheaded bitches. Ipsaro does admit that the superwoman Mommy Track doesn't work because it implies that "the male standards of performance are correct." "The gender debate will only be resolved when gender labels are dissolved. Even if you're using the androgynous model, you're still aware that the individual is exhibiting masculine or feminine traits," says Matteo, Ph.D., deputy director at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Stanford University.

Of course, the androgynous model could help men more than women. Camille Paglia calls androgyny a feminist utopia that "means men must be like women and women can be whatever they like." Warren Farrell, who runs gender seminars (and puts men through a beauty contest so that they

Someone asked me not too long ago what is my most vivid recollection of Provincetown after 2 1/2 years. The answer is easy although maybe somewhat surprising. It was that moment in time and space when I went over the sand dune at the National Seashore, saw the beautiful vision laid out before me and heard the town bells behind me. I believe this vision and the emotional impact of what I was feeling at the time (which as I said caused me to burst into tears) will remain with me always.

A similar question was asked about what had the most profound change, if any, in my life from these events.

That answer is even easier, it was the trip to the Johnson Space Center. That exclusion and going from a state of near panic on the tourist bus to the comfortable feeling I had upon returning to the hotel has been one for me to long remember, cherish and enjoy. However I definitely do not recommend this type of experience to anyone, I have said and do say small steps is the best way to proceed. There was a part of me that was left behind at the Center, but it is a part of me that I do not miss and hopefully will not locate me ever again. I can go back and pick these too few hours (although at the time each of the minutes when I was in a near panic state seemed like an eternity) as being a important part in helping me be who I am today.

Of course who that is remains open to a number of questions and a potential answer that is not what I first perceived when I was attending my first convention.

CALENDAR

- MAY 28 Rochester CD meeting
- 31 Provincetown Spring Get together starts
- JUNE 4 BUFFALO BELLES REGULAR MEETING
- 8-12 Be all in Pittsburg Anyone going?
- 25 Rochester CD meeting
- JULY 2 BUFFALO BELLES REGULAR MEETING
- 6 SPICE Convention Chicago
- AUG 6 BUFFALO BELLES REGULAR MEETING
- ?? Buffalo Belles Picnic special
- SEPT 3 BUFFALO BELLES REGULAR MEETING
- 15-17 Paradise in Pocconos
- NOV Riverside Gala weekend



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A review of the past and concluding travelogues by Janice.

To all you girls out there, by now you have made a judgement (and either have enjoyed, have been totally bored or some place in between) of my articles concerning my trips to Fantasia Fair and the IFGE convention. In addition to these two trips I have also attended the Be-All in 1992 (Detroit) and 1993 (Chicago) and Riverside (just south of Erie PA) in 1992 and 1993. I'm still hoping to make the Poconos in the near future.

To any of you out there that is considering a trip my recommendation for time, location and cost would be either Riverside or the Be-All. Both of these are nearby and the cost is reasonable and there is no telling who you might meet; the first time I met Denise was at the 1992 Be-All convention in Detroit. Despite that recommendation Fantasia Fair still remains as the outstanding event but it is the longest in time and the most expensive. For a person attending their first convention I do not recommend the IFGE, this being more of a working convention for gender community leaders.

Looking back on these events my most vivid and special memories is not of the planned seminars and programs which have all seem to merged together and faded with the notable exception of the Native American Tradition presented by Rena Swifhawk at the IFGE convention. No matter how many times I go to a make-up session and lesson I still can not seem to get it correct.

These most vivid, special and fond memories is of the non event activities which I participated in and of the people I have encountered.

These non events activities range from the simple pleasure of walking and shopping in Provincetown to the extreme of going to the Johnson Space Center.

In Provincetown the town and the adjacent Cape Cod National Seashore was open and available to anyone with the correct pair of walking shoes (which I have never been accused of having). It was also my first experience in going into restaurants and shops with completely no apprehensive (if you can't feel comfortable doing this in Provincetown during Fantasia Fair you will never be comfortable about it). To me the total experience of being treated as a single female tourist was worth more than all the seminars, lessons and programs rolled into one. And lets not forget the whale trip which is a whale of another story.

