

Renaissance News



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Vision - Integrity - Quality

November, 1993

The More Things Change...

by Dina Amberle

What do David Bowie and Richard Nixon have in common? And how does anything about those two disparate personalities relate to us as crossdressers?

The answer is that both of those men are famous for changing their public images. Bowie burst on the scene as a gender-bending, orange-haired space oddity who transformed himself into a white Anglo soul singer, later a film star, and now as an elegant elder statesman of rock still working on the cutting edges. Nixon transformed himself from the commie-baiter of the Cold War '50's to become the first President to really open up relations with the Communist Soviets and Chinese. Along the way, he turned himself from a has-been in '62 to President in '68; later disgraced through the Watergate scandal, now regaining respect through his writings and mastery of foreign affairs.

So how does that relate to us as

crossdressers? Well, change is what it's all about. But how much do we really change when we crossdress?

There are some who ascribe to the theory that we don't necessarily change at all because if we are truly transgendered we shouldn't need the clothing and outward appearances to get in touch with our feminine selves. However, I feel that most of us do need the visible, tactile changes brought on by makeup and women's clothing to make us feel feminine.

Is there a point in the transformation process when you notice the change from masculinity to femininity? I'm sure each of us has a different "turning point" when we move from our male selves to our feminine alter egos. It may be at some point in the process of applying the makeup, or affixing the wig, or putting on either the undergarments or the outerwear. We all notice the visible change in our appearance along the way. But when do you start to feel the change on the inside, in your attitude, movements, or mindset?

It's an interesting concept to try to judge how much we change when we crossdress. Other than the visible surface changes of appearance and clothing, it is often hard to discern femininity in ourselves or others. Conversational topics are still male-oriented for the most part except when discussing fashions or

shopping for our femme selves. And unfortunately, most of us don't get a chance to know each other in our male guises to allow us to make a sound judgment on the degree of change between the "guys" and the "girlfriends" we've come to know.

Femininity seems to be a subtle change within each of us, mostly internalized, but lurking within each of us even if we're talking sports, or discussing home repairs, or commiserating about our male careers. Perhaps we can be thankful that we aren't all trying to impersonate the breathless femininity of Marilyn Monroe or Betty Boop just because we're dressed for the part.

Change can also be an evolutionary process not simply a one-shot transformation. Refer back to Messrs. Bowie and Nixon. With both those gentlemen change was a dynamic, ongoing process. Are any of us stuck in a rut with our crossdressing? Have you changed your personal style as you grew into your feminine persona? The challenging feature of crossdressing is that we can be constantly striving for improvement, secure in the knowledge that genetics will always provide us with the insurmountable barrier to perfection. We may only be able to chip away at that barrier but the challenge is to keep improving, keep working

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Chapters & Affiliates

New Jersey

South Jersey: Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 435-5401 or write Renaissance SJ, PO Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Chapter leader - Terri [REDACTED]; Assistant Leader - Phil [REDACTED]

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia: Meets on third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, PA. Doors open at 8:00 p.m. Write to Renaissance PHL, Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020 or call (215)630-1437. Chapter Leader - Maryann Kirkland

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Meets on the first Saturday of the month at The Greens at Westgate in York, Pa. Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105, or call (717) 780-1LSV. Chapter Leader - Yvonne [REDACTED]

Affiliates

MOTG: Meets on the fourth Saturday of the month. For information contact Terry M., PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701

Metropolitan Gender Network: 561 Hudson Street, Box 45, New York, NY 10014 (201) 794-1665 Ext. 332.

American Educational Gender Information Services (AEGIS): Dallas Denny, PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033, (404) 939-0244

Renaissance News

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Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the gender community and the general public.

And, don't forget about...

Articles, opinion pieces and letters to the Editor are always welcome at the Renaissance News. Ideas for articles and opinion pieces should be sent to Renaissance News, P. O. Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020. Complimentary and irate letters to the Editor may be sent to the same address.

Significant Others who have article ideas or opinions they would like to share should send their ideas to Evelyn Kirkland, c/o Maryann Kirdland, P. O. Box 1242, Newtown, PA 18940.

Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics, and 9-Understanding Transsexuality.

Pen Pal Program: If you would like to be a pen pal contact Maryann Kirkland at P. O. Box 1242, Newtown, PA 18940. Attn: Dept. PP.

