

The Femme Mirror

Volume 23 Issue 1

Spring 1998



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE SECOND SELF, INC.

The Femme Mirror

The Femme Mirror is the quarterly journal of The Society for the Second Self, Inc., a non-profit 501c(3) corporation. Address: The Society for the Second Self, Inc., 8880 Bellaire B2 Ste.104, Houston TX 77036. Submissions to *The Femme Mirror* should be sent to: **The Femme Mirror, 8880 Bellaire B2 Ste.104, Houston, TX 77036.** Letters to the Editor may be directed to Frances Fairfax in care of *The Femme Mirror*.

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- 1) *The Femme Mirror* will not publish the last name of any Tri-Ess member without the expressed written consent of the member, unless the surname is known to be a pseudonym.
- 2) We encourage all contributors to the Mirror to adopt a pseudonym when submitting articles and letters for publication. We request that you place the surname in quotation marks so that we will know it is a pseudonym.
- 3) We request that each contributor include her Tri-Ess number on all material.
- 4) Contributors should avoid use of true last names in letters or articles, and particularly in accounts of chapter activities and other events. We reserve the right to edit such material to remove surnames or other potentially compromising information.

Please help us to serve you in a professional manner.

Thank you. Frances Fairfax

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MOVING ???

Please Notify Membership Director
Donna Martin
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A Note of Thanks

A note of thanks from your Mirror Staff to all of you who contribute your articles, photos, cartoons, poems, as well as your typing and envelope-stuffing skills. Your service is enriching the lives of all your sisters. This is YOUR journal. You, the readers, are the source of its contents and the reason for its existence. Ya'll are doing GREAT! Just keep it coming now, hear?

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You may notice that this issue (Volume 23 Issue 1) is the *Spring 1998* Issue of *The Femme Mirror*. Please note that you did not miss what was formerly called the *Winter 1998* issue. We have renamed this issue to the *Spring 1998* issue since the publication time more accurately reflects the season of the year. The *Winter 1998* issue will be published 4th Quarter of 1998.

See Page 60 for About Our Cover Girl



Executive Director's Message

By Carol Becroft

As most of you know, one of my pet projects is the development of Couples' Groups. I have thought and thought just how I could motivate others to form Tri-Ess Couples' Groups in their areas. Finally it occurred to me that I could show, by example, how Couples' Groups can develop successfully, as well as how much fun and camaraderie couples can have at the various "gatherings."

The example will be the Couples' Group that has developed in the San Joaquin Valley here in California. Bear in mind, this is a mostly farming area, with Fresno being by far the largest town.

In the beginning we had about five Tri-Ess crossdressers meeting at our Tri-Chi Chapter evening. It was a typical gathering of crossdressers:

"How's the job going?"... "I certainly like the 49ers football team." ... "Played any golf lately?" ...and, "Let's send out for pizza and EAT!"

I've always wanted to do something nice for wives, so that they, too, would want to attend chapter meetings and enjoy (!) themselves. After all, they can wear dresses and skirts at any time, so unless another wife were to attend the meeting, there was little for the wife to do. And, frankly, it was a rare occasion for a wife to show up. There was little of interest for most wives at our chapter meetings.

This passion of mine (to do something special for wives) went all the way back to the early 70's when I was leading the Mamselle group in southern California. We tried several times to have special gatherings for couples on a Sunday afternoon, but those were the days when accepting wives were few and far apart. As a result, we were not successful with developing a Couples' Group in those long-ago days. But I didn't forget it.

Several years ago, noting that our local chapter meetings rarely were graced by the presence of a wife, I began thinking about those early

days in the 70's. I decided that it might be time to try again to get a Couples' Group started here in the Valley, and announced this intention. I sent letters out to all the Tri-Ess members in the area. Many members had never or rarely attended a chapter meeting themselves, and I really did not know who was married, or, who might have an accepting wife.

So the letter was sent out, announcing that we were going to start a Couples' Group as part of Tri-Chi Chapter. It would be social in nature. When the night arrived, I was very doubtful as to who would attend. But I was hopeful. My goodness! We had seven couples (!) show up, along with our usual singles, at our home. As time went on, we were able to locate additional couples, to the extent that we just had our annual Christmas dinner and party in Fresno (at the beautiful home of Karyn and Linda), where eleven couples attended along with four single members of Tri-Chi. Actually, we have located three more couples and will be meeting with them to formally bring them into the Tri-Chi Couples' Group. It's wonderful to see the friendships developing between our couples.

This successful progress of the Tri-Chi Couples' Group didn't happen overnight. But enough of us worked at it to make the group very successful.

Some of our activities have been:

1. We have met at Estrada's Restaurant in Tulare, where we not only enjoyed the food, but enjoyed the companionship between the couples.
2. We gathered at another time in Fresno at the Plaza Restaurant where Lupe, our waitress, treats us like ladies. In this case, Marlene and I had approached the restaurant ahead of time to make sure that we would be welcomed. We were, indeed! There were no problems whatsoever. We have been there on several occasions as a group.

and smaller groups of couples (and singles) occasionally have gathered there. Sometimes we were "dressed" and at other times we did not "dress." This was in deference to nervous wives.

3. We have had earlier gatherings at special times of the year like Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. People would bring delicious dishes of food and desserts. Turkeys, when the holidays called for them, were prepared at homes ahead of time. This last gathering at Karyn and Linda's home was simply the best. We almost overflowed their home in Fresno. We exchanged gifts and just had a lot of fun.
4. Because I knew that many wives were still uncomfortable with crossdressing, and others still had unanswered questions, I approached Sallie Hunt, our understanding psychologist and educator at Fresno State, about having a special gathering for wives only. What we did was have the fellows go out for pizza while the wives met by themselves here in Tulare. The husbands set pizza back to the house so the wives would not be left out. The result of the wives meeting with Sallie as that they wanted to do it again. So this special gathering was repeated in Fresno. Nervous wives have become much more secure with their husbands' crossdressing.
5. A Mardi Gras activity was held in Fresno, in which our members appeared in crazy, funny clothes.
6. Several barbecues have been held in the back yards of our homes, and we always make sure that everyone gets plenty to eat.
7. We had a marvelous weekend near Lake Isabella, where Michelle and Rita put in a tremendous amount of work in preparation for our gathering there. People really enjoyed themselves! We check in early on Friday, and some even stayed until Monday. This event was probably the best that we have had, and the most work in preparing for the occasion.
8. There have been regular gatherings at different homes where the couples and singles have socialized for the evening. The group is strong and united and preparing for the future.

NOW! Does what our couples and singles are doing in the San Joaquin Valley have any meaning for you? Certainly, if we can develop a successful Couples' Group (with all singles attending and enjoying the event) in this agricultural area, you should be able to develop a similar group in your area. Do remember that we started from scratch, and it took a lot of time to get where we are, but we did succeed because of the efforts of a few workers who wanted to see the group succeed. And WIVES (!!!) really LOVE our Couples' Group!! We would never have had the participation from our wives if it weren't for the social fun we have at our gatherings. We have benefited several ways: We have gained the attendance of a number of crossdressers who rarely, if ever, attended a Tri-Chi activity. And, best of all, we have had the attendance of many wives who we did not know existed. It's been a WIN-WIN situation for crossdressing in this Valley. Tri-Chi Chapter of our

wonderful organization is most successful. I do want to emphasize that we do NOT neglect our single members. They not only are invited to all functions, but they also make it a point to come out, since they say that meeting with the couples enriches their lives.

My reason for using the subject of our local Couples' Group in this column is to motivate YOU and your chapter to start a Couples' Group in your area. Wives NEED other wives to network with, and such wives are much more apt to attend a chapter gathering if the "slant" of the meeting is directed especially toward wives. If you have a large group of crossdressers who attend without wives, perhaps it might be difficult to do the above. In that case, you might want to experiment with a separate gathering for couples over and above the usual chapter meeting. I think that each chapter will have to work things out according to just who attends chapter meetings. I have been to large chapter meetings where a few wives attended. In this case, I did not see the socialization that goes on between couples as it does in this area. I wish that such large chapters would experiment with separate nights for couples.

Perhaps there are several crossdressers in your area who have wives who are at least tolerant, wives who would come out if they knew that the gathering was slanted toward couples. That is the reason for our success. After all, there was definitely something special going on where the wives could participate as WIVES and not be frozen out by activities slanted toward crossdressers only. Tri-Chi Chapter has progressed from almost 100% male-oriented meetings to a predominately couples' group. Members without wives or with non-supportive wives need our Couples' Group, too. We will not neglect them.

You only need several couples to start a Couples' Group, and a house where the group would be welcome. Always remember that wives will generally not attend an event unless there will be others wives there, too. I don't get the impression that a large chapter male-oriented meeting with just a few wives attending is what our wives really want. I do believe that wives, especially, enjoy gatherings where there are quite a number of wives attending. It is the opportunity to visit socially with other wives that will bring our wives out. They rarely come out for any other reason. I believe that most wives will agree with me.

I fervently believe that the future of Tri-Ess is very much dependent on the development of Couples' Groups. I believe that the future will show that more and more wives will become accepting and that we need, therefore, to prepare for the NEEDS of those wives. And the needs have to do with socializing with other wives, and not just attending a meeting where the focus is directed toward the crossdressers. Wives can be our strongest backers if we meet their needs, too. And if we fail in meeting the needs of our wives, someone else will do the job, and we will lose both husband and wife to another group. (Or worse, those needs will go unmet, those marriages will suffer, and oftentimes, the couple will drop out of the transgender community altogether. Ed.) That's not the way for Tri-Ess (or the community) to grow! Contact me if you need help!

Keep Away, Sister! You'll Get Me Read!

by Jane Ellen Fairfax

There was no denying it. Carolyn was a beauty! With her lovely auburn hair amplified by perfectly-matching extenders, immaculate makeup, soft, sultry voice, and carefully cultivated mannerisms, she was the very picture of a lady. Not surprisingly, Carolyn was proud of her ability to pass in public. So it was hardly unexpected when she approached the organizers of a Holiday and demanded, "Keep the group away from me. They'll get me read!"

Passing has always seemed to me a sterile pursuit. Most crossdressers feel hurt when they hear derogatory comments from people who read them. To some extent, then, attempting to pass is an understandable defense mechanism. Even so, the concept has always struck me as selfish and intellectually dishonest. Some criminals attempt to pass counterfeit money as real. Crossdressers are not, and should not try to be, counterfeit women. But there is nothing bogus about our femininity. It is real! Our ability to express our feminine potentials is a true gender gift. Why hide it?

Recently, however, an insidious and cruel element has crept into our community, one which threatens the very foundations of support groups. Some "old guard" types are actually suggesting that novice crossdressers be excluded from outings because they will get the group read. Not only is such an approach futile, it is disgustingly heartless to sisters most in need of support.

Such behavior is not only insensitive, but futile. Buoyed by wishful thinking, most crossdressers convince themselves they pass better than they do. Even very polished crossdressers have little imperfections in their presentations. When a group of them go out in public, these little defects magnify one another, and the whole group usually is read. So why not lay aside ineffectual attempts at deception? Why not be satisfied with achieving the best possible feminine presentation, and go out and meet the public?

Nor does the crossdresser intent on passing accomplish anything toward the cause of public education and acceptance. If he should pass, who, except for his ego, is the better? If he does not pass, he misses out on some golden opportunities to educate. Instead, he does our cause real harm by inviting ridicule not only for being a crossdresser but also for being unable

to blend successfully.

But it is on the unfortunate novice that the most destructive effects fall.

When a new member emerges, she approaches the chapter with much trepidation. Perhaps she has labored for months on her feminine image, hoping her sisters will find her acceptable. Her self-esteem is a fragile flower that a gust of insensitivity can easily blow away. Can you imagine the effect of such a boorish remark as, "Keep away, Sister. You'll get me read"? Her self-image crushed, the novice will probably retreat back into seclusion, never again to emerge.

Every Tri-Ess sister should be aware of this destructive behavior and do everything in her power to discourage it. If chapter peers make it clear that excluding sisters from outings is unacceptable, the offenders may find it advisable to pursue their social deception in more appropriate settings. Nurturing the newcomer and the less-skillful sister should be a high priority for everyone in Tri-Ess. Should an attempt be made to exclude a sister from an outing, mature sisters should speak up immediately and emphatically, inviting her along and reassuring her that her presence is desired. While the group will be read, peer support will facilitate the adjustment of the inexperienced sister. Having enjoyed the outing, the new sister will want to become more and more a part of chapter life. Doling out positive reinforcement between meetings also helps the novice build self-esteem, and warms the heart of the giver. A little love cancels out a lot of thoughtlessness.

Now back to the story of Carolyn. Although her sisters felt hurt by her request to be left alone, they honored it. Some time later I was en homme in the hotel restaurant, dining with a colleague, when Carolyn, aloof and supremely confident, strolled past. "Well, would you look at that!" exclaimed my colleague. "That's a man!"

Support or self-indulgence? The choice is clear.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Francis,

I had my tracheal shave in Jan 96 along with my corrective surgery. All went well but the tracheal shave.

I am asking you to help me inform others just how touchy that area is. I happened to have lost most of my voice. My range decreased to about 3 whole notes and I am constanly hoarse and have little volume. I find it difficult to "yell" to someone as close as 50 feet. I completely lost my falsetta voice, too, so no more screaming or yodeling.

I am having corrective surgery now which is already at \$5000.00, and though I believe I will have better use of my voice, it will not be nearly what it was before the tracheal shave. Some further "lasering" of my vocal cords may help increase the pitch but that will be aways down the dollar road.

Thanks for your help.

Always, Emily



Editor, The Femme Mirror

In a recent issue, someone wrote a letter to the "Femme Mirror, The official publication of Tri-Ess" advising that a BBS run by Rachel Cummins was not an "official" system of the Sigma Epsilon chapter of Triess. Given the tremendous amount of politics involved within the Transgender community in general, I certainly do not want to dispute the point. If the chapter says it is not, it is not. But I feel that it is the chapter's loss.

I am neither the "oldest" member of the chapter, nor am I an historian. So I may have

a few of the following points confused, and would be grateful of any corrections. But I feel it is very important to make sure a few things are said. I will make every attempt to keep it as brief as I can.

Rachel, and her SO Kathy, were founding members of the SigEp chapter. Rachel was always interested in outreach, and did everything she could to educate the public and provide an open hand to all of us confused people. Rachel led the effort year-after-year to place index cards in various library card-catalogs around the country that helped many TG people find others through organizations like Tri-Ess. And many years before the general public use of the internet, Rachel used her own money to build and operate a BBS system.

Rachel had very few rules for her board. It was a place of true free speech. The board consisted of three main areas: email, conferences, and the files section. There were system-operators (sysops) on the system to help maintain some level of order, but they were told to never censor anyone. In my mind, the real value of the BBS was it's conferences. Several areas were provided as an attempt to provide order to the content, but they were often ignored as the focus of a conversation wandered from subject to subject. But in this board conversations took place that I have not seen anywhere else: certainly not in the rude and aggressive net-news groups. People from all spectrums of the TG spectrum that participated. Much of the conversation was trivial and chit-chat. There were several very "heavy" and in-depth discussions of core issues and concepts that were way over my head. But there were also many more discussions of (what I consider to

be) very important issues of why, how-to-cope, whom and how to tell, and a wide range of issues that we cannot discuss with others unlike ourselves. As with most systems, there were many "regulars" who actively participated in the discussions, and there were many MANY more who "lurked" and only read the discussions. Perhaps they learned and grew from them, and perhaps they didn't. But they were exposed to the issues with out feeling compromised and in danger.

There were always the types who would login (it was an open system after all) that would try to turn the system into a sex-chat line. They would use dirty language, and try to carry on lewd or suggestive conversations. But they would never EVER last, as the main population of the system would ignore them. Or worse yet (from the disrupters point of view), the main body of the board would try to educate and reach out. So these various attempts at changing the focus and meaning of the system would always fail from lack of support.

But then there was the files section. I will be the first to admit that this section contained much that was (to my mind) not worth-while. Many of the files were nothing but a dirty, sordid sex tales. But there were also files containing lists of resources, how-to's, biographies of the various ladies in the system, and other useful pieces of information. In the minority, yes, but there.

Now, Rachel's strength is always perceived as a weakness by those with a more closed mind. Instead of seeing the value of the system in its educational facet, they can only see the files, and perhaps the various unsuccessful attempts of the "red-necks."

And maybe if this is all that remains, the board should be closed. This is not my point.

Whether the board is closed, replaced, or let to run is the concern of the SigEp chapter and Rachel, not mine. But I cannot let the issue go without pointing out that the BBS has provided a safe haven for those who need help and advise. It still has not been duplicated, either in format or the feeling of warmth and support, anywhere else, "official" or otherwise. I know for a fact that both the board and Rachel and the other regulars have been instrumental in helping at least one person work through his/her feelings; me. And I can provide a list of names that I would suggest also benefited from the caring environment provided by the board.

Let the board live-or-die on its own merit. I personally think that it should still remain as a useful tool not available anywhere else, "official" or otherwise, and given support and help as yet another way of getting the word out in addition to other existing methods. But that aside, I don't want any to forget the value and meaning that the board represented, and the out-reach and friendship that was provided. Should the board be allowed to die, instead of encouraged and supported, I for one will mourn the loss of a very special place that was in my life.

But mostly, I want to make sure everyone realizes the effort and love that Rachel herself has, and I am sure will continue to, provided to the community. Without her and her efforts, I know I would still be in the closet, wondering about myself. Thank-you Rachel, for all you help and support, both to me and to the creation and nurturing of the Sigma Epsilon chapter!

Thank you.

Melissa Spence GA-3774-S
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Dear Frances,

I just read the article in the Fall 1997 issue of the Femme Mirror, titled "The Three Spectres Haunting the Transgendered Community." I think this is an accurate assessment of the current state of the community. Please print more stories like this, as we need to get the whole community involved, especially the sleeping crossdressing community.

—Bye for now,

Brandi Welch, Facilitator
Tau Chi Chapter

Dear Frances,

I have just finished reading the Fall 97 issue of the Femme Forum. It seems to be the best issue yet. There is a little of everything. However, I will correct you on one point. You forgot to include Tau Chi Chapter when you announced the Commended Chapters of 1997. Please remember us, as these girls deserve the recognition.

Thanks, Brandi Welch, Facilitator
Tau Chi Chapter

Ed.Note: OOOOPS!!! How could I have forgotten my own home chapter?

Dear Frances,

Thank you very much for printing my article in the Femme Mirror summer issue ("Finding Stephanie" by Stephanie K). My wife, Suzanne, has enjoyed reading your comments on the CDSO Listserve and has shared several with me. I thought you might like to read, and perhaps print, the following story about Suzanne and I.

Loved the Fall Femme Mirror. I am really looking forward to meeting you and Jane Ellen sometime. I hope at the 1998 Spice or 1998 Holiday En Femme. Be well.

Love, Stephanie
MN-4674-K

(See Stephanie's latest article, "Stephanie and Suzanne at the Mall," elsewhere in this issue.)

Dear Jane Ellen and Mary Frances,

For my column this month, I was rereading the Fall edition of the Femme Mirror. First I was impressed with the gigantic amount of work it takes to put together and publish such a well-laid-out quarterly. Golly, you must have to read an awful lot of stuff to know what to put together each issue. I can't even imagine proof reading it all, let alone editing the original copy that comes to you, or re-keying (hope you're doing it by scanner) all that stuff.

One of my little sisters always writes to me in longhand on legal tablets, with some kind of handwriting that I often cannot decipher. I like her, but I hate to try to read her letters. If I were writing by hand, it would be just as bad for the receiver, and I am very thankful that I have a means of corresponding legibly. I can't even read my own stuff back a week later.

It was nice to see our article about our trip through New England. Of course, that was last year, and we took another since. Trouble is, the one this year was really lackluster as far as a crossdressed adventure, except for getting ripped off by the con man in the restaurant parking lot.

What I used, that I thought was great, was Tanya Brown's letter to the editors about

Editorial Policy

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trusting mail order people with your real name and real address and even phone number. She wrote it beautifully, with or without your editorial assistance, and I think it was an excellent inclusion in the Femme Mirror.

By the same token, I found it a little uncomfortable reading several references in the articles in which it appeared to be taken for granted that all the readers are Christian believers instead of Moslems, Bhuddhists, Taoists, and yes - lots of atheists. There is probably a good forum for writing "factually" about the Devil. But I think that forum is more appropriate in church-related publications, rather than a nation-wide crossdresser's magazine supported by a membership only part of which is at all religious, let alone Christian.

Every time I think of you two, I feel admiration I have for your unending guidance and efforts for all of Tri-Ess and for other gender people outside of Tri-Ess. You have contributed richly to my life both personally and through Tri-Ess, and I do appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Allison

(Ed.Note: Thanks for them kind words! We truly appreciate your continuing support for Tri-Ess and the Mirror. May your humorous accounts of your adventures enliven many more issues!

MY DADDY CAN BEAT UP YOUR DADDY


by Brandi Ann Welch

I have always heard, by way of second person, about the gender (so called) wars and their continuing conflicts. When I say gender wars, I mean verbal wars about Tri Ess excluding others because of their sexual orientation. I haven't heard from the other side personally (I probably will after this article is printed); I just go by what I read in the Femme Mirror. Also, in the last couple of months that I have had E-mail, I have had a lot of mail forwarded my way. I have read all kinds of reasoning and dissertations about why our organization should stay the way it is. What I haven't read is why this verbal conflict continues. I say verbal, because I have not heard of one instance where any group has picketed a Tri Ess meeting or tried to gate crash a Tri Ess sponsored event. Why? Because we are all civilized people. Civilized, yes; but grown up? I don't think so. All of this reminds me of being in elementary school and somebody saying, "My daddy can beat your daddy up!" It's just immature talk.

Just think of all the wasted effort this bickering has generated. What has it accomplished? Well, it eats up time and space on my computer. It fogs out real progress getting legislation passed to secure our rights and our jobs. It eats up my time reading messages that are forwarded with fourteen hundred addresses on it. Some of the messages are shorter than the number of people they are addressed to! I don't have the time or want to take the time to hear about any organization getting slammed. My time is too valuable! What I want to hear is that we can volunteer to help in some way to get the word out that we are OKAY people. I would love to sit in and comment on the internet. Not to express my views, but to get a better grasp on why this continues.

Presently, I consider myself an advanced crossdresser, on HRT, undergoing electrolysis, and looking for a time when I can go full time. (I was recently mistaken for already living full time). I am Facilitator of Tau Chi Chapter, I have paid my dues to TATS, and made a meeting of GCTC. I haven't had time to go to more meetings, although I want to attend more. I wanted to volunteer for Annise Parker's campaign, attend the Gay Pride Parade, attend more social outings (especially that beach party), attend SPICE (to quiet Peggy! Just kidding, Peggy!), do the T Party again, lobby in Washington or Austin with Phyllis and ICTLEP, but I haven't had the time.

In a nutshell, I want to help our (my) gender community any way I can to get the word out that we are everyday people wanting to live life as we are most comfortable. But, this Indian keeps hearing all this from what I call the more experienced members of the community! I call on you to grow up and bury the hatchet! The most precious thing on this earth are my kids. Although they do not like what I do and what I believe, they love me more now than before I told them all about myself. This love, this unconditional love, is so pure and healthy, that if everybody had just one ounce, this community would not have any problems amongst one another.



Sally A. Hunt, M.A. MFCG

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Solidarity

by Melissa Dixon NC-4303-D

On November 6, 1996 I had the distinct privilege to represent Tri-Ess on an ad hoc group of transgenders formed to gain the support of the two national gay and lesbian political activist groups, The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). This ad hoc group consisted of crossdressers, fully transgendered and transsexuals from the male-to-female, the female-to-male, the gay and the straight segments of our community.

We were successful in securing the support of the NGLTF's Executive Director, Kerry Lobel, and after a long afternoon of presenting our case we tentatively gained the support of the HRC's Executive Director, Elizabeth Birch. The HRC's support was based on our being able to gain the support of our Senators and Representatives. Unfortunately, we were unable to motivate the transgender community to contact their Senators and/or Representatives to help us in this effort. The result of this lack of motivation is that the Employment Non-Discrimination Act that will be voted on this year is non-TG inclusive.

However, unknown to us at the time, we had "turned" Ms. Lobel's commitment for transgender and bisexual inclusion within the NGLTF. The result of this diverse group of transgenders displaying a solidarity in our "fight for equality", the NGLTF adopted new mission and vision statements at its September 13, 1997 board meeting.

The new mission statement reads: "*The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force works to eliminate prejudice, violence and injustice against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people at the local, state and national level.*"

The new vision statement reads: "*As part of a broader social justice movement for freedom, justice and equality, we are creating a world that respects and celebrates the diversity of human expression and identity and where all people may fully participate in society.*"

I am sure that many of you are shrugging your shoulders and saying "So what?" When I agreed to be the Tri-Ess representative on this ad hoc group, Jane Ellen Fairfax told me to "just be Tri-Ess." Being Tri-Ess doesn't mean that we are anti-gay, anti-lesbian, anti-transsexual. Being Tri-Ess means that we are heterosexual crossdressers that are very much in support of working for human rights for everyone.

I am sure that many of you believe that we should not be in-

involved with the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual community in working for human rights. When it comes to employment and the fear of losing our jobs, we are in the very same position as the gays, lesbians and bisexuals. While transsexuals are OUT all of the time, crossdressers, lesbians, gays and bisexuals are selectively out. As heterosexual crossdressers we come out to one neighbor, but not another, one co-worker but not another, one family member but not another, exactly the same as a gay, lesbian or bisexual. Just as we do not crossdress at work, neither does the gay, lesbian or bisexual have sex at work, yet we are all in fear of losing our job for what we do away from work, simply because someone in a position to fire us learns about our private lives. Therefore, as heterosexual crossdressers, we have just as much to lose, just as much to fear, and just as much need to work together with the gays, lesbians and bisexuals to gain our basic human rights. We have more in common than many of you want to admit.

I am not advocating that Tri-Ess change its purpose, mission statement or membership policy. I am advocating that as individuals, we open our hearts to the simple truth that we must work together to gain what all of us want, the freedom to be who we are.

There are some of you who are reading this that are thinking that working for your basic human rights is a waste of time. You have your "safe place to dress" and "safe places" to eat and shop. It is exactly that type apathy that will destroy what so many have worked so hard to achieve. As I wrote earlier, we have more in common with gays, lesbians and bisexuals than many of you want to admit. We must work together!

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Our Wacky Week's Vacation

by Diane Liegh

Diane and Desiree' arranged their October schedule so that they were free to take a week off. They had worked long and hard so they felt that they had earned some time off. They made reservations at the "Silverado II" in Winter Park, Colorado from Saturday October 18 to Saturday October 25. The following is Diane's account of what they did.

We were able to get our things together, get ready and leave by early Friday, so we took advantage of the opportunity. We arrived in Colorado Springs about noon on Friday. We checked with Budget car rental for a car but they said our reservation was for Saturday and they didn't have any cars that day.