This is not to say you would feel the same way, a large number if not the majority of people at these events found the seminars and lessons the best part of the experience. Only you know what you might find the most enjoyment from and if you are like me sometimes you don't know what that is until it is over and in the past.

club and public. It could generate some positive publicity for the club and the gender community, a number of the club members might enjoy the exposure to public speaking, it will give positive information and examples to a section of the public who might enter a field (medical, family counselling, therapy) where they will come in contact with TVs and TSs and create a ripple effect of information to the general public beyond the classroom.

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I wore only minimum makeup with a conservative long skirt and a brown top. The only jewellery I wore were my Star Trek earrings.

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During the days of the program, I was able to break away only twice; once to take a trip to the Houston Galleria Friday morning but then I volunteered (got drafted?) to help out at one of the seminars and be a hostess for the Keynote Luncheon. That meant I stood at the door to greet people on their way to lunch, check for the luncheon ticket and do my impression of the Gender Police looking for proper identification.

When I was able to see the Houston Galleria I made only one symbolic purchase and that was a small crystal step pyramid (which is now on my office desk top). Each step symbolizing another step I'm taking along the upward spiralling crossdressing path. How many steps have I taken at current with that first step being that day I walked into Wildside (more than eighteen months ago) and joined the Toronto Crossdressers Club and the second step being the first party I attended (less than a year ago)? How many more steps do I want to take knowing the top of the pyramid is unreachable?

After the religious services on Sunday, I did have some time on my own. The only item of special interest I wanted to see in Houston (outside the IFGE convention) was the Johnson Space Center. What I did not plan on

or even dream of doing before arriving in Houston was to see the center dressed.

I think it was a gradual process which led me to go to the Center as I was dressed for the week. I wore only minimum makeup with a conservative long skirt and a brown top. The only jewellery I wore was my Star Trek earrings. Since I wanted to see a part of downtown Houston, I caught a cab and picked up the Grey Line tourist bus at a downtown hotel after wandering around downtown for an hour or two. The bus trip stops at each of the visitor sights at the Center (which includes the outside exhibit, the visitor's center and the astronaut training facility) while the driver picks up the tickets for the command center. It was interesting in the visitors's portion of the command center since they were filming a movie segment down below in the command center.

It was requested if anybody was wearing bright colours to sit back and avoid flash pictures. I of course, sat in the front row. The whole trip took about four hours and I was able to get off the bus at the Galleria and catch a cab back to the hotel.

My thoughts at the astronaut training facility was that it wouldn't be much fun to crossdress in null Gee since I couldn't wear skirts (no way to keep the hem down), high heels would be useless (although I wouldn't have to worry about twisting my ankle), losing a nail would really mean losing a nail as it floats off, long dangling earrings would be dangling in all the wrong directions and my favorite long wig would have to go. Is there a way to take a walk on the wildside when in null gee you can't walk? Take a float on the wildside doesn't have quite the same sound to it.

It was interesting that in the whole time period, including merging with the other hundred or so tourists to see the command center, and the several hundred other tourists at the visitor center, and the other people on the tourist bus, nobody said a word. This was

(continued on next page)



unlike Provincetown where I was confident the tourists were out of their element, this was total main stream. I am not going to say I might have been out of my element since this is the element of my choice.

One Japanese tourist and myself exchanged thanks for taking each other's pictures at the training facility (I'm sure he will have an interesting story to tell when he gets home).