If you are a transgendered person with children and would like to network with other transparents, contact Elsa [REDACTED] at: Transparent, C/O Renaissance LSV, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

For TS information and peer counseling in South Jersey call Kelly Harris at 609 641-3782.

Events Calendar

Renaissance GP	Renaissance LSV	Renaissance South Jersey	MOTG
Nov. 20: Mariette Pathy Allen, Photographer	Nov. 6: Meeting, 8:00 p.m.	November: Halloween	Nov. 27: TBA
Dec. 4: Christmas Party	Dec. 4: Meeting, 8:00 p.m.	Party!	Dec. 4: JoAnn Roberts
		December: Elections	Jan. 22: Alison Laing
			Feb. 26: Dr. Roger Peo

Chapters wishing to have their programs listed should get them to the Newsletter at least one month in advance. Two is better.

ROGER'S NOTEBOOK (#83)

by Roger E. Peo, Ph. D.

I recently had a rather unpleasant encounter with some transgendered persons who are activists for "the cause" which, in their terms, is that professionals simply do not understand their situation. In fact, it is presumptuous for them to claim that they do. Their arrogance and intolerance was such that I could not even respond to questions I was asked without being interrupted (really, I was shouted down). I respect other people's opinions and positions, so I would hope that mine would be respected in return. I was not trying to change anyone's mind, just present a different view.

This encounter began me thinking (again) about the issue of "gatekeeping" for hormone therapy and genital surgery. As a helping professional it pains me to see people put themselves in situations where they can be irreparably hurt. My ethical position is to ensure that, insofar as possible, persons who are my clients do not follow that path. Can/should my ethics extend beyond that boundary?

I believe that I have an obligation to disseminate information such as

the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care to as many people as possible. It is my conviction that using them as a minimum set of guidelines can help people understand the consequences of their actions before the results are irrevocable. However, just as the activists above, there are some people who are firmly convinced that they know what is best for their particular life and do not want any impediments put in their way. Do I have any responsibility in such cases if they are not my clients? Probably not, however, I do not believe that all controls and standards should be removed, for these people do not speak for all transgendered people.

Endocrinologists and surgeons have a different perspective. In our litigious society, they can be sued if they make irreversible physical changes in their clients. Some decisions are made and later regretted. Then people lash out at everyone who was involved. While I am not an attorney, I suspect that a waiver of responsibility given to the doctor before surgery will not protect him from a later lawsuit. This often comes

down to the issue of informed consent. An attorney can argue that the person's state of mind at the time nullified the waiver. Many doctors want some assurance that their patient will benefit from hormones or genital surgery. This assurance can come from following the Standards of Care.

Are there surgeons who will operate without such assurances from a mental health professional? Of course there are. The people who regret having genital surgery often come from such situations.

In the end there is no simple answer. I do not believe that genital surgery and hormones should always be provided under the controls of the Standards of Care. If people want to have surgery without following them and there are surgeons that will perform it, then they should go ahead. Choosing "shortcuts" should be allowed but we can't have it both ways – get what we want and then blame someone else if it turns out it is not advantageous for us. There are always consequences from the actions we take.



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This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter if Dr. Peo's name and address appear in the reprinted version. Others must obtain written approval from Dr. Peo. A copy of such a reprint should be sent to Dr. Peo.

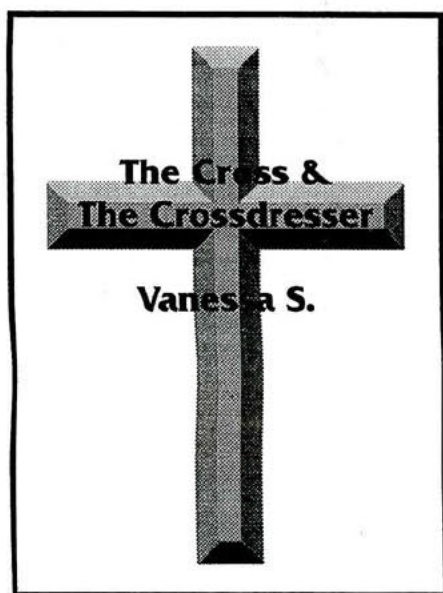


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Living In A Box

by JoAnn Roberts

The newspaper carried a story today of an 11-year-old boy who was kept in a wooden box by his step-grandmother, because she feared he was brain damaged. The boy was found to be mentally normal. When I read the story in the October 10th issue of the "Philadelphia Inquirer," I almost started to cry. What an ignominious way to live! How has that poor child's psyche been damaged? What will happen to him in later life? The whole thing gave me pause to consider my life. As I thought about that child, I realized that I, too, at one time, lived in a box.