Since we couldn't check into the condo in Winter Park until after 4 PM on Saturday, we were completely undaunted. We called the Days Inn, which is just outside the Colorado Springs airport, and got a room for the night. After their courtesy van picked us up and delivered us to the motel, we registered and got settled in our room.

We had all afternoon and evening so we called Enterprise car rental to see about renting a car. We asked for a mid size but when they arrived at the motel with our rental, it was a full sized Dodge. We told them that we only needed it for one day since we had a car reserved with Dollar for tomorrow. We did all the paper work in the motel parking lot and the rental agent left. We had talked briefly about keeping the car all week but when we told the agent that the Dollar rate was \$140/week, he said he couldn't match that rate.

As we were starting to drive out of the parking lot, we saw him drive back in. We stopped and he said he could now match the rate if we wanted to keep the car. We agreed, he changed the paperwork and we were spared the hassle of turning in one car, picking up another and changing all of the luggage twice. In addition, we got the car for \$140 for eight days instead of seven we would have gotten from Dollar and it was a full size, not a mid size.

We were then off for a day's adventure in Colorado Springs. We decided on a journey to the top of Pike's Peak. We had read brochures from the motel lobby about both the Cog Railway and the drive to the peak. We decided that we would decide when we got there which one we would do.

For those of you who have read some of my previous experiences, you will notice that so far I haven't mentioned a word about clothes. The reason for that will be covered in another article - maybe even this month. In any case, Diane and Desiree were headed for Pike's Peak. Neither of us had been there before. All that we had to do was get on US 24 westbound and follow the signs. The first sign we saw said "to Cog Railway" so we followed it. It took us through a small town where we were surprised to find all traffic stopped by the police!! (Was there an APB out on Diane?) No, there was a local parade. We asked a policeman about how long the parade would last and if there was an alternate route to the Cog railway. He told us the parade would last 30 minutes or so and that there was no alternate way but that we could go back to US 24 and get to the road up to the peak.

As we turned off of US 24 onto the Pike's Peak highway, we spied a quaint ice cream/sandwich shop. We stopped and had a sandwich and a dish of ice cream, then resumed our adventure. The drive up was beautiful and we stopped often to take pictures.



Wacky (continued)

When we got to the top, as soon as we got out of the car, the altitude hit us. Desiree had trouble getting her breath and I had some dizziness. We took it slow and easy and everything worked out OK. We roamed around the top reveling in the gorgeous vistas. The weather was clear and "on a clear day," we could "see forever."

We checked out the cog railway tracks; the train was not to be seen, and then checked out the gift shop. While looking around, we heard an announcement that everyone had to be out of the parking lot in 30 minutes. We went directly to the car and started down in order to avoid the expected closing time congestion.

The trip down the mountain and back to the motel were uneventful. Back in our cozy nest, we decided that we would go to Winter Park tomorrow via the Royal Gorge, Breckenridge, Dillon, and Silverthorne.

I chose a new forest green jogging suit with silk pants and knit top with silk sleeves for the day's journey. The room at the motel was right beside the front desk and morning buffet dining area. I decided to leave off my wig, makeup and flats while I was loading our luggage. It was much cooler doing the loading without the wig and also less conspicuous to the many people in the breakfast area. I don't think anyone paid any attention to my attire, or me, for that matter. Comfort and discretion have to be considered in outing situations.

I donned my wig, makeup, jewelry and flats once we were on the road. Desiree was driving and fortunately there was a mirror on the sun-visor. There was a picnic area/rest stop outside the entrance to the Royal Gorge that we decided to use. We parked by the ladies room and took turns guarding the door (there was no locking device) while the other used the one holer. We got back into the car and were ready to leave when I looked out of the windshield and saw a full grown buck lying under a pine tree right in front of the ladies room. Neither of us had noticed him before. That was worth a picture, and then on into the Royal Gorge Park.

We parked, got the seniors' ticket price for "you ladies" and started roaming around. We walked up to the cable car but the next trip wasn't for 30 minutes. We then walked half way across the bridge over the gorge. From there we looked down into the gorge, up at the cable car and back down at the cog railway (which descended to the gorge floor). We decided not to take either ride because of the crowds in each and the temperature - in the 80's.

The weather kept getting warmer, and with wig and jacket, so did I. I had packed clothes expecting the temperature to be no more that 60 degrees and it was at least 25 degrees warmer. I hadn't brought any short sleeve blouses so had opted to wear one of my male Hanes T-shirts under my jacket so that I had the option of removing my jacket. Finally my body temperature rose to the point when I had to remove my jacket for survival. Here I was, out in public with a thin male T-shirt over my bra, which was clearly visible. Is there a special name for a M2F crossdresser wearing a male T-shirt over a bra? I decided that I see females dressed in that manner often and if they could do it, so could I. The bottom line is that on one seemed to notice, or if they did, they either didn't care or didn't show it.

We walked back and I found a seat in the shade while Desiree purchased an ice cream cone. Two ladies came over to MY bench and the older one sat down next to me to wait for the tram for a ride across the bridge. The younger lady, her daughter, took off on foot to walk across the bridge.

My voice is anything but feminine as those of you who know me are aware. But I decided, "What the heck!" I asked the lady if that was her daughter. She replied and we had a nice little conversation. She had been there 30 years before with her husband and it hadn't changed. She was from Memphis, Tenn. The weather was beautiful, and so on. When Desiree appeared, the other lady asked, "Where are you ladies from?" You Ladies!! How sweet it is! She may have thought that I was the strangest looking "lady" she had ever seen, but if she did, she didn't show it.

We left shortly to continue our journey toward Winter Park. We continued on US 50 until getting to Colorado 9 where we headed north. The drive was much prettier than going Interstate 25 to Interstate 70. We drove through Breckenridge noting all of the shops just waiting to be explored on our coming visit to that area in January.

We drove on to Dillon and took Interstate 70 east for a couple of miles to Silverthorne. We drove around spotting the locations of various stores for later reference and then went to the Village Inn for dinner. It sits high on a hill overlooking IH70, Colorado 9 and the Silverthorne area. The last time I had eaten there, it was quite crowded and I expected the same again.

Remember, I had been traveling and sight-seeing all day and now was heading into a restaurant that I expected to be busy. Was my deodorant still working? How was my makeup? Was I crazy or what? It turned out that the restaurant wasn't crowded

Wacky (continued)

but it might as well have been. We were seated in an end booth right in the line of all traffic to the cash register with a family in the booth in front of us and a group of two families right across the aisle to my left.

We sat and waited, and waited and waited. Several people who came in after us received their food and we hadn't even seen a waitress. Desiree' pointed out that this is a common experience for two ladies at an eating establishment. I had never experienced this treatment. Finally a waitress appeared and asked what she could get for "YOU TWO LADIES". The second time in one day that I was called a lady. I even ordered my own meal. Because of my low voice, Desiree' has usually ordered for me in the past. We discussed how far I had come in the last few years while waiting for our food.

We continued to Winter Park after dinner via Colorado 9 and US 40 east at Kremmling. We finally arrived at the Silverado II at about 7:50 PM, checked in, unloaded the car and were now ready for a new day and our vacation to start!

The next morning, Sunday, we awoke to beautiful, blue, cloudless skies and moderate temperatures. I decided to take Desiree'



on a sight-seeing trip. We got dressed and drove to town for breakfast. We selected a little diner across from Cooper Creek Square that we later discovered was open only for breakfast. It is owned and run by a couple that has been in Winter Park since 1963. We had a wonderful breakfast and then "hit the road." We headed south on US 40 for the trip over Berthoud Pass. It is a gorgeous ride and much easier to drive since they have passing lanes all the way up on the north slope and most of the way up on the south slope. We stopped briefly at the summit (11,317') to enjoy the scenery.

The south slope goes through the towns of Berthoud Falls and Empire. When we went on the Alaskan Dignity Cruise in August we actually met someone from Empire, Colorado, but didn't get their address and don't remember their name. Isn't it a small world?

We proceeded on US 40 to Interstate 70 and headed west towards Georgetown. On our last visit to Winter Park, we rode the Georgetown narrow gauge loop railroad. This time we just waved as we drove by. We continued west and left Interstate 70 for US 6 prior to the Eisenhower Tunnel to take the scenic route over Loveland Pass. The date was October 20th and they were skiing at Loveland. As we followed the road, it was amazing how rapidly we gained altitude. We stopped frequently to enjoy the panoramic views.

We reached the summit (11,990') and parked so that we could go exploring. The air was so thin (I wish that I were - thin that is) and the pressure so low that we found ourselves gasping for breath after going a very short distance. There were people climbing to peaks on both the north and the south sides of the road. We wandered along a trail on the north side of the road that provided unimaginable views of the east entrance to the Eisenhower Tunnel and Interstate 70 approaching it. From this altitude Interstate 70 was just a narrow ribbon and the cars looked like ants. We finally tore ourselves away so that we could continue our adventures. We enjoyed the scenery on the descent and passed Arapahoe Basin and Keystone ski areas. People were skiing at Keystone, which was the first ski area in Colorado to open; the second year in a row.

Continuing on US 6 we arrived in Silverthorne. Since we had scouted the area just yesterday, we were obligated to visit the worthy stores. We visited many stores but didn't find any "to die for" items. We made a couple of minor purchases and started the homeward trek. Since we had gone via Colorado 9 and US 40 last night, we elected to go east on Interstate 70 to US 40. It

Wacky (continued)

also gave Desiree' a chance to go through the Eisenhower Tunnel. She was amazed at its size. This route turned out to be a shorter drive than the previous route.

We continued through Winter Park on to Frazer to stock up on food for the coming week at Safeway, the Fraser Valley's only large grocery store. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were rest and relaxation days. We sat around and read, rested and watched television. There was a small park nearby with an asphalt path through it for walking or jogging. Desiree' and I visited the park a couple of times just to be outside in the glorious surroundings and to play on the swings and slides in the playground.

Thursday we decided to trek back over the mountains and visit one of west Denver's larger malls. The anchor stores were Foley's, Penney's, Sears', and Ward's. It just so happened that every store was having a sale. Desiree' fell in love with, and purchased, a faux fur short black coat. I got a leather vest and skirt that they were just forcing me to buy. After several hours of walking and shopping, we decided it was time to return to our condo. We did, however, make a note of the mall's location for future visits. We both liked the colors, styles, and quantity of clothes in that mall.

It was time to pack up all of our goodies and memories for the trip home once we were back at the condo. The weathermen had been forecasting a major storm to hit the area on Friday afternoon, Saturday and Sunday and we hoped to beat it to the airport in Colorado Springs.

THE BLIZZARD OF 1997

We were on the road at 7 AM Friday morning but the weather had beat us. We (the car) crawled up and down Berthoud Mountain at 25 to 35 m.p.h. in about two inches of fresh snow. After reaching IH70, we descended from the mountains in a dense fog with visibility of about 30 yards. We had gotten below the fog by the time we reached the Colorado 470 bypass and then had continuous drizzle until almost to Colorado Springs.

We arrived at the Colorado Springs airport in plenty of time for our proposed flight AND ahead of the really bad weather. The cloud layer continued getting lower and we soon learned that all inbound flights were diverting to Denver. It seems that the Colorado Springs airport had decided to dismantle some of the airport low visibility landing equipment with the result that inbound flights could not land. We were stuck. The Blizzard of 97 was on its way.

We checked into the La Baron Inn, just off of Interstate 25 to

ride out the storm. The major reason for choosing the La Baron was that it had its own restaurant on the premises. Colorado Springs received 20 inches of snow in about 48 hours. During the tail end of the storm and during initial snow removal, it was illegal to drive on the major streets and impossible to drive on the side streets. We ventured outside after the storm to play in the snow. Although the storm lasted about 48 hours, hundreds of people were stranded on impassable roads, several people died and many animals froze to death.

Sunday brought clear blue skies and major snow removal efforts. Airplanes returned to the airport Sunday afternoon, but every flight was oversold all day Sunday and Monday. Rather than sit in a congested airport hoping to get on an already overbooked flight on Monday, we decided to rent a car and visit the large discount mall in Castle Rock, about 30 miles north on Interstate 70. The interstate highway had been cleared by this time and it was clear and dry. In that 30 mile stretch there were about 30 abandoned vehicles sitting on the shoulders, medians and ditches. We wondered where the people that had been inside these vehicles had gone and how they had gotten there.

We spend the day at the outdoor mall under clear blue skies and temperatures in the 50's. Our suitcases were already overburdened so we fought all buying impulses. Desiree did find two pair of pumps that she liked at Nine West so we had the store personnel contact their Fort Worth store to see if they had the same shoes in stock. They did! So here we stood in a mall in Castle Rock, Colorado buying two pair of shoes in Fort Worth, Texas! All we had to do now was pick them up after we got home. We drove back to the motel - most of the abandoned cars were still there - to get ready to depart - again.

We had dinner at Denny's, across the street from the hotel. We were glad that the hotel had a restaurant so we could get food during the storm, but it was a pleasure to get different choices (and prices) for a change. Denny's had been closed since Saturday noon because the employees couldn't get to work. Tuesday morning we got up, loaded our luggage into our rental car, drove to the airport, checked our luggage and turned the rental car back to the agency. We then had breakfast in the airport and caught our flight home.

It seems that no matter where we go or what we do, we encounter experiences that are "somewhat out of the ordinary." We keep wondering, "What adventure are we in for on our next journey?" Stay tuned - we will share them with you if you care to read about them.

A Wives' Bill of Rights

by Frances Fairfax

1. We have the right to know about our husbands' crossdressing, preferably before marriage, but certainly when our husbands begin to make crossdressing a significant factor in their lives and wish to contact support groups.
2. We have the right to honest and open communication with our husbands, with negotiation and compromise on both sides, particularly in regard to allocation of family resources and in matters pertaining to telling our children. Old patterns of selfishness and deception must cease.
3. We have the right not be pushed to "accept" things before we have had time to learn enough about them and to begin to get used to them.
4. We have the right to our husbands as men, the men we married, men who maintain a positive, healthy masculinity while "exploring their femininity" and seek neither to evade responsibilities nor to appropriate our own feminine roles.
5. We have the right to our husbands' masculine male bodies. Neither partner in a marriage has the right to alter body features without the full knowledge and consent of the other.
6. We have the right to support groups for ourselves that promote our own personal growth and well-being, help us understand our husbands' needs, and provide tools for relationship-building.
7. We have the right to support groups for our husbands that encourage their feminine development without denigrating healthy masculinity, that welcome us as full members on an equal basis with our husbands, and that fully support relationship commitments.
8. We have the right not be mocked and demeaned by sexually explicit or otherwise offensive conversation, dress and behavior at group meetings.
9. We have the right not to be pressured to attend group gatherings at public locations, night clubs, or other places that pose security risks.
10. We have the right to be asked for our permission before our clothes, make-up, jewelry or other personal items are borrowed.
11. We have the right to personal time in which to get in touch with our own femininity, pursue our personal growth and work on creative projects.
12. We have the right to expect local, regional and national gender organizations and conventions to fully support and promote these rights in their programs and policies.

First published in the Spring 1994 issue of the Sweetheart Connection.

The Wives' Bill of Rights A Matter of Common Sense

by Jane Ellen and Frances Fairfax

Since "A Wives' Bill of Rights" was first published three years ago, it has been reprinted numerous times, most recently in the Summer, 1997 issue of Transgender Tapestry. On the facing page, however, is an attempted rebuttal entitled "A Crossdressers' Bill of Rights," by crossdresser J. Freed. In attempting to refute the principles of the Wives' Bill of Rights, Freed resorts to a mixture of wishful thoughts and straw-man arguments. The article serves to demonstrate the controlling attitudes and selfishness that have made it extremely difficult for wives to cope with their husbands' crossdressing. We are responding jointly to Freed's statements, because crossdressers, no less than their spouses, suffer when these attitudes prevail. We will list each Right J. Freed disputes, followed by her remarks, then ours:

- 1. We have the right to know about our husbands' crossdressing, preferably before marriage, but certainly when our husbands begin to make crossdressing a significant factor in their lives and wish to contact support groups.**

"Disagree. The process of coming out to oneself takes years and is a gradual process of learning to love oneself. We occasionally see people coming out at twenty or younger. This is the exception, as most do not come out till they are over thirty. This is years after the average age of first marriage. Therefore, most cannot and will not come out to their wives before marriage, as they have not yet come out to themselves. After coming out to themselves, a certain amount of time must pass before one's comfort level is sufficient to come out to anyone else. The longer the attachment to a spouse, the more reticence there will be toward coming out. Therefore a person may feel more comfortable coming out to a complete stranger. Coming out to members of a support group, or even a store clerk, represents little risk of loss if rejected. The perceived and actual risk of loss of affection in coming out to a spouse is much greater. Therefore, the transgendered individual will have far greater discomfort in coming out to a spouse or parent. There is another reason it can be smarter to come out to a support group before coming out to a family member. Support groups can give crossdressers a greater understanding and a greater sense of confidence, along with a loss of shame and guilt. If a crossdresser or other transgendered person comes out to loved

ones in shame and guilt, shame and guilt will be reflected back in that loved one's responses. A person who comes out with confidence and love for themselves will more likely receive acceptance in return. Members of the support group can offer advice on approaches that have the greatest chance for success. A support group will also have materials to help the person in understanding this phenomenon."

J. seems to ignore a cardinal fact about marriage. It is a lifelong commitment based on trust. Where there is no trust, the marriage is based on a lie. Trust means mutual sharing and mutual giving - by both partners. The crossdresser who chooses to hide his crossdressing from his life partner is entering a life commitment with only part of himself. This is not fair to either party. When the crossdresser is unable to express his feminine side, tension builds. The crossdresser will vent his frustration over other issues, leaving the partner to wonder what is wrong. Puzzling over it will do her no good, for she cannot resolve what she cannot see.

How often have I heard a crossdresser whine, "I can't tell my wife! She'd never understand!" Yet a crossdresser's wife is usually his best friend. Data from Bullough and Weinberg (1989) demonstrates the truth of this statement. While wives are ambivalent towards the crossdressing itself, 78% express a desire to work through crossdressing issues, and only 14% reject their husbands. Even though the crossdressing itself is an unexpected revelation, most wives describe their marriages as happy.

And what of Marge, the store clerk, in whom J. would repose his confidence?

She is bound to him by no special ties. Why should she maintain his trust? As likely as not, she will share the juicy tidbit with her friend Sally, the secretary, who will pass it on to her hairdresser, who will tell the crossdresser's wife. Exposed before his entire community, the crossdresser now must face not only the issue of dressing, but also must deal simultaneously with his betrayal of his wife's trust, his children's pain, and repercussions at work. And all because he would not trust his life partner!

When a crossdresser informs his wife about his gender gift, he should do so with love and confidence. If the crossdresser has accepted himself, his wife will be more likely to accept him

A Matter of Common Sense (continued)

Because of social attitudes, many crossdressers need help to achieve self-acceptance. The suggestion, however, that a crossdresser consult "members of a support group" before communicating with his life partner, is incredible folly. Such individuals have no professional credentials. At best their advice is based on anecdotal experiences. Sometimes, however, it is actuated by a private agenda. All too often, their counsel is that the crossdresser is entitled to do as he pleases. Much more prudent is to write one of the large international support or professional organizations for referral to a degreed professional who has experience working with crossdressers and their relationships. When he tells his wife, the crossdresser may do well to have a professional therapist in his corner. Not only will the therapist work with him on self-acceptance issues, he will also be available to support the couple after the sharing. "Members of a support group" may pump up the ego, but the knowledge of a degreed professional will shore up the relationship.

2. We have the right to honest and open communication with our husbands, with negotiation and compromise on both sides, particularly in regard to allocation of family resources and in matters pertaining to telling our children. Old patterns of selfishness and deception must cease.

"Disagree. Whether one is in a transgendered relationship or not, if allocation of family resources is a problem, then a budget should be established. This budget will include housing, clothing, food, transportation, entertainment and a discretionary fund. A discretionary fund could be set for each partner, with money available to that person for whatever use desired without having to justify or explain expenditures. Once spent, no additional money would be available for those discretionary items.

In matters involving children, secrecy is never the best policy. Negotiation should take place on how to broach the subject. Children have a right to know and love their father as he is."

What a graphic example of the need for Right #2! Rather than trying to understand the provision, J. has fallen into the masculine trap of imposing solutions! A discretionary account is indeed a valuable solution for some couples. For other couples, other options may work better. But Right #2 is not about solutions; it is, rather, about the necessity for honest, two-way communication, negotiation, and compromise in reaching them. Mutual solutions are likely to be more lasting than those

imposed by fiat.

J.'s second paragraph makes a neat little exercise for the reader. Having analyzed the paragraph, imagine yourself as his partner, sitting down with him to discuss the sensitive issue of whether to tell the children about his crossdressing. What does J. claim by fiat? What does he leave negotiable? What feelings does his attitude arouse in you?

3. We have the right not be pushed to "accept" things before we have had time to learn enough about them and to begin to get used to them.

"May disagree. If Frances meant that a husband has no right to expect a wife's involvement in an activity with which she is uncomfortable, I wholeheartedly agree. If she means that a wife has a right to dictate or veto a husband's right to group involvement, to wear inside the home clothing of his choice, then I disagree."

Only J. mentions dictating and vetoing, and he does a lot of both in his article. Again and again a mutual approach, with negotiation and compromise on both sides (See Right #2) has proved successful in finding mutually comfortable solutions to crossdressing issues, including crossdressing at home and attending support groups. Love is the catalyst for mutual giving. Ignoring the discomfort of his partner, J. would vigorously defend his right to his choices. He may find himself in total control - of an empty battlefield. But why should there be a battlefield at all? When a couple employs a mutually giving approach, the conflict becomes their common opponent. The ensuing victory is not his, not hers, but theirs!

4. We have the right to our husbands as men, the men we married, men who maintain a positive, healthy masculinity while "exploring their femininity" and seek neither to evade responsibilities nor to appropriate our own feminine roles.

"Disagree. Men and women will continue to grow and change whether in a marriage relationship or not. Neither person will remain the person we married. I'm not sure what a 'healthy masculinity' is. If Frances means stereotypical societal gender roles and behavior, then we differ. Just as feminists have argued that women have a right to grow beyond stereotypical feminine roles and behavior, so do men. True equality means all people have a right to be all they can and to choose a personality expression that is comfortable for them. Just as women have won the right to appropriate stereotypical male roles, such as chief breadwinner, leader within the community, head of

A Matter of Common Sense (continued)

household, and protector, so men have the right to appropriate stereotypical feminine roles, like nurturer, housekeeper, and child-rearing. Some expect men to remain in the stereotypical male role of strength, chief breadwinner, and dominant decisive male, fulfilling all the stereotypical male models, while at the same time women's stereotypical roles and behaviors have been blown asunder. True equality is allowing each person to assume a role in the family that is appropriate to that person. Each person sharing according to their ability the responsibilities of financial support, care of the home, child-rearing, or whatever."

All too many crossdressers appropriate for themselves the nicest parts of femininity, leaving the less desirable roles for the wife. They love to play the glamour girl in sassy black dress and patent heels, ready for a night on the town. But drag themselves out of bed for a 2AM feeding - never! This attitude is, of course, selfish, and wives resent such double standards. Others indulge in dare-deviling behavior, which may lead to loss of their jobs and jeopardize the welfare of their families.

J. knows quite well that for years crossdressers have espoused "healthy masculinity" as opposed to "macho masculinity" with its confining standards. He has simply set up a straw man and proceeded to lecture it to bits. The key word, of course, is "sharing," in contrast with "appropriating," which means "preempting" or "usurping." There is no difference of opinion here. But why is J. so eager to use that word "disagree"?

- 5. We have the right to our husbands' masculine male bodies. Neither partner in a marriage has the right to alter body features without the full knowledge and consent of the other.**

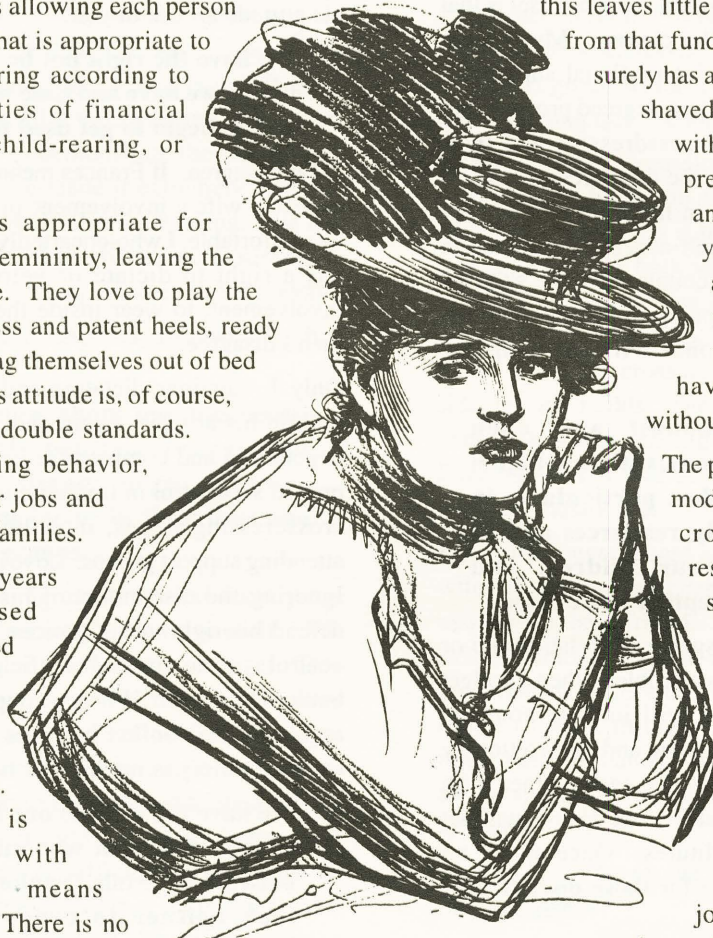
"Partially agree. For a husband to undergo sex reassignment surgery, breast enhancement or hormone therapy without notifying the spouse, is wrong, and to expect a purely heterosexual woman to remain in a relationship with that person is highly unrealistic. A wife has a right to know before these

steps are taken so she can contact a divorce lawyer. Short of those steps, I believe a man has certain rights to his body that are inalienable. A person who has no desire to have a beard has the right to remove their hair growth in any manner, whether temporary or permanent. The expense for this should come out of the person's discretionary fund, whether or not this leaves little or no money for any other spending from that fund. A person, whether male or female, surely has a right to have or not have pierced ears, shaved legs, shaved underarms, or whatever, without expecting to face ridicule. The present custom of women shaving legs and underarms is less than one hundred years old, and many feminists have argued that no one should ridicule a woman who chooses not to shave these areas. Conversely, men should have the right to shave their bodies without being open to ridicule."