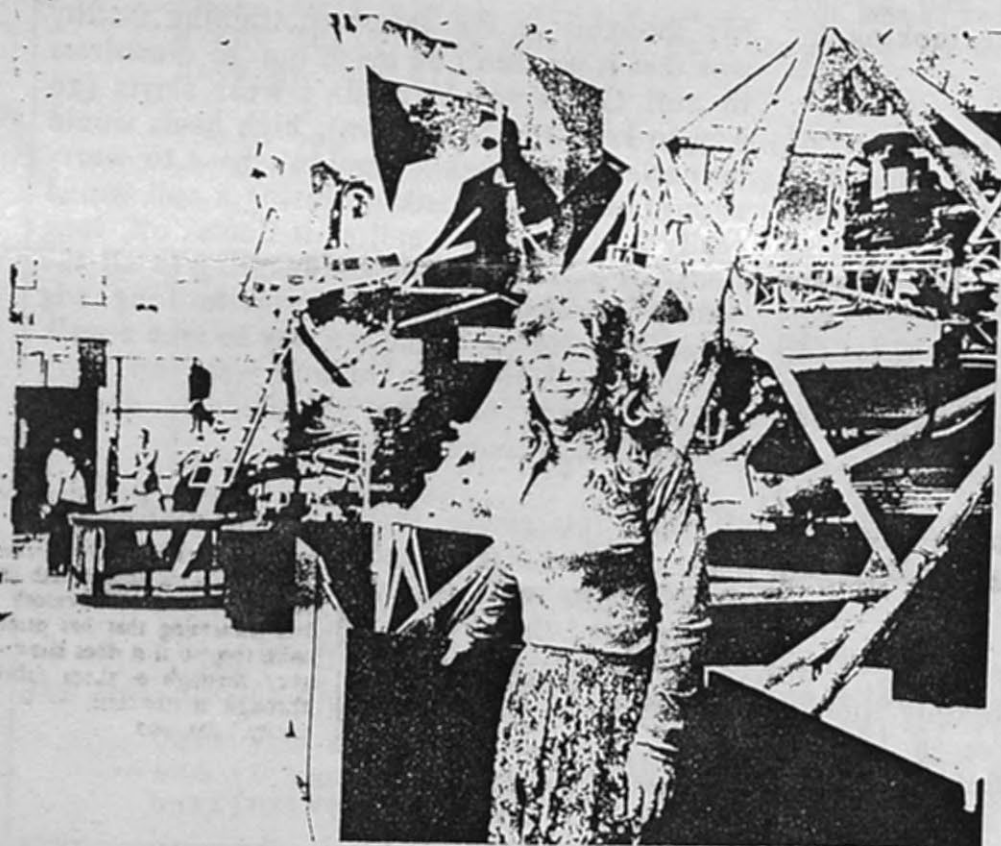
(Editor's Note: maybe the Japanese fellow is a member of the Elizabeth Club)

Later I made an easy decision on where to go for supper. I picked the restaurant from the largest ad in the tourist guide book (it wasn't too far from the hotel) and requested the concierge call a cab. The driver had a nice way of increasing his tip by asking me if I noticed how the bellman eyed me in the lobby. When I said no figuring he was going to make a demeaning statement, he suprised me by saying he was quite sure and I quote "I think you were turning him on." This is always nice to hear even if it's not true, and if it was true I wouldn't follow him up on it anyway!

While Fantasia Fair in Provincetown was an unparalleled emotional experience for me that I wish to expand upon, but may never be able to repeat, the IFGE Convention was a true working convention that I would gladly repeat under the proper condition of my personal growth, development, and gender community commitment.

My thoughts upon leaving the hotel were twofold. One; it's a good thing I'm wasn't going directly home because in light of the way I've been going these past few days, I might still be dressed. And two was a thought I had back at the Johnson Space Center and which I shared with you back at the end of my article dealing with the Congress of Representatives:

Ladies, the Earth is escapable, and so should be the closet.



Janice at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas

## *Prisoners of Gender CONT. FROM PG 4*

experience strictly looks-based approval and rejection, as women do), claims that male gender stereotypes are much more restrictive than female. "Men are prisoners of approval. They don't have the options women do to work at home or in the workplace." He says that in experimental seminars as many as 80 percent of males say that they would like to stay at home with a newborn child were it economically viable and if their wife—and society—approved.

If we're going to close the gender gap it won't be without a good deal of resistance. Cross-dressing and androgyny have always been perceived as flagrant challenges to the status quo—an aggressive defiance of the conservative view that all is right with the world. Not such a bad thing when you consider that most of us go through life without questioning how male and female stereotyping occurs. "When you start realizing we're all playing a cultural game—that none of us is naturally female or male—it's scary," says Sandra Bem. Whether you're frightened of addressing your own gender identity or not, following the herd is certainly not the answer. "Look at gays in the military—a great example of what happens when masculinity is threatened," says Ipsaro. Just one instance where gender identity matters more than performance and achievement to the so-called moral majority.

But perhaps the last words on relationships and gender best left to British actor Quentin Crisp, long heralded as the master gender blender, who stars as Queen Elizabeth I in *Orlando*: "My dear, I live my life in a permanent state of indeterminate gender, which would in fact be the perfect model for any relationship. After all, a marriage can only work if each of you forgives the other for being of the opposite sex." ■