My box was made from a variety of woods; bigotry, racism, sexism, and parochialism were a few. The nails holding it all together were fear, loathing, ignorance and despair. The wood was supplied, without charge, by the world around me and I pounded those self-made nails. Yes, my box was nailed shut from the inside. I hid the real me in that box for almost 32 years. The person that walked through the world was only a facade, a shadow-person built out of other people's expectations.

Then one day something happened. The nails made of ignorance

started to rust away. They were soon followed by those of fear. Eventually, the nails were all gone and first one side then the other fell away from my box. I let free the real me. I faced the world for the first time and realized that I could be my own person. I could have original thoughts and feelings. I was not a puppet to be controlled. I knew I could do almost anything I set my mind to and that ultimately, I could control my life.

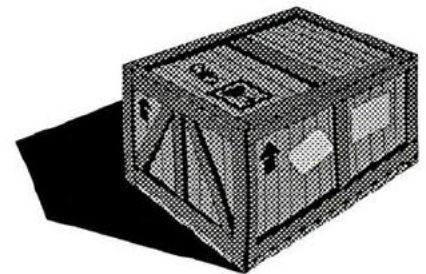
The key was acceptance of myself and acceptance of the responsibility for my actions. I understood that there is a basic human dignity within everyone and that dignity deserves respect. I resolved never to apologize to anyone for being me. And, I would consider carefully any criticism of others.

So, how many of you are still living in your own boxes? Isn't it about time for you to start pulling the nails free? Isn't it about time for you to kick the boards loose? And, isn't it about time for you to face the world and yourself with the truth? There are no barriers except those you erect yourself, so tear them down. Look in the mirror and say to yourself, "I have the ultimate con-

trol and responsibility for my life." Then believe it and get on with the rest of your life. The past is immutable, so why worry over what cannot be changed?

Look forward to the future and new goals. You will be amazed at how much you can accomplish if you will only believe in yourself. There is no one in this world more deserving of your respect than yourself. For, if you cannot respect yourself, how can you possibly respect anyone else? And, how will you ever break out of your box before you mentally suffocate?

Note: This article first appeared in the November 1987 issue of Renaissance News and is part of the essays and editorials in *Sacred Cows Make The Best Hamburger* published by Creative Design Services. Copyright 1987 by JoAnn Roberts & Creative Design Services. All Rights Reserved.



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by Angela Gardner

Pip pip and cheerio all birds and blokes what are readin' this column! I'm back from the British Empire. It was brilliant, love! That's a word they use a lot. "brilliant," and if they like you they call you "love." I went to a gay restaurant, two hot, smoky, neighborhood bar type places for TVs, an expensive central London disco/cabaret club, a play in the West End and a monthly TV night at a posh club in the same neighborhood as the Ritz Hotel. Out of drag in the daylight hours I did all the tourist type stuff and squeezed in an interview with a small British radio station (not the BBC), as a foreign observer of the British TV scene. In my spare time I tweezed my eyebrows, slept and caught a British cold virus. I need a week in hospital (Brits leave out "the"), to recuperate. All in all it was a great vacation.

The only negative thing, beside the rain, was the first hotel that I stayed in. Last issue I told everyone about Caroline Egerton's "Transvestite's Guide To London." All of my crossdressed adventures were culled from the pages of the Guide. Unfortunately the advice on hotels was not as good as the advice on nightlife. The New York Hotel in the Earl's Court area of London was talked up in the Guide as a very

TV friendly gay hotel with "superbly" decorated rooms. Can we talk? My traveling companion and I arrived at the end of a transatlantic flight and a thirty minute tube (read "subway") ride from Heathrow Airport. It was raining. The very heavy, essential to a traveling trannie luggage was breaking my back and all I wanted was to go to sleep. After we checked in we were shown to ... The Hotel Room From Hell!

It was a little like checking into Fawlty Towers but without the humour of that John Cleese show. When I made my reservation they told me they had a room near the lobby which was ten pounds cheaper since it might get a little bit noisy at times. Ten pounds is about fifteen dollars so I went for the cheaper room.