The problem with this argument is that body modifications impact people to whom the crossdresser bears special responsibilities. For example, tactile sensations from her husband's body hair may be a significant factor in a wife's sexual response. The crossdresser should consider carefully before allowing an "I wanna" to disrupt relationship chemistry. Pierced ears, for another example, will not escape notice on the job. Many wives fear job repercussions that may jeopardize the welfare of their families. Unilateral escalations destroy the mutual trust that is the foundation for marriage. For this issue as for others, communication, negotiation, and compromise are the key to resolution.

- 7. We have the right to support groups for our husbands that encourage their feminine development without denigrating healthy masculinity, that welcome us as full members on an equal basis with our husbands, and that fully support relationship commitments.**

"Disagree. A wife has no more right to choose her husband's



Jim Bridges Brings Style to Many Girls!

For those of you who don't know who I am, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jim Bridges, I'm a transformation artist and a bit more. I started out in the film business during the silent picture days doing makeup on "Birth of a Nation" for D.W. Griffith. From there I began working with that newcomer; Rudolph Valentino and that lovely ingenue; Virginia Prince. Just kidding! After thirty years in the beauty business, people do think I've been around forever. In actuality, I started out as a hair stylist in Beverly Hills, then changed direction to makeup. After freelancing in the Hollywood studio system, I headed for New York to work in high fashion. While there I became the East Coast Regional Director of Training for Revlon. I also worked with the Metropolitan Opera and many Broadway productions including "Sweeny Todd". I got a chance to work on a great number of beautiful faces including Lauren Bacall, Angela Lansbury, Lena Horne, Jackie Kennedy Onassis, Joan Collins, Jacklyn Smith, Farrah Fawcett, Sophia Loren and Beverly Sills to name a few. I also specialized in glamour photography, working with photographers such as Scavullo, and I was responsible for doing many of the Breck Girl ads. For ten years I was make up man to Mick Jagger on tour and also worked with Linda Rondstadt for four more. However, about a decade ago back in Los Angeles, I was approached to work with a group of cross dressers. This was a whole new experience for me, working with the transgendered. Let me tell you, quite a pleasant change. I'd had it with the temperamental actresses and models, and felt much more appreciated by my new clientele. A great deal of the time I'm the first contact for someone new to the cross dressing scene. They've read about me, or seen me on TV and they look me up; seeking my advice. My favorite make overs are those firsttimers sitting in my make up chair. Once they've gotten over the shyness and nervousness that is only natural, the joy on their face is evident as I turn them around to the mirror to at last view their alter ego. I have a transformation boutique in Studio City, California just north of Hollywood.



There, my staff and I do make overs. I have everything in stock to transform you into a beautiful woman. Starting with a good foundation garment, I have custom made corsets. Nothing will make you look better in a dress than a shapelier body. And a good corset will help hide that beer belly while giving you an hourglass figure. Since I began working with the cross dressing community I realized that an off the rack dress would not fit

correctly on a male body. So I personally designed dresses that are custom made for my boutique and catalogue. I had all new male body patterns cut, so they are longer in the sleeve, wider in the shoulder, smaller in the hip and longer in the torso. Which means that they actually fit you properly and help give the illusion of a feminine body. I've got a wide selection off wigs, shoes, breast forms, gloves, purses and jewelry. My rings are custom made for me up to size 14. I was very happy last spring to finally get my first mail order catalogue out. We shot it next door to my boutique at the World Famous Queen Mary Show Lounge and the Robert Toll studio in L.A. It was quite an effort, and I hope you like it. What's really great about it, is that if you can't come to see me in California, at least you can see first hand some of my dresses on actual cross dressers. My models range from 5'6" - 135 lbs. to 6'3" - 240 lbs. A

good cross section of my average customer. I can also customize a make up kit to fit your specific needs. If you have any mail order questions, my assistant Gina can help you by calling 818-755-9327.

Now let me answer some of my most asked questions. 1. The key to getting better at doing your own makeup is practice, practice, PRACTICE!!! I didn't become a makeup artist overnight and neither will you. But if you take just 15 minutes a week and work on your makeup, you too can come up with a great look. One week just work on your eyes. The next, your lips. Do this when you have no plans to go out so you're not rushed for time. The more you practice, the better you'll get! 2. You'll have a lot more fun if you don't worry about passing. The release of you

support group than he has to choose or interfere with her therapy or support groups.”

Nowhere does this provision state that a wife has the right to choose her husband's support group. A wife does, however, have every right to offer her input and participate in the decision-making process. Crossdressing is something that, for better or worse, husband and wife face together. Selection of a support group should, therefore, be a mutual process.

Semantics aside, however, what kind of husband would, given a choice, select a support group that denigrates masculinity, treats his wife as an inferior species, and promotes selfishness over relationship commitments?

12. We have the right to expect local, regional and national gender organizations and conventions to fully support and promote these rights in their programs and policies.

“Disagree. A wife has the right to ask that these rights be brought up for discussion and be subject to alteration or amendment and be voted for or against by the group. A spouse has no right to dictate unilaterally to any support group.”

Once again J. has chosen to demolish a straw man rather than answer on the point. This provision does not talk about “dictating unilaterally to any support group.” Nor is the Wives' Bill of Rights something to be altered, amended, or voted on - in other words, controlled - by the transgender community.

Right #12 talks about the right to expect community support for the principles in the Bill of Rights. Wives have every right to expect to be a full, participating part of the community. Many crossdressers' issues, from guilt and shame to job discrimination, are also their wives' issues. The Wives' Bill of Rights is a matter of common sense. Mutual respect and trust, honesty, negotiation and compromise are the bedrock of any committed relationship. Just as crossdressers expect to be treated with dignity by the community at large, wives expect similar treatment by the transgender community.

Simply stated, the Wives' Bill of Rights is a statement of basic considerations to which wives are entitled as women, life-committed partners, and participants in the transgender community. Crossdressers and their partners alike have every right to expect the community to promote mutuality in our relationships, and to take a stand against the selfishness which is so prevalent.

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female side that has been locked up for so long gives you the opportunity to grow and experience new feelings. Don't short change yourself with doubts of "Am I pretty enough?" Take a look around. Not everyone in the world is drop dead gorgeous. But if you present a positive, tasteful image when you're out and about, you'll fit in a whole lot better. In the day time, shopping or just taking a stroll, dress to fit in, not stick out. 3. Go to a professional for help with coming out. Ask other cross dressers for names of businesses CD's can trust. I hear horror stories all the time about "girls" paying ridiculous prices for products and services. 4. It is well and good to be blessed with a wife or significant other to help in your feminization. However, the down side is more often than not, a woman will try to use the same makeup application and wardrobe she might use for herself. The problem is, unless you have had professional training with make up and hair, you don't know how to change the shape of the male face. The end result usually has the cross dresser looking more like a caricature than a woman. In closing, I'm proud to be the first "Friend of Tri-Ess Commercial Member". And if you have any questions about me, or what I can do for you, call me at 818-761-6650. Or feel free to drop me a line. My address is Jim Bridges Boutique, 12457 Ventura Blvd., Suite 103, Studio City, CA., 91604.

Sincerely, Jim Bridges

P.S. Nothing makes me feel warmer inside than a letter from a first timer. Sharon, a new girl, recently wrote: "I wanted to take the time to write and thank all of you for making my adventure a great success. You all went far beyond my expected level of good service to treat me as a friend, not just a customer. For this virtual in the closet person all of you opened the doors for Sharon to come out. Again, a great big THANK YOU to all of you. To quote the lyrics of a favorite song, I had the time of my life, and I owe it all to you." Notes like that make it all worthwhile! J.B.



The Power of the Skirt!

by Bill Geurts

I have been wearing my kilt all week end long here in Portland, Oregon, and I must say that it is as if the doctor had just injected me with some amazing serum that made me instantaneously attractive or something. Women go out of their way to let me know that the kilt I am wearing is nice. They often ask what I have on under it. All of a sudden, I am feeling like a movie star or something, what with all the attention I am getting.

The kilt has power. I am empowered because I wear a kilt or a skirt. I have never come across something so powerful in my life. The minute I put on my kilt, I am immediately endowed with the power that it gives. There is something that causes the juices to flow in both men and women, when they encounter a guy wearing a kilt or skirt. These juices that flow are very real, and are usually very positive. Usually good things happen to me when I am in my kilt.

People go out of their way to be friendly, and to strike up conversations. I am here to tell you that women love guys in kilts, and I think that kilts, when used with discretion, look DAMNED GOOD.

Bill, you are letting the cat out of the bag!

If other guys are too chicken to wear a kilt, that's their loss. Why should we share the power with them? I like all the attention I get as the only guy in a kilt. It makes me an instant celebrity.

Last week I wore a Scottish kilt on a plane to Buffalo, where I went kilted to a Board of Directors meeting and to a national convention, at which I gave a presentation. The kilt made such a hit at the convention (especially with some of the ladies) that I continued to wear it every day. Although I took some good natured ribbing from some of the guys, I was able to turn this to my advantage, thanks to my repertoire of clever responses. In addition to enjoying the attention I got, I was far more comfortable in the kilt than I would have been in trousers.

Were it not for the kilt, I would have been lost in a crowd of more than 500 people at the convention. Instead, I was a celebrity. In contrast, when I wore a kilt to Scottish games on the previous weekend, I was inconspicuous in a crowd of hundreds of other men in kilts.

Therefore, why spoil a good thing by encouraging other men to wear kilts? If they want to be slaves to the conformity of trousers, it's their loss. I freely confess that wearing a kilt gives me an unfair advantage over other guys - and I am happy to keep it that way!

(Ed.Note: From Newsgroups: alt.fashion comes this little piece. Looks like some folks may be catching on to what we've known all along!)

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Spring, 1998

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Our Gender Family #8

by Rachel Miller

Bowling! What About Our Poker Game?

Alan, Bill, Charlie and Dan love poker and started a club that played the first Friday of each month. Ed heard about the game and asked to join the club. He fit right in and they all had a great time at the next game. The following month Ed suggested that they go bowling instead. Everyone except Ed wanted to restrict the club's activities to poker. A rather intense discussion ensued and Ed was asked to leave the club.

There was nothing wrong with bowling and if the club had been established to participate in varying forms of social events each month, bowling might have worked. But the purpose of the club was quite specific—to play poker—and the members weren't interested in other types of events. They had a common interest in poker and formed the club to meet their specific purpose.

How does the poker club relate to Our Gender Family? One of our continuing issues is whether every gender organization ought to be required to have open membership for anyone who wishes to join or be allowed to restrict membership based on certain criteria. Before we end up passionately arguing about this subject only to discover that we interpreted a term differently, let's check Random House's Second Edition Unabridged Dictionary now to establish some common definitions.

Association - an organization of people with a common purpose and having a formal structure.

Club - a group of persons organized for a social, literary, athletic, political or other purpose.

Organization - a group of people organized for some end or work.

Purpose - the reason for which something exists or is done, made or used.

The Speakers Lifetime Library lists an aphorism (a short saying that embodies a general truth or makes an astute observation) for clubs. "A club has to have more than one person and it also has to exclude more than one person. If everybody's a member, it is no longer a club."

Given those definitions and aphorism, the question isn't whether a membership line should be drawn but where it should be drawn and for what purpose.

Different types of organizations have unique membership cri-

teria. Religious groups require adherence to certain spiritual beliefs or principles. Businesses or companies organize around certain common markets, products or distribution channels. Fraternal societies, men's and women's groups and singles clubs all have different common bonds and exclude those who don't fit their purpose. A few simple illustrations make the point—the Catholic Church does not accept a professed atheist as a member in good standing and most single groups strongly discourage or prohibit a married person from joining. Without such basic membership requirements the fundamental purpose of the organization would be subverted.

One case where a membership requirement should not be tolerated is when it is based on discrimination. Requirements such as a golf club excluding Blacks or a business organization excluding women, deserve to be challenged.

How ought we approach membership inclusion and exclusion? The concept of a Gender Family that includes everyone who considers themselves part of either the gender or gay/lesbian communities is wonderful but doesn't mean that a single organization can create that unity. We have common goals but are also quite different in many ways.

We share the objective of bending, shifting or breaking society's enforced link between birth sex and gender role. Yet, the goal of a male cross-dresser to PASS as a woman has precious little in common with the needs of a female-to-male (FTM) transsexual to learn to BE a man. Perhaps the best approach is embodied in the theme for the Gay, Lesbian & Transgendered parade in San Francisco this year—"One Community, Many Faces"—One gender family with many organizations reflecting our differing faces

For a club to achieve its reason for being, it needs to focus on meeting the needs of its constituents. Experts on poker can help poker players and experts on bowling can help bowlers. But poker players and bowlers have little in common. Drawing a seven to fill an inside straight and picking up a 3-10 split appeal to two very different audiences. At the same time, bowlers can support poker players' rights and poker players can support bowlers' rights. If the club is large enough and has sufficient resources it may have alternative programs for poker players and bowlers. If critical resources are unavailable, the founding

poker players clearly have precedence.

The difficulty of meeting divergent needs became clear to me at the July S.P.I.C.E. conference. Some wives were experiencing high stress levels in dealing with their husband's cross-dressing. Cross-dressing wasn't allowed at the event but these women didn't even want the men to be present. Many steps were taken to increase their comfort level. No publicity was allowed, confidentiality pledges were required, special program tracks were developed, one-on-one counseling was readily available and provisions were made for women-only meals. Every reasonable concession was made to accommodate their needs.

While S.P.I.C.E. has the needs of women as its primary focus, they recognize that their ultimate goal is to help couples find ways to integrate cross-dressing into their relationship. That goal makes it necessary to work with men, so other program tracks were designed for men and for couples. Fortunately the organization has adequate resources to properly support the entire program.

Given the magnitude of the trauma already in existence, imagine what would have happened if FTM transsexuals who had relationships with lesbian women had been invited as well. The wives who couldn't handle cross-dressing husbands would have been totally unable to deal with that situation. Furthermore, S.P.I.C.E. doesn't have the expertise to deal with transsexual issues. The result of such an inclusive action would have been the destruction of an effective support group for the wives of

cross-dressers without establishing anything effective for transsexuals. Where is the value?

Suppose for a moment that we were to require an open membership policy for all gender and gay/lesbian groups. Who would be in charge of setting and enforcing the rules? Do we want a universally recognized umbrella group that can dictate policy to all groups? If open membership became a requirement, what would prevent "straight" members of society, say the religious right, from joining gender and gay groups and turning them into poker and bowling leagues? Where would we draw that line and what would make it any more valid than existing lines?

As a practical matter we don't have to choose either open membership or restricted membership—we already have both. Some organizations choose to be totally open. Others impose varying degrees of restrictions. As long as no one engages in discriminatory behavior, multiple choices provide the maximum value to all of our family members.

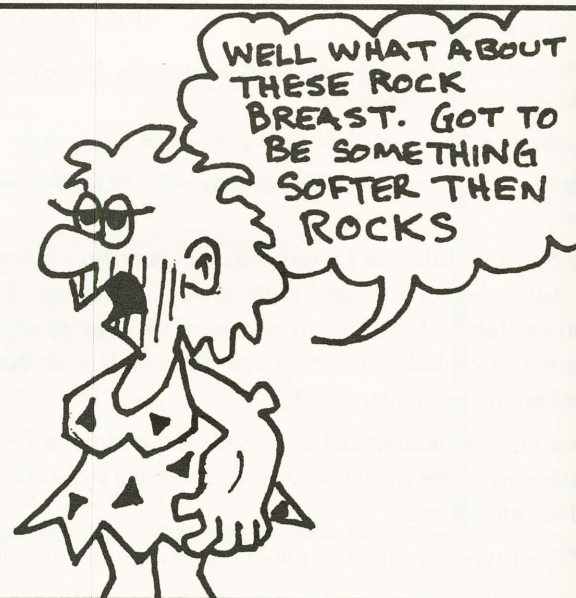
We need to avoid internal struggles that drain energy and direct our attention away from relevant issues. Territorial disputes dilute our ability to function as an effective group. I for one don't want to end up as a fulfillment of Groucho Marx's words - "I don't care to belong to a club that accepts people like me as members."

Rachel Miller

(<http://members.aol.com/RachelMill>)

BC / CD Stone Age Crossdressers

By *Melissa Anne*



Leslie, Judy, Dana, and Brandi's Great Adventure

by Brandi Welch

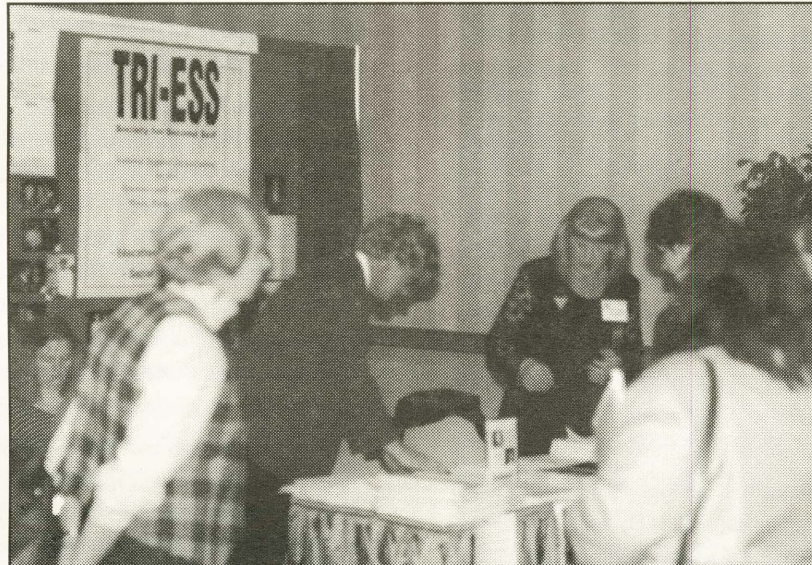
"Meet me at the curb, I will be circling in front of the terminal," were the words Judy told me before I met her in St. Louis. Tuesday morning my flight is pushing back from the gate in Houston. The pilot announces St. Louis has 36 degrees and possible snow. I think back to "'meet me at the curb,' she said," realizing it was a bad idea. We land, I see no snow. I see Judy's rented Cadillac disappear around the terminal. Not bad, no snow. Judy returns wearing black suede boots, black jeans, a black and blue velour top, makeup, pierced earrings and a burr. That's right, a burr, as in haircut, as in NO WIG. A quick shave and rinse off, makeup and fluff out, fringed boots, tapered leg jeans, pink sweater, and one liquid silver necklace. One hour and I was ready. Not bad, Girl!

I am ready for a cross country adventure, with my bestest friend and my adopted sister, Leslie. Judy is National Director for Chapter Support and wife Leslie, teacher par none, is on the SPICE Planning Committee. We drive catching up on everything and watching the scenery go by. Lunch time arrives, and Judy wheels into the Powhatan (named after a native tribe from Virginia) Restaurant, somewhere in Indiana. The Powhatan is a log building, and inside it's like any cafe across America. A few souvenirs and home made pies. Judy's loud laugh announces our presence, as the waitress hands us a menu. The parking lot was empty when we arrived, now it is filling up with pickup trucks. Bubbas, Bubbas everywhere (actually only three bubbas) sit down between us and the door. Judy eats it up as she sashays back to that **BIG, BLACK, NEW CADILLAC!**

Gassed up and back on the road, with Leslie driving, Judy reclined in front and my fringe boots tapping on the right rear window. All of a sudden we were in a convoy. Every trucker with "ears" on, must have heard about us and slowed down to let us pass and check out the "seat covers." I finally get to drive, at dusk, into the mountains. I fiddle with all the bells and whistles, trying to find the lever, switch, or button to adjust the right side mirror. Finally Judy lowers her window and moves

the mirror and states, "Is this alright?" I nod "Yes." I drive on, still wondering how to adjust that darn mirror.

Missouri, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania. We stop for the night in Washington, Penn. Judy goes in and gets the room. Leslie or I asked (I cannot remember), "Did you get a room?" Judy replies, "It's a handicapped room, the last room they had." Now with me having worked the night before and sleeping only a little in the car, "handicapped room" went over my head. I just wanted to relax in a tub filled with steaming hot water! Imagine my dismay finding no tub, only a shower. Great, no hot bath tonight! Let's go to a motel across the road!



Before my hot shower, we went to Denny's and ate. I never will forget what Judy had, "Eggs over Myhammy!" The young off-duty waitress sitting nearby starts talking as if she had known us for ages. She rattles on about always living here and never left town, after Judy asks, "How far to Washington D.C.?" Leslie asks what is the Beaver Barn(or something like that). Our talkative friend informs us that it is closed.

Daylight and sunshine, about 40 degrees. Judy drives while I continually ask to drive. I think she didn't like

my music. (Just kidding!) It's my fixation with the right side mirror, I guess. She misses U.S. 40, so we have to pay nine dollars to take the turnpike. Way to go, Girl! I get blamed for her navigational error, just as I was blamed for her computer crashing. (All I did was walk by the thing!) The scenery is great as we climb, turn, curve this way and that and finally descend. I wanted to see some deer, but I didn't. I day-dreamed about this rugged land when the Munsie, Susquehanna, and the Nanticoke Indian Tribes ruled it. Next stop, Crystal City, Virginia. No, Oz is in the Emerald City!

Have you ever had spinach lasagna? I hadn't, before we ate underground in the subway tunnels' shops and eateries. This was about six blocks from our hotel. I explained to Dana, if we walked far to lunch, I would change my brown suede boots for my Indian boots. She said it would be a short walk. Four blocks is short to her, while the hotel

Great Adventure (continued)

garage was my idea of short walk.

That night we confirm Dana's Saturday night plans at the Cafe Italia with the night manager, Fred. Dana and her family eat there every time they come to D.C. Well, I catch on right away. In the cafe foyer is a RAINBOW FLAG. Fred is at the front table stuffing pictures in an album. He shows them to us and tells us the pictures are from the Halloween Party. Here are pictures showing the waiters as drag queens and Fred as Cher, from Sonny and Cher. I look around, but the waiters all look stereotypical. Great day! We hit the jackpot! We eat and have that after dinner mint liqueur. I ask who ordered the drink, and Dana commented, "It's on the house." We leave with Dana commenting on how well I blend in.

We go the Leslie and Judy's room to talk conference strategies. At this time Judy threw satin shorts and a tank top at me. I hold them up and see an orange owl on them and the word, "HOOTERS." Leslie says Merry Christmas! My very own Hooters outfit.

Bright and early Thursday morning, I am told to dress casual, i.e., jeans, tennis shoes, and tank top. Dana shows up in dressy skorts and matching top with two inch heels. Judy is in an honest to goodness, DRESS. We take pictures using the Cadillac as a backdrop. Judy sure knows how to use a camera. We converge on the Hyatt exhibit room, to make sure all is well. Next thing I know, lunch is over and about 1:30 Dana and I take the subway to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. We pass the Museum on Culture. It has an Indian exhibit currently showing. I drag Dana inside and proceed to give my comments on each exhibit. I truly dazzle her with my knowledge of Native American Indian history, as she comments about me being an expert. Friends don't call me an Indian Princess for nothing!

We make the Air and Space Museum with about two hours free time. Not much time, as every school group surrounds Dana and bombards her with questions. Not me, just Dana. I feel invisible. I don't mind being with Dana (Read Jane Ellen's Mirror article, "Keep Away, Sister! You'll Get Me Read!"), as she is a great friend. It's just that (I realize now), I am jealous because someone else is getting more attention. We check out a few exhibits, but run out of time. The school kids continue to ask Dana questions, the girls in front listening intently. The boys are standoffish, coming close to ask, "Are those real?" and pointing to Dana's chest. They return to their cliques, giggling. Another boy returns and inquires, "What size are they?" "Thirty-six C," Dana answers. Again, giggles, and the boys are gone.

Friday morning at eight A.M., we descend on the exhibit hall, find our booth and start making it a Tri Ess booth. I wanted to decorate it like the girls did the hotel room in "Too Wong Foo", but "hen mother" Judy said, "We need to project a professional image." Judy issues assignments. Dana is in charge of outreach and I am in charge of the booth.

My most important job was to make sure Dana and Judy kept their shoes on. No such luck!

A conference attendee asks Judy about crossdressing in other cultures such as Native North American Indians. This brought Judy to reply "Brandi here," pointing to me, "is our Indian expert." This comment Judy's caused my editor to add, "Indian expert! Hell, she didn't even know what wampum was until a few month's ago!" This lady and I talked a few minutes about Berdaches. I informed her of the other Native North American crossdresser, the Indian Princess. I explained how she would sometimes ride with her warriors into battle or on hunt, and that she was over the tribes "Dog Soldiers." Dog Soldiers were the best of the best warriors of the tribe. Kind of like having your own personal Navy Seal Team! I went on to add that the Indian Princess was usually also the tribe's spiritual leader or in training to be the tribe's Medicine Woman. Sometimes they were one and the same. And while getting married to the bravest brave and raising a family. You thought professional business women had a lot to do!

Friday was a blur of activity. Dana was talking to a blond college student, while I was correcting SPICE brochure addresses. Dana makes the comment, "Like Brandi here." I stand up and the student says to me, "You are not a man.!" I add, "Yes, I am," and pull out my driver's license to prove it! Talk about a compliment and getting shook up all at once! This is getting confusing! Five thirty arrives so we can close the booth. I am not tired, just exhausted. We wait for Dana. It seems she found a photographer taking portraits of the Marine Corps Ball in the ballroom and she talked them into taking both our portraits. That girl could sell a pair of shoes to a one-legged man!

We regroup at Judy and Leslie's room before shopping and dinner at Union Station. We take the subway. I do not like the subway! My rainbow flag is up all the time I am on board. It feels as if I have been backed in a corner, no way out. I sat alone, watching my friends. My mind goes wild, thinking something will happen. It doesn't, thank God! After 1400 stops, we emerge into the underground expanse of Union Station. Amtrak shares space here, so it sometimes is noisy. I wanted to split up and say, "Let's meet under the clock," just like in the movies. I was corrected. That clock is in New York. Oh well, it's a blond thing.

We do indeed split up, and as I wanted a drink and Judy wanted a smoke, we looked for a



Great Adventure (continued)

bar. One drink later and I am off shopping again. Judy stays and holds down the bar, striking up a conversation with the lady on her right. When she leaves to catch her train, the lady to Judy's left says, "I am so glad to finally meet a woman with a deeper voice than mine." We head back to the room on the "traveling corner" called the subway.

Saturday morning, I am wearing a green coat dress. I forgot what everybody else was wearing. Ten forty-five. Time to drive Dana to the airport to pick up Marybelle. Dana tells me to go to Terminal A. Well, Terminal A's parking lot is uncovered and it is misting rain. I drive to Terminal B's lot. We lucked out on parking where we did, as the flight was listed to arrive at Terminal C. Lucky, as we only had to walk 1000 yards, not 2000 yards. This exercise ruined my black patent leather ankle strapping Mary Janes. After this incident, I promised myself from now on I would buy only quality shoes, regardless of price. Anything for my hurting dogs (feet)! While waiting for the plane, I watched a lady nearly fall over her husband's bags as she watched Dana walk by. It was funny enough to laugh, but this Indian knows her manners.