That room was in the basement. It smelled musty. There was a hum coming from under the floor. A low frequency, annoying, all pervasive hum. The comforter on the bed had stains on it and there was no closet. That's right, I had no place to hang my dresses. All I'll say about the bathroom is, if you go to England don't expect much in the way of space to lay out your makeup. I was so tired none of it mattered. As I lay on the bed it became obvious that there was no way to screen out the hum. It, along with

the bathroom fan, which did not go off when you turned off the light conspired to keep me awake till about one AM.

At two AM the friendly desk clerk decided to put a call through to our room. Did I mention that the phone, unlike any hotel I have ever been in, was across the room from the bed. I found it in the dark with only minor injuries and heard an unknown voice ask for Gus. It seems that this person was looking for his friend whose last name started with the same initial as mine. After pleasantly informing this individual that I was not Gus and I had no idea how to switch his call back to the hotel operator I went to bed again. The hum was now louder than ever. I didn't sleep till four AM.

The next morning after coffee I informed the manager that the ten pound cheaper room was not acceptable. In every hotel I have ever

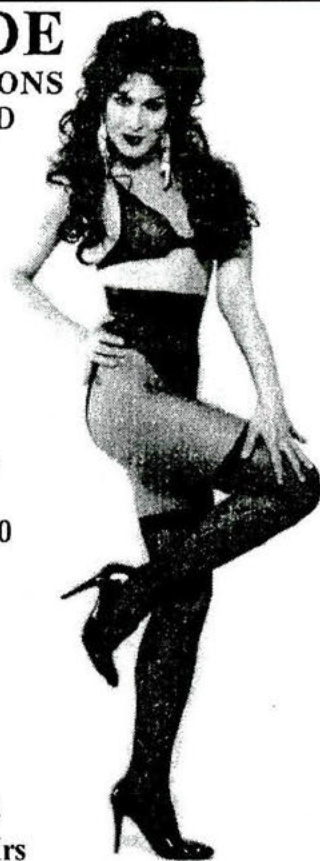
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been in the customer is always right. Service is the name of the game. I'm an American, dammit! Well, that got some action. Our things were moved to a better room. On the fifth floor. It was much better than the basement hell hole, being one of the seventy five pound rooms. What they failed to mention was the fact that I was being charged the extra ten pounds. This wasn't mentioned until I got the bill. These were only the negative things I knew about.

After I had moved out of the New York Hotel, (at least they lived up to the New York stereotype of rudeness), I learned that they had failed to put any calls, except the one for the wrong number through to my room. I got no messages that anyone had called either. As a result of that I missed out on dinner with Caroline and lost out on getting an apartment for the next week at a

much cheaper rate than I ended up spending in another hotel. Do not patronize the New York Hotel. I don't know where the bad attitude came from but it was definitely there. I let Caroline know all the dirty details and I hope she will be leaving it out of the 1994 Guide.

Otherwise, as I said, everything was great. Men will buy you drinks in the clubs much faster than they will in the U.S. and everytime I went out I met another girl or two to hang with. At one of the clubs a couple of girls started calling me Julia Roberts. I've seen Julia Roberts and I'm no Julia Roberts. I guess they couldn't come up with any other glamorous American film stars. If you go to England do pick up the Transvestites Guide To London and do have dinner at the Philbeach Hotel restaurant and visit their bar. Say "hi" to Jimmy the barman.

And now...the rest of the column.

OOPS

I incorrectly reported that the fabulous Henri David Annual Halloween Ball would take place on Halloween night, Sunday, the 31st. Well, Henri changed his mind. The party happened on Saturday night, the 13th. Since I'm writing this before the party happens and you're reading this after the party happened I guess we all had a great time. Hope you didn't show up on the wrong night. I think Sunday was a convention of Three Stooges fans. "Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk! Look at the goils!"

HUH?

We got a letter from one of our readers the other day that opened our eyes to another possible prob-

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lem. A few issues back the Vis A Vis column started out with what was obvious to the writer and to me, the editor as an example of Warner Brothers cartoon speak. Bugs and Tweety always said things like, "Ifn' I dood it my momma says I get a whippin'. I dood it!" The reader who wrote did so to complain about our demeaning and denigrating use of a stereo-typical poor, black dialect. By the time I received the letter Brenda had already talked to the offended reader and explained the toon talk. What I learned from this episode is never take cultural knowledge for granted. I had no idea that anyone would not instantly understand the beginning of that Vis A Vis. If we offended anyone else who didn't get it, I'm sorry. I'll try not to assume too much about the readers cultural background and please, if you don't get it drop me a line and ask me what I'm talking about. [May I add that on reading that piece I identified it as the catch phrase used by Red Skelton in his radio show as the character "The Mean Widdle Kid." Of course, I'm older than most of you. It's conceivable he also used it on his television show, but I don't remember it from there. GHL. Ed.]

MEDIA WATCH

From around the world and across

the nation our network of ever vigilant crossdressers scan television, radio, films and print media to find titillating bits about guys in dresses to help make this column long enough to bother printing. This month Linda [redacted] from the LSV Chapter sent in an item from the York, PA, Daily Record.

It seems that people who raise sheep can be a little wilder than you'd think. A fifteen-year-old sheep raiser named Ken won first prize in the York Fair's Funniest Sheep Costume Contest by dressing his sheep as a bridegroom and taking on the role of the bride himself. Why would he do a thing like that? The sheep was already dressed in white. Just add a veil and the sheep would have been a perfect bride. (This is how they've been treated by lonely sheep farmers for centuries.) But no. Ken got a long, white, off-the-shoulder gown, pantyhose (which he said itched), white gloves, and a pearl necklace. He topped off the ensemble with a long blonde wig and stuffed the bodice with tissues.

The sheep wore a tuxedo and in the newspaper picture they do make a lovely couple. LSV, keep your eyes open if a bride with a wooly groom shows up at one of your meetings, it could be Ken.

I was listening to my favorite

modern rock station WDRE and the DJ, Donna Donna (so nice they named her twice), was interviewing rock star Howard Jones. They had just played a song by a group called either The Janes or The James when Donna said that Howard told her that the group liked to wear dresses. I had noticed that part of the lyric of the song just played said something about dressing up in women's clothes. Donna Donna then went on to mention a couple of other groups that have worn dresses in their videos and then she said she thinks every man should wear a dress now and then. She was already my favorite DJ but if she wasn't married I'd propose. Ken could lend me his gown. WDRE broadcasts on Long Island and is simulcast in the Philadelphia area. Call them and request more songs from men in dresses.

In film we should stay on the lookout for the new Robin Williams film, Mrs. Doubtfire. Clips I have seen indicate that this could be one of the best (non glamorous) female impersonations in film history. He even does a good voice. In this film the question of, "How is he able to transform himself like that with no prior experience at female impersonation?" is answered by having Harvey Fierstien be his makeup artist friend who does the job.

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I wasn't a big Beverly Hillbillies fan in the sixties but I was familiar with the show and I don't remember Jethro having a twin sister. It seems that this twin sister has appeared in the major motion picture that was just released. Her name is Jethrine and she is played by the same male actor who portrays Jethro. That should be interesting. Let me know if he's any good.

LAST CALL FOR BATHING BEAUTIES

I've received about four or five photos for the swimsuit issue and that is enough for at least one page. I have decided to run the swimsuit photos in the January issue and I have also decided to waive the rule requiring the picture to be outside. I know not everyone had the oppor-

tunity to go to Rainbow Mountain Resort which is where a lot of the photos were taken so if you have a suit and have a good photo inside your home go ahead and send it in. I must receive it by December 15th and no photos will be returned. Write your name on the back of the picture so we can identify you to the readers and if you had it taken at a pool or the beach let us know where. That's it for this month. Cheerio!



Hey!

I Want my Vis a Vis

Well, it seems Brenda has finally figured out that working a fulltime job, having one child and getting ready for the arrival of another and being the managing director of Renaissance left very little time to work on Vis A Vis. All is not lost! Ms. Dina Amberle is reading every group newsletter in the world at this very moment and will have a brilliant column ready for the December newsletter. Promise.

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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 ça changé, 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 publicly 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 (priced) 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 Cross-dressing 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 dint have no girls, but she did have two

Hot • Buzz

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 cosmetic surgery. A Lip-suck, as they're called in the trade, can remove as much as 2 liters of fat cells from the body. Current techniques avoid the use of general anesthesia and 2 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 uniform-ity 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 Brasiere*, or *You Left Me Breastless*.