We whisked Marybelle to the conference, where Leslie and she compared teaching notes, and where to shop for good teaching (elementary) books. One book I will always remember, Leslie bought for her grandson. She read it to me while we sat in the exhibit booth. After reading each page, she would add, "Where's the ducky?" I would immediately have to find the ducky before she said, "There he is!" It was great fun. So much for being professional!

We ran out of Femme Mirrors sometime Saturday. The human head weighs eight and one half pounds. Judy and Dana quickly made packets of the remaining loose literature and included my Tri Ess business card. "Why my card? Where are your cards?" I inquired. Judy responded, "I left my cards at home." Smart girl, this Judy, where did I ever dig her up? So far nobody has contacted me, but who knows? Maybe next year or the next! Near closing time, David and his wife, two professors, are introduced to us. They say that Dana has told them a lot about me and are interested in getting to know me. I answer a lot of questions about crossdressing and my views on the subject.

For Saturday night, I had my black satin T strap halter to wear, but decided to wear what I had on, as we didn't have the time, as we had seven P.M. reservations at the Cafe. Dinner's great and so is the conversation. A Drag Queen comes in with her escort and Dana invites them to our table for photos. She does, to my dismay. She must be a Southern girl. We leave the Cafe in good spirits and walk in a fine mist. Well seven of us did, as Dana ran back to the hotel. I am talked into an impromptu fashion show by our new friends. I model the red leather outfit I was planning to wear the next day as they were going home early the next morning. I modeled two after five dresses, and I almost forgot my Hooter's outfit. We say our good-byes. I am invited to their home whenever I get time to speak to his college class.

Sunday, my Red Leather Dress day! We watch the crowds hit the other booths with half priced book sales. I change to jeans and boots to pack up the booth and drive back. It took about ten minutes to have that booth packed.

After three days of eating rich food, we head for McDonald's. Back on the road west, to the wide open spaces. Oh give me a home where the buffalo roam! Leslie crashes in back as Judy and I share driving duties. We debate if we should take US 40 or I-70, the turnpike. She makes me decide. At the last minute, I say US 40. We twist and turn and go up and down and never get over 30 mph. We then decide to turn around and get on I-70. Then we find alternate US 40 and decide to try it. We drive a mile or two and realize we are still not making enough time. We head west on I-70.

A few miles down we have a cloverleaf to get on the turnpike and get blinded by the sun just as we need to exit to the right. Next thing we know we are headed east on I-76. Judy saw a sign that read "so-and-so, 88 miles." She mumbled that she wasn't going to go 88 miles out of the way. I remind her that it is 88 miles out and 88 miles back. She gives me that look. She u-turns at a spot reserved for emergency vehicles. A sign flashes by, stating "turnpike patrolled by aircraft." "Hey, Judy, what if we are caught and don't know it yet? We drive on hoping to find I-70 again.

Around the next curve (Pennsylvania mountains) my heart sinks as there is a smokie with his lights on. Judy says he is warning us about something. Smart girl. We stop around the next curve and wait. We go about two miles in the next two and a half hours, wondering what made the traffic jam. We finally see about a few thousand tons of mountain lying on the Interstate, with one lane open. The avalanche fence looked like the T. Rex fence in Jurassic Park! We stop to freshen up and to get our bearings.

Back on the road, I fall asleep. Shortly thereafter, I am waked up by the words, "Oh, shi_!" It seems we (Judy) missed another exit and were headed for Pittsburgh. Before we straightened our mistake out, we made Cleveland. After that, not much exciting happened, as I had the early am shift driving, fighting sleep and 18 wheelers for the left lane. We made St. Louis about four hours late. I had a free room I used to freshen up and get ready to fly home. We said our good-byes and they headed west.

I had been at the conference and traveling for 24 hours without freshening up and passed. I was rode hard and put away wet, but I felt on top of the world. I flew south unwinding, feeling the emotional letdown after a week of dressing the way I feel and a week with my closest friends. Somewhere on the drive home I tell Judy and Leslie that I feel something is about to change. When asked what, I said I did not know. I had that warm satisfaction of knowing there will be another time, real soon. Anyone for a cruise? —Bye for now.

From the Internet

Word Origins

Did you know that "girl" once referred to a child of either gender? That "shrew" once denoted a male, and that "man" indicated a man or woman? The fact is that several of our most common English words have done some blatant gender bending over the centuries, usually following one of three patterns of cross-dressing.

Positive terms that were once gender neutral were turned into masculine words. The original meaning of "man", for instance, was the unisex human being, only later did it assume the "man"tle of maleness. Likewise, "god," now a masculine word, is derived from the Indo-European root "gheu," which denoted a deity of a neutral gender.

Independently formed words for female were misinterpreted as derivatives of "male" and "man." "Female," for instance, is not "male" with a "fe" attached. (Such a male would be known as a "gigolo.") Instead, "female" began as the independent Latin root "femina," which in turn became the French "femelle."

But during the 14th century when the French word "femelle" crossed the Channel, some linguistic channels also got crossed. The "melle" in "femelle" was mistakenly pronounced as "male," so "femelle" became "female." This egregious "male" apropism led to the mistaken impression that "male" and "female" came from the same place, whereas we now know that women are from Venus and that men are from Mars.

Through similar "male"feasance, the independent origin of "woman" was also erased. "Woman" came from the Old English "wifman," with "wif" meaning "female" and "man" meaning a human being of either sex. Eventually, "wifman" became "woman," which was erroneously assumed to be an offspring of the male "man" (though some suspected the milkman).

Several diminutive or negative terms once applied to both genders came to denote females only. Like "man," the word "girl" was once gender neutral. But perhaps because children occupied a low status in medieval England, "girl" narrowed in definition to mean a female child around 1375 when a royal pronouncement chauvinistically decreed, "Boys will be boys!"

Similarly, "harlot," a word now used for females only, origi-

nally meant a male vagabond or rascal, while a "wench" was a child of either sex, and a "shrew" was a male villain.

Far be it from me to suggest that English speaking males deliberately appropriated gender neutral terms for themselves.

Sunday in the Park with God

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and a six-pack of root beer and he started his journey.

When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old woman. She was sitting in the park just staring at some pigeons. The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old lady looked hungry, so he offered her a Twinkie. She gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. Her smile was so pretty that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered her a root beer. Once again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted!

They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word.

As it grew dark, the boy realized how tired he was and he got up to leave, but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old woman and gave her a hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever. When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face.

She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?"

He replied, "I had lunch with God." But before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face and he asked, "Mother, what did you do today that made you so happy?"

She replied, "I ate Twinkies in the park with God." But before her son responded, she added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected."

Moderation

by Diane Liegh

I first heard the word "transvestite" in Alfred Hitchcock's movie "Psycho" a long, long time ago. Imagine, a word to describe my needs! I still thought that I was the only male in the world to want to wear female clothes. Of course, I knew that if I let my secret out, I would be in for all kinds of trouble and harassment.

So I muddled through my life, coping as best I could but never feeling like I really belonged. Everyone else thought highly of me. I was academically gifted - school was a breeze. I was athletically above average - I won high school letters in football and track. I was considered popular - I held several elected offices throughout grade and high school.

I went to college, graduated and was commissioned as a 2/Lt in the USAF. I went to pilot training and earned my wings. During all of this time, the need/desire to cross-dress was not particularly strong or the episodes long lasting.

I was assigned to Vietnam for a year where I cross-dressed regularly. I have since talked with people in the navy who cross-dressed on ships - an impossible task when no one has any privacy - but they did it!

I returned home from Vietnam and "outed" myself to my wife. Her first reaction was to close all of the shades and drapes in the apartment. During counselling prior to our divorce years later, she stated that she didn't remember that event.

I made up my mind that if I ever got serious with another lady, I would tell her of my needs and let her make an informed decision on whether or not to continue our relationship.

Crossdressing became a larger part of my life in the 70's. I got an address for the Sacramento Gender Association from some talk show. I wrote to them and it seemed like forever before they responded. They referred me to a group in Houston, I don't remember now just which group it was. I wrote to them and got a beautifully written note in return that said they would love to have me join them but that there was a group in Dallas!

I contacted Samantha, she sent me some material and in-

vited me to attend a meeting. In those days the meetings were held at the Marriott off of Stemmons Freeway. (It no longer exists.)

I have gone from never stepping out of doors to getting into situations which I have written about on various occasions.

I have several reasons for writing this article. The first is to let anyone out there with a similar background know that they are not alone. The next, and in my view, more important is to tell everyone to proceed at their own pace. **DO NOT LET ANYONE PUSH YOU FARTHER OR FASTER THAN THE POINT WHERE YOU ARE UNCOMFORTABLE.** By the same token, when you find that you are not the only crossdresser in the world and find things to do and places to go - proceed with moderation. You can easily ruin the rest of your life by proceeding too far or too fast.

When some people find out about the existence of the gender community, they leap into it for all they are worth. They may spend a fortune on clothes, makeup, jewelry, reading materials, etc. It takes up ALL of their time and everything else suffers. Their job and family situations often descend to desperate situations.

You may have dealt with your issues for your whole life but it is all brand new and confusing to your spouse, children, family, etc. Give them time to adjust - if they must know at all, and I am a firm advocate of telling at least your spouse. It is your decision as to whom you should tell - don't let anyone else make the decision for you. Listen, really listen, to different positions on various issues and evaluate how you can apply these positions to you.

In a recent issue of our club newsletter the editor stated something to the effect that "not all of us are as daring as Diane". Some of our members are much more adventurous than I, others less. I have traveled my road for many years at my own speed. Make your own decisions as to current goals and work towards them - but don't press. Goals and situations change and you can change yours.

I met a wonderful lady a few years ago. I soon told her I wore female clothing. I gave her the opportunity to see me dressed in a private and safe location. Her first words on

seeing me "en femme" for the first time were, "You're pretty." We have grown together from there. It hasn't been easy for either of us.

I have grown to the point where I recognize that she married a male and wants time with that male. The most recent article I have written talks about a trip to Colorado. In that article, unlike others I have written before, I didn't go into great detail on femme clothes selection, dressing details and so forth. What I really didn't say was the both the male and femme personnas went on that vacation with Desiree. On some days the male persona and Desiree' explored and some days Diane and Desiree' explored. It was better for both of us to be able to experience all aspects of the relationship. One day Desiree' even proposed that the next day we both get all dressed up "en femme" and go into Denver for dinner.

I believe that she is learning to accept me and that I am learning to accept that she is learning to accept me. We shop for clothes and both of us are on the look-out for outfits that we think the other might like. I assist at home by doing laundry, ironing, dishwashing, some cleaning, and other things regardless of what clothes I may be wearing. We both have problems with "thinking what the other is thinking" at times. Honest discussions are the only way to resolve these areas.

I know all of the reasons for not wanting to tell your spouse about your crossdressing. You are hiding a significant part of who you really are when you do this. Fear of financial loss, isolation from friends and family, and divorce are just a few of the reasons many people stay in the closet. On the other side of the coin is a wonderful, exciting world in which you can share who you are and what you like with other caring individuals. Your current friends and family may just fit into this new "other" group. In this respect, maybe I was brave. I decided that I was unwilling to live MY life as a service to what other people wanted me to be for them. Be sure what you want before you leap, however, because there is no going back!

If you moderate your desires to cross-dress and allow both of your personalities to react in your relationships, I believe that you will be a happier individual and those around you will be happier also.

I haven't done anything that anyone else out there can't also do. Just remember - set your own pace and strive to practice moderation.

Outing Myself to My Daughter

by Jayne Nicole

Well, I did it, finally. I outed myself to my daughter tonight. I was doing laundry when she came in. I was dressed en femme. She is 18 and extremely bright. I thought she saw me dressed. I was wrong, but decided to tell her anyway rather than have her wondering why I took her in the car for a trip that wasn't to be.

I was rather emotional. I told her there was something that I have wanted to talk to her about, but was afraid of. I was afraid of losing her or having her think I was weird or something. I finally just came out and told her. She was relieved that it wasn't what she was really afraid of - that of my wife and I getting a divorce. She had been wondering for some time about some of my actions, physical appearance, and attitude changes. Also she had been in my room and seen my clothing, makeup, and stuff. She knew they weren't her mother's.

I gave her some history on me and background on how I've felt this way. She said it didn't matter, she still loves me as I am. She is glad that I finally told her about it and let her out. She does want to meet some of my friends. That will have to wait for the future. I don't want to do that right now. She still hasn't seen me dressed or even pictures. I told her I'll let her see them whenever she wants to, but she'll have to ask. She would like to attend our support group meeting sometime also.

She told me she is proud that I've been active in our support group editing the newsletter and helping others by doing outreach and talking before other organizations, universities, and church groups.

I'm finally relieved to have told her and have it turn out well. The fears weren't justified, but I needed them to have it turn out this way. I'm sure my emotions when I told her had to do with her acceptance.

Well, one down and one more to go. We are going to tell my brother soon, by Christmas at the latest. I hope it goes as well as hers did. I'll let you all know how it goes with his

Jo-Jo's Night On The Town

by Camille Douglas

"Josie! There's a woman at the door...must be someone to see you!"

"Woman, indeed!" I thought as I heard my father-in-law's voice booming through the closed porch door. But, as I noticed my reflection in the glass of the door, I thought, "Woman? Well....maybe I look a teeny bit like one." I shifted nervously in my high heels, waited for my mother-in-law, Josie, to come to the door, and, as I waited, my thoughts drifted back to the events of the day, this Halloween of 1997.

For a few weeks prior to the end of the month, I had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of Halloween. Every chance I got, I'd check out the costumes and other associated stuff in the stores, and wish as hard as I could for an opportunity to get dressed up. Halloween, as you're no doubt aware, is the "Transgender Night of the Year," a night which affords us the opportunity to do our thing, while remaining relatively anonymous. I had been wishing and wishing for a chance to get dolled up. I'm not of the Catholic faith, but I'd have gladly prayed to St. Jude if I had thought it would have helped me in my quest.

My wife and I had a couple of discussions on the subject, in the days leading up to the "big night." She was quite nervous about the fact that I might be "read," as she put it, as more than just a guy in a dress, trying to get a laugh. As much as it hurt, I had to agree with her somewhat. I racked my mind for a solution, but to no avail. It seemed as though all was lost for sure.

On the way home from work on Friday, I experienced a serious case of the blues. My friends at work had been discussing their Halloween plans, what they were going to wear, where they were going to go, etc. It seemed to me that I was the only one with no idea what was going to happen that night. At this point, I was lower than a well digger's boot. I trudged into my house, took off my coat, and poured myself a coffee. "Well, maybe next year," I said with a sigh..

A few minutes later, my wife came home. And, she said, "C'mere for a minute, will you?"

I thought she wanted some help getting something out of the car..

"What you want, hon?"

"Here", she said, "take this."

I stared, with an uncomprehending look on my face, at the yellowish-coloured object that she had passed to me.

As if sensing my confusion, she said, "It's a wig, silly, for your costume tonight."

Gulp!

"My costume?"

"Yeah, follow me. I had an idea."

Off into the bedroom we went. There, laid out on the bed, was a green bridesmaid's dress, a matching scarf, and a pair of super elegant gloves. I stared, open-mouthed in disbelief.

"What are you gawking at? Isn't this what you wanted?"

I was somewhat at a loss for words. "Y-y-yes.." I managed. "Ok, I'm glad to hear it. Here's the plan. You know that 'Jo-Jo Savard,' the psychic that's on television late at night? The '1-900' psychic? Well, you're going out, as her!"

Jo-Jo Savard, the psychic, wore the most bounciest, flounciest dresses you ever saw. Her hair was equally outrageous. This was just about the greatest costume idea of all time!

"I have one request, though. When you get dressed up, and do the makeup, don't do TOO good a job, OK? I don't want anybody catching on that you're really enjoying this."

I had a lump in my throat the size of a tennis ball, so all I could respond with was a muffled "Uh-huh" and a vigorous head nod. "And, at least try to look as though you're having trouble walking in those high heels!"

My knees were weak. Great Scot! This was the moment I had waited for, for at least 40 Halloweens. I sat down, and tried to finish my coffee.

The hours passed slowly, until it was time for the makeup application. I was so nervous, that I think I developed a facial tic. The makeup went alright, although I plastered it on a little liberally. I reminded myself of a bricklayer with a trowel, as I smeared it over my face. Too much blush, and too red a lipstick, came next. And, mascara! Let me tell you, I had my lashes that full of it, I swear I could have snuffed out a candle at six paces simply by blinking my eyes rapidly.

Then came the costume, and the wig. Ahhh...the wig... As my friend Janey lamented to me one day, "You just can't get a good wig for \$4.00 anymore these days." After I'd gotten it stretched over my head, I looked a little bit like "Cousin It" of the Addams Family. It took my wife about ten minutes to pile it up on top of my head, in a rough semblance of Jo-Jo's hair.

And then came the moment of truth. I had to check myself out in the mirror. So I went over, and took a peek. Staring back at me was the absolute Halloween costume.

"You look like Jo-Jo!" my wife said in amazement. "Thanks, I think!" I said with a humongous grin. I got up and started walking out of the bedroom.

"Hold it right there, fella! Remember, I told you not to look so prac-

ticed in those heels!"

That sentence struck me as so funny! I had to remember not to laugh too hard, though. If this makeup started running from tears of laughter, I'd need a sandblaster to clean it up.

Now, came my first hesitant steps outside the security of my house. Was I nervous? Hmm... I don't think "nervous" was the word. I didn't have butterflies in my stomach, I had pterodactyls. Ever try to get into a Ford Tempo, while wearing three inch heels and a wig piled four inches high atop your head? After a couple of foiled attempts at quickly ducking into the car, I realized that the feminine way of doing it, i.e. sitting down backwards into the car, and then swinging both legs in at the same time, was the best way. Finally, I got myself folded into the driver's seat, and I was off.

My first stop of the night was my sister-in-law's house. I pranced into their kitchen amidst howls of laughter, and gave everybody a great big "Jo-Jo" hug. Cameras were flashing furiously, recording the event for posterity. It was there I left my first lipstick print on a glass, while enjoying a cool drink. There's a first time for everything, right?

My sister in law, after she'd calmed down a bit, peered at me and said, "You know, you're awfully good at this. Almost too good!" Oh, heavens! and after all the precautions I'd taken to look "too" done up! The cat was about to get out of the bag. I just batted those ridiculously long eyelashes at her, and blew her a big kiss. The ensuing laughter from everybody seemed to make her forget how "good" I actually was at looking like a lady.

"And, now, Dahlings, I must be off. I have other places to go. Other people have requested the gracious presence of Jo-Jo at their homes tonight." That really got them going! The giggles and guffaws were clearly audible outside, as I made my way up the driveway.

I received some peculiar stares as I slipped into the car, enroute to my second stop of the night. A girl going into my sister-in-law's house as I was leaving told them of this "outrageous-looking woman" she saw outside. Outrageous? You bet. I had her fooled with the gender, too!

And, now, back we go to the steps outside my father-in-law's house, waiting for Josie to open the door. When the door finally did open, I walked in, grabbed my father-in-law and gave him a huge hug! He stared at me, and said with a nervous grin, "Nice costume. But, who the heck ARE you?"

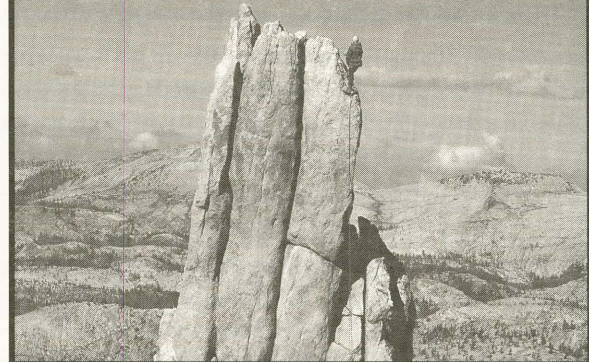
"Oh, for crying out loud! Don't you recognize your own son-in-law? And, keep those dogs of yours away from me! If they jump on me now, they'll just wreck my pantyhose!"

He actually had to sit down, he laughed so hard. My mother-in-law had to run for the bathroom. Suffice it to say, I was a big hit there, too.

The old adage that all good things come to an end still applies, and eventually I had to go home and reluctantly peel off my costume. It was like saying goodbye to a good friend. I hated to see it come off. As I scrubbed the last of the makeup away, I thought, "Only 364 days until next Halloween. Look out, world, because Jo-Jo WILL return. And, you won't have to call a psychic line to confirm this. Believe me!"

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Stephanie and Suzanne at the Mall

by Stephanie K

Stephanie and Suzanne went to the Apache Mall in Rochester, MN. We drove over together but Suzanne dropped me off and then parked the van and came in later. I had been telling her recently about how people react (or don't react) to me when I go out dressed as Stephanie. Always inquisitive and wanting to know more about this interesting but DIFFERENT activity of mine, she suggested we go to the mall but not walk around together. She wanted to see me from afar in public and see how that public reacted to me. I just did my Stephanie thing and she watched. I saw her several times during the adventure (about 45 minutes) but didn't interact with her. I wore my long black ivory print skirt, mock turtleneck ivory T, black blazer and hose, comfortable shoes (black suede flats) and appropriate make-up and jewelry.

I interacted with the public much more than I ever have in the past and it was fun. First I strolled into a puzzle store while I waited for Suzanne to park the van and come in. The salesgirl asked if she could help me and I said I was just looking. After a few minutes I started walking out and chatted a bit with her about how slow business seemed to be. She said that it was busy all day until just recently (Hmmmmm, it couldn't be because a man in a dress walked in and scared everybody else out??) I next strolled into a discount jewelry boutique looking for some dangly clip-on earrings. The salesgirl asked if she could help me and I asked to see clip-on earrings. She showed me and I noticed that there wasn't one pair of dangly ones (DARN!). So I wandered around the shop looking at the rest of the earrings, pins, and necklaces. I found some bracelets and I just had to get one. I found one that I liked so I bought it. It was fun interacting at the counter with the salesgirl. She didn't bat an eye in disapproval and even helped me find the right change in my purse as I fumbled around nervously.

Next I strolled down to the bookstore and spent quite a bit of time just looking around. Once I had to squeeze past a man who had a large package at his feet. I excused myself and he moved and just went on looking at the stacks. I stood next to him for a few minutes looking for what I wanted and he didn't give me a second glance (and, no, he wasn't sweating or shaking in his boots because he was standing so close to this rather tall....what? Did he know? Did he care? It looked like he didn't even notice! Hmmmmm, very interesting and enlightening!).

I didn't buy anything in the bookstore and walked out. I intentionally made more eye contact with people as I passed them in the mall. A few stared. I think though that even fewer people paid attention to me this time than the last time I was there two weeks previously. I next stopped at the JC Penney store and actually looked at some winter coats in my size. Then I wandered over to the women's dress department and looked at all the beautiful dresses in my size AND THEY

WERE ON SALE!! There were several customers and salesladies in close proximity but I didn't notice any of them looking at me. I even picked out a couple of dresses and held them up to me to see how long they were. I found the wonderful stretch velvet I love so much in a long dress style!! But I didn't have my Penney's plastic with me. And I didn't want to buy without trying it on! I hadn't planned to try on clothes on this outing. Of course, my wig is a pain when I have to pull stuff over my head. I wonder if anyone would have said anything if I had walked into the fitting rooms to try the dress on? All they can say is no!

Well, that was the extent of our outing. Suzanne said she wasn't quite ready to go out to dinner (be seen) with Stephanie yet, so we drove back home and got a video and a pizza after I put Stephanie away!

Let me say a few words about Suzanne's experience with Stephanie at the mall. This was not a really fun thing for her to do! She still would

Grace and Lace Letter

A Christian Publication
for the
Transgendered Community

Jane Ellen
and
Frances Fairfax
Publishers

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rather be with me and have fun with me as Steve. But she really wanted to face her fear of embarrassment and shame when and if I got ridiculed or something as Stephanie. She followed me around all evening and said that her only bad time came when I was in the puzzle store right at the start. While my back was turned the salesgirl rolled her eyes and smiled as she pointed me out to another customer! I wasn't aware of this (but so what!). Suzanne felt this feeling of shame and embarrassment. I didn't, so we talked about that. We both agreed that a lot of people dress differently in public (like teenagers especially) and people laugh and/or disapprove of them. People express themselves in how they dress and how they look all the time. That's called freedom of expression in this country!

She also said that she thought that I really didn't stick out from the crowd as much as she thought I would. Yes, I was taller and broader (6'4", 240 lbs) but she said she was surprised to see many broad, tall people. If anything she thought I stood out because I was better dressed than most of the women there (she is a dear!!) She was surprised that hardly anyone paid any attention to me. We decided that there is a certain level of anonymity in a mall situation and most people never really pay much attention to each other (sad, but true, but good for us CDs, eh?). I noticed that I never spent one ounce of energy worrying if I would meet someone I knew (I have a few friends in the Rochester area). I believe that like everyone else they would not pay attention to me unless I came right up to them and talked to them. It's this anonymity thing in crowds like this. This was a great insight for both of us because we have these ego-identities that believe we are the center of our universes and this experience proved that we really aren't. And this is a good thing for us to realize! Keeps us a lot humbler!!

On the drive back we got into some stuff about how she thinks I pay more attention to her clothes than I do to her. She sometimes wonders (and fears) that whenever I compliment her on what she is wearing that I am really doing so because I want to wear her clothes and not because she is looking lovely and I am "hot for her bod!!" That really doesn't happen ever. We really don't have the same taste in clothes (nor do we wear the same size) and I DO love her and her body, not just her clothes (well, I do get turned on a lot more by seeing her in her pretty lingerie, but since I have my own, it is really about how she FILLS that lingerie in a way that I love and cannot duplicate myself—a good indication to me why I love and need her and can't satisfy all my needs by myself!).

The next morning she was feeling a little more fear around thinking that she MUST get to like being with Stephanie all the time. I told her I have no expectations about her going out with Stephanie. She told me that her intention is to have fun with Stephanie only if we can do fun things that she likes to do. She will continue to accept my unusual interest and continue to try to understand crossdressing in general but she may not actively participate with Stephanie in everything. She is going to leave it open, play it by ear. I love her for her courage and understanding so far. She is the best!! We both learned a lot by this adventure. We both recommend it to other couples trying to live with and understand this wonderful but unusual gift.



Universal Colors

Makeup comes in more colors than Sherwin-Williams, and the effects are equally dizzying. But just as interior design has eggshell - the shade that goes with everything from chintz to sisal - beauty has its universal colors.