Maybe some of you saw the little new 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 dal) 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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SHOPPING WITH JACKIE

by Jackie

I opened my eyes. 10,000 pair of panties, 8,000 bras, 5,000 slips, nightgowns, robes, and more. Did I die and go to TV heaven? No! I went to the Vanity Fair Outlets in Reading, PA. Shop til you drop girls. Prices like you won't believe. Everything at least half price and many things being closed out for a fraction of the retail price. I happen to love VF panties because they have a wide crotch, fit well, and hold some extra things that other panties just won't (if you know what I mean). In addition, Lee has an outlet on the second floor that is all close-out priced. I got Lee Jeans with the elastic waist that retail for \$29.95 for \$7.00, tunic length T-shirts for \$2.00, blouses for \$5.00, and sweaters for \$5.00. I also got some nice soft jeans in tan and black (with the L. L. Bean label) for \$7.00. (Now we know who makes \$39.95 plus shipping, L. L. Bean Jeans.) Located on US Route 422 in West Reading, the VF Outlets are worth the trip. Merchandise changes daily so you take your chances with the bargains, but they are always available.

On the catalog side, I've got to tell you about "Anthony Richards." Mostly dresses, one and two piece, along with selected jewelry and nightwear. Good quality (I almost always wear these things before I tell you about them), and nice prices. How about a nice tritone (cute) chemise, jewel neckline, back keyhole opening, cap sleeves and solid self sash, washable poly/rayon linen, sizes 8-20, for \$21.99. Or, a floor length gown with long cuffed sleeves, back keyhole neck opening, self-belt over elasticized waist, gently gath-

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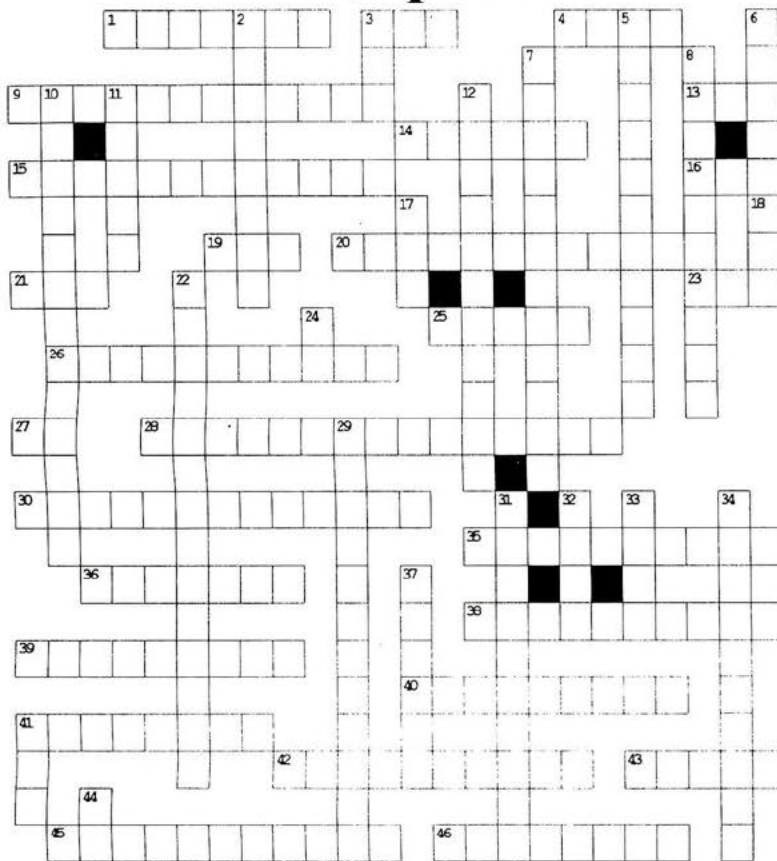
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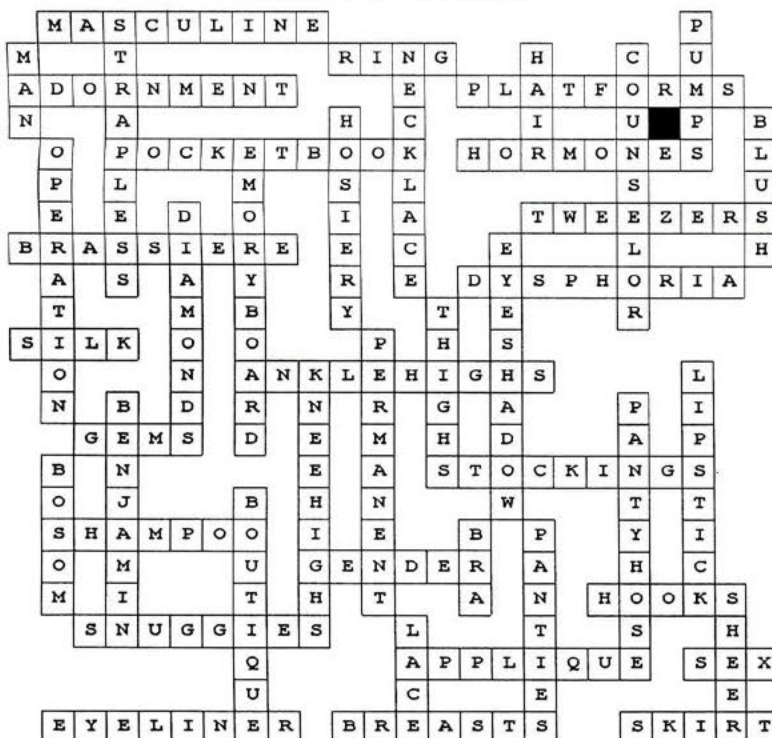


Designed & contributed by Sami Rae

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1. Teats
3. Degree
4. Young Miss
9. Change of allocation
13. Tush
14. Close fitting undergarment
15. Male hormone
16. Boob tube in radio cabinet?
19. Brooch
20. Angry brother in sister's clothes?
21. Operation
23. Purse
25. Spikes
26. Second operation
27. Natural woman
28. Counselor
30. 28-across product
35. Embellishment
36. Female gland
38. Advice
39. Inate knowing
40. Natural talent
41. Closet full
42. Enamel
43. Pigtail
45. After shampoo
46. Female hormone

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10. Shocker
11. Silky fabric
12. Gender bender
17. Young male
18. Embrace
22. Change
24. A small changer of sex
29. Brother in sister's clothes
31. Studies sex
32. Female clothing item
33. Manlike
34. Base
37. Cosmetics
41. Toupee
44. Hairstyle

ANSWER NEXT MONTH

LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS

Back in the August issue guest Vis A Vis columnist Dina Amberle took aim at Jane Kamper Bentley from ETVC. When the smoke cleared Ms. Bentley managed to crawl to her word processor and shoot off a retaliatory round. Here we have her response to Dina's assault and the original article from the ETVC Newsletter, (reprinted with permission) that started the bruhaha.

Dear Ms. Gardner,

In a recent ETVC Newsletter article written for the significant others page, I confessed to strongly negative feelings toward my female-to-male lover's crossdressing. Renaissance "Vis A Vis" guest columnist Dina Amberle characterized my effort as "hypocritical rationalization." Ms. Amberle seems to have missed the context for my confession and confused honest feeling with hypocrisy. Feelings are not hypocritical. There is no such thing as a feeling one is not supposed to have. Feelings are our internal weather; no matter how unpleasant, crudely anomalous or absurd, they just are. I purposely bared my "worst" feelings in order to make the point the mine put me in a position ironically similar to that of many women (such as my former wife) married to or dating male crossdressers. Suddenly I, a crossdresser, could identify with their struggles to accept a partners crossdressing. I believe that an unbiased reading of my article will confirm what I claim. You have my permission to reprint it.

Sincerely,

Jane Kamper Bentley

Editor, ETVC Newsletter

The Man Within My Woman

by Jane Kamper Bentley

I used to be married. One reason I am no longer married is because my wife could not abide my yearnings to live full-time as a woman. After marriage, I determined that living full-time wouldn't be enough. I had to become a woman. I went into therapy, began hormones, prepared people at work for my transition, and after several months suddenly realized that I hadn't needed to become a woman, but to take the notion as far as it would go. A year later, I met a woman who loved me however transgendered I was; who, in fact, especially loved the femme part of me - but if you think this a prelude to encouraging wives to love the "woman within," it isn't. This is about something unexpected. My new love discovered a penchant for crossdressing as a man. She was good at it. Her first time out, another FTM crossdresser was shocked to learn she hadn't been practicing for years. Wherever we went, friends

complimented and encouraged her. More than flattered, she felt empowered. There was only one problem. I didn't like it. As long as her male side was something abstract, or expressed solely as assertive behavior, I felt fine. But when the fedora, suit and tie came out and the mustache got put on, I felt cheated and became hostile. I didn't want to date a man, genetic or un-, no matter how dapper. Fortunately, her crossdressing is not as crucial to her as mine is to me. If it were, I would try to be understanding; I would try to help her with shopping and learning how to tie a tie; how to stand with one hand in her pocket; how to walk with her shoulders rather than her hips; and to coach her with voice. But I'd hate it. I would want a lot of times when she would dress as a she, and lots of reassurance that when the mustache came off and the pants came down that that "guy" would disappear, and I would just be with my woman.

How do our readers feel? Drop us a line and let us know. Here is another letter to the Editor that is less controversial.



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Dear Editor,

Music is a very large and integral part of our society today. It appears as both a focus and as a background throughout many a person's day. How do music and song relate to crossdressing? In spite of music's ever-present nature, in all of the reading I've done and all of the discussions I've participated in pertaining to the crossdressing lifestyle, I have yet to encounter any but the most fleeting mention of song lyrics. Since first discovering, then acknowledging and now finally accepting the crossdresser within me I have been able to listen to many songs from all styles of music with a new perspective. I have found many more songs than I ever expected which have reference to crossdressing or meaning for me as a crossdresser. This is true even if the original intent of the song was something else entirely. I would be interested to hear from other crossdressers about what songs effect and/or influence their crossdressing.

Sincerely,

Ms. Stacy-Lynn [REDACTED]
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(CHANGE - continued from page 1)

on our outer images as we find out more about our inner femininity.

The thing to remember is that "change" is what it is all about in this lifestyle. But "change" in the sense of growth or development is important in both halves of our lives. Don't exchange one rut for another rut with the only difference being the presence of high heels in the latter. Most great people and institutions incorporate change to keep themselves in the forefront. We all have made the surface change to femininity but the deeper changes are what will make us more complete — and more interesting — women.

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Beauties Wanted

That's right, bathing beauties! You read it in Angela's column. The big *SWIMSUIT ISSUE* is coming in January! The rules have been relaxed so we will accept a photo taken in your home. Don't delay, mail your photo before midnight tonight! Operators are standing ... oops, this is a mail in deal. Get it to us by the middle of December. Make sure your name is on it. No photos will be returned. The Editor reserves the right to run whichever one she wants so if your's doesn't get in don't complain. She has mysterious criteria for acceptance.

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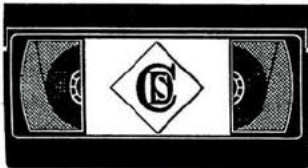
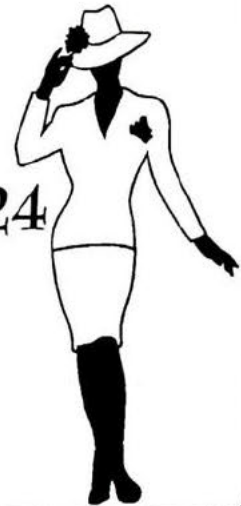
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ACETATE—Most acetates will require dry cleaning. If the label says it's hand washable try it but don't mix colors. They may not be color fast. If you like to live on the edge and are thinking about using a dryer, use it on low and take acetate out while still damp. Acetate melts over 300 degrees F. When ironing set the iron on the low, permanent press setting. Fashion hint: don't clean off your nail polish while wearing an acetate dress. Nail polish and some perfumes contain organic solvents that could redesign your outfit while you wear it. Acetate is actually a chemically treated form of rayon. Better living through chemistry!

ACRYLIC—Dry cleaning is not recommended for the acrylics. Hand wash or "Gentle Cycle" in the machine is the way to go. Use a fabric softener every third or fourth wash. This will help prevent static build up. You can use a little fabric softener on your mod acrylic wigs too. It works like conditioner does on hair. Ironing is not a good idea. If absolutely necessary do it on the lowest possible steam setting. Try just drying acrylic sweaters flat.

NYLON—Stains will set in nylon if it isn't washed often. This means after every wearing. Turn it inside out and toss it in the machine. It dries quickly so check it after ten minutes and take it out as soon as it's dry. Don't bother dry cleaning cause it doesn't work very well. Again, iron on the lowest possible steam setting if necessary. If you have a stain set in, good news. You can use any stain remover. Even bleach. Live it up.



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