Here's our shopping list:

- ✓ **Shu Uemura Glow On** blush, Amber
- ✓ **Revlon Naturally Glamorous Blush-On**, Tawny Peach
- ✓ **Christian Dior** eye-shadow compact, Discretion
- ✓ **Trish McEvoy Enhancer 6** eye shadow
- ✓ **Il-Makiage** eye shadow, shell
- ✓ **Shu Uemura Pressed Eye Shadow**, 390
- ✓ **Estee Lauder Natural Brow Filler**
- ✓ **Chanel Tranlucent Loose Powder**, Light
- ✓ **Stila Lip Glow**, Rose Shine
- ✓ **Lorac** lip gloss, Pewter and Pink
- ✓ **Poppy Sheer Power** lipsticks

Taken from Allure's *Little Book of Beauty Secrets*

Barbie Dolls We'd Like to See

by Denise Summers

Sister Mary Barbie: This spiritual Barbie comes with jointed knees and neck for genuflecting and praying, mini-rosary beads, a mini-bible, and a black sequined nun's habit (after all, she's still Barbie). Pull the string on her back and she says nothing because she's taken a vow of silence.

Admin Barbie: Works twenty-hour days for little pay (80% of Admin Ken's salary) and is the lowest on the totem pole despite being the one that actually runs the group. Comes with mini-laptop. Pull the string on her back and she'll schedule a meeting with your other dolls, replace the toner cartridge in the laser printer, coordinate a re-organization and a move, and order airline tickets for Director Ken.

Temp Barbie: This smartly dressed, intelligent, hard-working and enthusiastic Barbie is ready to go right out of the box, but usually goes untouched for at least a day while everyone tries to figure out why they bought her. Pull the string on her back and she'll stuff envelopes indefinitely, all the while wondering why she got a liberal arts degree. Comes with mini-resume, and mini-filing cabinet filled with the past five years' worth of US Tax Code revisions, which need to be collated.

Ripped-Off-In-The-Divorce-Settlement Barbie: Pull the string on her back and she unloads a torrent of insults and death threats for her ex's new wife. Comes with a hatred for all men and a Malibu Barbie tan except for a white band on her left-hand ring finger.

Twelve-Step Barbie: Pull the string on her back and she says, "Hi, I'm Barbie and I'm an alcoholic." Comes with a "One Day At A Time" bumper sticker, a 30-day chip, and a pack of smokes.

Birkenstock Barbie: Finally, a Barbie doll with horizontal feet and comfortable sandals. Made from recycled materials.

Bisexual Barbie: Comes in a package with Skipper and Ken.

Blue-Collar Barbie: Comes with overalls, protective goggles, lunch pail, UAW membership, pamphlet on union-organizing and pay scales for women as compared to men. Waitress outfits and cashier's aprons may be purchased separately for Barbies who are holding down second jobs in order to make ends meet.

Homegirl Barbie: Truly fly Barbie in midriff-bearing shirt and baggy jeans. Comes with gold jewelry, hip-hop accessories, and plenty of attitude. Pull cord and she says things like "I

don't think so," "Dang, get outta my face," and "You go, girl." Teaches girls not to take garbage from men and condescending people.

Transgendered Barbie: Formerly known as G.I. Joe.

The recent announcement that Mattel and the producers of "Baywatch" have joined forces to create Baywatch Barbie came as no surprise. After all, both companies have made millions off airheads with flawless skins, Malibu tans and synthetic breasts. If Baywatch Barbie sells well, other Barbie/TV tie-ins seem certain to follow.

Some other possibilities:

Melrose Place Barbie: Comes complete with her Barbie Dream Apartment, where Skipper and the rest of the gang live rent-free. Other accessories include a bottle of vodka, silk sheets and an arrest warrant.

Dr. Barbie, Medicine Woman: This helpful doll offers other homesteaders important tips like what conditioner to use out on the Plains and how to take care of their nails while shoeing a horse.

America's Most Wanted Barbie: She's on the run after 30 years of crime against feminism

Oprah Barbie: Push a button on her back and this Barbie actually speaks! Hold your very own talk show with topics like how tough math class is, Ballerina Barbie's struggle with bulimia, and Ken's who wear Barbie's clothes.

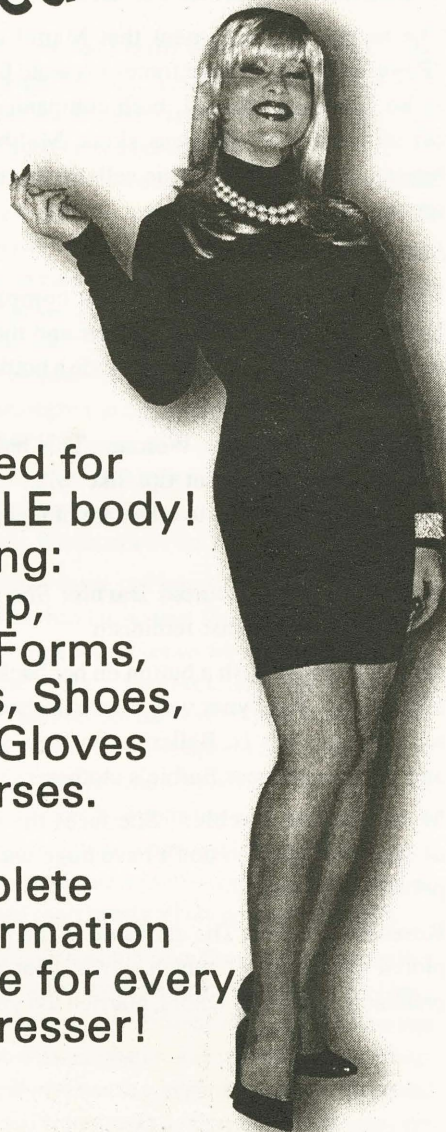
My So-Called, Barbie: She faces the same troubling issues as regular teens who don't have huge wardrobes, perfect bods, pools, and ponies.

Roseanne Barbie: The dark side of the American dream is explored with this doll, which shows what happened after Barbie graduated from high school, married too young and ate too much.



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Be-All-You-Want-To-Be Weekend - 1997

By Dan Pearson

A hotel in DuPage County recently played host to what some might consider a rather unconventional convention.

Drawn together by the common desire to wear women's clothing, hundreds of men from all across the nation and several foreign countries enjoyed the rare pleasure of being allowed to cross-dress in public.

For many of the participants of the "Be All You Want To Be Weekend" held at the Hyatt Hotel in Lisle, this would be the only time an year they could express themselves in this fashion.

While some of the crossdressed conventioners were easily identified as men, many of those gathered could have passed for genetic females in any other context. Ranging from dowdy to decidedly glamorous, these kindred souls openly celebrated the irresistible appeal of women's apparel.

Since 1983, this annual event, which rotates between five Midwestern cities, has allowed the wide spectrum of transgender individuals the opportunity to meet and mingle in a secure atmosphere.

The recent four-day program included seminars conducted by leading professionals in the area of transgender studies. Topics covered included fantasy dressing, sexual reassignment surgery, legal issues, partner counseling, wig labs and learning to develop a female voice.

Social activities included a pool party, a boat ride on Lake Michigan, a visit to see the celebrated female impersonators at the Baton Show Lounge in Chicago and a shopping trip to the Yorktown Mall in Lombard.

Now in its 15th year, this year's "Be All" was sponsored by the Chicago chapter of Tri-Ess, a national organization of heterosexual crossdressers, also known as the Society for the Second Self.

"We have our monthly meetings in Elmhurst, but our members come from all over the Chicago area," said Naomi Owen, the "Be All" founder and former Tri-Ess Chapter president.

"When we started 20 years ago, we used to meet in people's homes behind locked doors and drawn shades. It was a hush-hush kind of thing.

"The idea (for "Be All") was to have a weekend for people who

could afford to take the time and wanted to have an inclusive program that included improvement, study and social [activities] all in one package. We provide a unique outlet for people who have a need to cross-dress," said Naomi. "This is not a swinging group. There is nothing illicit going on. Our program is designed to help people deal with this need so that they are not consumed by shame or guilt. On the other hand, we don't want to attract the wrong kind of attention. So we try to urge our people to dress nice and look nice and act nice.

"The hotels all want our business because we are well behaved. We have many families here, husbands and wives and teen-agers and children. It is a very wholesome environment and we want people to be proud of who they are and what they are."

To promote a greater public understanding of transgender issues, Naomi has participated in talking to local student and community groups, including classes at College of DuPage.

"We always joke, 'It's not catching. If you didn't come here as a cross-dresser you are not going home as a crossdresser.'"

Loraine

"You changed my life," said "Loraine," a vivacious and cautious DuPage crossdresser who only recently rediscovered her feminine self. This World War II veteran, who as a child had been dressed as a girl by "her" grandmother, first became aware of the existence of the Tri-Ess organization after reading an article by the writer published in Press Publications' Spotlight in 1995.

"The reason I joined Tri-Ess is because I responded to the interview you had with Candace a couple of years ago and I wanted to thank you. I read the article and there was a phone number where I could reach Candace. Very timidly, I called up, and Candace was just wonderful. She took my hand and allayed my fears.

"Later we went (shopping). For the first time in my life I had a dress of my own. Oh, I was so tickled. It made me feel just wonderful, but at the same time I was timid and frightened."

Rachel

"This isn't a rare thing," said "Rachel" Crandall, 37, a transgender sexual psychotherapist from Michigan who works as both a man and a woman.

"It may be a rare thing to see in the middle of a Chicago hotel

News Around The Transgendered Community

Benjamin Association Elects Two Transgendered Professionals To Their Board

For the first time in its history, two members of the transgender community have been elected to the Board of Directors of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. Sheila Kirk, M.D. and Jude Patton, CMHC, CMFT were elected to four year board terms in September at the HBIGDA conference held in Vancouver, B.C. . This is a historical and important event that brings the Transgendered and professional communities closer together. Their appointments allow the Transgendered Community to have a positive, strong voice in establishing standards of care and policies that will greatly benefit all of members of the Trans-community.

Dr. Kirk and Mr. Patton have been asked by incoming president, Richard Green, MD, JD, to establish a committee to address consumer concerns. This committee is being formed to give the trans-community a voice in HBIGDA's activities, to support consumer advocacy for current and future proposed Standards of Care revisions, and to provide empirical data and research data supporting consumer concerns.

It is their hope that members from the T-community will serve on this committee with them. Since HBIGDA is a professional organization and has specific membership requirements to become a voting member. HBIGDA's bylaws limit any committee membership to voting members. Persons who qualify for voting membership and who wish to serve on the community are encouraged to contact Dr. Kirk or Mr. Patton immediately. HBIGDA members who choose not to participate on the committee at least will have a chance to vote for various items and specifically for changes in the Standards of Care. You may contact the HBIGDA at (612) 624-8078, to leave a voice mail message, or e-mail to: robin009@gold.tc.umn.edu to obtain information and an application for membership.

YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT! - Any suggestions for changes in the proposed Standards of Care need to get directly to the committee working on them, or can be sent to Sheila Kirk or Jude Patton to present to the committee and the HBIGDA Board of Directors. Time is of the essence for the final draft is said to be in its final stages.

Dr. Kirk and Mr. Patton suggest that those who do not qualify for HBIGDA membership could form an Ad Hoc consumer concerns committee, and could funnel their suggestions and

ideas through them. The goal is for every voice to be heard.

Both Dr. Kirk and Mr. Patton strongly urge world-wide community input and are striving to reach out to all community members in all countries. "We want to reach out to everyone not only those who identify as "trans" but also those who have other self-definitions for their gender and sexual identities," said Patton. "We should not be USA-centric in our considerations for improving consumer welfare."

Any help you can provide to disseminate that Dr. Kirk and Mr. Patton welcome any suggestions that will enhance community consumer welfare would be greatly appreciated. Your help in getting this information out to the general trans-community and to other trans-organizations by e-mail, into newsletters and on websites is encouraged.

"For the first time, we have an unified opportunity to be heard by the professionals who administer our care and set the standards upon which our care is given," said Dr. Kirk, "As a transgendered physician who in my private practice specializes in caring for our community, I am gratified for this opportunity to work together with Jude to make a positive impact through this first step in improving our community's welfare."

Those with comments or questions can send them via mail to: Sheila Kirk, M.D., P.O. Box 38114, Blawnox, PA. USA 15238. Jude Patton, 1812 East Madison, Suite 102, Seattle, WA USA 98122. You may also reach Dr. Kirk via phone (412) 781-1092 (Tues/Thurs 10A-5P EST); 24 hour fax (412) 781-1096 or e-mail, SheilaKirk@aol.com. Mr. Patton can be reached at (425) 787-5094, e-mail: JUDEPATTON@aol.com



but this is very, very common. I don't want to make anyone feel uncomfortable, but I do have a right to be here and I have a right to feel safe here. You cannot convey what it feels to be in the lobby of a fancy hotel and to be respected.

"I wear almost no makeup. I do very little with my hair, but I feel beautiful. This is my fourth Be All. I enjoyed it so much I made it an annual thing. This year I wasn't only an attendee, I gave two workshops as a professional. I was also in the Gong Show," she grins. "I think people like it when we laugh at ourselves and that's what transgendered people need to do more. This is my life, but it's funny. A man in a dress is funny and there isn't anything wrong with laughing at ourselves."

Katharine

Originally from Gary, Ind., Katharine Hammond, the co-owner of "The Dressing Room," spent 10 years working as a commercial fisherman in Alaska in order to earn the money to open a boutique in Michigan that caters to the needs of the transgender community. At the statuesque height of 6 feet, 5 inches without heels, Katharine, who is divorced, says "she" can't go out in public even as a man, without people noticing. "If I had been born a foot shorter, my life would have been very much different."

She sees attending conventions like the Be All an important part of her business, which also allows her to dress as a woman for the entire event.

"Friends of ours in the garment industry say this could be as much as a 60 million dollar business. I think once you come to terms with the fact that this is never going away, that's when you can start having fun with it."

Rachel

The red-haired "Rachel," a very serious attorney from the suburb of Bolingbrook, has been involved in Tri-Ess for about a year and is attending the Be All in the company of his very supportive wife. "[The urge to cross-dress] has been with me all my life, but I just started dealing with it in the last four years. It got to the point where it was controlling my life anyway. It was taking up so much space in my head, it was making me nuts. I grew up feeling there was something wrong with me. The more people that I meet that are like me, the more it convinces me that I really am not that different after all."

For information about the Chicago chapter of Tri-Ess, call (630) 262-8707 or write to P.O. Box 40, Wood Dale IL 60191.

(Ed. Note: Great job, ladies of Chi Chapter! And great reporting by Mr. Pearson!)

BC/CD Stone Age Crossdressers

By *Melissa Anne*



Highlights of the Summer Board Meeting

June 23, 1997

1. A Motion to grant Lifetime Membership to Carol Beecroft, Virginia Prince, and Marlene L. passed unanimously.
2. A Motion to authorize Jane Fairfax, Frances Fairfax, and Judy Daniels to travel to conferences, chapters and other meetings on behalf of Tri-Ess passed unanimously.
3. A Motion to accept a bid by Beta Gamma Chapter to hostess the 1998 Holiday En Femme in Minneapolis, Minnesota, passed by a vote of 8 to 2.
4. Jane reported that plans for Sigma Nu Rho Chapter of Trenton, New Jersey, to hostess the 1997 Holiday En Femme, seemed to be behind schedule, but that a final brochure was promised to be ready in time for mailout of the Summer Femme Mirror. Jane noted that HEF 1999 has not yet been scheduled, HEF 2000 will be held in Los Angeles, and HEF 2001 will be held in Chicago. HEF 2002 has not yet been scheduled.
5. Peggy Rudd reported that plans were complete for SPICE 1997, to be held in Ontario, California, in July 1997. SPICE 1998 is to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, and SPICE 1999, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
6. Jane reported on the status of the new Tri-Ess online forum for wives and partners of crossdressers. A Motion to grant official approval of the Board and funding for this new program passed unanimously.
7. Denise Peters reported on the status of the new Membership Directory, and distributed sample copies of Section B (Profiles), Section A (Photos) and an Index will be out at a later date.
8. Jane presented the Membership Report. Membership is at an alltime high. The Board discussed ideas for attracting and retaining more members, and for serving those beyond reach of local chapters.
9. Marlene presented the Advertising Report. A Motion by Virginia to appoint an Advertising Director passed by a vote of 8 to 2. Marlene was directed to search for a candidate with professional expertise. A Motion was passed granting Marlene an advertising budget of \$1000.00.
10. Marlene presented the Chapters Report. Further information was presented by Jane and Judy. Marlene also reported on the Big Sister Program. A Motion to amend our application form to allow a new member to permit us to give her mailing and/or e-mail address to the nearest chapter, passed unanimously.
11. Jane brought up the issue of underage inquirers. Naomi volunteered to check out the possible legal liabilities we might encounter and report her findings to the Executive Committee.
12. Carol presented her new vision for the National Couples' Program. The original vision statement was amended to clarify that the Couples' Program is under the Tri-Ess Department of Spouses' and Partners' Support, and that local couples' groups are programs of local Tri-Ess chapters, the members of which are, by definition, members of Tri-Ess. The Couples' Newsletter, edited by Carol, is to be published and mailed by Onnalee, editor of the Sweetheart Connection, in order to take advantage of computer technology and the nonprofit-rate Bulk Mailing permit. Donna Martin will supply the mailing labels from her records of current couples' memberships. The Board approved the revised Couples' Program as outlined, and instructed Carol to implement the policy changes.
13. Virginia reported on Tri-Ess' investments. Virginia proposed the appointment of a Finance Committee to draw up annual budgets and set financial policy. Naomi moved that the Chair be instructed to appoint such a Committee, to consist of at least three members. Naomi further moved that the office of the Treasurer continue to handle financial matters under the present arrangement until the Finance Committee is appointed and decides to make changes. Both Motions passed.
14. Samantha presented the final Financial Report for 1996. She noted that the Report ought to include Holiday En Femme figures, as the bigger our annual budget, the more likely we will be to attract donors. Likewise, chapters can benefit by coming under our Group Exemption Letter. The Board discussed criteria for inclusion of chapters under the GEL.
19. Samantha introduced a comprehensive new Membership Information Form and outlined the new dues structure. A Motion was passed to approve the new forms and dues changes.
20. A Motion was passed to define a "Friend of Tri-Ess" as "any person or entity who supports the aims and purposes of the Society for the Second Self."

Hey, Good Looking

Makeup Essentials

Ever wonder why all of a sudden, for no good reason, your favorite liquid foundation doesn't seem to go on as smoothly as it did just the other day, and the next morning your face is all broken out?

"Gee," you say to yourself. "This stuff's only a couple of years old. And I usually even wash my hands before goopin it on. Maybe it's time to try another brand."

Well, guess what? The problem is probably poor technique, both in application methods and in skin care. Nasty things can, and do, live in that bottle of liquid cover up, and even, to an extent, in that lovely mauve pressed powder eyeliner.

This isn't an infomercial to increase profits for purveyors of cosmetics. It's a helpful hint from an experienced user. Cosmetics do eventually go bad, sooner if they've been opened, but it is possible to extend their useful life if you are careful.

The key to everything is CLEANLINESS. No bacteria, no germs, no problem. Look at Michael Jackson! I'll bet his skin never breaks out...

Rule One: Shave with a new blade EVERY time.

Rule Two: WASH your hands and face after shaving. Keep your cosmetics in a storage container when not in use, and keep the outside of bottles clean.

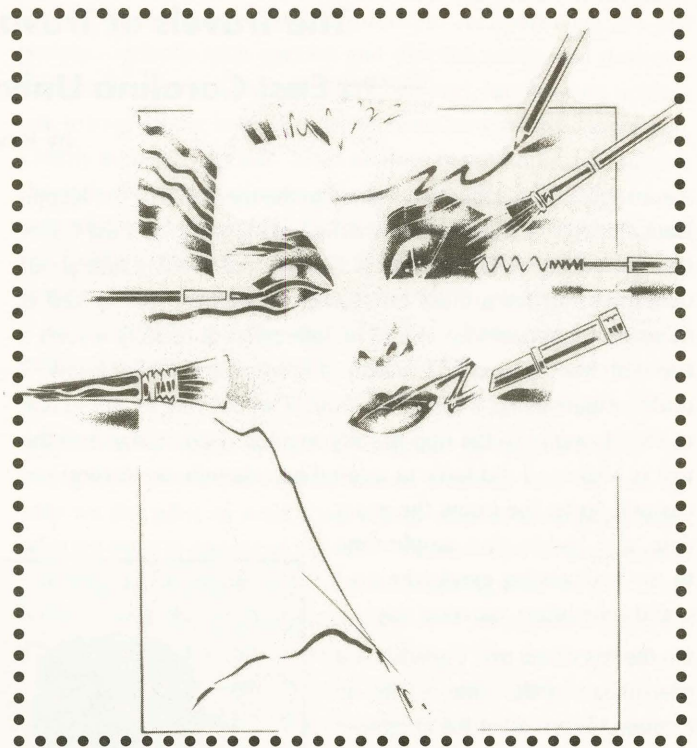
Rule Three: Use some kind of alcohol-based astringent after shaving.

Rule Four: NEVER touch your cosmetics or your face with your fingers while applying makeup.

Buy a supply of makeup sponges. A bag of the triangular ones will last you a month if you dress every day. While you're at it, get a bag of cotton balls and another of small (about 2" square) absorbent pads. Last, but not least, buy a set of makeup brushes. These don't have to be expensive. Get a set consisting of one large brush for powder application, a smaller one for blush, two for eye shadow (these look like the largest of model ship painting brushes, one round and one cut at an angle), an eyebrow brush, and a lip brush (yes, that's right, lipstick really should not be applied directly). Altogether, this shouldn't cost more than \$20 to \$30

Apply liquid foundation by pouring a bit on the short side of the sponge triangle, and press-apply it all over your face, adding more as necessary. Use small brushes to apply eye shadow. Use large brushes to apply blush and face powder.

NEVER touch the bristles or your makeup with your fingers. Distribute foundation ONLY with the sponge. Do NOT use your fingers to smudge makeup after application. Touch your face ONLY with your applicator



tools. DISCARD sponges after ONE use.

At the end of the day, when it's time to remove all this stuff (sigh), it is important to remove all of it. Do NOT sleep in makeup. It makes a mess on your satin pillowcase and it will virtually guarantee skin problems.

First, wash your hands. (Yes, Mother...) Next, wipe off as much makeup as you can with tissue paper. Kleenex is cheaper than makeup remover. Next, soak a cotton ball in eye makeup remover and hold it to your eyelids for twenty seconds or so. Wipe the eyelid with a wet absorbent square. Repeat with other eye. Repeat entire operation. If you're going to see your SO soon, repeat until your cotton ball/square is clean.

Apply a liquid makeup remover to everything else and rinse with fresh water. Repeat. Wipe your face with an alcohol astringent on an absorbent square. Apply a moisturizer. Mary Kay makes an excellent Night Creme (looks like pink Vaseline, and smells only slightly better, but it works absolute magic on irritated skin.) Use this last. Cleanup should take about fifteen minutes, if done with proper thoroughness.

Use a peel-off masque once or twice a week, before the moisturizer. This takes at least another half hour.

REPLACE all liquids six months after opening; Powders after a year. Enjoy!

The Travels or Travails of Beverly and Dana to East Carolina University at Greenville, N.C.

by Beverley Gayle

About a year ago, Dana mentioned to the members of the Kappa Beta Chapter of Tri-Ess that she had made a trip to East Carolina University at Greenville, N.C., and had given a talk about Crossdressing for a class on Human Sexuality. She asked if there were anyone who would be interested in making a such a trip with her the next fall, to keep it in mind and let her know. I told her that since I lived fairly close, I would like to attend one of the classes. So the opportunity availed itself to me, and the rest is history. I did have to remind her, though, on several occasions, to let me know the exact date, as I had to give ample time to my unknowing employer, so I could schedule a vacation day.

On the day of the trip, I got dressed way ahead of the time set for us to meet. I arrived at the shopping center in the small town of Zebulon, N.C., about one hour ahead of time. I was dressed as usual, as "Beverley, The Business Lady" in a navy blue skirt and jacket, matching pumps with my trademark 4-1/2 inch stiletto heels, and a white blouse. I carried a pair of black penny loafers, so I could walk the long distances between campus buildings that Dana had warned me of.

When I told Dana where I would meet her, I didn't realize just how open the place was. You know the sort of place; it was "across from a McDonald's." I had all kinds of truck drivers giving me the eye, but why not? There I was, a good looking lady, driving a dirty black pickup, just like off the farm. Actually, where I live is surrounded by tobacco crop land and a horse farm. I thought they would just think I had borrowed the truck to go to town, since this town is in "Tobacco Country, U.S.A." There was this one driver, a garbage truck driver, of all things, who I know went out of his way just to gaze at me. When he first went by me, he risked giving himself a severe neck strain trying to look at me, before he went to pick up the trash at McDonald's. Coming out of the store parking lot, he pulled

around in front of me again, and almost broke his neck trying to look at me. He then drove across the parking lot in an erratic manner.

Dana finally got there around 10:30AM. She was dressed somewhat casually but spiffy. She was wearing a dark green or black skirt with matching tights. She was also wearing a pair of low-heeled black patent T-strap flats. She said they were very comfortable.

Before hitting the road, so to speak, let's let the imagination run loose a bit, and just visualize two very nice looking ladies, getting out of the car they are riding in, and with closed fists, literally hitting the road! Oh, well, so much for that!

Anyway, before "hitting the road," Dana stopped at an Eckerd's Drug Store to purchase some mints. She said the clerk told her she looked very much "like a lady," until she spoke, that is. Then all was revealed.

We left the Triangle East Shopping Center around 10:45 or so and proceeded to drive the short distance to US 264, just yacking away and ignoring the surround-

ings. OK, we did spare an occasional glimpse at the changing trees, yellow, red and russet, mixed in with some pine green, under the bright fall sun and the famous Carolina blue sky. I sort of had to act as the navigator, though, letting Dana know when to slow down, to watch for "Bears," and to change lanes in time for the various turns at the intersections in Wilson. Ya see, I'm a "Big Rig Jockey," and I've been from Raleigh to Greenville many times.

Dana had me to really follow very closely the directions Dr David Knox had sent her, once we had gotten to Greenville, so we could find his apartment without getting lost. We got there between 12:15 and 12:30 P.M. I figured at that point discretion was the better part of valor, so I changed from heels to flats. This was good thinking, as I was to discover later on. Once we



Dana

Beverly

freshened up we began to discuss where we might go for lunch. David's wife, DeDe, would have nothing of it, as she had made a pot of "DeDe's Salmon Stew" as well as some fresh wheat bread. Yummy! The stew had all kinds of good things in it - zucchini, new red potatoes, beans and corn, just to name a few of the ingredients. Being the cook I am, I told DeDe I just had to have the recipe. She said she would send it to me.

After eating lunch, we went in separate cars to the University. Dana went with DeDe and I went with Dr. Knox. Dr. Knox and I talked quite a bit about my feelings and thoughts on crossdressing and transgenderism. I told him there weren't any right or wrong answers to the questions about crossdressing, because as varied as we are, there are as many different answers as there are crossdressers.

After getting to the University, we went to Dr. Knox's office, where we met a new professor who teaches, if memory serves me right, Human Sexuality. She is very young, and is just out of Ohio State University. She was really dressed casually, very, very low key. Actually, she was crossdressed, pants and a top, you know the spiel!

Once acquainted, we went to Dr. Knox's classroom, where we met about one hundred and twenty curious eyes, mounted in skulls full of semi-congealed mush, to borrow from Rush Limbaugh, just waiting to be educated as to why we wear women's clothing. We passed out about sixty booklets Dana had assembled just for this class. We also set up a display of books on crossdressing by various authors - Peggy Rudd and Virginia Prince, to name a few. Dana gave her dissertation about the subject, her big words for the day being, "Anima" and "Animas." Then came my time to shine. I took center stage, so to speak, with a big, "Howdy, I'm just so proud to be here" and "that ya'll came to see me," borrowing from "Cousin Minnie Pearl" and from that fantastic "Louisiana Cook," Justin Wilson. I told them I felt like the "Monkey in the Gilded Cage," as curious about them as they about me. I gave a brief synopsis about myself, and explained how I was like the dual heart pin I as wearing, one pin with two hearts, yet one in appearance; me with two personalities, male and female, yet in the same body.

I explained to them about the two Tri-Ess chapters I belong to, Kappa Beta in Charlotte and Sigma Rho Delta in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area of North Carolina. I told them I was one of the co-founders of Sigma Rho Delta, explained its purposes, and told them some of the things we do to develop the feminine self and gain self-confidence. I explained to them that Sigma Rho Delta was formed to give the crossdresser and his spouse or significant other a place to meet and to talk over their "war stories."

I explained to the class that Dana and I are in essence "educators." We are educating the public to recognize we are just people - people with special and diverse needs and desires - that we bleed when injured, cry when hurt, laugh when tickled; yet, to express our inner beings, we dress how we feel, as women. I really surprised myself. I had expected to mumble and stumble through about five minutes of what I wanted to say. Once I got started, though, I couldn't seem to quit. I just went on and on, but I didn't ramble, or at least Dana said I didn't. Everything just seemed to naturally roll out and fall in place. Believe me, it did! Beverley has found out she has a knack for speaking in public. It was G-g-g-g-great, fantastic! But my male persona would not have been able to do it without being a nervous wreck.

After concluding our speeches, Dana and I were thoroughly "interrogated" about our experiences as women: why we feel the way we do; why, as males, we would want to wear pantyhose; why we want to appear as women. We answered all questions as honestly as we could. We told the students that women don't have to wear the clothing to express how they feel, but we do. The students were just so very "curious." The first question, as you might expect, was, "What do you do when you need to go to a restroom?" Dana told them she sometimes uses a ladies' restroom. I told them you either "hold it" or you do it before going on a trip. I told them about a "sister" of mine, who along with her spouse (no names mentioned), travels across the country, and how they look for "one-holers." (You know, those restaurants and services stations with just one restroom.)

When they finished our "interrogation," we were subjected to a battery of "mug shots" by most of the student audience. Many wanted their photos taken with Dana and me. One young lady, in particular, wanted to have her photo taken with us so she could send it to her grandmother! Can you believe it? Her grandmother! Wow! Just imagine what kinds of questions her folks will be asking her about the college classes she is taking! It seemed that every other one wanted a photo with us. After the photo session, we went back to Dr. Knox's office, where we dropped off a few things we didn't need for our trip to the library.

We then departed on our long hike across the campus to the library building. We went to the Office of Multiculturalism/Cultural Diversity Academic Library Services at the Joyner Library, where we met Ms. Mary Williams, the Director. Now, this was one very nice Afro-American lady. She was very open and receptive to us. I felt she was more entertaining than Dana and I. After talking with her for a while, Dana presented her with some books on the subject of crossdressing. She took us on a tour of a number of departments in the library, where she

introduced us to a large number of staff people. One of the staff ladies paid me a very nice compliment. She told me I looked better than she did, and that I was dressed much better. I was tickled "stink pink." Of course, I know I'm a pretty redhead. Ha! Ha! Chuckle, chuckle! Actually, attitude has more to do with appearance than anything when presenting oneself as to how one feels, either male or female.

After meeting with them and having numerous pictures taken with them, we went back to Dr. Knox's office and picked up the things we had left there. We left the school around 5:30 or so and went back to Dr. Knox's home. There, after a bit of freshening up and discussing what to do for dinner, we went to a Chinese restaurant Dr. Knox and DeDe knew about. Now being new or fairly new to different types of foods from other countries, I didn't know exactly what to order. I chose, after very careful consideration, a menu item called "Triple Treat." This item consisted of beef, pork, and shrimp, and had a variety of vegetables in it, too. It was surprisingly good. I might just learn to like Chinese food, after all.

When we finished our culinary treat, we returned to Dr. Knox's home. There, Dana transferred the photos she had taken from one diskette to another, using David's computer. Now, let me explain what she was doing, as best as I understand it. The camera Dana used was one of the new-fangled digital ones that is really a computer with a camera lens. This thing makes a very fine picture that can be printed out using a computer and a color printer. When Dana had finished transferring the pictures from the camera's disk, DeDe served us dessert. We had frozen yogurt with various toppings: nuts, chocolate syrup, strawberries and those little colored candy thing-a-ma-jigs called sprinkles. We also had coffee to go with it. We left Dr. Knox's house around 9:30PM.

Dana and I discussed our day from the time we left Greenville until she dropped me off at the shopping center where I had left my truck earlier. You talk about time flying! The time really flew on the way back. Before we knew it we had successfully negotiated the many turns in Wilson and were back in Zebulon. The trip was somehow much quicker than the ride to Greenville that morning. Next spring, Dana and I will probably be doing it again. It'll be another blast! We both returned home very tired, but also quite elated and pleased with ourselves. If you really want to have an exhilarating time, I highly recommend you visit a college class. You won't regret it. I thoroughly enjoyed it and plan to do it again.



Telling Mom

by Brandi Ann Welch

Hi All! I just told my Mom about me being on HRT (hormone replacement therapy). It went a lot better than I have been worrying. You see, my Mom is the type to worry herself into the hospital, so I have been very concerned about telling her.

Two weeks ago, when I came home from the National Conference on Family Relations, she caught me in her laundry room and asked me for the second time if I were on female hormones. The first time I lied and said, "No." I wasn't ready to tell her, and I worried about how she would react. Anyway, that day in the laundry room I had decided now was the time, but my daughter was there so I said "No" for the second time.

I wanted to catch Mom alone to tell her. I thought Thursday would work. So I said "No" and she commented that she just wanted to know, as it looked like I was filling out! "Oh, girl, I hope my poker face held!" I thought.

Thursday, Friday and the following Monday, Dad was home. No good. I waited. Anyway, I thought she would bust out crying and she would tell me I was going to Hell. Was I ever wrong! I am the one that busted out crying. I told her everything, what I have been doing and more important, how I felt. She really was prepared for it. She said she had been praying about it and that she would leave it up to the Lord. She added that mothers just know these things. She went on by saying that she understands about my feelings; however, she wants me to stop taking the hormones. I didn't give her an answer either way. She added that just last week, she busted out crying and told Dad that "It isn't fair! I always wanted a girl!"

A little background here. Mom had trouble getting pregnant and they adopted my older brother (he's three years older than I). I found out a few months ago that Mom had taken some hormones and I guess some type of fertility pills, and Dad took some potency pills. I was born and then Mom got pregnant again. This time there were complications and the baby was lost. I am not sure if it was aborted to save Mom or it died in the womb. Anyway, she had to have a complete hysterectomy. I guess that is what she meant. I guess my almost little sibling was a girl. I didn't ask.

Mom says she loves me and I know (she said so, also) that they won't turn away from me. I told her I never was comfortable before and never knew real unconditional love before I found my friends in the gender community.

New Tri-Ess Dues Structure

Effective January 1, 1998, Tri-Ess International will implement the first major revision of our dues structure in ten years. The most obvious change is in making the Single's and the Couple's annual dues amounts divisible by 12. More chapters are choosing to collect their members' chapter and Tri-Ess International dues in one month of the year. Bringing all anniversary dates into the same month makes life much easier for chapter treasurers and budget planners. Those who join in other months have their dues prorated to the chapter's anniversary month. Hence the dues "increase" from \$35 to \$36 for an individual membership, and from \$45 to \$48 for a couple's membership.

A totally new dues option will now be available. It actually amounts to a dues reduction. As of January 1, you will be able to renew your dues for two years at a time, at quite a savings over the year-by-year rates. Also new is a Sustaining Membership, designed for those who wish to donate a bit more to Tri-Ess on a regular basis. Sustaining Members will also be eligible for special discounts on Holiday En Femme registration and other benefits. Friends of Tri-Ess dues will be \$24 for an individual, \$36 for a Vendor, and \$100 for a Benefactor. Life Memberships remain unchanged at \$500 for an individual and \$700 for a couple.

Individuals

Annual	\$36/year	\$60 / 2 years
Sustaining	\$96/year	\$160 / 2 years
Life Member	\$500 one time payment	

Couples

Annual	\$48/year	\$80 / 2 years
Sustaining	\$120/year	\$200 / 2 years
Life Members	\$700 one time payment	

Friends of Tri-Ess

Annual	\$24/year
Commercial	\$48/year
Benefactor	\$100/year

The Friends of Tri-Ess "Annual" membership is primarily intended for individuals who support the purposes and aims of Tri-Ess but do not classify themselves as Crossdressers or spouses of Crossdressers.

The Friend of Tri-Ess "Commercial Member" is new and intended as part of the planned advertising promotional efforts. It is like a current Friend of Tri-Ess above except it is intended for businesses that advertise with us. They get a free business card size ad in the Mirror. They will also get a 20% member discount on display advertising space. A "Commercial Member" may get other benefits as negotiated, all relating to advertising and promotion.

A "Benefactor" is simply a non-crossdresser, Friend of Tri-Ess who donates a minimum of \$100. A Benefactor may be an annual Friend of Tri-Ess member who feels strongly about supporting us, or an entity or organization that contributes to Tri-Ess.

**Turn Stumbling Blocks
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Virginia's 85th Birthday Party

by Richard Docter, Ph.D.

On November 22, 1997, just a few hours before the 85th birthday of Virginia Prince, forty-two of her friends gathered in the Grand Salon of the Cal State Northridge Student Union for a banquet and gala celebration. Dr. Vern Bullough, historian and author of many books about transgender topics, opened the evening with a toast. He spoke of Virginia as a "...compassionate and caring helper to many..." and as "...the mother of all crossdressers' support groups." Each of the banquet-goers then introduced herself or himself, often commenting upon how their path had crossed Virginia's in years past.

During a one-hour reception just before the dinner, Kathy Helms, Tri-Ess Board Member and long-time Alpha Chapter activist, accompanied Virginia on a person-to-person tour throughout the ballroom. The festive scene was decorated by Patti Thomas whose author-publisher husband, Sandy Thomas, helped to organize the party. Another writer in attendance was J. J. Allen, resplendent in her Red Velvet Dress, made famous by her popular book, *The Man in the Red Velvet Dress*.

The record for distance went to Linda Williams who flew in from Texas for the party. A close second went to Rebecca Breitenbach of Tucson. Holly Cross drove up from Long Beach, while Marlene came from Tulare. The Goodman's, Vikki and Monica, said "we just couldn't miss this...", and they were joined by the well known Christine of PPOC in Orange County.

Irene Ellis enjoyed reminiscing about the old days in Virginia's Hose and Heels group, one of the forerunners of FPE and subsequently, Tri-Ess. Their friendship extends back to the days when it was illegal for men to appear in public as women in Los Angeles and in most other cities. Irene and Virginia noted that some progress must have been made, when someone observed that we could now have a party at a University and nobody need fear arrest.

But not all of the guests were old friends. For Jerri Moore it was just her second time out in public. "I'm delighted to be a

newcomer here this evening," said Jerri, "...and I am well aware of what Virginia has meant to all of us." Some of the academic folks from Cal State Northridge included: Drs. Bruce Di Matti, Richard Docter, Richard Smith, and Jim Elias. Dr. Barry Dan of Cal State Long Beach also attended.



With the help of Jane Ellen Fairfax and Donna Martin, Kathy Helms had sent out a letter of invitation to all Tri-Ess Chapters and members. In response, scores of cards and checks from nationwide were received to honor Virginia. Additionally, over six hundred greetings and many checks were also received from participants at the 1997 Fantasia Fair. Alison Laing, former Executive Director of IFGE, was a big help in getting the word out to organizations on the East coast.

Following a prime rib dinner, Virginia provided a voice-over commentary for a slide show which showed various phases of her life, spanning early childhood through the recent honors she received from FPE groups in Sweden. A unique highlight was her description of her early childhood, and of her pride in the unusual achievements of her mother and father, both distinguished and highly regarded citizens of Los Angeles. Of course, there was also an ample array of pictures showing Virginia having a good time on her many world tours.

Chatting with Virginia following the slide show were Jo Charlene, Linda, Julie, Michele, Dee, Diane and other friends from the southern California area. The happy event concluded with Richard Docter summarizing some of Virginia's highly personal contributions as well as her research and theoretical work. A birthday fund was collected from Tri-Ess members and many others from all across the country, and a check for just over \$1500 was presented as a token of our appreciation for Virginia's life-long service to the transgender community. Virginia said some words of thanks, then spoke of what it means to have so many "wonderful and loving friends." The party concluded with a rousing chorus of Happy Birthday, and many hugs for Virginia.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY...

My brother-in-law opened the bottom drawer of my sister's bureau and lifted out a tissue-wrapped package. "This," he said, "is not a slip. This is lingerie." He discarded the tissue and handed me the slip. It was exquisite; silk, handmade and trimmed with a cobweb of lace. The price tag with an astronomical figure on it was still attached. "Janice bought this the first time we went to New York, at least 8 or 9 years ago. She never wore it. She was saving it for a special occasion. Well, I guess this is the occasion." He took the slip from me and put it on the bed with the other clothes we were taking to the mortician. His hands lingered on the soft material for a moment, then he slammed the drawer shut and turned to me. "Don't ever save anything for a special occasion. Every day you're alive is a special occasion."

I remembered those words through the funeral and the days that followed when I helped him and my niece attend to all the sad chores that follow an unexpected death. I thought about them on the plane returning to California from the Midwestern town where my sister's family lives. I thought about all the things that she hadn't seen or heard or done. I thought about the things that she had done without realizing that they were special. I'm still thinking about his words, and they've changed my life. I'm reading more and dusting less. I'm sitting on the deck and admiring the view without fussing about the weeds in the garden. I'm spending more time with my family and friends and less time in committee meetings.

Whenever possible, life should be a pattern of experience to savor, not endure. I'm trying to recognize these moments now and cherish them. I'm not "saving" anything; we use our good china and crystal for every special event-such as losing a pound, getting the sink unstopped, the first camellia blossom. I wear my good blazer to the market if I feel like it. My theory is if I look prosperous, I can shell out \$28.49 for one small bag of groceries without wincing. I'm not saving my good perfume for special parties; clerks in hardware stores and tellers in banks have noses that function as well as my party-going friends'. "Someday" and "one of these days" are losing their grip on my vocabulary. If it's worth seeing or hearing or doing, I want to see and hear and do it now. I'm not sure what my sister would have done had she known that she wouldn't be here for the tomorrow we all take for granted. I think she would have called

family members and a few close friends. She might have called a few former friends to apologize and mend fences for past squabbles. I like to think she would have gone out for a Chinese dinner, her favorite food. I'm guessing-I'll never know. It's those little things left undone that would make me angry if I knew that my hours were limited. Angry because I put off seeing good Friends whom I was going to get in touch with-someday. Angry because I hadn't written certain letters that I intended to write-one of these days. Angry and sorry that I didn't tell my husband and daughter often enough how much I truly love them. I'm trying very hard not to put off, hold back, or save anything that would add laughter and luster to our lives. And every morning when I open my eyes, I tell myself that it is special.

Every day, every minute, every breath truly is...a gift from God.

(From the Los Angeles Times , 4/14/85. Sent in by DAINNA from somewhere out in cyberspace.)

(Ed. Note: The following proclamation was accidentally omitted from the Fall 1997 issue. We are extremely embarrassed to have overlooked our own home chapter's recognition as a Tri-Ess Commended Chapter for 1997. -Frances Fairfax)

PROCLAMATION

Dear Sisters of Tau Chi Chapter,

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Tau Chi Chapter has achieved recognition as a Commended Chapter for the year 1997. The continued growth in membership, the excellence of the Femme Forum and the unique Boys-R-Us program, the creative meeting programs, and the stalwart support for SPICE and the Femme Mirror operation, have combined to place Tau Chi Chapter in the top rank of Tri-Ess chapters. I know how much time Tau Chi members devote to enriching the lives of their sisters, and Tri-Ess is very grateful.

Tau Chi Chapter will receive this high honor during the Holiday At Sea this coming January. Congratulations, Sisters, for your landmark accomplishments in 1997!

My love to you all,
Jane Ellen Fairfax, Chair
Tri-Ess Board of Directors

TRI-ESS Chapters and Forming Chapters

Region 1 (New England)

New York City Metro Area

CHI DELTA MU
P.O. Box 1, River Edge, NJ 07661-0001
Contact: Susan Lynette
Phone: 1-800-484-7593 (Code 4985)
E-Mail Denise: cdm@carroll.com
<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/7396/>

Albany NY Metro Area

LAMBDA CHI LAMBDA
P.O. Box 97, Ilion NY 13357
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Buffalo, NY Metro Area

NU PHI CHI
Buffalo Belles
P.O. Box 1701, Amherst, NY 14226
Contact: Denise NY-3404-N
Phone: 716-643-2626

Region 2 (Middle Atlantic/Ohio Valley)

Trenton, NJ Metro Area

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Northern Pennsylvania

Endless Mountain Girls
EPSILON MU GAMMA
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Northern Ohio, Western PA Area

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Sheffield Lake, OH 44054-0053
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Phone: 216-556-0067

Lansing, MI Metro Area

FORMING CHAPTER
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Baltimore, MD Metro Area

FORMING CHAPTER
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Charlotte, NC Metro Area

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Raleigh, NC Metro Area

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Greensboro/Winston-Salem Metro Area

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Region 5 (Mid-West)

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Springfield, MO Metro Area

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Region 6 (Mid-Continental)

Denver, CO Metro Area

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Region 7 (Northwest)

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Moscow, ID Metro Area

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Grants Pass, OR Metro Area

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Contact: Lori OR-4319-L

Eureka, CA Metro Area

FORMING CHAPTER
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Tulare, CA Metro Area

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Santa Cruz/Monterey Metro Area

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Region 9 (Florida)

Orlando, FL Metro Area

PHI EPSILON MU
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Winter Park, FL 32790
Contact: Alice FL-3077-E
Phone: 407-382-8389
www.horizon-usa.com/misc/fem.htm

Fort Myers, FL Metro Area

GAMMA CHI BETA
P.O. Box 510045
Punta Gorda, FL 33051
Contact: Alice FL-3077-E
Phone: 407-382-8389

Region 10 (International)

Overseas Contact: Eve Burchert
P.O.Box 1412, Barrington, IL 60010

Tri-Ess Helpline!

Do you have a question about Tri-Ess? Do you need help regarding media outreach in your area? Tri-Ess Executive Director Carol Beecroft may be reached at the Tri-Ess National Office in Tulare, California at:

(209) 688-9246

Carol is often available to speak to radio audiences via long-distance telephone hook-up, and she is compiling a list of members who are able to appear on radio or television, or speak before college classes.

Do you have a question about the Femme Mirror or other Tri-Ess publications and services? Tri-Ess Chair of the Board Jane Ellen Fairfax and Mirror Editor Frances Fairfax may be reached at:

(713) 349-8969

Are you interested in starting a Tri-Ess chapter? The new Tri-Ess Liaison for Chapter Support and Services, Judy Daniels, may be reached at:

(417) 831-3433

Does your local chapter have a Helpline? Ideally, each Tri-Ess chapter should operate a Helpline and list the number with the local Crisis Hotline, Gay Switchboard, Mental Health Clinics, etc. The expenses involved would vary with local phone rates and installation charges. As a second, unlisted line in a sister's home, a Helpline does not take a lot of money. What it does take is considerable dedication on the part of the sister volunteering to answer the Helpline. How about it, ladies? Does your chapter have a Helpline yet?

Tri-Ess-Sponsored CDSO Online Forum for Spouses and Partners of Crossdressers Signs 50th Subscriber!

Our subscription list for support of crossdressers' wives and significant others has signed its 50th subscriber! Operated by a wife, Beverly, the listserv is a forum for all genetic women involved with crossdressers. Subscription is free. It is not limited to spouses or partners who are members of Tri-Ess. However, it is "for women only" as there are many, many forums available for transgendered men.

Now, a few words from Beverly:

Hi! Welcome to our very own support list for wives and/or SO's of crossdressers. Just a few rules here....

1. NO postings, and NO subscriptions from crossdressers. Not your husbands or your boyfriends. This is for US.
2. No flames. If you disagree with an opinion please do so with courtesy and respect. Don't attack the person.
3. Those of you with strong, militant transsexual attachments, please move on. This list is not for you. If you'd like to E-mail me privately, I can pass on to you several addresses for support of SO's of transsexuals. There are many out there.
4. No advertisements! If you are in doubt about the acceptability of something, please forward it to me.
5. Many subscribers to this forum are uncomfortable seeing people crossdressed. For the comfort of all, transmission of crossdressing photos on the forum will not be allowed. Such transmission can be done by private e-mail, among consenting parties.

That's just about it for now. This list is still new. The rules may change along the way. If so, I will post a general announcement. If you have any suggestions, comments, or just want to talk.....feel free to E-mail me at Crencher@camtel.net.

Regards, Beverly

To subscribe to the list, send e-mail to: <LISTSERV@HOME.EASE.LSOFT.COM> with <SUBSCRIBE CDSO first name last name> as the message. You will receive confirmation from the listserv with complete instructions. Then, you may send a message to all the people currently subscribed to the list, by sending mail to a single address. **It's simple! It's fun!**

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A Declaration: An Alternative View

By Vicki Thomas

I am a crossdresser. Although a genetic male, I have a healthy feminine side which I express, among other ways, by wearing feminine clothing. Outmoded social stereotypes do not upset me. I play into them. This is to say that when I'm out in public I enjoy playing the role of the subjugated woman of a generation ago. Likewise I have used Genderland's excesses to further my education on basic feminine traits that even a butch lesbian cannot avoid because they are innate. I still enjoy going to gay bars and female impersonator shows, but not as much as before. I've outgrown them. My time there allowed me to perfect basic feminine gestures, postures, and voice variations. Proper makeup and having a face which did not betray my true sex gave me the confidence to build on my experiences. Now I have no fear of going anywhere at any time dressed in women's clothes. I do not pass. I PREVAIL. Because I could not wait for society to accept me as a crossdresser, I became, if you must label me, a counterfeit woman. I'm not insulted by the term. My mental health depended on becoming more than just a crossdresser. Because of that, my attitude is much like Shakespeare's Falstaff when he is asked to defend himself after playing dead to avoid being killed.

"Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit: to die is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man: but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valour is discretion: in the which better part I have saved my life."

— Henry IV, Act V, Scene IV

I also consider my feminine side to be a gift of God. I worship God both as a woman and as a man, at different churches, to be sure. (I'm confident, not stupid.) As one of the lucky ones who can go freely in public, it's important that I and others like me educate the public about crossdressing. I do, but I pick and choose my times in order to insure that I don't contaminate the circle of friends I have who know me only as a woman. Like Jane Ellen, my time en femme has softened my rough masculine edges. I have also learned how to listen and empathize. In addition, I have had the good fortune to witness what women are like when there are no men around. If I ever marry again, I

will have a better understanding of females than I ever did before.

I have not annihilated my masculinity to develop my femininity. Although I don't use hormones or any other body altering drugs, my passion to explore femininity has not been without cost. Women may say they want a soft, compassionate man, but many are still under the delusion that a good woman can turn a "Bad Boy" into a fine upstanding man. Likewise, women may complain about self-centered, strutting, egocentric males, but many continue to be attracted to them. What has happened to me is the worse thing that can happen to a man seeking a lover and mate. I've become objective. I can see both sides of the coin.

Masculine/feminine balance is more difficult for me, but achievable. To be sure, no one completely satisfied with his masculine image is likely to have delved into femininity as much as I have. Life circumstances can and do exert influences. Mood swings can have disastrous effects if not channeled and fought with bribes. To boost my defenses, I signed a contract with myself stating that any time spent in public en femme must not endanger my job, family, or relationships with friends who don't know I'm a crossdresser. I am luckier than most because there are fewer times I must postpone the gratification of dressing en femme. Using what amounts to Method Acting, I've gained freedom from the fear of being exposed. However, I realize that none of us are truly free until all of us are free.

My decision to seek out the limits of crossdressing expression was possible because I have no wife or children. Anyone seeking to follow me who has close family does so at the risk of losing that same family. As the song says, "My life ain't no good life, but it's my life." I do not blame crossdressing for my shortcomings as a male, nor can I promise that I can maintain the precarious balance between the masculine and the feminine. The siren song of becoming a woman is always there for me. While it is impractical for my sisters to lash me to the mast of my ship, my best protection is to keep asking two fundamental questions: What sex am I attracted to? Answer: female. What level of success have those who have changed their sex had in sexual relationships with lesbians? Answer: Slim and none. Case closed.



Guess What I Am?

by Carrol Lewis (a nom de plume)

I am overwhelmed by what I do not know about crossdressing. I say this after reading nearly everything I can lay my hands on over the past four years. It has been that long now since the day I was reading something (I can not recall just what) and hesitated for a moment and said to myself the self confessional words in AA style, "I am a transvestite. Oh my God!"

I could not believe those words, hoped that I had not said them aloud, and wondered, having said them, if the police would shortly break down my door. An ensuing house search would turn up the inevitable bizarre assortment of clothing that clearly did not fit my wife, and for that matter, only barely fitted me. Jail and public disgrace would follow. No doubt I would be paraded through the streets in petticoats, a false beard and shaved head. To date I have never "knowingly" laid eyes on a crossdresser. I have attended only two meetings where transgendered people were present, but I was the only crossdresser among transsexuals. I am still confused. I live in a part of the country where people just talking about being pretty don't seem to need or want a more focused group. At this time I do want and need that, but more on that later.

I remember laying awake the night of my epiphany, feeling the warmth of my wife, whose soft regular breathing was a testimony to the notion that ignorance is bliss (for awhile). I did not sleep well, for there were not exactly visions of sugar plums that danced in my head. Instead they were visions of overpainted drag queens whose dark red smiles were really snarls and heavy lined eyes that reflected devil-like images back at me. I saw short skirted, fishnet legged, push 'em up and over, party bra'd girls who were boys, leaning against lamp posts outside a lonely Edward Hopper diner, waiting for a scruffy old man in a late model car to drive by and conduct business.

My body began to glow in the dark as I lay there with increasing embarrassment and shame. Hot flashes, night sweats and a new aerobic style of tossing and turning were certainly to follow, lo, all the remaining days of my life. I was just 50, so a heart attack over this would probably make this all mercifully short.

In the morning I got on the computer and typed in the search box "transvestite." Actually I was so nervous I spelled it wrong the first two times. I paused for an interminable length of time before pushing the search button, certain that someone I knew

would see I was after this kind of stuff. I would say I was writing a book...yes, that was what I would tell them...or me. With the word finally spelled right I was flabbergasted to see something like, well maybe one million or so listings. How could this be? Oh boy, there was big trouble here. I was a pervert, I had decided that just before I finally went to sleep, and I was apparently surrounded by untold thousands if not millions of pantied perverts. No wonder society was so hypocritical and Frederick's was selling so many lacies in what they euphemistically refer to as plus sizes. Fat ladies don't wear garter belts!

I read a few of the items and then hurriedly signed off the net suspecting that the longer I was on the greater the chances of my dirty little secret being discovered. As that first day unfolded I managed to laugh a few times but mostly I shook with fear. Because much of my work I do alone, I was able to sit for much of the day reliving some of the events that brought me to this place...this word...this confession that if I were Catholic I'd die before I ever shared.

Over the next several days I keyed into and out of cyber space at a dizzying pace. I am a reader and a researcher of sorts, and so I was out to learn, and learn I did. This was aggressive behavior, not at all lady like. I was flabbergasted at what was out there, what people said and wrote about. I could not believe that there really were others like me. The abbreviations I had never seen before were a code that insulted my intelligence but I started to catch on. I alternatively resumed my laughing and shaking. I read about broken marriages, ruined lives, guys dressing in cars and walking dark streets just to hear the sound of their own clicking heels. Fantasies I now confessed I had were not mine alone. But, I, we, were a sleazy bunch. Prom dresses and bird seed breasts! I mean, really, give me a break! Well, on the other hand...

I read about books on the subject and went through hell trying to find a way to get them by mail in a plain brown wrapper. I knew the postal inspectors were watching me through one of those spy holes in the ceiling when I went to get my ladies' mailbox. The first time I opened it I saw a sticker at the back with her name and his real name on it. Now all the town knew. I thought about quickly canceling my order but was afraid "they" would recognize a man's voice over the phone. I was stuck. Oh, but I was writing a book! Right? This was serious research into

the unsavory for science.

The books came, and out of everyone's sight I read. I mean I read like a driven animal. I found vindication and fearsome thoughts. I had a new name for my self. I was a crossdresser and not a transvestite hooker. This is not to say that I have anything against transvestite hookers. In fact, I was known to say jokingly in public that in my next life I would consider the life of an upmarket kept woman. But really, in spite of my personal collection of not too prissy dainties, I did not want even privately to lean against Edward Hopper's light pole in an entrepreneurial pose.

Oh, boy, the rationale I went through! I was up, down, sideways, forward and backward. I yo-yoed with every page, sometimes thrilled, sometimes horrified was a crossdresser; that was a sure thing, and now I needed to consider what the hell I would do with it.

I stopped biting my nails.

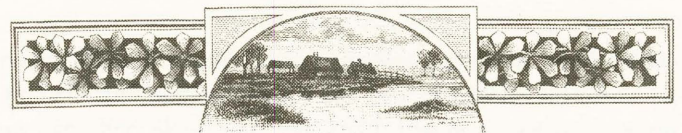
I'm not gay or lesbian, although I have often found the consideration of lesbianism rather titillating. I'm married; I have children. I had a dysfunctional childhood with all the trimmings, and am overly dedicated to my work. In short, I am so predictable by those various studies, surveys and "other" people who consider "us" that it saddens me. All this time I thought I was so peculiar. Not so. There was or is my age, my family and feelings about them, my devotion to spouse, purges, childhood, oh, and my gender. Now I find I have sisters. This is the time to say "Oh my God!" again, because now we talk sorority stuff, padded and skirted travel opportunities and support groups.

I am not a joiner. Not golf clubs, not professional groups, not church, synagogue or mosque. But I have found Tri-Ess, and while I scour each issue of this magazine multiple times and have written to a wonderful person (sister) who is a Big Sister, I have still never laid eyes on a "sister." No doubt someday I will, and hopefully soon, but thus far I feel like a lone shewolf out there. I write these thoughts hoping not to offend but to connect with those who are like me. Many who have taken this seriously and with such profound kindness need to know that I am here. Not because I am individually so important but that I am a part of a collective whole that they have sought to bring together.

I do not know whether my attitudes are like others, my dress style like theirs, or really whether my overall understanding is like theirs, but I do know of their kindness. Learning to laugh and liking who we are is critical to our leading a real life, which is what we really want to do. There are still lots of things to discuss and explore that the examiners of "us" will find interesting and helpful. I can not imagine the courage it has taken

the Grand Dames before me to write and talk and organize. They have and do bind us together as a group that can be identified behaviorally but also in our individual hearts, so that we can re-enter each day with special insight and mission.

I wish to view my mirrored self in appreciation and see that reflected image as instructive and challenging to everything I believe in. I love the beauty and the style, and I know that it comes with more than the price tag of a good foundation, be it powdered, liquefied or stayed. There is a seriousness about this that I want to explore, and I hope to do so. I don't want to know why I am so close to the gender center, but rather what are the options for me and others. Perhaps in the absence of group discussion I can write about my adventure, which has, I think, all the elements of a good story be it fiction or non-fiction.



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Conned in New Mexico

Further Adventures of Allison and Phoebe

by Allison Marsh

Phoebe and I just returned from a 6,000 mile, 19 day trip to Branson Missouri, visiting Berchaud Pass in Colorado, my home town of Manhattan, Kansas, the big arch in St. Louis, Merimec Caverns in southern Missouri, Branson for four days, White Sands, New Mexico, Palamos Mexico (for the best giant Margaritas in North America), Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon, Oatman, Arizona (where the wild donkeys entertain the tourists on the main street during the daylight hours), Laughlin, Feather River Canyon, and up I-5 to home to Washington.

We made the whole trip without a stitch of men's clothing with us. Great fun! But there was one occurrence that relates to my traveling as a woman with The Claw. For the second time, we found ourselves spotted as suckers – spotted because we were two women traveling alone from out-of-state. Here's how we were....

CONNED IN NEW MEXICO

We had our car repaired sixty miles east of Lordsburg, New Mexico, right off Highway 10. Pulled into a bumpy restaurant parking lot and a man fortunately watched us come across the lot. He said our tie rods were bouncing up and down, and that they should not be. Said the guy just leaving in a nearby car had noticed it too and had commented about it as they saw us bumping toward them.

It turned out he was a Good Sam certified motor home mechanic with his own shop in Wisconsin. He was on the way home when he stopped at the restaurant. He told us we could probably fix it ourselves if we were good with tools; we just had to set the pointer in the crossmember to "seven" and re-tighten it—after we took off the dust boot. Since he could see we were sort of mystified, he added that Lordsburg was famous for ripping off motor home people, and that we should probably try to make it to Wilcox for a reliable front end alignment shop.

Finally he got so worried about us two ladies that he decided he should lie down and stick his head under there and see the extent of maladjustment. He found the pointer was way off the "Seven" mark and that we might not make it to the next town (and there was no town for the next 60 miles). So we stewed some more, realizing that even if we called AAA, we'd be there

for a long time before something happened.

Finally he said, "Well, I can wait long enough to see if I can fix it here." So he got his tools out of his van and asked if we had a towel to lie on in the gravel. That kept the dirt off of him, though not the ants, for the next two hours. He removed the boot, found the cotter pin missing in the central steering gear box, and the overlapping 4" of tie-rod connections had pulled apart to the last half inch. One more half-inch, and the wheels would have simply gone their own way and nobody would ever have known why.

After some time, he spotted the cotter pin up in the worm gear; it was still usable. But the last guy who worked on the alignment had not spread the pin at the bottom when he installed it, and that's why it worked its way out of position. He opened the three little gear boxes across the front, got everything put back into place with me gently turning the power steering until it all came together. I could hear it snap when it got just to the right place and he called to hold it right there. He put in the cotter pin and spread it. Accidentally spread it too far, and said they'd have to use a chisel to take it out next time, but it'd stay there forever if I didn't need another alignment job later. He finally got everything reassembled, and replaced the long boot that covered most of the assembly. He came out from under the car several times to rest his arms, but kept at it until it was safe for us.

At one point I told him I had a jack under all that luggage in the trunk, and offered to get it. He wisely said, "No, I wouldn't work under the car under a car jack; if it slipped or broke, the car would come down on me and I'd never fix another car." I was glad, and was very aware of the dangers of getting under a jacked-up car. But I stood there with my male curiosity pushing me to see what all was happening under there and realizing there wasn't room for but one head to get in to see the workspace.

When he was through, he took our pad of paper and wrote us out an itemized, detailed sheet telling the steps and mechanic Good Sam codes to list the work he had done. Wrote out the name and address of his motor home repair shop in Wisconsin. Gave us a lot of other well-informed advice about both our car and our motor home which was still at home in our garage. He wrote the price he would have charged if he had done this work

in his shop, \$118.00, so that we could go back to the company in Tumwater where I thought they might have been responsible for the un-spread cotter pin. He didn't ask us to pay him. But he had gone so far out of his way to help us, with all that discomfort, that we dug out \$120 and thanked him profusely, and we all drove away.

We didn't have any other mechanical trouble on the trip. The day after we got home, I took the car down to my independent mechanic, who could possibly have been the one that screwed up steering. He said to let him see the diagram the guy had drawn us so we could show the mechanic in Lordsburg or Wilcox exactly what we needed to have fixed, and avoid having work done that we didn't need to pay for. My mechanic then said, "Let me see the itemized receipt he wrote for you." He followed that remark by saying, "I just can't see what it is he's talking about. Let's put it up on the rack."

So he and his principal assistant raised the car and we all got under it. He shined his light on the separate dust boots and said, "There's not just one boot; see, there are two short ones, one on each side. And see these seals on the boots? Those are put on by the factory. When we cut those off for repairs, we reseal the boots with new seals, but they are not the same as the factory seals; the replacement seals don't look the same. No one can re-install a factory seal. And you see the gear boxes he told you about?"

There's only one, in the middle. From one side to the other, there aren't any cotter pins except the ones holding the lock nuts right on the wheel connections, and you can see those are inserted from the bottom up and have never been touched. And there aren't any worm gears any where near them. And even if the assembly came apart, there's nothing to bounce on a bump

in a parking lot. And there isn't any adjustment pointer."

He added, "Next time you go on a vacation trip and bring your car in for a safety check, I'll bolt the hood down for you."

Well at least I didn't have to admit to him that we had been spotted as suckers because we were two women traveling alone. (He only knows my male side, not Allison.) But we both laughed. The con man had been so completely believable it was worth \$120 for the entertainment—better than one of the shows we saw in Branson. So my mechanic doesn't know I was crossdressed; the con man doesn't know I know that everything he ad-libbed to me was a lie, even the advice he gave me about my motor home; The Claw agrees we probably got our money's worth out of the experience and entertainment, even though it wasn't what we thought we were buying; and we got home safely with my faith in Hondas restored because they are remarkably well constructed cars with no cotter pins holding the vital parts together. And I got an extra hour of free, unsolicited entertainment while I listened to my own mechanic regale me with stories about all the other people he knew (including himself in his earlier days) who were conned by Good Samaritans who helped people avoid fatal accidents by doing roadside repairs for them in New Mexico.



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OUR GENDER FAMILY #9

by Rachel Miller

Hey Mom! Would You Like Another Manhattan?

Once I understood and accepted my propensity to cross-dress, I was determined to end the hypocrisy of hiding that part of myself from my loved ones. I had come out to my wife, sister and a few others with great success in early 1994. I wanted to tell my Mother, but she lived in a small Wisconsin town 1,700 miles away. It was crucial to do it in person and my chance came with a business conference in Chicago in June. I made arrangements to drive up to my Mom's house on Friday afternoon.

My Mom and I have had an excellent relationship for many years. Still, I was fearful of her response. I knew that I couldn't continue to live a lie any longer, yet I had heard enough stories to know that there was significant risk in telling. Much of the advice I had received from well-intentioned transvestites was to NEVER TELL ANYONE! Perhaps my greatest concern was her religious background. My Mom is an extraordinarily devout Catholic and attends Mass daily. I had never heard a sermon that preached tolerance towards cross-dressers so my anxiety level was high.

One thing I had learned in telling others is to take control of the situation rather than letting things happen by chance. So, after a great dinner of fresh lake perch I took advantage of a Wisconsin characteristic and my Mom's one small vice—brandy. Most people think of Wisconsin as the beer-swilling capital but it's in the consumption of brandy where we are true professionals. In the evening Mom enjoys a brandy manhattan (2 parts brandy + 1 part sweet vermouth, for the uninitiated) on the rocks.

My butterflies disappeared with the first drink and the beginnings of courage arrived with the second. Before the third arrived I thought I'd better start telling my story or risk losing the ability to speak rationally. "So, Mom, I've got something I'd really like to tell you." I had developed a pattern of presenting a personalized letter to each person we were going to tell. It was designed to establish the desired context for the discussion. Here's a lightly edited version of the one I gave my Mom:

"Dear Mom,

"Over the years you have sent birthday and holiday cards that express the most wonderfully thoughtful sentiments. It makes me feel very good to know that you feel that way about me. I

have always felt that we were very much alike with our softness and sensitivity. I like that part of me. Unfortunately, I was also insecure and uncertain and others often took advantage of me. So, far from being settled, life has been a long journey of exploring and finding out who I am and who I want to be.

"The big improvements started on Easter Sunday, 1980, when I first attended a new Church and with the help of many, began to discover my spiritual and emotional self. It was the beginning of a long journey to become all I am capable of being.

"Over the years I made great progress. Still, I continued to have difficulty with one area of my life. That one area is often viewed negatively by others so it was difficult for me to deal with it. Finally, on my 50th birthday, I determined that no matter how difficult the process might be, I was going to resolve it.

"My search turned out far better than I had ever envisioned. As a result I feel whole and complete for the first time in my life. My big questioning and searching is over. The best part is that I like the person I found inside myself.

"The attached poem is a way to tell my story in a simple way. What the poem says may surprise you, and it may take awhile to get used to, but it is all positive. I am glad to finally be able to share my feelings with you. We can talk about any parts that you are comfortable in doing.

"Mostly, I just want to say - I love you!

"Your son, Richard"

The poem that I shared with her is an outgrowth of trying to put my cross-dressing in perspective. Without the appropriate context it could appear to be the defining characteristic of my life. While I am a cross-dresser, I also have many other important aspects to my personality. Cross-dressing is just one aspect. I wrote the poem for myself but found it effective in communicating the whole me to others. Here's a copy of what I gave her.

Do you love me?

You know me as a person who has strong spiritual beliefs, who loves his wife and is committed to his marriage, who values family and friends, and who feels that being a grandfather is one of the greatest experiences of life.

You know me as a person who loves children and childlike things, who is sensitive, caring and compassionate, who believes in per-

How to Contribute to Your Chapter Newsletter **

By Diane V.

In order to assure that your newsletter is kept productive and stays out of trouble, here is a simple instruction manual for maintaining your newsletter:

1. Pick up pen (or pencil) and paper.
2. Enter writing chamber. (Could be office, den, porcelain facility, etc. You get the idea.)
3. And speaking of ideas, engage brain (but do not clutch!)
4. Proceed to transmit signals from brain through digital process on either right or left hand with writing instrument connected.
5. Warning! Do not exceed personal limitations, commonly diagnosed as writer's cramp, or diarrhea of the pen (similar to diarrhea of the mouth).
6. Do avoid, however, another malady known as writer's block.
7. To aid in evading point number 6, a series of ideas follows: personal experiences; shopping trips; dining out en femme; embarrassing moments; fuzz busting and fuzz-busted; other busy experiences, such as stops at Jiffy Boob; recipes for almost anything; your autobiography; personal discoveries on makeup techniques, clothing, etc., worth sharing; personal triumphs and tragedies to the extent you wish to reveal them.

How about it, Gals!!

** (and your Mirror)

(Reprinted from Alpha Omega's Femme Silhouette, Oct. 1966)

Poet's Corner

The Art of Marriage

A good marriage must be created.

In the art of marriage the little things are the big things.

It is never being too old to hold hands.

It is remembering to say "I Love You" at least once each day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is standing together facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family. It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for things of the Spirit.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is not only marrying the right partner,

It is being the right partner.

(Ed. Note: This was sent in by the wife of a crossdresser. It is the text of a calligraphic scroll she bought her husband for Christmas. She says, "It is one of those gifts that you buy for both of you. I thought it would help us to remember why we got married as the years go by. Hope you all like it, too." Thank you, C.S.!)

Disclaimer

The opinions and views expressed in the Femme Mirror are those of the respective contributors and do not necessarily represent the views or official policies of The Society for the Second Self, Inc., its Officers or Board Members.

sonal responsibility, and who is committed to working hard and doing a good job.

You know me as a person who enjoys good food and fine wines (plus beer, pizza and ice cream), who brings humor to the workplace and elsewhere, who works at physical conditioning and enjoys long distance running, and who loves animals, especially cats.

You know me as a person who is discovering a love for theater and the arts, who is learning to express his enjoyment of decorating, colors, fabrics and textures, who wants to be accepted and loved just as he is, so, do you love me?

What if I take a chance and become vulnerable and disclose my story; will you still love me?

What if society does not accept part of me, but I do; will you still love me?

What if I need to expose the truth about me to be at peace inside; will you still love me?

What if I told you that I like to shave my legs and wear a skirt; will you still love me?

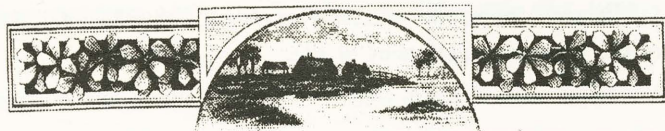
As I handed the poem to her, she started reading and I stopped breathing. At the end she put the paper down and said, "Of course I love you. I don't understand all this, but I love you." She asked a few questions and we talked for about a half hour. Finally she stopped and asked me to follow her into her bedroom. She opened her jewelry box and asked if there was anything I wanted for myself. I was thrilled with her response. I took a necklace plus a locket with my grandparents' pictures inside. Then she opened her closet and asked if I wanted any clothes. I laughed and said, "Mom, we're not anywhere close to the same size but THANK YOU!" We hugged and all was right in my world. No more manhattans were required.

Well, that's my story. What's the best way to start coming out of your closet?

Rachel Miller

<http://members.aol.com/RachelMill>

P.S. I finally have proof positive of my transgenderism. The day before Thanksgiving I had hernia surgery. That's right hernia, not himnia. It is a bad joke but at least I can laugh again...



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Tri-Ess Pen Pals

Many sisters have written over the years to express their disappointment in not receiving replies to their letters to other Tri-Ess sisters. It seems that while some sisters are wonderfully prolific pen pals, others (for a variety of reasons) are not. To assist those who would like to receive lots of letters, we have compiled a "Pen-Pal List". All you have to do is promise to reciprocate. Just fill out and sign the form below and send it to:

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- 1) Write your letter to your chosen Pen Pal. Include your picture if you wish. If you choose not to include your own return address at first, be sure you include your own Code Number in your letter.
- 2) Place your letter in an envelope, affix correct postage, and lightly pencil in the name and Code Number of your Pen Pal on the front.
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- 4) Include your return address on the outer envelope and be sure to apply correct postage. Once received at the Forwarding Service, your inner envelope will be properly addressed to your Pen Pal and sent on its way. If or when you and your Pen Pal choose to exchange letters directly is up to you. Have fun, Sisters!

If you wrote us asking to be placed on the Pen Pal List and your name does not appear above, please write us again. We are sorry, but sometimes we do "drop the ball." (Or, in this case, the name!)

NEW!!! We have a sister who wants to be a Cyber-Space Pen Pal. Kimmie (FL-4532-D) says she loves answering her E-mail and would like to have you visit her Web Site, too. Her E-Mail address is: Kimmie_CD@aol.com Her Web site is at: <http://members.aol.com/kimmiecd/index.html>

List of Pen Pals

AK-4644-F Alicia
 AZ-3954-B Rebecca
 CA-3800-M Charli
 CA-1282-V Fran
 CA-4470-S Julia
 CA-3354-N Michelle
 CA-4249-F Shirley Louise
 FL-3434-C Debi
 FL-3433-T Donna
 FL-3892-B Jeanne
 FL-2520-B Joan Ann
 FL-3720-R Karen Rose
 FL-3640-C Norma
 FL-4046-J Rita
 FL-4379-G Roni George
 GA-4158-B Franki
 IL-3623-G Nancy
 MD-4435-S Diane
 MN-3996-L Carla
 MO-3752-B Laura
 NC-3743-H Ann
 NC-3723-C Sherri
 NJ-3818-L Carol Ann
 NY-4022-B Cathy Ann
 NY-3277-H Evelyn
 NY-4502-R Fiona
 NY-4506-K Patricia Ann
 NY-3717-P Tammie
 OH-1617-H Razilee
 PA-4046-J Rita
 TN-1230-H Rita
 UT-3779-E Genevera
 VA-2642-I Madelyn
 VA-3401-W Samantha
 IN CANADA
 ON-4010-S Julie Ann
 PQ-4457-M Micheline
 OVERSEAS
 OM-4577-L Sheena

Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 1998

20- 22: True Spirit Conference, Laurel MD, The American Boyz, PO Box 1118, Elkton MD 21922-1118

26- 3/2: Texas T Party, San Antonio TX , PO Box 17, Bulverde TX 78163

MARCH 1998

24-29: Crossing Borders, IFGE's 12th Annual Convention, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, IFGE, PO Box 229, Waltham MA 02254-0229, (617) 899-2212

APRIL 1998

29- 5/2: California Dreamin' 98, San Francisco CA. PO Box 1088. Yorba Linda CA 92686

MAY 1998

20-24: 9th Annual Esprit, Port Angeles WA, PO Box 1101, Renton WA 98057

28-31: Spring Fling, Provincetown MA, PO Box 2283, Woburn MA 01888

JUNE 1998

10-14: Be All You Can Be 1998, Pittsburgh PA, PO Box 15408, Pittsburgh PA 15237 Phone (412) 224-6015

JULY 1998

15-19: SPICE VI, Atlanta GA, Dr. Peggy Rudd, PO Box 5304, Katy TX 77491, Fax (281) 347-8747, E-mail: melpeg@phoenix.net

About Our Cover Girl

Our Cover Girl hardly needs an introduction. **Virginia Prince**, founder of Tri-Ess, and indeed, of the transgender community as we know it, recently celebrated her 85th Birthday. (You may read all about the festivities on page 46.) Virginia has been living openly as a woman for half those 85 years, traveling extensively in Europe and Asia, delivering countless lectures in university classrooms and radio studios, writing the first self-help books for crossdressers and their wives, publishing the first newsletters and magazines and starting the first local group, her famous "Hose and Heels Club." A complete list of her books and papers would take up a good part of this page. Even more significant, however, is the unrecorded list of all the people Virginia has helped over those years. Lonely, frightened, confused crossdressers drew from Virginia reassurance and hope, and found the companionship of others like themselves. Those countless thousands of transgendered persons are her true legacy of greatness. **We love you, Virginia!**

The "Gender Gift"

by Sharon Overby

Crossdressers are frequently accused of possessing a "Gender Gift." I am a male crossdresser, and I have heard this statement enough times that if I had a nickel for every time thatx Well, you get the idea.

Is Crossdressing really a "Gender Gift?" It certainly is about Gender, somehow or other, so I guess that part fits. But is it a Gift? Well, I didn't order it, request it, pay for it, and I've got it, so I'd have to say it was a Gift.

Like all gifts, it may or may not be welcome to the recipient or those around him. The husband who always wanted a stuffed and mounted moosehead may be overjoyed to inherit one, but his wife may not appreciate waiting for it to drool on the Thanksgiving turkey, displayed in its full glory over the dining room table in front of her mother and six maiden aunts.

On the other hand, the husband who just received a perfectly horrendous hand-knitted sweater from his wife who is "finding herself" in a crafts class at the local elementary school may not care for his "Gift" either.

Most crossdressers are NOT comfortable with the fact that they were, in fact, born to be Feminine Men. It doesn't fit with the expectations of their parents, wives, children, relatives, employers, or the guys at the corner bowling alley.

Unfortunately, it's the way they are, and nobody, but NOBODY can ever change it. That's about the only thing we know for sure about crossdressing: It NEVER Goes Away. It is a part of us as surely as is our eye color. We can change our eyes from blue to brown with contact lenses, just as we can wear clothing appropriate to a hunting/fishing trip in the wilds of Alaska, but that DOES NOT in any way change who we really are.

Most wives are as happy to learn that their husbands were given this "Gift" as they would be to learn that he had some incurable disease, or had permanently lost his employability, or maybe was incapable of fathering children. When they finally learn that it is NOT going to go away, things get even worse. True, some wives are happy to be married to crossdressers, and even enjoy helping them express their feminine selves, at home, in public, and even in the bedroom. Unfortunately for most crossdressers, these wives constitute a very small minority.

"Why is this?" you may ask. It's quite simple. crossdressers who do not accept themselves as they really are look for ways

to change themselves into "normal" men. The simplest and most obvious way to do this is to marry a "real" woman who absolutely WON'T put up with such nonsense. The crossdresser who does not accept himself will NOT look for a wife who will accept his crossdressing. How could he? He wouldn't recognize her if she hit him over the head with a shovel. The result is a marriage between a crossdresser ashamed of himself, and a wife who wonders what she did wrong. She, of course, didn't do anything wrong. She was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. The question is, what is she (and he) going to do about it?

I'm not going to address that question here. I'm still on the topic of the "Gender Gift."

So do I, as a male, heterosexual, crossdresser feel that I have received a "Gender Gift?" Of course I have. Go back and re-read the second paragraph of this article. Now, am I happy about it? Not always. Sometimes I wish I were NOT a crossdresser. (Warning! Do not quote me out of context! Reprint ALL of this paragraph, or none of it, or I will disavow all knowledge of what I have written and sue yourx Wellx)

As I said, sometimes I wish I were NOT a crossdresser, but this NEVER HAPPENS when I am dressed as a woman. When I am dressed, I am invariably at peace with myself. In skirts, I don't understand how I could EVER have wanted this to go away. I have insights into myself that I could NEVER have had if I had never worn women's clothing.

I used to feel like this HAD to go away, WOULD go away, HAD gone away, when I was younger and had not yet learned to accept myself as I am. I sometimes think about how my life could be different if I were not a crossdresser. Now, I know that my life could be different, but in order to live in that mode, I would have to suppress my crossdressing. I have tried that, and found that my life became totally unmanageable. I became extremely depressed, barely able to work, and unable to relate to other people in a reasonable manner. The bottom line is, in order to function as a reasonable person, I MUST crossdress.

Now let's ask the question, "Is this a Good Gift or a Bad Gift?" Is this an "Arrest Me Red" Ferrari Testarosa, complete with a voice programmable and fully functional Sofia Loren android (sorry, but I AM an electrical engineer) or is it cyanide in a bad Tater Tot? Well, it's not somewhere in between. It's MUCH better than either.

If someone walked up to me Right Now and offered me a button to push to "make it all go away, Right Now" I would have to treat him with all the courtesy I would afford to a telephone solicitor looking to sell me a lifetime membership to a Richard Simmons health club. Or a "Wine in a Box of the Month" club. Or a 99 year, (for ANY monthly payment), non-cancelable lease for a two-cycle Saab. In other words, No.

NO. NO! I actually like myself as I am. Granted, I am different from most people, but that's just fine with me. I have learned things about myself and people in general that CANNOT be known by those who are not transgendered. I can try to explain these things to others, but I might as well try to explain RED to my dog. This would be much harder than you might think, even if you know that dogs are colorblind, since my dog spoke only Norwegian (Woof-da!) and on top of that, he's been dead for fifteen years.

So, bottom line. The Gender Gift has been given to ALL crossdressers. Some accept it. Some don't. Their wives, friends, and significant others don't really understand it. Some of them accept it, or don't, but in a very different way from the manner in which their crossdressing spouses do or don't. The unfortunate thing is that ONLY THE GENDER GIFTED can really USE the gift. No one else can really understand it. OTHER MEN cannot understand it. NO WOMAN can really understand it, since it is a characteristic of a biological man, and if you don't have the body and the hormones, you CAN'T really experience it, any more than a crossdressing man can really understand what it is like to be a biological female.

Should male crossdressers marry as a means of controlling or even eliminating their crossdressing? Of course not. Unfortunately, many do. By the time most married crossdressers discover who they really are, they are adults in their forties, have children, and have created many relationships, both in their personal and business lives, that are at direct odds with their true natures. What do they do then? That depends on their wives/partners and families, and what they themselves are willing to live with. Whether or not they can work out a livable relationship with their families depends on what they are willing to give up, and what their families are willing to accept. This is not a one-time accommodation, either. The need to crossdress seems to increase with age, which means that boundaries negotiated today may have to be adjusted sometime in the future. Renegotiations become more difficult, since the crossdresser now has greater needs, and relationships have become more involved.

If the crossdresser gives up anything of his crossgender nature, he gives up a part of himself and becomes less of a person, and subtracts irrecoverably from that which is MAN.

(Reprinted from the December issue of En Femme.)

Tribute To A Tri-Ess Sister

By Denise S. (FL-2746-S)

I was recently notified by Jane Ellen and Frances of the tragic death of a long-time member of Phi Epsilon Mu chapter of Central Florida. Kathy M. (CO-3461-M) was killed on her bicycle after being struck by an automobile about mid October.

Kathy joined Phi Epsilon Mu in the early 1990s, and as is typical of new sisters, it took her some time to get up the nerve to attend a chapter meeting. Not comfortable with a whole room full of crossdressers, Kathy visited me at my place once, and we had a very pleasant evening together. However, still too shy to attend a meeting, Kathy first attended one of our non-crossdressing meetings, where she met several of our members, wives, and partners. Soon after that Kathy began attending meetings whenever she could.

Kathy was in her 50s, married, and from Daytona Beach, FL. The couple typically spent part of the year in Colorado Springs, CO. It wasn't until the last year or so that Kathy opened up about his crossdressing to the wife. Over the last couple of years Kathy and wife have stayed in Colorado the entire year.

Kathy was a quiet and very pleasant sister to know and corresponded with some other sisters. Kathy enjoyed going shopping enfemme and moved about quite well and discreetly in public. Kathy's wife, Karen, notified Tri-Ess and Phi Epsilon Mu of Kathy's untimely death and requested she be removed from all mailing lists.

Those who knew Kathy have lost a dear friend and sister, and we will all find that special place in our hearts where she will live on forever. I'm sure you all join me in your thoughts and prayers for Kathy's wife and family.

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A Book Review *Bert and Lori*

by Sofronia Anne Strong -MN 3264 G

I met Bert, or Marjorie, as she is known in Tri-Ess, or Lori, as she identifies herself in this book, just a couple of months before we chartered Beta Gamma Chapter. We had been corresponding because we are Tri-Ess sisters. Marjorie had invited me to join her in Madison, WI where she was concluding participation in a board meeting of a scholarly foundation. We had a wonderful, sisterly evening together, although neither of us had the nerve to dress en femme.

After that we corresponded for over a year, comparing notes about crossdressing. I also shared some of my unpublished writings with Marjorie. What I sensed from our dialogue, but could not know from the sketchy background she had given me, was that this sister is such a brilliant scholar and skillful writer. I was flattered and pleased that she complimented me and encouraged me in my own writing. Somewhat to my surprise she praised what I call my "penny dreadfuls", the transvestite fantasy fiction I have had published by Reluctant Press (eight novellas). Eventually she informed me that she was working on her autobiography, for which she had a publisher. Our correspondence eventually tapered off. So little did I hear that I assumed that the book would not appear. Wrong!

In August I received an inscribed copy of *Bert and Lori - The Autobiography of a Crossdresser*, By Robert J. Rowe, (Prometheus Books). I immediately read it and was stunned. This is a landmark book. Nothing of its kind has ever before appeared in the limited, serious literature of crossdressing.

In an introduction by Vern Bullough, PhD., author of the comprehensive study of crossdressing, *Crossdressing, Sex and Gender*, Dr. Bullough informs us that this new book is significant because the author is a heterosexual crossdresser whose book personalizes his life as a crossdresser without sensationalizing it.

What a fascinating life it is, too. How unique, and yet how like the rest of us.

In telling his life story, from his first awareness of his desire to wear women's clothing to the present loving relationship with his second wife, Bert examines his struggles, joy, pain and the vicissitudes of his femme persona, Lori. Of particular value is his technique of interweaving this personal story into the fabric of our world of crossdressing. Marjorie is a brilliant researcher and an accomplished writer. The book thus brings the reader a wealth of insight about ourselves. Moreover, he understands

the value of crossdressing, both to ourselves individually and to society at large.

I was not surprised to read the following remarks in the author's preface. "Above all, and this only occasionally, but most importantly- dressing up has provided me with a glimpse of something extraordinarily peaceful and beautiful, something which can, with good reason, be called spiritual or divine." Such insights fill this volume. Acknowledging that we do not know why we are this way, and fully aware of the difficulties it brings to us, he searches for the positive rewards, gained through his struggles with his crossdressing.

Bert carries us from his youth in the period from 1946 to 1953, during which phase he discovers a growing need to dress up. He describes his early love life with a glamorous Gloria until he enters into his troubled first marriage. He is remarkably open about his family of origin. He reveals his dysfunctionality as he struggles through graduate school and admits us to the wrenching pain of the failure of his marriage. He describes finding his present wife and outlines the battle she is enmeshed in with her first marriage to a scoundrel. We see how these experiences have purified them both in the furnace of life's enigmatic dilemmas. In addition to the normal stresses and struggles that we all face in life Bert has had to face the spectre of his crossdressing.

It requires immense courage, as well as great self-knowledge and insight, to pour out the truth about oneself in such an honest and forthright way. We learn of Bert's achievements as an art historian, his days while earning his doctorate at Harvard, his Humboldt Scholarship and his Guggenheim Fellowship. Like all of us he has had to face ordinary adversity while avoiding his crossdressing.. He is extraordinary not only for his brilliance as a scholar, but for his courage and persistence in the face of these difficulties, including the terrible reality of being a crossdresser in a seemingly transphobic society. (I say seemingly, because I suspect that it appears more transphobic than it is.)

In Chapter 6, "Strange Temples, 1984-1997", Bert analyses the crossdressing phenomenon and our crossdressing community. He deals with the conflictedness of crossdressing, the war between the sexes, feminism, brutishness in men, and the positive aspects and potential values of forced crossdressing.

He defends Tri-Ess against its critics ("Why can't Tri-Ess do

what it wants to?") and then criticizes it for answering its critics. He evaluates the problems of the being a crossdresser and outlines our contribution to society at large. He acknowledges that what we do is important, that we make a genuine contribution to the culture, and he defines just what it is.

I think he states the value of crossdressing best in this: "Peering into the heart of things, as Wordsworth would have it, helps us define ourselves. Crossdressing in itself may not be 'me', but it helps inform me of and about myself. And others!" It seems to this writer that this struggle for self-understanding (self-acceptance) is the essence of our lives. Bert has, in this book, made a significant contribution to that quest.

Curiously, the author is not altogether "out". He confesses that he dresses only at home and not completely. Neither is unusual, I am sure. He admits that he is not comfortable in the presence of other crossdressers. That, too, is hardly rare. He cleverly disguises his real identity and coyly covers up the specifics of his academic career and personal history. He has admitted to me that he stipulated to his publisher that he would do a book tour and do signings only if the publisher guaranteed his salary and pension. This is curious in the light of his open and unrestrained honesty about his personal history.

What this tells me is that the author is still ashamed of what he is, which makes him no different from the rest of us. His book is an exercise in self-acceptance and for that I applaud him standing up and cheering. Bert tells us that he is content with Lori, but I do wonder if he might not find it rewarding to expand his crossdressing experiences. Might he discover that the world will fail to accept him only insofar as he fails to accept himself?

The book is vastly enriched by its two appendices. The first of these is devoted to transvestite fantasy fiction. I was delighted to have my own work acknowledged thus: "Among Tri-Essers I want especially to thank Sofronia Anne Strong for loaning me a copy of *The Locked Closet*, from which I quote at some length at the end of this volume." I was also delighted to note the following: "I also want to thank the members of the Tri-Ess organization. Their support and advice has been invaluable, and their own life stories have taught me a great deal about crossdressing." Rowe acknowledges that among the several sources that have informed him, one of the important ones has been transvestite fantasy fiction. He states:

"Modern fantasy draws on traditional motifs and fictional ornaments (tropes, if you will) common to far older transvestite tales. Moreover these motifs and tropes impinge at least occasionally on real life experience." In this he makes the connection between our fantasies and our real life, challenging the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. This is in the forefront of academic thinking at present and a worthwhile exer-

cise, especially for us.

In a brilliant comparison he publishes an account from my novella, *In Finery*, alongside the same story from my non-fiction manuscript, *The Locked Closet*. In putting these side by side he shows that what is titillating in fiction is often horrible in fact. More importantly, it becomes apparent that the fact is far stranger than the fiction, far less plausible. Rowe says, "Unlike other crossdressers, he (Strong) has lived through much of what he writes about." "He doesn't have to fantasize to come up with plots, characters and episodes for his fantasy fiction. He only has to remember them." The significance in these remarks is that the distinction in literature between fiction and non-fiction is an indistinct and arbitrary one. Ask any crossdresser! He'll know!

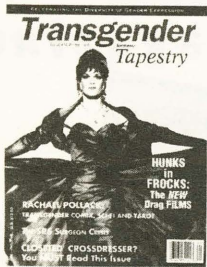
In this same appendix he also, like other present academics, calls for the elimination of false distinctions in art. Separating "high" art from "low" art is ultimately impossible, he asserts, and undesirable as well. "If you can't grapple with both, how can you choose between them? That is, of course, if you want to choose." He emphasizes this point in the following:

"Sofronia Anne Strong's novels are every bit as entertaining and informative as a lot of Agatha Christie's detective tales, if not quite as smooth or tightly plotted. I'd rather read *Sorority Life* than *Death in the Air* any day, and I'd much rather read *In Finery* than a smarmy best-seller like *Bridges of Madison County*. Strong's novels are more vibrant, honest and true to life."

In the second appendix we hear from Jill Rose, Bert's wife. She tells her story with similar honesty and sincerity. She describes her travails in an earlier abusive marriage and recounts her own feelings and emotions in learning to deal with her husband's crossdressing. She also describes how she has made accommodation with his sexuality and her own. Their private arrangements are an exposition of the importance of openness and the acceptance of reality to our personal happiness. Jill is as remarkable a person as her husband.

After reading this significant, well crafted book I concluded it is mistitled. I think it should be called *The Confessions of St. Bert (and Lori)*.





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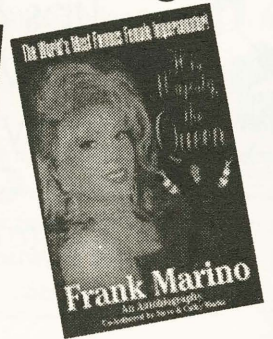
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February, 1998

Dear Tri-Ess Sisters and Friends,

We of ICTLEP hope that you will share this information with your friends. As you can see from the above letterhead, our mostly volunteer staff continues to expand. For those of you on the internet, please take notice of their job assignments and of their e-mail addresses. Also, check out our AOL keyword and our web page at www.abmall.com/ictlep. (For those of you not on the internet, there is no possible way that I can relate to you just how VAST our TG-internet community is. It is like trying to describe the Grand Canyon.) Discover how ICTLEP is working to support the heterosexual crossdressing part of our vast community as well.

On the legal documents front, ICTLEP continues promoting the following premise: if a person has passed the real-life-test, and has been completely medically certified for genital surgery, then that very same medical certification should also apply to get the legal correction of birth certificate completed before and **WITHOUT THE REQUIREMENT OF EVER "HAVING TO" SUBMIT TO GENITAL SURGERY**. In ICTLEP's opinion, this will allow the curious crossdresser a **TRUE CHOICE**, and it should allow coping wives a comfort level of knowing that genital surgery is not necessarily the "end-all". This was published extensively in Vol 3.1, Issue 5, National Journal of Sexual Orientation Law (1997) at www.sunsite.unc.edu/gaylaw.

Last year in Texas, I personally took four, long-time MTF and two, long-time FTM folks through for legal sex correction on the birth certificate **WITH FULL AND COMPLETE** knowledge of the court that they were non-genital-surgical transgenders and would probably remain so.

On the family law front, ICTLEP continues its "pro-family" promotion of the following premise: if a happy, loving and legally married husband and wife want to remain married, and one of the spouses is going into a transition, then this couple will **REMAIN** a legally married couple after that transition and **CANNOT** be pressured by anyone to divorce. A growing number of these transgender marriages are happening in many States. ICTLEP is also monitoring and advising a growing number of cases where non-transsexual people who, with foreknowledge married already completed transsexual people, and are now trying to annul those marriages either to avoid their half of marriage debt or to keep the transsexual from seeing the children. So far, our marriages are being recognized by the courts. ICTLEP is monitoring and advising a legal, same-sex transsexual couple who are grandparents, where their adult child is suing to keep the transsexual grandparents away from the grandchild.

On the employment law front, ICTLEP continues to be a clearing house for information on the following items: non-legal strategy for keeping a job during transition; case law reports and legal strategy for folks who have lost their job; transgender educational articles for non-transgender lawyers including jury voir dire suggestions; attorney referral; and a checklist for transgenders to use when seeking an attorney. All of these articles are available individually through our office at the above mailing address, phone or e-mail address. For those of you on the internet, you may download the Index and Table of Contents to our publications. As a personal observation, the trend is that more and more—although still a minority—of our folks are keeping their jobs. I am seeing this mostly in large corporations, state governments and university settings. Although there is not a trend yet: it is happening to some degree everywhere, in every state, in every industry and in every line of work!

On the national policy front, ICTLEP is firmly established as a major leader in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. More and more national lesbian and gay organizations are amending their by-laws to include both bisexuals and transgenders. This is a direct result of action by ICTLEP and other national TG groups. In October, I was part of the 1st National Policy Roundtable for LGBT Organizations, and I met with almost forty Executive Directors from these organizations. **SUPPORT OF THIS COALITION WILL YIELD DIVIDENDS IN FUTURE LAWS THAT PROTECT TG FOLKS (yes, heterosexual crossdressers, too) FROM HATE CRIMES, FROM JOB DISCRIMINATION AND FROM LOSS OF PARENTAL CUSTODY OF OUR CHILDREN OR LOSS OF VISITATION OF OUR GRANDCHILDREN!**

Please help us continue the struggle for your benefit and for the benefit of those who are just coming into their transition. A mere \$10 each month to the above mailing address is all that we ask. Thanks!

Phyllis Randolph Frye

Tri-Ess Supporting Membership Information - also complete reverse side

Yes! I would like to join in supporting Tri-Ess, *the Society for the Second Self, inc.*

Please select one of the categories and levels of suggested minimum supporting memberships shown below

All Tri-Ess supporting members receive - Membership Card and *The Femme Mirror*, our quarterly magazine, along with special discounts on selected products and services. Sustaining and Life Members receive special recognition and additional valuable membership benefits. Crossdressers will also receive the Tri-Ess Membership Directory, its supplements and a free personal listing in the Directory. Supportive Wives who join with their crossdressing husbands in the "Couple" category receive the quarterly newsletter, *Sweetheart Connection*, and early registration discounts for 'SPICE', annual spouses' conference. Wives and female partners may also join in the "Individual" category to receive their own copies of *The Femme Mirror*.

"Individual" Supporting Membership categories
Intended for Crossdressers only (see definitions)

"Couple" Supporting Membership categories
For Crossdressers and spouses or female partners

*New - 16.7% Special savings - 2 Year Option**

*New - 16.7% Special savings - 2 Year Option**

Annual \$36 per year \$60 for two years*

Annual \$48 per year* \$80 for two years*

Sustaining \$96 per year* \$160 for two years*

Sustaining \$120 per year* \$200 for two years*

Life Member \$500 * one time payment

Life Member \$700 * one time payment

Other, Please specify your optional or additional gift amount \$ _____

Please check the appropriate statements: I am - OR I am not - over eighteen (18) years of age.

I am - OR I am not - A CROSSDRESSER - defined as an individual, typically a heterosexual male, who occasionally chooses to make a social role presentation considered appropriate for persons of the opposite genetic sex, for the purpose of personal expression, without the intention of entering a program leading to sex reassignment surgery, and without attempting to attract a partner of the same genetic sex. Your femme signature is satisfactory.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Payment Options: Enclosed is my Check or Money Order payable in US Dollars to "Tri-Ess"

Charge my membership to VISA or MasterCard or American Express

Account Number _____ Expiration Date ____/____/____

If paying by credit card, please enclose a separate sheet of paper showing (1) your name as it appears on the card, (2) the billing address, and (3) your credit card signature. This information is confidential and secure. Your credit card statement will indicate PM Publishers Inc, Katy, Texas, and show the payment amount you have indicated above, plus an additional 5% donation. (\$36=\$37.80, \$48=\$50.40).

For your security, The Society makes every effort to protect the confidentiality of all contributors, members and applicants. Your true identity, personal check and credit card information are safe with us.

* One time payment in full is required for these categories. Crossdressers financially unable to afford the minimum annual contribution amounts shown above should write for optional payment plans, reduced payments or waiver.

[The terms used herein assume the Crossdresser is male. Female Crossdressers are also welcomed. Please write Tri-Ess for detailed information]

the Society for the Second Self, inc. / 8880 Bellaire Boulevard, B2, Suite 104 / Houston, TX 77036-4621

Tri-Ess Email: TRIESSINFO@aol.com

Tri-Ess Telephone Helpline: 713.349-8969

Please mail this completed form and payments to:

Donna Martin
P.O. Box 597859
Chicago, IL 60659-7859

Donna Martin's Email Address
djmtris@aol.com

Tri-Ess Supporting Membership Information - also complete reverse side

For privacy and security purposes, Crossdressers and their wives, and other members, may choose to use assumed names. Most Crossdressers adopt a feminine name. If you do not have a name, have fun. You might select one that is similar to your real name, 'Sam' becomes 'Samantha', 'Donald' can be 'Donna', or choose one that defines your femme personality, 'Hillary', 'Mae', 'Dolly', 'Marilyn', your first girlfriend, or favorite movie actress. You can use your true surname, or choose a modification of your last name. However, it is usually advisable and we recommend you create a completely different femme surname. The choice of your name(s) should be made thoughtfully to meet your personal security needs and preferences. Even your mailing name may be another pseudonym. For additional security and convenience, we encourage Crossdressers to use a US Post Office Box or similar commercial mail receiving service. Simply rent the box in your true name and list any others names, including your femme name and your mailing name, as authorized to receive mail.

If you have been a former member of Tri-Ess please give your membership number, if possible, state of residence at the time, and the femme name used for your previous membership

Previous Tri-Ess number _____ Name _____ State _____

___ For "Individual" Crossdressers (Wives may also join as an 'Individual')

Femme Name _____

Mailing Name _____

Mailing Address Line 1 _____

Optional Line 2 _____

City, State and Zip+4 _____

___ Check here to have a Tri-Ess Big Sister' contact you by mail

___ Check here to indicate a wife Joining as an Individual Please give the membership number of your Crossdressing partner

___ For "Couples" (Crossdresser and supportive spouse or female partner)

Crossdresser's femme name _____

Spouse/Partner's name or other adopted name to be used _____

Mailing Name(s) _____

Mailing Address Line 1 _____

Optional Line 2 _____

City, State and Zip +4 _____

___ Check here if you wish to be contacted by the nearest Tri-Ess Chapter

Optional: Telephone Number in case we need to contact you

Ask for: _____

Optional: Secure Email Address: _____

The "Friends of Tri-Ess" Supporting Membership categories below are intended for non-Crossdressers; individuals, organizations, vendors and other entities that support the educational aims and purposes of The Society.

"Commercial" Members receive discounted advertising rates and other important benefits, write for complete details.

- ___ Friend of Tri-Ess "Annual" Member minimum contribution \$ 24 per year
- ___ Friend of Tri-Ess "Commercial" Member minimum contribution \$ 48 per year *
- ___ Friend of Tri-Ess "Benefactor" minimum contribution \$100 * Please Specify \$ _____

Organization Name (If applicable) or Business Name (Commercial Members) _____

Mailing Name of Contact Person _____

Telephone Number _____

Mailing Address Line 1 _____

Optional Line 2 _____

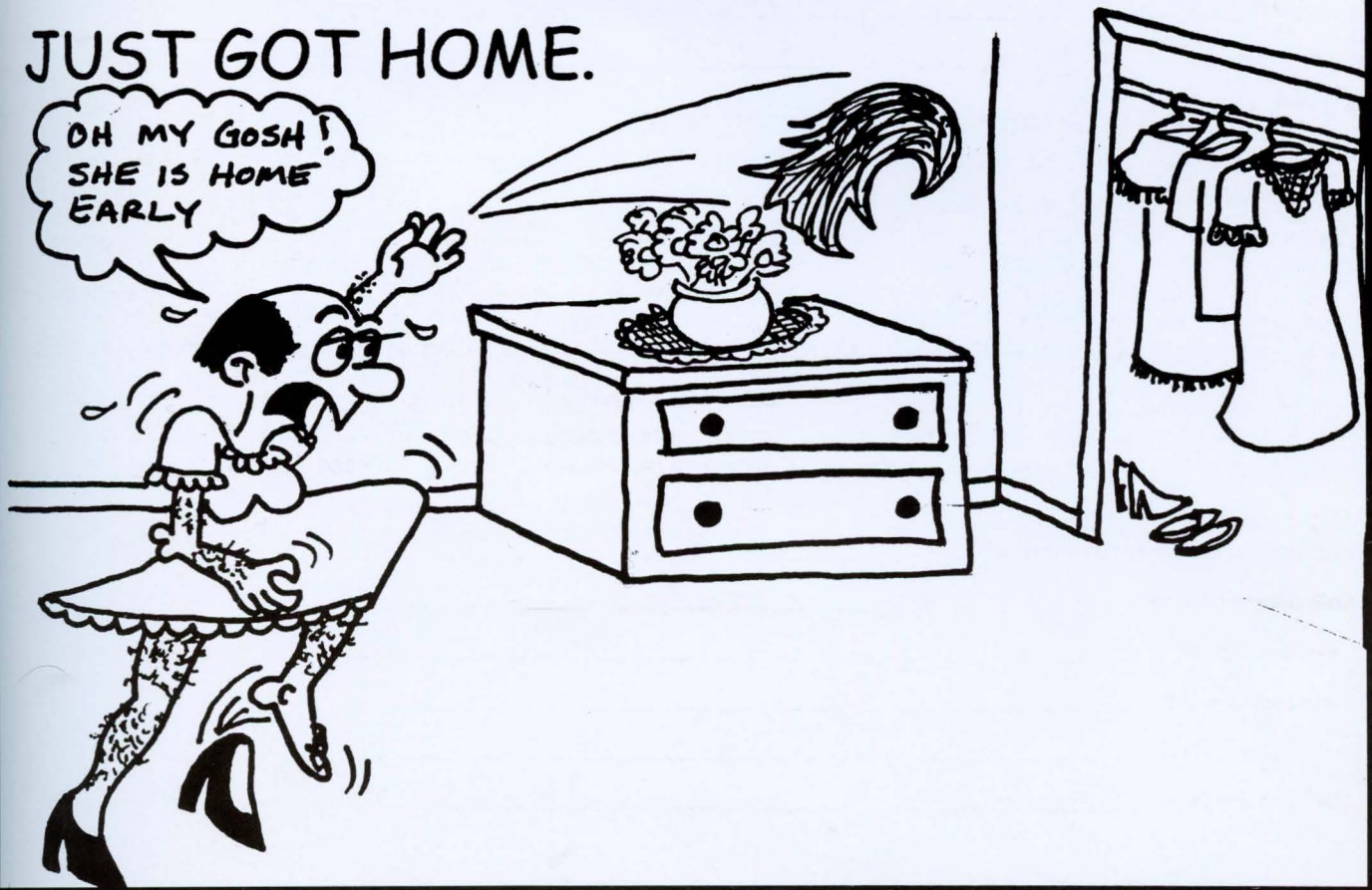
City, State and Zip +4 _____



BIZARRE HUMOR

By Molly Anne

FASTER THEN A SPEEDING BULLET!
ABLE TO LEAP THE SOFA IN A SINGLE
BOUND! LOOK! FLYING ACROSS THE
BED ROOM CEILING , IT'S A FLYING
RACCOON. NO, IT'S CATHY'S WIG
FLYING INTO THE CLOSET. HIS WIFE
JUST GOT HOME.



Maturity

From an Ann Landers column

Maturity is the ability to control anger and settle differences without violence.

Maturity is patience. It is the willingness to pass up immediate pleasure in favor of a long-term gain.

Maturity is perseverance, the ability to sweat out a project or a situation in spite of heavy opposition and discouraging setbacks.

Maturity is the capacity to face unpleasantness and frustration, discomfort and defeat, without complaint or collapse.

Maturity is being big enough to say, "I was wrong." And, when right, the mature person need not experience the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so."

Maturity is the ability to make a decision and stand by it. The immature spend their lives exploring endless possibilities and then do nothing.

Maturity means dependability, keeping one's word and coming through in a crisis. The immature are masters of the alibi. They are confused and conflicted. Their lives are a maze of broken promises, former friends, unfinished business and good intentions that somehow never materialize.

Maturity is the art of living in peace with what we cannot change, the courage to change what should be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference.