

The Femme Mirror

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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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Editorial Policy: *The Femme Mirror* will not publish any material that bashes any transgendered person or support organization, nor will it publish any ad hominem argument. 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.

The Femme Mirror is absolutely committed to protecting the security and confidentiality of all Tri-Ess members. In order to ensure this protection, the Mirror conforms to the following editorial policy:

- 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 [REDACTED]
P.O. Box 597859
Chicago, IL 60659

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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See Page 7 for About The Cover Girl



Executive Director's Message

By Carol Beecroft

There are two matters I wanted to bring to your attention.

The first item has to do with what is happening to the Library Project. Marlene, who helps me in so many ways in the Tri-Ess office, has been delegated much of the work on this important project. She says that we have filled 26 libraries with our book packets. In addition, a number of libraries are waiting on book packets, but the sisters who offered to donate the packets have not followed through with checks. In this case, we have 13 libraries waiting for our book packets, and as soon as our checks come in we will see that those libraries each get a book packet.

Remember, Tri-Ess is **MATCHING** each set that you donate with **ANOTHER** set that you, the original donor, can direct to another library of your own choice. We actually can fill an additional 21 libraries as soon as these "original" donors select another library. And, as noted above, Tri-Ess will pay for this second set of books. I will be mailing a letter shortly to those members who qualify to select a second library for a gift of a book packet. All-in-all, we have either donated, have libraries waiting for books, or are waiting for a second selection by an "original" donor in the total amount of 60 libraries. That's good progress!! If YOU are interested in donating one of our book packets to a library in your area, please send a check for \$30.00 plus the name and address of not only that library but also the same information for a second library. The second set of books will be paid for by Tri-Ess. That's a great deal (2 for 1) for you, the libraries and Tri-Ess. As you might know, Tri-Ess places an attractive sticker on the inside of the back cover of each book,

indicating our name and address.

By the way, I do receive calls occasionally from television producers who are looking for crossdressers, and particularly for crossdressers and spouses, to appear on television talk shows. As you may know, they pay all your travel expenses for you to be on these shows. If you might be available for a television appearance to talk about crossdressing, do get in touch with me, and I will keep you on my list.

I am most happy that I have found my good friend, Merissa, who is terrific with the computer. In the past she laid out issues of the Couples' Newsletter for me. I had lost contact with her, and things came to a screeching halt as far as my layouts were concerned. Now that I have again established contact with Merissa, we should soon have another issue of the Couples' Newsletter in the mail. By the way, I would welcome letters and articles dealing with "couples' matters" for future issues of the Couples' Newsletter.

If you are part of a couple, but are not listed as such on the Tri-Ess records, please consider sending in an additional \$10.00 a year for a Couples' Membership. That way you will be sure that you and yours get the Couples' Newsletter. Plus, your wife will receive the Sweetheart Connection. We want all Tri-Ess couples to get these newsletters. I have personally observed the development of a feeling of closeness between couples who belong to Couples' Groups. If you are interested in starting a Couples' Group in your chapter, please contact me. My best regards go to all of you.

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
into Stepping Stones!**

Come to

S.P.I.C.E VI



July 15 - 19, 1998

Atlanta, Georgia

Write: Peggy Rudd, Box 5304, Katy, TX 77491-5304

Fax: 281-347-8747 E-Mail: [REDACTED]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Looking Toward the Future

I just received my latest copy of our Tri-Ess Femme Mirror and I was impressed both by the professional quality of the layout and by the thoughtful articles. California was well represented among the writers by Tri-Ess member and Alpha friend, Melanie Yarborough.

This is the first issue to have been professionally laid out. While I personally would have appreciated more "design" in the form of illustrations, more white space, and a variety of typefaces, I was very pleased at the effort to move forward with attempts to make our magazine even better.

I remember, not too many years ago, when our national magazine only had a few pages and appeared infrequently. The Femme Mirror is now a forward looking, quality publication. And it became such through a lot of hard work and careful planning....

Just as our magazine, our whole national structure has developed a forward looking attitude, with the result that membership is growing and new chapters are forming.... [We] need to be looking ahead... our greatest goal is to meet the needs of our members....

Kathy Helms, President, Alpha Chapter,
(from her editorial in the October issue of Alpha Bits.)



Dear Sisters,

I am a member of Tri-Ess and also a web master. If your chapter needs web space I can provide it free, or, if you would like some assistance in setting up a page for your local chapter, I will help also.

If you want to know more about me you may check the pages listed below.

What do I get out of it? Some hopefully good publicity. I do host three sisters' web pages and four fem e-mail boxes.

Hugs from your sister,

Candy ([REDACTED])

Home page

www.ruralamerica.com/candy.html

Spouse Links:

www.ruralamerica.com/candy2b.html

Rings for Cross Dressers:

<http://mail.ruralamerica.net/~kplace/rings.html>



Dear Sisters,

I am a square dancer of long standing, but alas! all my dancing has been en drab, whereas I would definitely prefer to be going to a square dance all prettied up in a gorgeous square dancing dress over a fetching bouffant petticoat. I would greatly appreciate any information which any of our crossdressing dancers may care to offer concerning the availability, location, and schedules of crossdressed square dancing anywhere in the country.

Further, along another but equally fascinating line, I have a great fondness for those lovely gowns of the Civil War era, complete with hoop skirts, pantalettes, hold-onto-the-bedpost lace-up corsets, and all the trimmings. Any and all information on this particular style of dress would be most gratefully received.

Many thanks in advance to all who respond to these requests.

Love,

Betsy ME-2461-S

Dear Jane Ellen and Frances,

Congrats to Frances on the new look of the Femme Mirror. It really looks wonderful and is a real improvement over the old format. This one is so much easier to read.

I have only one minor complaint. I wish that I could get a email or phone call before you go to press so I could change my ad. That's a pretty old ad and I don't carry some of those books anymore.

Also, the ad above mine on pg. 59 - Queen Cushion Shoes - they're not in business anymore.

Hugs and warmest regards,

JoAnn Roberts

Thanks for the kind words, JoAnn, and for your new ad, which appears in this issue. Thanks also for the word about Queen Cushion Shoes. Sorry to hear they've folded. - Frances



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About Our Cover Girl

Debbie [REDACTED] is from a small town (Tewksbury) in Massachusetts. She began playing dress-up with her sisters at the age of six and never stopped. Well, that's not quite true. Debbie finds it extremely easy to quit crossdressing and purge, as evidenced by the fact she's done it eight or nine times.

Debbie left home, got married and joined the military in her early twenties. She spent twenty-four years traveling the country and world. About eighteen months ago, her ex-wife notified the military of her crossdressing, and she entered a very educational phase of her life. To make a long story short, Debbie retired a year ago and has made Northern Virginia her home.

For many years, she was a very active pengal and in her heyday was writing over twenty letters a month. As a result, she has friends all over the country. Unfortunately, she lost touch with many of her pengals during her post divorce education.

Debbie is active in the community and has been a member of Boulton & Park (San Antonio, Texas), and started attending and working at the Texas T-Party in 1992 (when stationed in Texas). Since then she has worked at various other conventions (Southern Comfort and True Spirit) and served several years on the Board of Directors of the Transgender Education Association (Northern Virginia). Over the years, Debbie has been a consistent contributor to the Femme Mirror. Her sense of humor is her greatest strength and she constantly shares it with everyone.

She remains very active in outreach and has sponsored and helped well over twenty sisters to emerge from the closet. It is her greatest love and joy. Debbie has a couple of favorite sayings: "Helping new sisters is our payment to those who were there for us;" "The more I discover about myself and people, the more I realize just how much I don't understand;" and finally, "To love yourself, you have to be able to laugh at yourself."

The Jim Bridges Catalogue

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Jackets and Suits designed for the MALE body!
Featuring: Make-up, Breast Forms, Corsets, Shoes,
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North Hollywood, CA 91617-0715

phone 1-818-[REDACTED]

fax 1-818-755-7942

ALASKA DESCRIBED

by Allison [REDACTED]

For the few thousand of you who missed Peggy Rudd's Dignity Cruise to Alaska, it seems only fitting for me to impose my views on you.



The Grand Promenade

There were about 26 of us, including crossdressers, some wives, and three or four grown children. The number changes each time I'm asked, which also happens when someone wants to know how many whales we saw. I personally saw fifteen. But I was below decks when the captain backed the ship down to avoid hitting two other pods of whales, probably bringing the total to 450 or a thousand.

We started out a week and a half ago on Sunday afternoon (August 3); returned last Sunday morning (August 10). Phoebe (The Claw) and I left on Saturday and drove up from Olympia to Blaine so we could spend the morning shopping as two doddering old ladies adrift in Vancouver. Turned out we WERE adrift in Vancouver. We went to the Canada Pavilion (left over from the Worlds' Fair) where we could see the ships and the cruise ship parking lot, only to find out that our directions from the travel agent were wrong and neither of those were our ship. We spent the rest of the morning asking all the interesting looking people we could buttonhole, where the right departure pier was. It turned out to be around the stadium and two rivers over, a distance of about 60 miles and three and a half hours, the way we drove it.

Checking our four steamer trunks (what's a cruise without a steamer trunk?) and eight suitcases - well it WAS a seven day trip - we carried on the make-up and medicine bags which weighed about 35 pounds each. The need for that much makeup and medicine being dictated by our age, they were somewhat affected by how we wish we might look if we apply enough stuff.

After standing in line with the other 1,998 embarkees and finally crossing the gang plank, we learned that we were supposed to have checked in for boarding passes as we entered the building next to the pier. The clerk at the desk near the street smiled sweetly as she handed us our passes and informed us we might like to hurry, since the ship was departing in one and a half minutes. The claw made it in time and prevailed on the Captain to hold the departure until her "friend" could make it, her friend not being used to running in high heels.

Our cabin was one deck below the bilge. There being no windows, fresh air was piped down from somewhere above, and a thermostat on the wall gave the false sense of security that we could control the temperature at any level we wished. We became quite proficient at climbing the rope ladder up to the deck where the elevator took the more affluent passengers up to the fun places. And there WERE fun places.

But first, the beds. We had specifically written to Melanie Rudd that we needed a queen size bed with room for one of us to sleep crosswise, a medical necessity these days. Instead we had two beds with futon mattresses (similar in size and width to the five-high bunks we had on the LSMR 411 in World War II). They were a perfect size for a litter of puppies each, which was perfectly all right once we got used to barking in our sleep.



The Inlet to Glacier Bay

The icebergs here are not as large as those in the Atlantic, as they break off in smaller pieces. Still there is a lot of ice floating around in the bay.

ALASKA DESCRIBED (continued)

When we climbed the ladder to the upper decks, we were stunned by the clothes people wore. Beautiful. There were gorgeous silk creations, sparkling jewels, some of the largest breasts I have ever observed on 55 year old women, glittering high heels, a couple of movie stars, and hair do's that knocked our eyes out. We were simply thrilled. Then the house lights went on, the welcome movie was over, and the rest of us looked around, sharing our disappointment over the fact that the crossdressers and their families were the best dressed people on board. And I was a little chilly in my cut-off jeans.

The food was great. All of us on the Rudd tour were seated at three large tables. Well actually we were seated on chairs so we could eat off the tables, which were very full of good food. Chitlins and hominy grits were in short supply, but everything else was there in abundance. I personally enjoyed the escargot, first cousin to our northwestern varietus slugus.

The social director announced that it was possible to eat 12 meals a day on the ship. The last one of the day was the midnight buffet. That was a little later than The Claw and I usually sup, and a little past the time when we were alert enough to safely descend the ladder, so we just slept over in the dining room until breakfast. That gave more continuity to the ship's program, especially since the breakfast toast also slept over from the night before. The other advantage to our routine was that when we woke up, we were already at breakfast, and didn't have to shower or make up like the other people did. We came to be regarded as heroes by the other passengers, not for sleeping over, but for being found alive each successive morning.

Almost everyone on board was nice to us. The nicest ones were the ones who knew we were crossdressers. For instance, The Claw was nice to me; Peggy was nice to Melanie; Desiree was nice to Diane; Mary Belle was nice to Dana. Nobody else much cared except the ship's staff, which went out of the way to be nice to us. Of course I doubt that the captain would have backed the ship up to avoid hitting us, like he did the whales, but he was still good to us.

It took us three days to gather the courage to traverse the 12 decks up to the open air swimming pool and two hot tubs. Differing from Colorado last year where I forgot a brassiere to hang my floppers in when we left the hot springs dressing room, we dressed in our own room, and just stayed in our swimming attire until I could return and exchange dunked floppers for dry ones. None the less, the hot tub experience was not lacking interest.

I had swum in the very flexible latex falsies before and knew they'd stay in my swim suit armor-plated bust line. But I didn't count on the pressure of the Jacuzzi sliding one of them most of the way out the top as I was carrying on a charming conversation with the pool's only other occupant, a middle aged man who easily could have paid the entire cost of the trip for The Claw and me. My oh my, he was a gentleman. Didn't say a thing. It was Phoebe who reminded me that my disfigurement had suddenly migrated. After a courteous interval the wealthy gentleman, whose hair had all been meticulously reimplanted, left. It was only then, that I found the humongous currents in the hot tub had shifted both of my forms into the same breast cup, leaving me unable to stand without a noticeable tilt, and looks of pity from passers by.

Even our dinner table companion, who observed the hot tub caper, didn't say anything about my anatomical catastrophe that evening. I returned the courtesy by not mentioning that the only way we spotted him as a crossdresser among the other sun bathers was that his legs were spread on the deck chair as though awaiting the gynecologist to start the D. & C.

Of course table manners were another thing. I was very subtle in not criticizing my friend who mimicked me as I licked and sucked my fingers clean as I finished up my sticky role the following breakfast. It was, of course, his way of having fun, even though



Ridges of Mendenhall

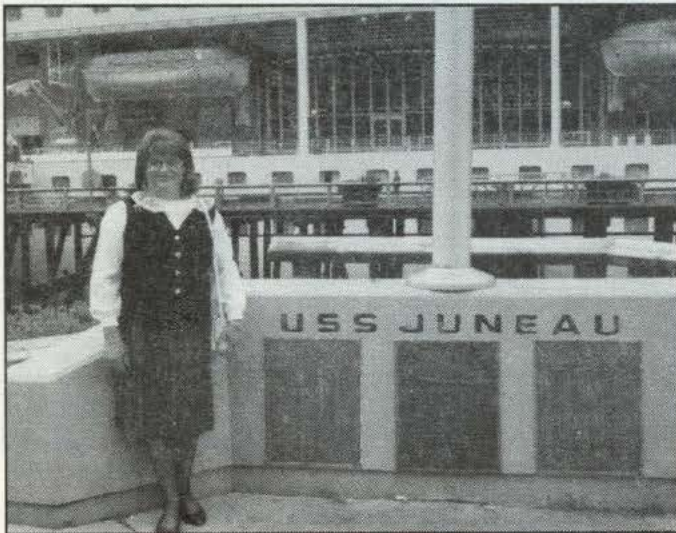
While we were flying back, I took this picture out the floor of the helicopter to show the ridges that form as the glacier approaches the end of its path. By this time, it has been exposed to higher temperatures for a longer time, and there's a lot more melting going on.

ALASKA DESCRIBED (continued)

I doubt that it would have been judged as good table conduct if I were to write to Miss Manners.

When we reached Skagway, Alaska, we were all debarked. A couple of people were stripped all the way to the cambium layer, but most just had their vocal cords stapled so they wouldn't bark while on shore. The first store I entered was named Miss Bonnie's Buttons and Boobs or something like that. She had HAT PINS! Would you believe I have been hunting for a place to buy hat pins ever since I spent four days at Esprit two years ago chasing my straw hat around the parking lot at the Red Lion in Port Angeles? Remembering what I have read about women protecting themselves by inserting a long hat pin directly between the ribs and into the heart of their attackers, I bought two for \$10 each. Then, in order to avoid being caught smuggling lethal weapons into Canada when we returned through customs, I spent \$20 for another straw hat. Everyone in the store had fun helping me find one that fit well over my wig, and then figure out how to pin it in both the front and the back.

The second store we entered was the jewelry store with the 100 year old painted pocket watch on a rock up high on the hill above the town. The proprietor got into a lovely conversation about Skagway history as he knew it and I as I knew it. Cuddled snugly in my new purple big-brimmed straw hat, and knowing that I looked more feminine than I have in my life, I commented that if we spent all our money on the cruise I'd just find me a rich man



Diane [REDACTED]

and marry him and give him the bill. Then I said we must leave. He smiled, looked me straight in the eye, and said, "Have a nice cruise, sir." Phoebe grabbed me by the arm and dragged me away while I was trying to demand just what he meant by that.

We encountered Peggy and Mel sitting on a street bench waiting for a couple of others from our party to quit their phone conversations with their brokers. It was comforting to know some of us weren't as broke or broker than we were. The Rudds were not shopping. They explained that they had seen their share of the world's souvenir and art memorabilia, and now bought only things they knew they would use at home, like under arm deodorant. I forgot the brand, but it said, "OK for men too."

Some people took the narrow gage railway part way up White Pass, the old Gold Rush mountain pass where all the horses, some of the donkeys, and many of the prospectors died from cold or from eating the ones who had died without raising the temperature to the 175 degrees required by the health department. I had taken that train 20 years ago, and it had come apart in the middle half way up the pass. We sat still on the tracks watching the engine belching smoke across the canyon above us. So we sat on the depot bench and prayed for the safety of the excursioners until they returned to Skagway.

Elizabeth, at our table signed up for a bicycle trip from Skagway to Haines, where she would meet the ship that night. She loved it, and described it in detail to us at dinner as she stood up during the entire dinner. But her ego was still intact; no one had offered her a jock strap to start the trip.

We arrived at Haines in the early evening. As usual there was a fair sized crowd walking off the pier to go into town. An irritated Italian man was standing beside the line as we passed. He was calling to his wife to hurry up and bring their child, in words that more clearly betrayed his emotions.

The Claw occasionally has bursts of originality, and as soon as we were out of his earshot, she had one of these attacks. Quite clearly she mimicked him, "I said, get the hell up here now and bring the damn bambino with you, ya ol' bat!" She knew of course that the man couldn't hear her, but she didn't know the couple immediately in line ahead of us were also Italians and were friends of the man with the recalcitrant wife. THEY broke out laughing.

When we reached the street and boarded the city bus to get to down-town Haines, I looked out the window. They were stand-

ALASKA DESCRIBED (continued)

ing outside, pointing at us, four Italians and one bambino doubled over with laughter. They may have departed straight for Italy from Haines, because we never saw them again, and believe me, we were looking.

Another of our dinner companions and his wife became good friends during our 21 meals together. We were surprised that each of us wrote all or parts of club newsletters. More surprised, that we had each used each other's stuff in what we had written. More than that, we had corresponded. And even more odd, her last news letter was awaiting me when we arrived home, and my last e-mail to her was sent after she had left for the trip. She has flown lots of airplanes and has more distinguished flying crosses than I have pesos left over from my last trip to Ensenada. That gave me a serious challenge: to downgrade airplane pilots and upgrade Navy electricians from an earlier war so that we stood toe to toe in glory.

At Juneau we took a helicopter tour to Mendenhall Glacier. I explained to The Claw that Mendenhall is the largest glacier on North America if not the world. As the six of us in our copter got out on top of the glacier, I thought it might be nice to verify for Phoebe that my knowledge of glacier sizes is infallible, and I asked the pilot if I were not right. "Hell, no," he said, "it's just the closest one to Juneau." I thought back over the problem in the hot tub, my experience talking so seductively in my straw hat to the jeweler, and now this. The whole trip began to take on

an ominous tone. "How", I asked myself, "can a woman's prestige be further damaged?"

To make matters worse, my expensive zoom camera chose to shiver so much that it was unresponsive to all the control buttons. I changed the battery, but still couldn't make the film back up or go forward or the lens go. So I tucked it snugly between my two bumps where it would warm up and then work. But tragically I had forgotten the old expression, "colder than a witch's --" (where I had put it), and it still didn't work. So I opened it and ripped out a whole roll of exposed film, which will be found by archaeologists 250 years from now, developed, and shown as historical proof that Pentax cameras are not always so hot.

At Ketchikan we took the shore excursion out to Totem Bite State Park. It is a park full of totem poles and an Indian Long House built by the Tlinket Indians (not to be confused with the Clunket Indians or the Italians). Everything was excellently maintained, including the fat woman in the red coat and jet black hair who stood with her mouth open in front of every totem pole I wanted to photograph. Since, as they explained, it is the Tlinket custom to build and paint the totem poles, and then let them deteriorate and finally fall down (except for these new ones in the park), I finally concluded the same might sometime happen to her. Then I would come back and get the pictures I wanted. I suspected somewhere back in the crowd was a neglected bambino, but spent little time searching.

Once back on the ship, it was "enjoy the cruise" back to Vancouver. The ship put on really good stage shows with a young, but very professional cast. The table servers were wonderful. (What a weak word to describe the delectable 20-year-old girls who responded favorably to every legal request we made of them!) The cabin attendant had to have realized that one of us was only pretending to be a woman, but he refrained from ever calling Phoebe "Sir," so we tipped him a little extra.

At the all-passenger talent show, our friend, Jill, from Vancouver, wowed the audience with the top performance. She sang "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" while decked out in a skin-tight sequined dress and the wonderful black wig she has worn in performances for Holiday en Femme and for Esprit. But this time she had the whole ship's band as background. She never did tell the audience she was crossdressed; nobody thought to ask. I hoped she would pull it off beautifully, but she left the stage fully clothed.

Peggy Rudd bought drinks for all of us in the 13th deck lounge as



Dining Onboard with Allison and Phoebe

ALASKA DESCRIBED (continued)

she and Mel told us how wonderful we all were. We all knew that anyway, but it was nice to hear it from someone who makes money from having written it in a book. Everyone assumed I was smashed, but that was before the drinks were served. Actually, I was thinking about some of the funny questions the non-criminals asked while we were in the our two pub-



Jill [REDACTED]

lic pre-sentencing hearings scheduled by Peggy to explain why we look and act the way we do. Some timid woman asked if we used the women's rest rooms. Somebody among us had the nerve to answer, "No." Not wanting to be banned from the restrooms and suffer from constipation for the rest of the week I placed practicality above veracity, and bit my tongue until the end came off and the but slid back down my throat.

Janet and Emily, daughters of the most energetic missionary in our group, and of the charming Mary Belle, would have captured the Miss Congeniality award in a Miss Universe contest. Maybe even Miss Universe herself. While complaining that there were no 19 to 24 year old boys on the ship, they made friends with everyone else on all 13 decks. Next possibly to Jill, they will be the fondest remembered people on the whole ship.

When we all parted company at Vancouver, our last view of Peggy and Melanie was while they were still at the breakfast table chewing on last night's toast. They waved, we waved, the twenty ladies from the Bahamas told me my slip was showing, and we assured the Canadian custom officials that we weren't hiding anything except my slip, and hadn't bought anything in Alaska except some rather interesting stories about how airplanes can

be made to work under adverse conditions. Don't think I'm kidding about the value of the airplane information; next time I'm on American and the pilot and copilot are asphyxiated, I'll put that information to use and become known as the reincarnated Amelia Earhart, once a passenger on a Peggy Rudd cruise.

Your loved one,
Grammy Allison

Poet's Corner

Plastic Beauty

By Sue CA-2384-S

My breasts are made of silicon,
My toudch of latex foam,
My wig of polyester,
and never a head has known.

My lashes, vinyl fibers,
My eyes to accentuate.
My skirt so long and flowing
Is made of acetate.

My seamless hose of nylon,
Like silk, so sensual.
My nails are of acrylic,
And again I need a fill.

Nylon blouse, and slip, and such,
I clutch a vinyl bag.
I've become a plastic beauty.
I'm just a man in drag.

Destiny - Dignity

Dignity Cruise #8 or North to Alaska

By Diane [REDACTED] TX-4261-H

The Dignity cruise started almost a year before the ship left for one Diane [REDACTED]. It included, first and foremost, the decision to go. Then we (Diane and Desiree') had to decide on accommodations - standard, upgrade, deluxe or super deluxe. We settled on an upgrade to a cabin with its own outside veranda.

Then came the clothing decisions. What would the weather be like? What did we need to take? What did we have and what did we need to buy? This mandated many shopping trips for Desiree' and me. Desiree' ended up with a floor length, beaded off-white gown with a bolero jacket, a pink ballerina length gown with a fitted nylon bodice and a taffeta skirt with a full net over-skirt, as well as many casual outfits.

Diane got a floor length black gown with a square neckline, 1" wide shoulder straps and a skirt with a slit up the front left side to an almost indecent height. She also got a off-white beaded floor length gown (although different from Desiree's). Diane also got a sports outfit with jacket, matching skirt, matching slacks and coordinated skirt and blouse. With all of this, plus what we already had in our closets, we were ready to start selecting outfits.

The ship was scheduled to sail on August 3. We planned to fly to Seattle on August 1, take a shuttle to Vancouver, BC on August 2, spend the night and then get to the ship as early as possible on August 3.

By midnight on July 31 I was all packed and ready to go! Desiree only had a few things left to pack so we fell into bed for a short night with a planned 6AM get up.

NOT!!

The phone rang at 1AM. Diane's

youngest son's wife was in the hospital to give birth to Diane's first grandchild! Diane loaded all of the luggage that was ready to go into the pickup (which almost filled it) and buzzed off to the hospital. Desiree' joined her later after finishing all of the things left to do in Diane's absence.

Diane held her new grandson at 11AM that morning. The only trouble with that was that she and Desiree' had planned to catch a 10AM flight. That was OK. We all have to be flexible and set priorities.

We went directly from the hospital to the airport, caught the next flight to Seattle and our travel plans were back on track.

Sunday morning plans called for breakfast at the hotel with several fellow cruisers. As I remember, there were Diane's male self, Desiree', Melanie & Peggy Rudd, Jill's male self with her spouse Mary Ann, and Dana's family (Mary Belle, Emily, and Janet). We had a nice breakfast and then it was off to the ship.

I chose to board the ship "en drab" in case there were questions with Customs. Jill decided to follow suit. As it turned out, Customs didn't even look at my identification and apparently didn't care who I was or how I was dressed. Since we were there early, Customs and boarding were also quick and painless - only one very short line. We got to our cabin and it was time for Diane to emerge.

Later on deck, Diane met Dana and family and NONE of them recognized her!!

How sweet it is!

For many of you reading about the cruise the important part is what Diane wore each day, what accessories, etc. One girl on the cruise had created an extensive spread sheet containing what she was to wear every morning, afternoon and evening, - a minimum of three changes a day. Another girl wore the same skirt almost every day. Others were somewhere on the scale between these two. I only changed twice a day - usually. The theme of this article is not who wore what but what I feel that the cruise was REALLY about.

As many of you know, Peggy Rudd's second book was entitled *Crossdressing with Dignity*. All of the cruises Peggy has set up are called "Dignity" cruises. I don't think it is a stretch to say that Peggy believes that a crossdresser can maintain his dignity



Jill on the promenade

Destiny - Dignity (continued)

while in a dress AND IN A "STRAIGHT" public place and that the Dignity cruises are a workshop where anyone can put the theory into practice.

I have been to several "Texas T Partys" and a "Holiday En Femme." I have been to malls and restaurants. I have done all of the above en femme. None of these compare with the cruise. There were over 1900 passengers and a crew of almost 1000 on the cruise ship, and among them were about 20 crossdressers.

We ate with these people, associated with them and explored with them. In seven days, I did not witness a single event of rudeness towards anyone in our group. To the contrary, most people went out of their way to be kind, or at least neutral.

Now there was one instance when the ship was in port and lunch was not served at the regularly assigned tables. Instead, as people came into the dining room they were seated at the next empty seat. Well, Diane, Desiree', Lucerne, Elizabeth, Dee, and Donna were all seated and "doing lunch" when a couple were seated at the last two remaining seats. It turned out that they were from Waco, Texas. The man tried to be congenial but his wife almost died of apoplexy. The only time she spoke was when she heard Desiree' say that she was from Texas. "Who said they were from Texas?" was her offering to the conversation. A few words, gobble down food and they were out of there as soon as possible. BUT THEY WERE POLITE!

Some of the girls sunbathed in female swim suits, one of the gals took the train excursion in Skagway, Alaska and took line dancing lessons on the ship, both in a miniskirt. In fact, she appears momentarily on the videotape of the cruise during the line dancing lesson. Three of the girls got up and sang solos at the Karaoke event. Diane played bridge and participated in a nail care seminar with seven other ladies. One girl spent most of her time in "outreach" activities. Jill, who many saw perform at the 97 Texas T Party, sang "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" at the talent show and "Crazy" at the Karaoke. Many went into the port towns to shop and sight-see. Diane, Desiree', Mary and Fran all went for an evening stroll through town in Haines. Other girls visited a local bar and later reported that after the locals' initial shock wore off, everyone had a good time.

Diane and Desiree' went on a wildlife excursion boat in Juneau. Diane met Susan and husband Rich. Susan, a teacher, was very interested in crossdressing and talked with Diane for a long time. Susan even brought a friend to a seminar, hosted by Peggy, to

learn more about crossdressing and ask questions. The attendance at that seminar overflowed the space available. It appeared that most of the attendees were genuinely interested in learning more about our phenomenon.

Seventeen of us (crossdressers, S/O's, and children) had a group picture taken one night while dressed for an "after five" dinner. During the remainder of the cruise, the photo shop couldn't keep those prints in stock. Eventually they sold about 80 copies of OUR group photo. Who bought them? Why? It is sure our group didn't buy all of them.

I showed the photo to one lady on deck and she asked if there were any "real" women in it. I answered yes and asked her to pick them out. Unfortunately she first pointed to my position (I really don't think that she was aware that the person that she was pointing to in the picture was the same one that she was talking to!) and said, "That isn't one." She finally did pick out one or two females and then asked if there were more. When I told her that there were five more, she didn't know what to say. Now how should we handle this? Should all of the females be offended, all of the unpicked CD's be elated, or just accept the situation as is was and go on with our lives?

The point of this article is that it is not necessary to go to "Friendly" places. For many, this is an intermediate step on their road of travel, but for many others, this is the end of the road. There is nothing wrong with this, but you don't need to limit yourself in this manner.

I have read two very good articles in gender publications recently. The first was "Have You Ever Forgotten Your Clothes?" by Janyne C. in the August Fiesta!, newsletter of the New Mexico Chapter of Tri-Ess, which was reprinted from the June 1997 issue of Alpha-Bits, the publication of the Alpha Chapter of Tri-Ess. The second was "An Open Letter" by Debra Darling, in the August 1997 Northwest Passages, the newsletter of the Northwest Gender Alliance. Each of these articles talks about who we are, how we are, where we are, where we plan to go and how we plan to get there. They are both thought-provoking.

Consider taking a quantum leap in discovering yourself. Consider going on a Dignity Cruise...and if you don't want to get into the heavy discovery stuff - go anyway. You will have a blast!





Ask Frances



Dear Frances,

My husband is only 46, but for the last few years, he has lost all interest in sex. I found out about his crossdressing ten years ago, and I'm still having problems with it, especially since he'd rather spend time in front of his computer "chatting" with his "sisters" until two in the morning! When I approach him more than once a month, he says I'm oversexed! This can't be normal for a man his age, transgendered or not. I've been wondering about crossdressers possibly having low testosterone levels. Is this true, and if it is, has anyone tried hormone therapy (testosterone, not estrogen)? I'd slip it into his breakfast juice, if I thought it would help!

Signed: Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,

Many have speculated that lower testosterone levels are a factor in "causing" crossdressing. As far as I know, the research data available does not confirm this. The persons tested all were "within normal limits."

What could additional testosterone do for them, should we slip it into their orange juice? Heightened aggressiveness, somewhat coarser skin and hair, deeper voice, and (perhaps) more of a sex drive, are possibilities. This would depend on the individual, the dosage, and myriads of other factors. It's not likely to regrow hair in bald areas. It could cause old-fashioned teenage acne to reappear. It could make them irritable and even harder to live with. The effect we wives would be looking for (renewed sexual energy that is focused on us) is the most problematical. If there is some physical problem affecting sexual performance, such as prostate enlargement, for instance, more testosterone will make it worse.

Mental/emotional attitude is more important than most physical factors, anyway, where sexual function is concerned. Some men (not just crossdressers) are self-centered (to the point of being narcissistic), and some are obsessive-compulsive. While crossdressing itself is no longer considered pathological behavior, narcissism, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and impotence in the absence of physical disease are recognized psychiatric diagnoses for which various therapies do exist. In simpler terms, crossdressing itself cannot be "cured" because it is so closely

linked to elements of the personality, but other recognized disorders that are sometimes associated with the crossdressing can at least be treated.

But let's hang onto our hats, ladies! Before reaching for that secret herbal blend, (or prescription drugs, for that matter), make sure he has a thorough check-up to rule out any physical disease. If he is already on drugs for high blood pressure, for instance, that could definitely be a factor. Check with his cardiologist. He's too embarrassed to see his regular doctor? Send him to someone else, such as a urologist! Then see a counselor for help in sorting out personal and relationship issues. Whether he's willing to acknowledge it or not, he does have a problem, and it will take both of you, working on it together, to make it better.

Another factor involved in his lack of interest may be his feelings of injury and rejection, stemming from your failure to jump for joy when you found out he was a crossdresser. When what is so important to him is such a turn-off to you, hurt feelings are normal enough. That alone is a powerful killer of sexual desire. What is wrong is his failure to empathize with your feelings, which anyone should realize are at least as bruised as his. Some people let themselves harden into punishing, withholding, manipulative types whose pride won't let them apologize and start over. But we have to watch out for ourselves here. Sometimes we are the ones guilty of this!

One last thought. All together now, ladies: We - are - not - oversexed!

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What's in a Name?

A Wife's Perspective

by Frances Fairfax

Going back to the "femme name" issue for a minute, it is obviously a sore subject for many of us. It's a major step from "my George in a dress" to "SHEILA, THAT 'OTHER WOMAN'" George is spending so much time and money on.

What's in a name? Naming her validates her! Naming her thwarts our efforts to close our eyes and make it all go away. It can take quite a lot of communication, a lot of empathy, and a lot of work on both sides before George and his wife can both recognize that he is the same person (a man with some "feminine" personality elements) all the time, regardless of dress or name; not two different people, and not "a woman trapped in a man's body." Only then does the name become all that it was meant to be - a convenient, congruent label for that beautifully dressed creature, and a "code" to use when out shopping together!


On a slightly related subject, it is not too unusual for a beginning crossdresser to assert quite strongly that he is two people! I know one who had "her" take up smoking, something he had never done in his life, just to accentuate the difference between the "two" of them. Noticed any "night and day" personality and behavior changes when he's "her" as opposed to him? Has this changed with time? For the better or for the worse? My husband is pretty much the same person all the time, regardless of how he's dressed, but that's not saying it was always that way. I'll say this about Jane - "she" is still easier to talk with sometimes!

"Well we all have a face
That we hide away forever
And we take them out and show ourselves
When everyone has gone.
Some are satin some are steel
Some are silk and some are leather
They're the faces of the stranger
But we love to try them on.
Have you ever let your lover see
The stranger in yourself?"

-The Stranger by Billy Joel

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Who Was That Masked Man?

Ending the Era of the Mask!

by Rachel Miller

For most of my life I was very good at fooling people with the masks that I wore. Everyone thought they knew me, but they only knew the parts of me that I let them see. They were never allowed to see any sign of my cross-dressing. My mask made me appear confident and secure while inside I was confused, afraid and alone. I was convinced that I could never allow my "weakness" to be exposed. I was terrified by the thought that somehow someone would look me in the eye and see the truth, the truth that I desperately sought to hide. So I built an impenetrable facade that no one could pierce. Hiding became such an integral part of me that I was no longer able to be myself even with myself. The real Richard was banished from open existence. After hiding so long even I no longer knew the truth about me.

Eventually I realized that the only way to be liberated from my self-imposed prison was to freely allow someone inside the barriers I had so painstakingly erected. But what if I let someone in and they didn't accept me? What if they rejected me and laughed? That would really confirm that I was a bad person. So I kept my mask on, hid my fears and continued to play my pretending game. The idyllic life that observers saw was nothing but a hard, crusty shell that hid an interior of pain and anguish. I hated hypocrisy yet excelled at its practice with my endless parade of masks.

Predictably, desperation arrived and began ripping at my carefully constructed facade. I could not, I would not, continue to live like this. Richard had to come out and no rationalization was effective in continuing to suppress him. I reached out to other cross-dressers and, with the compassion that can only come from true understanding, they extended their arms and helped me set my masks aside and explore without judgment. They encouraged me, the me I'd kept so carefully hidden, out into the sunlight—squinting and covering my eyes, but in the sunshine for the first time. They understood me. They accepted me. They gave me the strength to begin to understand and accept myself.

Through their sensitivity and compassion I finally found the courage to share myself fully with my wife Marsha. She couldn't possibly understand in the beginning, but she loved me and love is stronger than the strongest walls. She helped me to beat down my walls with firm but gentle hands. When my walls and masks finally came down, Richard was free to discover the bliss of becoming one complete person.

That's my story and also the core story of many others in the gender community. Most cross-dressers have traveled this horrifying right of passage and nearly all started out feeling lost and alone. Unless we do something different, the next generation will be required to follow the same destructive path. So, if we are to end the "Era of the Mask," what ought we do? And who is this we? Well, this message only applies to two groups of people—those who have issues regarding cross-dressing and those who have resolved some of those issues. Each of them have a role in the solution.

If you have issues, for your health and well-being, contact your local chapter's support group and begin a dialog. There are members who can talk with you one-on-one, in a group or refer you to professionals if needed. They can help you find answers because they understand—they have felt your pain. If you prefer, participate in a pen pal program. My therapy was delivered very effectively through the US Postal Service. The Internet offers more options for the computer literate to reach out for help. Whatever your situation, quality help is available. There is no longer a reason to continue to suffer in quiet desperation. If you have resolved some of the issues (no you don't have to have everything worked out, only some small part of it), consider joining your chapter's support group or pen pals as a helping resource. You can understand and relate to the needs of the other person and can help them to health by sharing what you have already learned. If your chapter doesn't have a support group, consider starting one. It is our healing life blood.



News Around the Nation

IFGE Moves to New Location in Waltham

As of August 31, 1997 IFGE moved to its third location in its ten year plus existence. (Not counting Merissa's basement office!). The new location, 14 Felton Street in Waltham, MA, 02154 is literally only a stone's throw from the Moody Street address. This means that no changes in phone or post office box numbers will be necessary. [Notice: The area code for IFGE was changed to 781 (from 617-) as of September 1, 1997. Please make a note of this for your records.] Congratulations are due to Laura Caldwell, IFGE Board Member and Treasurer; and Nancy Cain, Business Manager; who were the point team on this relocation effort.

This site was selected out of over two dozen possible locations. The office space in the new facility is slightly smaller than in the previous location on Moody Street. The offices are located on the second and third floor of a building occupied on the lower floors by the Waltham Committee, Inc., a local social services organization for people with developmental disabilities. They have already begun being a good neighbor by doing envelope stuffings at a very reasonable rate.

This move is expected to reduce IFGE's annual facilities expenses (rent, taxes, utilities etc.) by approximately \$25,000! Alison Laing, IFGE Executive Director, says, "This is just one more effort in making IFGE more efficient and cost effective."

Nancy Cain, Business Manager for IFGE says, "While in the long run, IFGE will realize a significant annual saving from this move, the immediate cost for preparation of the property has been more than anticipated. Several generous members have helped to cover this cost, but we can still use more help." These expenses include the cost of carpeting, electric and telephone installation, A.C. modification, construction of one new room, many incidentals such as new locks, an alarm and security system and the moving of the heavy furniture and fixtures.

IFGE will be holding a special "open house" at the new location sometime this fall. If you are interested in being invited, call IFGE at 781-899-2212.



National Transgendered Leader Honored in Death

by Phyllis R. Frye

Ed. Note: While the rest of the world was mourning the deaths of Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, here in Houston we also marked the untimely departure of a true Friend of Tri-Ess, Dee McKellar. The record of her accomplishments listed below does not tell the half of her story. It cannot capture her dry, off-the-wall wit, or her selfless dedication to serving her sisters and brothers. Most of us came to know her better over this past year, as she hosted our Tau Chi Chapter meetings at the home of offices of ICTLEP, as well as the weekly meetings of Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous, a program started many years ago now by two sisters well known to Mirror readers, Dr. Jaye [redacted] and former Mirror Editor Brenda Thomas. Dee will be sorely missed by us all.

(Houston) National transgender community leader, Dee Skene McKellar, died on Saturday evening, September 6, as she and her friends were being assigned their rounds with the Q-Patrol, a neighborhood watch group. She was felled by a massive heart attack and died before reaching the hospital. CPR was begun and Houston's EMS arrived within minutes of the attack. They treated McKellar, a well-know, non-surgical transsexual, with the utmost of professionalism and respect.

During the next day, many of her friends gathered along with Dee's daughter and planned for the activist's remembrance. The service was an open casket, gravesite service on Saturday, September 13, at 11AM. Everyone that knew and loved Dee (or David, as she was known in the NASA area prior to 1991) was invited. The Q-Patrol served as honor guard and most transgendered activists wore their activist t-shirts to the service. Many others attended in dresses, wigs, makeup and heels in Houston's 95 degree noontime heat, as a crowd of over 50 people assembled. Over a dozen persons remembered Dee in prepared and spontaneous remarks, music and verse. Dee's daughter, brothers and other family members were also present.

Dee McKellar was a national leader in the transgender community. In 1991, she was one of the founding committee members for what has become the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP), now in its seventh year.

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News Around the Nation

She served as a Director and as its Secretary for several years. With Dee's assistance and push, ICTLEP has been in the foreground of transgender re-integration within the lesbian/gay/bisexual community. Dee assisted in organizing, and attended, both the 2nd National Transgender Event in Washington DC in October 1995 and the 3rd National Transgender Event in Washington DC in February 1997. She spoke to countless people needing help who called, wrote or e-mailed the ICTLEP office.

While serving as a Director of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association, Dee served on the NLGLA committee responsible for the unanimous NLGLA Board vote in August 1997 that brought bisexuals and transgenders fully within the bylaws of that organization. Dee also served as a Director of Gender PAC for a short time, assisting with organizational and bylaws procedures.

At the state level, Dee was one of four who planned, and one of twelve who participated in the transgender protest of the 1995 Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby's March on Austin in the spring of 1995 in Austin. This LGRL event was to call attention of Legislators to violence and hate crimes against gays and lesbians. The transgenders who were with Dee resented being purposefully left out of the LGRL push. As a result of the protest, most of the LGRL marchers were persuaded that the TG protest was right and proper and that TG issues of violence and hate crimes were the same issues as those of gay and lesbian folks. Also, in that same legislative session, Dee assisted in the planning, and attended the hearings for transgender legislation dealing with document changes.

On the local level, Dee hosted two Transgender Employment Day events. She was a Director of Spectrum, a member of Q-Patrol, a member of Lesbians in Business (LiB), a volunteer with both the Houston READ Commission and Annise Parker's Campaign for City Council, co-moderator of the local Helping CrossDressers Anonymous (HCDA) chapter, and an instructor on transgender issues for classes of the Houston Police Academy. Dee is known to many others in Houston. She worked for the League of Women Voters several years ago and was a beloved member of the Houston Writers League.

Previously known as David McKellar, she attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology and completed three years of engineering studies. She worked for Boeing in Seattle and later for

contractors in the NASA - Clear Lake City area in computer flight simulation design for many of the early astronauts. She had a private pilot's license and loved the skies. She was also an avid photographer. So when you look up at the clouds, smile in case she is about to snap the shutter.

Dee is survived by her proud and loving daughter, her mother and two brothers, and a very large community of friends. Anyone wishing to send cards may do so. Send a separate card to daughter (Deborah Donaldson) and to mother (Elizabeth McKellar) in care of me at [REDACTED], Houston 77035 and I will forward.

For more information, call Phyllis Frye at 713-[REDACTED]



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With Love, From the Child of a Transgendered Parent

By Debbie McKellar Donaldson

The following was written by Dee McKellar's daughter only days before Dee died. I do not know if Dee ever saw it, but Dee already knew that her daughter loved HER! We were given permission by the daughter to share this.

When I was growing up, there were good times and conflicts as in any other family I knew. We were living the average middle-class American life and everything seemed fine. It was not until I was nine years old that I was told about our family secret. My father was a cross-dresser and had been for all of my life. This admission shocked me, of course, but I was really too young to understand what was going on. Over the next four or five years the cross-dressing continued with my knowledge. However, our encounters at home were infrequent enough when he was "dressed" that I was able to block out the feeling that I thought my father was a freak. Things changed, however, when I was thirteen or fourteen years old. He actually started wearing these clothes in front of me on a regular basis! It became a routine. When he came home from work he would check the mail and proceed to go change. Other than the clothes, the evenings went on as always. During my teen years, I spent a lot of time in my room to get away. I also kept very busy with school, a job, and spending time with my friends. I did anything I could to distance myself from the freak. Needless to say, there was a lot of discord in the house and animosity between us.

Things finally came to a head when I was eighteen. I found my own place and moved out. Things were tough, but there was no way that I was going back. Shortly thereafter, my parents separated and filed for divorce. In a period of approximately seven or eight months my father had effectively erased his family from his life.

Over the next two years or so, I would occasionally visit my father and share small talk to catch up. A close friend of mine likened these visits to business meetings because of our demeanor. Over time, however, I began to notice changes. His hair was getting longer and he seemed to be developing — dare I say it — breasts! Finally, my father put me out of my questioning misery and gave me a letter. This was his way of coming out of the closet to publicly live his life as a woman. The letter explained the steps that would follow, such as name change, changing the sex on the driver's license, and everything else that goes with

becoming a new person. When I read that letter I felt as though I would fall over. This piece of paper was telling me that my father was essentially dead. After this revelation, I saw my father even less than ever. Suddenly, about three years ago, I grew up. Visits became more frequent and conversations were longer and more enlightening.

Now, I am twenty-eight years old. I am proud of who my father has become and the person that she is. She is not ashamed of her identity and does a lot of work in the community. She is also a major force in the transgender community. She is working nationally and internationally to help make things better for other people who are having trouble adjusting to their identity.

I still have problems getting my pronouns straight and on occasion I still accidentally call her Dad in public. She is patient though, and tells me that it will just take time. She tells me that she is thankful that we are talking because there are kids that sometimes turn completely away from their parents. I sometimes space my visits apart, but I could never lose complete contact. After all, deep down inside is the person that raised me. She is my father.

Ed. Note: Debbie Donaldson is the only child of noted transgender activist, Dee McKellar. She wrote this article just days before Dee passed away suddenly on Sept. 6, 1997.

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News Around the Nation

ICTLEP Relocates

By Phyllis Frye

The International Conference on Transgender law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP) has completed the transfer of its offices from Houston, Texas, to New York State.

The new, paid ICTLEP office secretary is Sharon Ann Stuart from Cooperstown in upstate New York. Sharon is the only remaining original ICTLEP Director, other than myself. She is a past Director of IFGE and has been a long-time leader in Tri-Ess. During the early years of ICTLEP Sharon began what became the Military Law Project. She authored and amended the ICTLEP Bill of Gender Rights into its current ten rights. She also authored the Declaration of Gender Liberty. In May of 1994 she stood beside me as we two came within less than 24 hours of almost being arrested for a lay-down protest of the Stonewall 25's non-inclusion of transgender in the event's name. Unfortunately, in 1995 she was fired from her job for being too "out" as a crossdresser. She has remained unemployed during these two-plus years, all the while searching for paying work and entering a college program to give her new skills. In effect, for the past year, Sharon has been on an ICTLEP sabbatical. She now has a paying job with ICTLEP and will be giving it her full attention. My experience with Sharon is that she is dedicated and meticulous.

Our physical office and mailing address will move with Sharon to Cooperstown.

The new address is P.O. Drawer 1010, Cooperstown, New York 13326.

The new telephone number is 607-547-4118. It has an answering machine. The new screenname for ICTLEP will be [REDACTED]. The old web addresses of www.abmall.com/ictlep and AOL keyword ICTLEP remain.

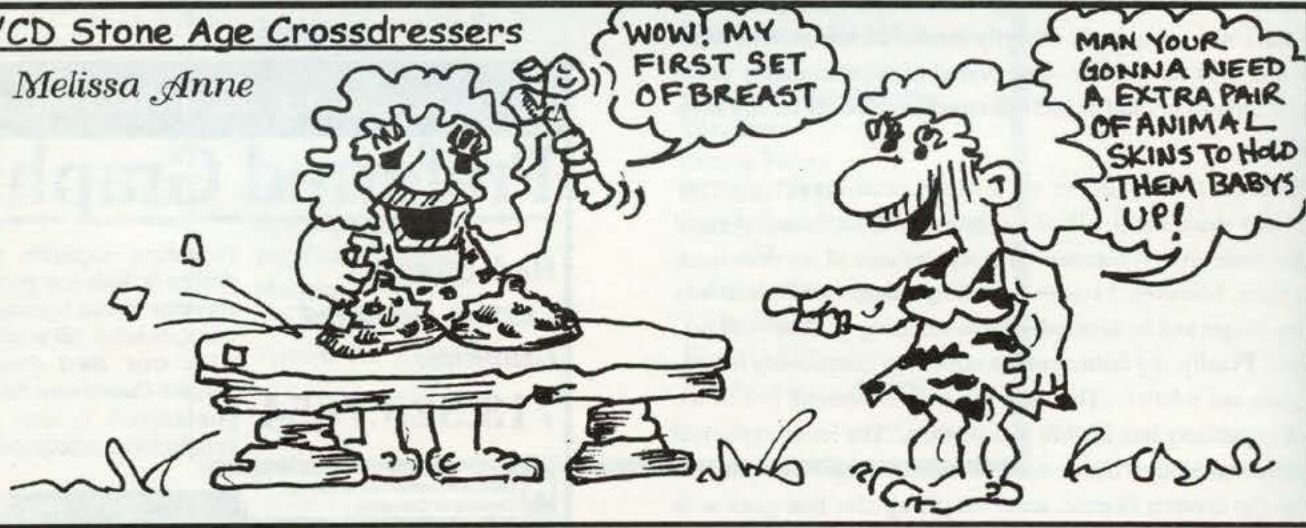
As announced in July, my Board asked that I remain Executive Director (although I will be doing considerably less) and run ICTLEP from my home in Houston, Texas. And both Spencer Bergstedt and Melinda Whiteway will co-chair the 7th ICTLEP Conference to be held most likely on the west coast either in the fall of '98 or the spring of '99.

I feel confident about our new staffperson. But I have some apologies to make to our ICTLEP supporters as well. During the office move, I found many undeposited checks and several unfilled orders. I have since received word from several folks that they had quit contributing because their checks were not clearing. I humbly apologise and ask that if your checks have not cleared, then cancel them and please give us a new try with an office secretary who has the highest and most impeccable record of decades of TG community service, Sharon Stuart. And if you ordered and paid for something that you did not receive, please let us know and we will fill the order - NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

ICTLEP relies on the donations of many individuals. Your support is needed if we are to continue our legal education work on behalf of transgendered people. Contributions can be mailed to ICTLEP, P.O. Box 1010, Cooperstown, NY 13326. Please help us to help other transgendered people in the future in the manner that we are helping you today. Any, yes any, amount will be appreciated as a one time gift or as a monthly pledge.

BC/CD Stone Age Crossdressers

By Melissa Anne



Afterthoughts

By Bob (of the Grace and Lace staff)

Want an antidote to the selfishness, negativity, feuding and fussing in the gender community, in our own local groups, or (if we will admit it) in our own hearts? Here's the answer that works.

What a momentous and tumultuous week this has been! First the shocking, tragic, accidental deaths of Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed. Then the week-long grief over Princess Di, followed by Saturday's highly emotional funeral procession and ceremony at Westminster Abby. The crowds, the flowers, the music, the continuous outpouring of sympathy and tears as the world mourned the passing of the young "Princess of the people" will long be remembered. Finally, the news of the death of Mother Teresa, a saint in our own time. Who could forget the contrasting picture of Diana and Mother Teresa in our newspapers and TV screens? Princess Di, young, tall and elegantly dressed, towering over the diminutive, old, wrinkled nun clad only in a simple habit. They were two women who shared a common purpose to help the unfortunate, but who lived in different worlds.

Mother Teresa's life philosophy was to help and to love one person, one at a time, no matter how helpless their position. As I contemplated this, I was struck by the similarity to what we are trying to do. I thought of Christ's greatest commandment: "To love one another as I have loved you." I remembered what Jaye wrote in the last issue of G&L: "If you, as a transgendered person, have been rejected or made to fear rejection on the part of the Church you attend, and it's likely many of you have been, take courage. Take courage in knowing you are beloved of God. Take courage in knowing you are not alone. Take courage in knowing our loving and unspeakably merciful and gracious Lord loves you and is with you. Take courage in knowing where you have fallen short (and being who, being how, and being what God has created you to be is NOT falling short). God forgives you and has for you an endless supply of love, mercy, and grace."

I remembered what Lee Frances wrote to me only this morning concerning her visit with the "girls" of a local transgender group, where she listened to their current problems and provided Christian guidance. In a rush of emotion, I recalled the heart-wrenching notes our homepage received this past week from those who had been comforted by the messages there. And then I came full circle. I knew that Mother Teresa's philosophy was also ours, that all we could do was to help one person at a time. And if we could do just that, reach only one tormented soul with G&L to give them comfort and Christ's love, then all our efforts will have been worthwhile, and our mission successful.

Hey, Good Looking

BODY SHAVING

by Melanie Yarborough

There's more to a body shave than just lathering up and going at it with the razor. There are special techniques and little tricks learned with time and experience.

- *Make sure your bathroom is well-lit. You'll need good lighting.
- *Fill up your tub and soak in a warm bath. Not only does this soften your pores and hairs, it's a relaxing thing to do. After 15 minutes, get up and sit on the edge of the tub. Keep the faucet water running a little. Your razor'll be clogged with hair with each stroke, and need constant rinsing off.
- *Important! Use Hair Conditioner on your legs instead of shaving cream. It's a lot smoother to apply.
- *Don't forget to change sitting positions every so often. You can cramp up a leg and not even know it. Use smooth, even strokes. You may need to go over one area several times.
- *The most delicate part of the leg is around the kneecap on both sides. The skin is thinnest here, and you can really slice yourself up badly. Do not go over this area at first. When you have shaved the rest of your legs, then stand up. In a standing position, kneecap skin will be taut and more shaveable.
- *Don't forget to shave wisps of hair on your toes and fingers.
- *Chest shaving: Be careful around the nipple area where it's especially sensitive. If you are going to be wearing a low cut top, consider plucking each individual hair with a tweezer. Yes, this can be very time consuming and painful. But a shaved chest still shows "under the skin" stubble which would have to be covered with makeup. A tweezed chest shows no hair at all for a day or two. Put on the top you plan to wear, to see the exact amount of surface area you'll need to pluck.
- *Razors: A lady razor is best for sensitive skin. Remember to replace it after 3 shavings. That's why it's called "Disposable"! When done, don't forget to clean it out & dry it off thoroughly. Do not store it by the bathtub - the moisture will rust it quickly.

(Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in the Neutral Corner newsletter and is reprinted courtesy of the author.)

Interesting Articles

Clothes Horse

By Ricky Hunt ("The Bearded Lady")

Heaven knows I'm not a clothes horse. In fact, when I wear a dress it has been remarked that I look more like a horse with clothes. I read each catalog that shows up in the PO Box with care and interest, even when I know I can't afford anything. Anyhow, I have enough dresses and goodies in the closet to last forever and then some.

I suppose it's happened to all of us. Paging through the catalog you see a dress that just looks fabulous, and you can't wait to get one. So you send in your money, or put it on the charge card, and wait anxiously for it to get there. The thing finally arrives, you finally find time alone to try it on, and it looks somehow - different. I mean it looked great in the catalog, but now it's on you and it just doesn't look so hot. I hate to bust anybody's bubble, but in my case I know it's because the model in the catalog was a size 10, and you could probably fit three of her into a dress that fits me. Why is it that even Lane Bryant, that caters almost exclusively to the larger woman (or man), still uses slim narrow waisted, small breasted women to model what they know darn well is going to be sold in size humongous? You ask a stupid question, you get the obvious answer: it's because all of us generously proportioned consumers of feminine fashion like to think of ourselves as that slim and inviting model, not as a Sherman tank in a skirt.

So along comes the L'eggs people with a new catalog for us larger types and, lo and behold, the models are as big as the merchandise. It's nice to know that the frilly slip will look like that on me, and the nightie will just never make it so I can save the money for something else. So let the merchandisers and their conventional wisdom and traditional sales plans take note: it didn't offend me one bit to see a hefty woman in the bra I want to buy. In fact I went out and bought a dozen of the imperfect pantyhose to keep on hand. Now that's truth in advertising if I ever saw it!

(Ed.Note: This article originally appeared in CrossTalk and is reprinted courtesy of the author.)



What Is Femininity?

By Ricky Hunt ("The Bearded Lady")

Just what in the world constitutes femininity? Last month I was analyzing the gender clues presented by one of my coworkers, wondering if she was a transsexual. Things have changed again, and I have a whole new set of coworkers, many of them female. The good news is I have a full time permanent (or as permanent as any job gets these days) job with benefits, good pay and lots of overtime. The bad news is it's located two hours from my home, is third shift and there's lots of overtime.

This job is quite different from what I am used to. It's a huge place and it runs 24 hours a day producing its product. I roam throughout the plant fixing things, thus I get to meet just about everybody. As far as I can tell there is no sexual discrimination here except in the technical trades. As usual the techs are all men, but that is probably a fault of the educational system rather than hiring practices.

The subject of femininity has been on my mind because there are so many women here doing so many different jobs, from driving forklifts to assembly work to supervision, and there is not a doubt that any single one of them is a female. There are none of the clues to femininity we as crossdressers would think of: clothing, makeup, hairstyle, jewelry. These women run the gamut from tiny and graceful to overweight matrons who approach my own exalted girth. They can make themselves understood above the roar of the machinery, shuffle huge loads of boxes around, grab a wrench or screwdriver and adjust a balky machine and all the time there is no doubt as to their gender.

It's not a matter of secondary sexual characteristics. While there are an abundance of bulky breasts and humongous hips there are just as many with boyish figures that have less need of a bra than we do. There are many overweight women who have no visible hipline. Even in shapeless shirts and jeans or uniforms, even when viewed from behind, the femininity is there. You simply know this is a woman in front of you.

Just how the heck do they do it? As I write this I am attired in a white blouse, flowered skirt, stockings, dangly bracelets and long wig, but no one would take me for a woman even if the beard didn't give me away. Crossdressers spend hours trying to create the impression of femininity, use all the societal feminine accou-

terments and signals we can identify to bolster the image, and still can't approach this innate feminine essence. It just ain't fair!

So if it isn't the clothes or anything external, the only thing left is internal. Could the essence of femininity be an attitude? Something genetic other than the obvious sexual clues? Cultural? All of the above? Perhaps the essential real life test should not be held at a formal ball or party, but working third shift in a factory. If you can pass that test you have it made!

(Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in CrossTalk and is reprinted courtesy of the author.)

Debut

By Ricky Hunt ("The Bearded Lady")

Can you stand to read one more personal story about a sister coming out of the closet? I know that every crossdresser newsletter uses these stories as fill when there isn't enough other stuff to put on the page, and that you have read a million of them, but this time I'm the one telling the story. For that matter I don't care if you read it or not, I'm gonna tell it anyway.

Those of you who have followed my maunderings will know that "The Bearded Lady" is not only a pseudonym but reality. Except for short periods when I had to wear a breathing mask I have been bearded since my body provided enough hair to cover my chin. I can remember painful and anxious days in my youth wanting desperately to grow a beard, or at least some fuzz on my upper lip, so I could be a hippie. At that time my crossdressing was in remission, and I had no desire to dress at all. When the desire did come back, I dressed alone and didn't care about the beard because no one could see me anyway. I lived in a very rural area and had no hope of attending a meeting, and my size will not allow me to pass. Why bother with the hassle of shaving if I couldn't go out anyway?

So about two years ago I changed jobs and am now in a small city. There is a crossdresser group here, but with all the changes in my life I was reluctant to get involved. As anyone fool enough to write me letters knows, I take forever to answer because I keep getting involved with this or that and never have any time for anything. And frankly, I was afraid that I might lose control of my dressing, and while I have a marvelously supportive family I am always careful to take them into consideration. I did not

want to take a chance in offending them or allowing my compulsions to rule me.

So why did I get involved? My wife gave me the push, much to my surprise. She had gone back to school and her course in human sexuality required a research project, and what would be more natural than research on crossdressing? So she contacted the local group and they were very receptive to both the survey and to my beard. (Of course I went as my male self! I'm not that dumb!) We enjoyed the group, and I decided it was time to shave.

From the times I have had to shave before, I knew that it bloody well hurts

to scrape that tender skin, so just after New Year's I shaved to give my face time to prepare for the meeting at the end of the month. I had acne again from the irritation, had a one o'clock shadow, and people told me I looked ten years younger. This was not bad in my forties but was a real problem in my twenties. Back then no one took me seriously until I had a mustache.

Then I spent two weeks out of town and practiced makeup in my motel room, endured the agony of the alcohol in makeup on my irritated skin, drove into New York City to visit Lee's Mardi Gras where I bought a wig, and wished I had several thousand extra dollars to buy the place out. If you're ever there they are nice people and very friendly and helpful.

I did find out that my wig hair sticks to the makeup on my face and is highly annoying. There must be a solution, but my wife wasn't available to help on my first night out and I was too chicken to ask my daughter. I have this funny feeling with makeup because my ideas of femininity are based on the natural look. The women I admire don't use makeup, or at least use very little of it. A heavily made up woman seems unnatural to me, so smearing enough goo on my face to cover the beard provokes ambivalent feelings at best.

I had a week off in compensation for working over Christmas. I began to sew furiously, as I wanted something to cover my hairy arms. (I had to stop shaving somewhere!) My face still hurt and makeup is not my forte, but I screwed up my courage, dressed up and went out. In my excitement I got the wrong day for the meeting, and showed up to a dark and empty house in the middle of a blizzard, freezing my legs off in a skirt and hoping my wig wouldn't go sailing down the street. Not only that, but having killed the other car just before Christmas, I took my wife to work so our son could have the car and had to kill time until Midnight when she got done. How do I get myself into these things, any-

way? I know, I know, if I had bothered to read the newsletter to be sure it wouldn't have happened.

Call it a dry run, or practice, or a jolly good try. (My wife suggests "stupidity.") The next night there were too many people around to prepare at home before the meeting, so I bundled my clothes and makeup into suitcases and off I went. It took far too long in the bathroom to get ready, but at last Ricky made her public debut and.... And nothing. I don't know what I was expecting, a trumpet fanfare, masses of people lining the streets and cheering, or all three networks covering this momentous event, but I was simply accepted as one of the girls, invited to join the Euchre game and that was that. Come to think of it, isn't that what all us girls say we want, to be accepted without a lot of fuss? That's what I got, a friendly, low key reception, but my mind was ready for victory parades down the streets of Paris or a ten minute introduction as the honored guest of the evening.

I had a good time at a small party with some friends, learned how to eat pizza without eating my wig along with it or dropping it on my bosom. I learned, too, how not to scratch my face when it itches and muss my makeup. I was simply able to relax as Ricky in front of people. Not what my unconscious mind was expecting, but Thanks, girls, it was just what I needed. So that's it for Ricky's Grand Debut.

(Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in CrossTalk magazine and is reprinted courtesy of the author.)

To Come Out or Not To Come Out, That Is The Question

By Ricky Hunt ("The Bearded Lady")

This article from five years ago illustrates that the more things change, the more they remain the same.

Pardon me, but my dander is up. I know that it is difficult and potentially embarrassing to raise a dander while wearing a skirt, but by golly it's hoisted and flying in the hot air of opinion. As one who regularly generates gales of opinion on these pages, I must first proclaim that everybody is entitled to their own opinion, and while I may not agree with that opinion we are all free to express out thoughts in public. But once that opinion is out in the open it is subject to criticism and objection, and I strongly object to the edict declared by another author in the August 1992 issue [of CrossTalk magazine]. In short, she stated that you either must come out of the closet and fight the good fight or you are living a lie and of no use to anyone.

I must reject this simplistic, black/white view of the world. Perhaps it is because I came of age in the 60's, when those in political power would have had us believe that there were only two choices: (1) Uncritical love of country and blind allegiance to the administration or (2) Blackhearted commie-pinko treason. Then, as now, I countered with the immortal words of Mark Twain, "Loyalty to the country: always. Loyalty to the administration when it deserves it." The critical point is that the administration is NOT the country and the country is NOT the administration.

I fear the echoes of this masculine, either/or, yes/no philosophy permeating the author's writing. I hate to say this, because it plays into the gender stereotyping that I try to avoid, but her imagery of revolution, war, trials, and domination are distressingly masculine. Pardon me, but I was under the impression that we were trying to explore the feminine side of our nature, and to achieve some kind of integration so that we can live as a whole person. At the risk of letting my own masculine side take over, I must answer her as I did the misguided President who told me that I had to fight an unnecessary and unjustified war because he was not to be questioned:

"I will not accept the false choice you offer. There is a whole spectrum of choices out there that cover the world like a rainbow. No one color has precedence, we are each a droplet of water refracting the light from where we are placed at this time. Perhaps we will move in the winds of the world, perhaps we will fall in the coolness or rise in the heat of the sun. Together we are a glorious whole, not a regimented accumulation of sameness."

"I would choose to nurture my sisters with my love and advice, to support them and sustain them, helping them to overcome fear and loneliness. I refuse to tell them to go away because they do not share my agenda. Most certainly I would not denigrate any organization even if that organization does not fulfill my particular needs. I came out of the closet earlier this year and found that I did not particularly enjoy it; the negatives outweighed the positives, so I simply reopened the door and went back in. This was a personal choice, based on my personal needs at this time, and to have someone tell me that I am betraying some cause by doing so negates the fundamental reason for our being in an organization - to support each other and find solace from those who share similar concerns. I have said it before and will say it again: Crossdressing is not the only influence on my life and is only one of many things I like to do. I will not let it control me, and I will not let proselytizing dogmatists coerce me into becoming what I am not."

Lastly I resent that author's misuse of Martin Luther King's vision. Mr.

King fought and died for a world where peace and understanding were the norm. The polarization and alienation envisioned by the author are the antithesis of Mr. King's dream. The glass of water is neither half full or half empty, it is a vessel that offers one of life's necessities; we need not argue over the quantity, but only appreciate and partake of the contents considering our needs and the needs of others.

Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in CrossTalk and is reprinted courtesy of the author.

New Political Action Committee Launched

By Ricky Hunt ("The Bearded Lady")

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

Yes, my Sisters, you must suffer no more in silence in your motel rooms and closets! Demand entrance to the sweater shop run by the ILGWU. Do not skirt the issue but join the thousands of your sisters who will never know the pains of labor in the birth of this noble cause. As did the unions of tradesmen before us, we shall join together and triumph!

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

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

Membership requirements are easily fulfilled and benefits substantial. Simply forward the price of your next dress to the

ILGWU and it will be placed in our Union Strike Fund. It will remain there, to the great interest of your leaders, until our first demonstration. This demonstration will be a Million Woman March on Washington to demand our rights as part time women. The Union Strike Fund will supply each sister with a pair of high heels suitable for marching and a tastefully decorated picket sign. Since we will have prepared the way with lobbying by our own PAC, the Federated Associated League Supporting Imitation Effeminate Sisters (FALSIES), we expect a rousing greeting as we strut through the hallowed halls of Congress in our finest. There are tentative plans for a sit down strike so please no Mini-Skirts.

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

(Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in CrossTalk magazine and is reprinted courtesy of the author.)



REPARTEE is fun magazine which encourages the view that transvestism is something positive to be enjoyed, presenting a well balanced view of all aspects of cross-dressing, including the more exotic and erotic aspect such as fetishism.

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More Interesting Articles

New Age

By Ricky Hunt ("The Bearded Lady")

Welcome, my sisters, into the world of the New Age. Listen to the formless music in the background. Hear the muted chanting of a choir of True Believers. Abandon your previous self to the teachings of Mother Earth. Feel the innate power of the mysterious Female Life Force flow into your sadly male body. Read the articles in crossdressing magazines filled with terms like "oneness", "karma", "pansexuality" and even "reincarnation." Recently I even learned that women have superior hearing to enable them to be better mothers.

Now I'd be the last one to publicly trample on anyone else's spiritual beliefs, no matter how ridiculous I privately consider them. I firmly believe all people have the inalienable right to go to hell in their own way without help from anyone else. You can believe 17 contradictory things at once and it's fine with me, just do not expect me to share your belief. The skeptic in me starts to scream things like "Oh, yeah? Cite me a study proving women have better hearing than men!" I have a hard time believing my desire to wear frilly things can be traced to experiences in a past life, especially when I am not convinced I have any life besides the one I am living now.

"New Age" anything gives me problems. The essence of the New Age seems to be uncritical acceptance of the mystic powers of the earth, the universe, little green men from outer space or some other source of power of which normal mortals have no understanding or control. Self proclaimed leaders will offer you understanding and guidance (for a price, and not always in money) using crystals, pyramids and other conduits to control those forces. New Age ideas can cure your ills, soothe your soul, soup up your mind and balance tires. The beauty of it all is you do not have to understand anything about it; you have no responsibility, it is all beyond your control. Isn't it nice to know your need to crossdress is a force of nature?

Sowwash! (That is the feminine of Hogwash, isn't it?) You better take responsibility for your crossdressing. It's one thing to indulge in the fantasy of femininity, but this is one more variation on the "I can't help it" excuse. Yes, spirituality is a necessity of human existence, be it in a Born Again Christian, an Eastern Mystic or a disciple of the New Age. Humanity seems to

have an inextinguishable need for something (God, The Cosmic All, The Great Frisbee) that is responsible for creation, something bigger than us that started it all. But fer cryin' out loud, there are no mysterious powers or abilities endowed to a person by virtue of femininity or masculinity! Watch out, sisters. Just because it's in print somewhere doesn't make it true. Which leads to a nice piece of circular logic to end this tirade. Go ahead and read all those TV rags you subscribe to, but don't accept the pontifications of anyone, including me, without questioning.

(Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in CrossTalk magazine, and is reprinted courtesy of the author.)

R.A.P. for Sig Ep!

By Veronica

Relax, I'm not suggesting that we form a rap group. I'm sure that none of us would be interested!

I was thrilled to read in the August issue of the Southern Belle, that Sigma Epsilon had contributed more money to S.P.I.C.E. than any other chapter this year. We should all be proud that as a chapter, we continue to be the leaders in the crossdressing world. Even though we achieved something wonderful, I kept having this underwhelming sensation. First of all, I don't think \$481.00 is much money, and secondly, the figure made me think about Sig Ep's financial situation. I would like more money to go to S.P.I.C.E. and to Sig Ep. With the extra money, we could educate people, continue the outreach programs or perhaps start a college scholarship program.

There's an easy way to increase the funds in our coffers. If each member will contribute what they spend on one shopping trip a year, we'll collect thousands of dollars. I like catchy phrases, and I wondered what saying would help us remember to make a contribution. I came up with "R. A.P. for Sig Ep." "RETURN A PURCHASE" you've made, or in your mind, return an upcoming purchase, and just donate the money to Sig Ep. I'm so sure that each one of us can make this small sacrifice of giving up one purchase a year, Linda and I will contribute one hundred dollars to get this started. I'm not really sure what I spend on average, as sometimes I might buy just a pair of shoes, while other shopping sprees singe my credit cards.

"Return a Purchase" for Sig Ep, and we'll all benefit because of it. Money and education get most people and groups ahead. It's time for us to take Sig Ep to a new level of activity.

(Ed. Note: What a great idea! If this is a sample of the generous and creative spirit found in Sigma Epsilon, no wonder they are doing so well. And what a challenge to the rest of us!)

SECURITY TIPS

By Denise S., FL-2746-S

Thought I'd take a moment to discuss a subject very much on top of the list of important things to crossdressers, especially those new to the gender community. Of course, that is security. Nobody would want to cause a security problem to themselves or another, so I'll mention a few things to keep in mind that might help.

For many years now Alice and I at Phi Epsilon Mu have been in touch with hundreds of sisters who wanted information about the chapter, but some wouldn't give us their name and address so we could mail it to them. This is fairly understandable when someone makes their first contact with a support group. In order to protect the security of our members we don't give out information about our meeting place, etc. unless we have an idea who we're dealing with. This includes over the internet.

Beyond the most obvious security precaution of obtaining a post office box to receive crossdressing related mail, there are some other security tips for you to consider. Some of these are fairly common-sense, but as time goes on it is easy to forget and get a little relaxed, then next thing you know a big "oops" occurs.

The telephone can cause a problem if you give your number to other sisters. If you're trying to be discreet and a sister calls and leaves a message on your answering machine using their femme name, or yours, anyone could hear that message as it comes in or as it is being played back. Exchanging male names might seem risky, but when "Martha" has an obvious male voice, questions will no doubt result. Of course, never give out another sister's address or phone number. It is very hard to remember exactly who says it is okay and who doesn't.

I have received many calls from sisters who have left a number and their femme name, but no call back instructions. Sometimes when returning calls I'll get an obvious female on the other end and I have no idea who to ask for without potentially causing a big problem.

Under no circumstance should a crossdresser ever drop by unexpectedly at another sister's place of residence. This would be bad enough en drab, but at least ten times worse if you are en femme.

Names on mail exchanged between sisters can be a problem, so make sure you agree on this matter with those whom you correspond with. I recommend just using initials and last names until

this is confirmed.

Speaking of names, if you have or plan to get a post office box, make sure you notify the post office to accept ANY mail to the box and to list your male and femme names (as well as anyone authorized to receive and pick up mail from the box). Otherwise, some items will make it through while others will be returned as "not known." This happens quite often with our chapter's newsletters.

Should you bump into a sister while out in public (regardless of en femme or en drab), the best thing to do is not make contact, especially if the other sister is in the company of others. Let them approach you. Of course, that is if you recognize each other!

In our chapter newsletter I recently touched on internet security regarding E-mail addresses that use your femme name as part of the address. NOT A GOOD IDEA! Also, some people list the person's name in parentheses behind the E-mail address and this often gets transmitted right along with the message. Check to make sure this isn't happening so you're not exposing yourself or anyone else in the process. (You can do so by sending yourself a copy of an E-mail you send someone else at the same time.) Also, any time you send a message to more than one person at the same time, you are automatically giving out all of those E-mail addresses. Did you realize that?

Those who are on America On Line are familiar with "Instant Messages." If you discover someone you know is on line while you are on line, do not include any names in instant messages. (Such as: Hi, Denise!) People log on line from different locations, and they may not be alone, so you never really know who might be on the other end reading your message.

AOL allows five screen names (E-mail addresses) and if you have more than one, double check the member profile of each of those screen names to make sure you are not telling everyone something you don't want them to know. In fact, be very careful about what you put in your profile!

Shopping for feminine items is very rarely a problem with sales people. If you bump into someone you know while shopping (especially with that darling teddy in hand that you can't do without), it could be a different matter. When I shop at local stores

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Our Transgender Battlefields

By Melanie Yarborough

The fight over segregation took place at lunch counters, polling places, and schools. Gay rights struggles were fought at bars like the Stonewall Inn. Pro-Choice/Pro-Life conflicts are often played out at abortion clinics. Every movement has its flashpoints, those visible places where you see the conflict.

The transgender movement also has its own battlefields. However, they're places lacking in glamour or symbolism. They're the public restrooms and dressing rooms of the land. They may not be the battlefields we may have chosen or even wanted, but for better or worse they're ours.

Public restrooms for the opposite gender are by law illegal to use; many of us face a choice between bladder/sphincter disaster or potential arrest. It's obviously a big issue with the straight community, as when we do outreach we're universally asked, "Which bathroom do you use?"

Changing rooms are also problematic. So much of our transgenderism centers around gender appropriate clothing. Yet many of us are unable to purchase as elaborate or necessary a wardrobe as we'd like. We cannot use the woman's changing room by law, and we fear being "outed" even if we change into a

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the first thing I do is scan the parking lot for any familiar vehicles. Once inside the store, I make a wide circle through the store to see if anyone I know is there.

I suppose it is also appropriate here to mention three tips for if or when you go out in public while crossdressed. (1) Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages. (2) Drive extra carefully. (3) Avoid using public "ladies" restrooms. I won't say any more about the importance of those tips other than I know lots of people who are shaking their heads in agreement with all three.

Compared to many of you reading this, I've been far more vulnerable to security problems. My home phone number has been published in gender community publications for years, I've also been involved in chapter contact by regular mail and E-mail, and have been visited by many sisters. The only problem I've ever had, security-wise, was when my E-mail address included my femme name and the wrong person saw it.

Well ladies, that's a few little security tips that I hope will help you keep things discreet. Just be a little careful and it will go a long way. If you have any other suggestions that work for you, let us know so we can share them. That's what it's all about.

dress as men at the men's facilities.

Public restrooms and changing rooms are the last bastions of gender segregation. This is because they involve two of society's most taboo subjects: excretion and nudity.

Urination and defecation are private, almost shameful acts. A great deal of our language's obscenities and bawdy humor center around it. It's second only to sex in raising the most titillation. Nudity is equally verboten. It's illegal in public, except at designated beaches or colonies. Getting undressed in front of another person also means vulnerability, as in a police strip search or medical checkup. It also means sexual activity between two people. Nudity is so taboo that many of us won't even walk around naked in the complete privacy of our own homes.

Moreover, restrooms mean very different things for men and women, each equally powerful. To women, it's a place to socialize, and a womyn-born-womyn-only space. Crossdressers and even transsexuals who enter this "No Man's Land" are seen as wolves in sheep's clothing. To men, restrooms are less places to socialize; however, they have become identified as pick-up places in homosexual culture. Many heterosexual men fear being approached in this way. Obviously, a female-dressed person in the men's room is assumed to be a cruising queen, and faces a very real and violent hate crime.

Likewise, female dressing rooms are places where women temporarily make themselves vulnerable by disrobing. Any transgendered people entering there face equal shock and indignation. It's not just an invasion of privacy. Many women fear potential rapists, a serious and legitimate concern.

Most non-transgendered people take these gender segregated areas for granted. Accordingly, they see no need to even discuss the issue. We need to enlighten them on their blindness to the cultural significance of both places. We also need to stress our right to use these places as part of our own gender expression.

As crossdressers and transsexuals, we may someday gain acceptance on the street or in the workplace. However, as far as restrooms and dressing rooms are concerned, we're treading on sacred ground. Like it or not, these are our battlefields. It's time we discussed them seriously.

(Ed. Note. This article originally appeared in the Neutral Corner newsletter, and is reprinted courtesy of the author.)

The Three Spectres Haunting the Transgendered Community

A spectre is haunting the transgender community. In fact, there are three spectres, which if left unchecked could rip this community apart.

The first one is **SEPARATISM**: Crossdressers versus transsexuals. Both groups have very different interests and needs. But instead of celebrating our diversity, we often look at each other with distrust. It is unproductive for anyone to claim a holier-than-thou attitude, or to belittle others not as intense about their transgenderism. It is equally unproductive for anyone to disparage another's life decisions. We ourselves may not feel compelled to take certain steps; however, they're still valid for those who do need to take them.

There is also separatism by politics. There are some who claim leadership, and feel they are a power unto themselves. Some have a hypersensitivity to perceived slights, while others' demands for gender political correctness border on the ridiculous. There are macho power plays and catty bitchy quarrels over petty details. Some would say, "Hey, this isn't anything new. All groups have it." But using the jaded and cynical it-happens-everywhere excuse never has, and never will, justify anything.

The second one is **PASSIVENESS**. Why are many crossdressers so passive, almost numb? Because drag is a drug. It's an erotic or transcendent experience, and this makes it easy to become self-focused. Carried to an extreme, it can become a blind worship of all things feminine. Transgenderism is by definition a very egocentric thing. It means a lot of time is spent on one's own image or issues, to the exclusion of all else. But this makes it very difficult to organize this community.

Some members feel that "as long as I have a meeting and nightclub I can go to en femme, that's enough." They don't want any more than that. But for us to have this transgender space, we have to be willing to work to maintain it. This means commitment to serious, roll-up-your-sleeves work, such as lining up guest speakers, vendor outreach, answering the voice mail and PO Box, running the Speaker's bureau, etc. It means more than just coming to meetings, going to shows, or primping before each other.

It's morally wrong and politically a dead-end to leave organizing to a few motivated people, while sitting back and simply partaking. Everyone has an investment in keeping this community going. However, many only want to pass and blend, or transition

and become the girl or boy next door. If that's the only goal, transgender rights will never come to pass. Striving for invisibility or settling for a well-lit closet does not earn respect. It's a one-way ticket to nowhere.

The third one is **THE SLIPPERY SLOPE**. Transgenderism can become an addiction, and it follows the logic of addictions. One needs greater doses to get the same initial high. Soon, meetings aren't enough. How about shopping in the daytime? Soon, shopping in the daytime isn't enough. How about spending an entire weekend en femme? Soon, this isn't enough. How about living full time? What's next? Like all addictions, it can consume everything: our time, our money, our family, our friends, our careers.

Many in our community, especially newer members, don't know where they are on the spectrum. But some may see others moving far and fast, and feel they need to move far and fast, too. This is not, and should never be, a competition to see who is the most out in public, or passable, or transsexual. Transgender is a very individual thing. What's appropriate for one person may not be appropriate for another.

Separatism can be overcome with unity, appreciating and respecting our differences, and working together. Passiveness can be overcome by taking responsibility. "Ask not what the Transgender community can do for you, but what you can do for the community." And, the Slippery Slope can be dealt with by tempering fantasies with realities, and always striving to maintain that sense of balance.

Most other groups have equivalent problems. However, they have the history, resources, and power to continue to exist in spite of them. Given our own community's tentative organization and relatively weak position as a social movement, we simply can't afford them.

(Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in the Neutral Corner newsletter, and is reprinted here courtesy of the author.)



The Internet and the Transgendered Jungle

By Melanie Yarborough

A closeted crossdresser pours out his anguish about whether to tell his wife and children about his other self. An older gentleman interested in "she-males" cruises for pick-ups. Two pre-operative transsexuals trade information about hormones and doctors who do reassignment surgery. A teenage boy lives out his fantasies by presenting himself to others online as a beautiful young woman. Welcome to the world of Cyber-transgenderism.

The Internet has become a standard part of many transgendered people's lives. In fact, this community was probably quicker to pick up on its value and uses before almost anyone else. However, there's a darker side to the internet many don't consider.

There's a natural attraction to the net, to be sure. First of all, there's the privacy. You don't even have to leave your own room; you're safe from the prying eyes of roommates, spouses, or children. It's anonymous. You can pour out your desires and questions (as well as venom) without the risk of face-to-face confrontation. You can present yourself as you want to be, with a femme name and description of your measurements and looks. And transgendered people hunger for information on how to develop their image, information available only from other transgendered people.

However, this communication isn't always a wonderful thing.

A macho aggressive side often comes out online, called "Flaming". Many people send cruel, hurtful messages because anonymity lets them get away with it. The macho impulses to see women (or those presenting themselves as women) as objects to be used, abused and thrown away is given free rein. Aggression in cyberspace could lead to aggression in other space. Moreover, one could start to see people less as flesh-and-blood individuals and more as disembodied entities. A callous, hard disregard for others may result. Overuse of the net could become a substitute for real human contact. Many of us know how addictive it is; you can easily spend an entire evening in front of a screen.

There's a vocal minority of transgenderists, transsexuals, and "out" crossdressers on the net. For every one person talking, a dozen or so are only observing. You may be getting only one point of view, and think it's the only one. The quiet, less assuming, and maybe more reasoned people aren't heard from.

When you have access to too much information but have no

framework to put it in, you get "information overload." Just having the info doesn't necessarily make you wiser or tell you how to use it. That only comes from real-life experience.

I'm not saying that the Internet is somehow evil or that people shouldn't use it. It's here to stay. I'm only drawing attention to several negative aspects of it to give users a more balanced perspective. In many ways, computer use is like a drug. And drugs have side effects.

(Ed. Note. This article first appeared in the Neutral Corner newsletter, and is reprinted here courtesy of the author.)

Grace and Lace Letter

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News Around the Nation

Evanston, Illinois Passes Transgender Inclusion Ordinance

By Melissa [REDACTED]

In the Spring 1997 issue of the *Femme Mirror*, Dr. Jaye [REDACTED] wrote in her article entitled "Community," "Someone once articulated a military strategy to divide and conquer. By sitting in our little camps, our circles pulled tightly around us and our defenses on full alert, we are surrendering, by default, to the status quo of rejection and isolation imposed on us by the very society in which we so badly need to be integrated. This, I submit, is stupid behavior on our part."

"We can all agree in general principle, I believe, we heterosexual crossdressers are guilty of circling our wagons, arming ourselves with various defenses, and reacting to other sub-groups with great and adamant fear."

Dr. [REDACTED] is absolutely correct. We need to quit surrendering to rejection and accepting isolation as a way of life. I quit surrendering to rejection and I refuse to accept isolation as an answer to any problem. We need to begin to stand up and out and work for what is rightfully ours, basic human rights. The right of not having to be ashamed of who you are. Are you ashamed of the color of your eyes, hair, your height, size of feet? I doubt it, because you could not not do anything about them. You were born to be the way you are. Then why should you live in fear and shame of being Transgendered? Why do you allow your fear and shame to lead you to make degrading statements about your brothers and sisters?

And being part of a family means that we look after each other. For transgendered people, that means working together to protect ourselves. It's Time America! is one such vehicle for that because it was the first nationally-organized grassroots civil rights movement seeking to secure and safeguard the rights of ALL transgendered persons. Its tactics include politicization and consciousness-raising about transgendered civil rights issues and concerns; the gathering and dissemination of information regarding acts of discrimination, harassment and violence committed against transgendered people; letter writing; telephone and fax campaigns to legislators, county commissioners and city/town councils; letters to the editor of print media; interfacing with non-print media; establishing contacts with state/local gay and lesbian organizations; and lobbying our elected representatives at

both the local, state and national level.

The Illinois chapter of It's Time America, It's Time Illinois! has been doing this for two years since it was formed. One of the issues that many of you are going to raise is that these political organizations are primarily for transsexuals and their rights. This could not be further from the truth. Think about growing up. Your biological brothers and/or sisters were different, one may have taken to school work, another was a natural athlete, and yet another had the ability to work with their hands to create beauty. You were all different, with different talents, needs, desires, wants, yet you were above all else members of the same family. What we all need to do is start thinking of ourselves as members of the Transgender Family. We have brothers, we have crossdressers, we have fully transgendered and we have transsexuals. Yes, we all have different needs, different wants, different desires, but above all else, we are members of the same family. Yes, we will disagree, just as you disagreed with your biological brothers and/or sisters, and yes, unfortunately, we will sometimes say things that are completely inappropriate. What we need to do is rise above these events and continue to remember that we all are members of the Transgender Family. If we can't respect ourselves how can we expect the non-transgender community to respect us?

Finally, the person who spearheaded the Transgender Inclusion Ordinance Evanston, IL was Miranda Stevens. Not only is Miranda the vice-chair of It's Time Illinois!, she is an officer in the Chi Chapter in Chicago, IL, and a crossdresser. Read on to see what Miranda did. Congratulations Miranda!

Last night the Evanston City Council made history as Evanston became the first city in Illinois to extend human rights protection to their transgendered residents and visitors. The Council voted unanimously in favor of Ordinance 61-O-97, which adds transgendered individuals as a protected class to their Human Rights Ordinance. This ordinance prohibits discrimination in employment, public accommodation and housing.

This historic vote was the result of representatives of It's Time, Illinois! (ITI), a transgendered political advocacy organization, meeting with Paula Haynes, Director of the Human Relations Commission in Evanston. Ms. Haynes was immediately receptive to inclusion since she has received complaints of discrimination of this type through her offices.

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The effort was spearheaded by Miranda Stevens, vice-chair of ITI. After meetings with Ms. Haynes the issue was brought before the Human Relations Commission. ITI suggested that sexual orientation be defined in the Human Rights Ordinance as encompassing both affectional relationships and gender identity. The Commission unanimously voted to adopt ITI's inclusive language and to present it to City Council as an amendment to the Evanston City Code.

The proposed ordinance was first presented on July 7, 1997, by David Bradford, Chair of the Human Relations Commission, to Evanston's Human Services Committee, which is made up of 5 City Council members. At this meeting, ITI's report on hate crimes and discrimination was presented to all committee members. Testimony was presented by several members of ITI, as well as Drs. Fred and Randi Ettner who are both Evanston residents who have many transgendered patients in their medical and psychiatric practices. Also testifying were Ellie and Louis Altman, who are parents of a female to male transsexual son. The Human Services Committee voted unanimously to present the measure to the City Council for action on July 28, 1997.

At the July 28 meeting, nearly two dozen supporters from the transgender and gay community were present. During the citizen comment portion of the meeting, six people stood up and spoke to support the measure. David Bradford, chair of the Human Relations Commission spoke first and framed the ordinance. Miranda Stevens then explained who transgendered people are and why this protection is needed. She said, "For most of you, this is the first time you've encountered a transgendered person, outside of stereotypical caricatures on television or movies. We hope that by the end of the evening, we would have put a more human face on our community."

Next a transgendered Evanston resident and an MBA student, who had never come out before, spoke of the fear of discrimination she lives with every day, and how she fears for her job if she were to be "outed". A statement followed this from a transsexual woman who works in Evanston. She spoke about how this was not "special" rights but equal and that she would feel more secure with this protection. Rick Garcia, who is the Executive Director of the Illinois Federation for Human Rights, spoke on how his statewide organization supports the transgender community and how "arbitrary discrimination is immoral and should be illegal".

Ellie Altman, the founder of the first support group for parents of transgender children, was the last to comment. She said, "We are your neighbors, your friends." She spoke of how she was struck by the fact that so many transgendered children are re-

jected by their own families. She proudly showed a framed 8 x 10 photograph of her son as he received his Ph.D. degree.

Before the vote, Alderman Joseph Kent, chair of the Human Services Committee, spoke eloquently about the leadership that Evanston has always taken on human rights and that this issue was "huge". He acknowledged that this ordinance would not completely take away the pain and difficulty that transgender people deal with in their lives. But with this protection, they can work to support themselves and their families. He said that every suburb and city and state must understand that we are all human beings first and deserve the same rights.

Alderman Gene Feldman said that he was "proud" that Evanston was the first Illinois community to include this protection. While he confessed that he could not possibly understand what it must be like to live as a transgendered person, this ordinance is a "vital and important beginning" to the long struggle of achieving equal rights for all transgendered individuals. When one of the council suggested that employment discrimination be removed from consideration, Alderman Feldman made an impassioned plea, saying "That would cut the heart out of the ordinance." The council then unanimously voted (9-0) to pass the ordinance. The gallery stood up and applauded the city council for their decision.

"This is why we founded ITI nearly two years ago", said Stephanie Young - chair and co-founder of ITI. "The credit for this goes to all the members of ITI and the transgendered community who have supported us. We also need to thank the gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual organizations that have supported us as well. It is truly a group effort."

"It has been a remarkable experience working with the people of Evanston," said Ms. Stevens. "The Human Relations Commission and the City Council demonstrated a depth of understanding and compassion for humanity which is truly remarkable in this day and age. They should be very proud of what they achieved tonight."

"This is a very forward decision by Evanston" stated Janice Galeckas - Secretary/Treasurer and co-founder of ITI. "It can be a template by which other towns can step forward and grant protection to all citizens."

ITI is now focusing on its efforts in Oak Park, followed by Cook county and the City of Chicago. In addition ITI is working with the Illinois Federation on inclusive language for the sexual orientation amendment to the Illinois Human Rights Act.

For more information contact: It's Time, Illinois!, PO Box 33, Oak Forest, IL 60452 Hot Line: 708/535-1506

The Flight of the Phoenix

By Deborah [REDACTED] UT-4248-G

The sensuous feel of the wood beads of the necklace on my chest, the glint of the nail polish on the end of my hand- time is forever, suddenly crashed, a sisterly playmate, disappeared. A heated discussion, transmitted through walls, of the difference between men and women.

An older girl shows me how to make a necklace using peas and thread, and I tell my parents with the innocent honesty of a child that I want to be like her. This is met with the fearful exclamation of a failed parent's sarcastic defense, "Go ahead- be a sissy!"

Like most kids in possession of a childlike faith, this "No-No" I accepted with a certainty of belief usually reserved for things like the imminence of the sunrise, or the benefits of beginning school the next week. A certainty that allowed me to use my laughter toward those less limited as a weapon, by making fun of others' "sissy" behavior.

Still, my true self, knowing the forbidden benefits of a full expression, would find a way to yet live, much as the small flower grows forth from the barren rock. I would evade a sense of wrongness by watching, from the safety of being another person in fantasy, the liberty I wished, or I could imagine being allowed to dress by unusual circumstances.

Years later, as I discovered the joys of a Teen Home Alone, a nervous exhilaration accompanied me as I discovered the glories of an older sister's closet. A thrill took me in- fear kept me there. And the voices in my head said the word that describes my activity was cured with electric shock, as Science & Mechanics magazine also said. Dick Tracy's Crimestopper's Textbook comics showed me both the probable social standing of this, and also how to "spot" others like myself! But a part of me knew better, that this had a neat side, and, What's So Wrong With Being A Woman?

All of this would vanish at the WOOPH! of a car door announcing an early family return. As my heart pounded with their bad advice, I escaped by either exiting out of the clothes, hiding under the bed, or once by hanging silently hoping! swinging several feet over their heads on a rope.... or lying in bed, covers up to my neck, as my mother felt my forehead temperature, praying! "Please don't pull down those covers!"

Still, even though I hated those close calls, and I literally had hung by a rope over a world of boiling disownment or abuse, and

the world screamed - Get Fixed! I knew that I would continue. The Twilight Zone was on TV then, and I dreamed of the episode where the main character would suddenly find himself all alone, in an empty town, and panic. I knew what I would do - go straight to the women's clothing stores!

One night I knew what I had to do. A Walk Across Town. Dick Tracy awaits just outside the door. The Ku Klux Klan is just down the street. And then there are the good ole boys, my dad's business associates, peeking out every window. All of these would both convict and injure me with the title "perversion", despite my extreme caution. So I went, the stormy wind ripping its fingers at my being, as I jumped from shadow to shadow. Their bad advice screaming, as prying eyes searched for my familiar, small town face.

But wrapped in all of this, aside from the adventurer's gratification, was that as I walked forth into the world, the screaming receded, as if into the distance. Then a new voice approached, one that felt like an old friend. One that I recognized as my own. It said, Welcome Home. A friend to hold my hand, and keep me company. Then I knew that I would do the only thing I could do - save the only person I could.

Years and half a continent later, I know what I have to do. I will find a community of people like myself. Before, I had assumed that others existed, but only in distant places. Then I found a newspaper article with a photo of an actual person. This was the first person like this I had ever seen, that I knew of. There was a shudder as I beheld this image, and a thrill as I awaited my first meeting with the gender group.

At that first meeting, there was an excitement as familiar as an old memory, as that dressing room door opened, beholding the first eyes to knowingly see. This was a good time, and led to my coming out, meeting others like myself who did the same things as I. But after awhile, I knew that this was not the community I had hoped for. I had turned down an awful row and hit a brick wall defined by the limitations inherent with those who did not like themselves. This atmosphere generated a lot of loud finger pointing, intimidation, and general paranoia building. All with the knowing nod of the leadership. A heated discussion told of spies in our midst, people outside the group trying to find us out. Needless to say, this did not lead to the people-boasting, life-is-

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SPICE REPORT!

By Rachel

The theme of SPICE 1997 was "Getting to Know You"- first, to know yourself; second, to get to know your personal love relationship; and third, to get to know other participants.

Exercise (yoga or bioenergetics exercise) was available to start each new day. I took bioenergetics just because I didn't know what it was. According to the information given to us, "Bioenergetics is a way of understanding personality in terms of the body and its energetic processes. It is also a form of therapy that combines work with the body and the mind to help people resolve their emotional problems and realize more of their potential for pleasure and joy in living. A fundamental thesis of bioenergetics is that the body and mind are functionally identical; that is, what goes on in the mind reflects what is happening in the body and vice versa." It was interesting- if interested in more info the above was excerpted from "The Way to Vibrant Health" by Alexander Lowen MD and Leslie Lowen. Unfortunately there are no counselors available in my area that are skilled in Bioenergetics.

I went to SPICE with the burden that the survival of my marriage was depending on me! In one of our many discussions about cding my husband had said "things have to change or we go our separate ways". Well, I figured I had to change. SPICE showed me that the burden of the marriage is shared between us!! It's not all up to me!!

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fun crowd that I had so long wished for. I could have simply gone back into the closet, since this was a disaster, seemingly a collection of the things I feared the worst of in society, in an earlier time.

Fortunately, by now I had been in public several times, and knew the acceptance to be found there. Being in public was more accepting and fun than my experience with the gender community (except for Tri Ess National). My thoughts were, "Don't get hurt, get busy," and I still wanted a group.

Another group was started, Engendered Species. I have made it into the image of the group that I confidence, and freedom. I also have made 40 new friends in the process.

From the ashes of both adult and childhood frustrations, came a more whole life, lived to its fullness.

That statement seems so simple but it was like a revelation to me. A great burden was lifted from me.

The actual meeting of other significant others was uplifting. I found it educational to realize other "normal" women were having difficulties with coping with crossdressing. I had often thought there must be something wrong with me that I can't accept this. So just meeting these women helped immensely. I met one woman that seemed to have everything together but had a couple of years ago been described as "a basket case," so I reasoned that there must be hope for me.

I felt sorry for the people that sat at my table that first night because I was crying already. It was just such a relief to be able to talk with someone about this. The online forum is great and has certain advantages over being in person, but meeting someone in person has a distinct advantage also.

We learned about assertiveness, about setting boundaries, about negotiating, about active listening; things that help you out in everyday life, not just in coping with crossdressing.

A big thing for me was going by myself. Initially I wanted my husband to come but that didn't work out so I went by myself. And it became my big adventure!! I proved to myself that I could do something I wasn't used to doing. I went outside my comfort zone. I realized that if worse came to worse I could go my separate way and survive. I would be okay. Once I realized that it wasn't too far a jump to realize that if I stayed in the relationship it was because I wanted to stay, not because I was afraid of leaving!

The taking of hormones was the big topic, and this proved to me that some women had more concerns than I did. One group meeting was with a panel comprised of three crossdressers and they would answer questions from the group of wives. I asked a question (which was totally out of character for me) about helping me to understand how I don't see this softer, more compassionate side of my husband; but, when he writes about crossdressing, it usually brings out his Macho side. They said it sounded like he had some work to do about integrating his masculine and feminine sides. A little light came on! I had work to do to improve me and our relationship, but he had work to do, too! He wasn't Mr. (Miss) Perfect.

Some of these things are so simple, so elementary that you would think that they would be obvious. But they weren't obvious to me.

Next year's SPICE is July 15-19 in Atlanta Georgia. I'm going to do my best to be there. How about you?

have another problem to overcome—there's this third person, the crossdresser's feminine self, hanging around the fringes.

A lot of the discussion, in this workshop and others having to do with sex, centered on the issue of the crossdresser dressing in bed, and/or dressing for lovemaking. It almost seemed to be a foregone conclusion that every crossdresser wants to make love with his wife cross-dressed. I felt a bit out of it, because that particular desire is not on my "wish list," but it was one of the earliest indications to me of how different we all are.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON: GETTING TO KNOW YOURSELF (the men's workshop) This one, our first session with Walter Bocking from the University of Minnesota, really began to go deeply into relationship issues and how our transgendered status impacts them. So many of our difficulties arise from problems in communication, which is made more difficult, in turn, by the different ways men and women communicate! (For example, men get virtually all their information in a conversation from the words said; women get far more of their information from the visual cues of the other person.)

Walter gave us the following model for discussing relationship issues with our partners, and a couple of the men tried a demonstration for us. (The example I give below isn't necessarily the one they did; I'm just pulling something from one of the workshops to give you an idea. Also, I'm presenting it as initiating with the man; it could start either way.)

1) DESCRIBE THE SITUATION. Tell your partner what you see as the status quo.

"Dear, our kids don't know about me. They're getting older now, and I think it might be time to tell them."

2) DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THIS. "I feel separated from them, since they don't know all about their Dad. And I have a real fear that they may stumble on to it some other way. That could really be damaging to the trust they have in me, and in us."

3) TELL WHAT YOU NEED FROM HER. Be very specific about this—try to have something do-able. "I'd like you to start thinking about telling the kids sometime, even if it's some years from now. Maybe we can pick a time next week for you and I to talk about this some more."

The partner comes back with a paraphrase of what you said; her understanding of it, anyway. That's important—if she didn't understand it correctly, you can get into a discussion about the wrong thing!

The model tries to avoid the confrontational aspects of "negotiating" that happens between transgendered (and all) couples. We're working together on this marriage, after all.

There was some discussion about how we physically place ourselves for discussions like this. For example, I personally don't do this well sitting directly across from Kiki—it feels too much like we're in emotional opposition to each other. In our session on Saturday, we pulled our chairs almost right next to each other—our left hips almost touching.

Walter gave us some homework—we were to come to tomorrow's morning session with some ideas of issues to discuss using the model.

A CHANGE IN STRATEGY

Sorry, folks. It's now August 4 [two weeks later], and I just can't break down what I remember into which workshop it came from, or continue the level of detail that I was able to do before. (Sigh!) But I think I can still give you a feel for what happened.

The occasional use of role-playing, mixed with explanations by the presenters and personal stories from the participants continued to be the usual workshop structure. We (the men) got to know each other quite well, as well as understanding the nature of each relationship from the man's point of view.

I do have to pause at this point, though. Comparing notes with Kiki at the end of the day, it became apparent that, in some cases, the man's description of what was going on in the relationship did not jibe very well with that of his wife! The need for better communication between married partners was brought home to us in a very real way.

Kiki and I missed both evening programs. We were especially sorry to miss Richard Miller's presentation Friday evening (but we did buy Rachel Miller's book, *The Bliss of Becoming One!*, which I believe is available from Tri-Ess)—others we talked with thought it was great.

SATURDAY.

I felt pretty intense. This was the morning for a final check of what we'd learned about communicating with our partners, in preparation for actually putting it into practice that afternoon.

After lunch, all the couples convened. After a short introduction, we paired off with our wives and significant others. I presented my issue to Kiki, using the model we'd learned. She listened,

Thoughts on SPICE

The 1997 Annual Spouses' & Partners' International Conference for Education

By Dana

A bit of background: First, in case you haven't read the "Dana Home Page," I should tell you that I'm a married, heterosexual crossdresser. I've been married to my wife Kiki for 12 years, and it took 6 years before I told her about my transgender nature. We've been through therapy of various kinds and I had a bout with severe depression. We realized that "not dressing" was not going to be an option if we wanted me (and us) to have a chance at a full, happy life.

We negotiated an agreement—I travel to Reno (the nearest large city) every couple of months to a safe transformation shop. I have an evening with "the girls" and spend the night. I never go anywhere alone. Kiki has never seen Dana, her pictures, or her clothes.

In April of this year, I attended the IFGE Convention on the Queen Mary in Long Beach. That experience, along with the closeness I've developed with my new friends in Reno and here in cyberspace, made it appear Dana was becoming more a part of our lives, whether wanted or not. We talked about going to SPICE, and Kiki agreed we should try it. We flew down to Ontario with quite a bit of apprehension, and little or no preconceptions. Among other things, this would be the first time she would ever (knowingly) meet another crossdresser.

Before the details, some overall thoughts:

SPICE was wonderful. That doesn't mean it was the "perfect conference"—there is no such thing, and it would certainly be impossible with such an incredibly diverse group of people. But I had read online negative stories about SPICE—husbands being verbally bashed, or the participants being accosted with Only One Way of doing things. I want to tell you up front that NONE OF THAT HAPPENED. There were about 60 people there, and there was love and mutual support all around.

Not that there wasn't tension. There were some couples having some pretty deep crises, and the knowledge that the wives were talking about us in the next room as we were discussing them automatically raised feelings in me. ("What are they laughing about in there?") But every person there was committed enough to their relationship to be spending time, considerable money, and tremendous emotional energy just to be there!

We didn't know what to expect from SPICE, or from ourselves. We had a vague notion that we were doing this to improve our

12-year marriage, but had no idea how SPICE might help us to do that. Even now, after the conference, whether it has any lasting impact is entirely up to us. A major turning point or just a bump in the road?? We don't know yet. But at least we've pulled out the road map.

OK, to the workshops!

THURSDAY MORNING: "GETTING TO KNOW YOU"

Somewhat to our surprise, the wives and husbands were split up for the very first session. (Let me note here that some women, attending alone, were in their own set of workshops—I rarely saw them; I don't even know how many there were.) Our "Getting to Know You" workshop involved breaking into pairs; we introduced ourselves to our partners, talked a few minutes, then the group came back together and we introduced our partner to the group.

Some of us were first-timers, and several had been to one or more previous SPICE's. It was quickly obvious that there was tremendous diversity here in these ten men—crossdressers never seen dressed by their wives and others whose wives help them dress; crossdressers who went out more than once a week and some who hadn't dressed in months; at least one "non-op" transsexual and one transitioning transsexual; etc., etc.

If I had any questions about whether this group of strangers would be willing to share their innermost thoughts and feelings, they were eliminated right then and there. Although the stereotypical man does not speak openly or easily about personal issues, that sure didn't hold for this group! (After all, we've all had lots of practice working with our feminine selves.) But you'd think any group of strangers might have trouble opening up.

"SEX AND INTIMACY" (Men's Workshop)

I remember starting to scratch the surface of our marital relationships in this workshop, but not getting into it very far. The most important point is perhaps in the title itself—Sex and Intimacy are two tightly related subjects, but they're not the same thing. Many couples who think they're having sexual difficulties are really having difficulties being intimate with each other! Of course, non-transgendered couples (I would say, millions of them) have trouble really being intimate. But transgendered couples

and paraphrased it back to me. I corrected a couple of details, and we talked about some details of how to accomplish what I asked in a Win-Win kind of way.

(You want to know what I asked, don't you? My issue was that it was always hard for me to bring up transgender issues with her—it always raises a big "Red Flag" that I'm about to ask her if I can do something new; push the barriers back a bit further. I asked if we could set a weekly time that would always be open to discuss these issues, or anything else really personal about our relationship. I'm happy to say we are now doing that.)

Kiki took her turn, and that went well, too (but I'll keep what she asked confidential).

The same process was going on all over the room. Although I didn't hear any of these conversations, the couples were obviously taking the exercise seriously and really trying to accomplish something. I felt very proud of all of us!

Finally, after a break, it was the Closure session. We were all together once again; Kiki and I would be running to the airport after this one. There was no real presentation this time, but rather questions and comments from various people around the room. The idea was to try and bring together everything that had happened in the past 3 days (Is that all it was??) and make sure we had some real tools we could take home with us.

The Name of the Game

For Kiki and I (and others), the big issue is integration. She and I have a relationship, and there's this "other person," Dana, off to the side. Since Dana is part of me, that creates a distance that keeps us from being as close and intimate with each other as we'd both like. So, the idea is to find ways that Kiki can allow Dana into the relationship in a way that she's comfortable with. And it's about how I can be caring and sensitive to Kiki's needs, and respectful of her feelings.

A tangible change since SPICE is that I feel more open to talk with Kiki about transgender stuff, both light and heavy. She has even brought subjects up a few times since we've been back, which virtually never happened before. That makes me feel wonderful!

SPICE was worth the time, money and emotional energy for us. The next one is in Atlanta, which is probably too far for us to go. We are considering looking for one of the couples' intimacy workshop weekends that happen from time to time (like "Marriage Encounter"). We might talk with a therapist in Reno (who we and friends of mine have seen) about her starting a significant others' support group.

"Dog Days"

By Frances Fairfax

Here we are in the "dog days" of summer. Nothing is stirring except what has to. Unfortunately, "they" won't let us sleeping dogs lie. School has already started, including two-a-day football practices, all in the August heat. "They" in their wisdom have so decreed.

I'm sure every one of us has felt the bite of arbitrary social "rules" laid down by some unimpeachable "them." While we may laugh at such fashion dictates as "Don't wear white after Labor Day," most aspects of our lives are ruled by our fear of what "they" will say. This is not all bad. If we didn't have this healthy fear of consequences backing up the still small voice of conscience, we would get ourselves in a lot more trouble in this world. "Your freedom to swing your arm ends where the other person's nose begins."

The healthy fear of consequences that keeps us from defying the law of gravity by stepping off a cliff, also prompts us to do whatever is necessary to conceal the "CD thing" from "them." Fearing all those consequences that would befall him and us should "they" find out, we assume the burden of logistics, of cover stories, of locked closets and dresser drawers. The terrible burden of secret-keeping often gets shifted from his shoulders to ours. He feels a great sense of relief and freedom, even a "gender euphoria," that may blind him to consequences we are suddenly and all too acutely aware of.

Does this ring any bells out there in the doldrums? Is your new title "Acting Chief of Security" because he's AWOL from that post? A very hot topic at a previous SPICE was, "Why can't men OWN their own crossdressing?" Why can't they take responsibility for their own actions? Consider the consequences before they do something? When they can't or won't behave responsibly, and we try to set sane boundaries, we get resentment and envelope-pushing. "Ain't it the truth?" Only mad dogs, Englishmen, and crossdressers go out in the noonday sun right now—there's a sale on at the mall!



On My Way Out of the Closet

By Claire

It didn't start out with the hope of a great adventure, but it sure exceeded any expectations for this closet case. It was something that had to be done and when it was over I found myself in Seattle with a couple of days to spare.

Frankly, when all your contacts with the crossdressing community are over the internet and telephone, bravery is much easier. So what to do for a couple of days? I have it! I'll contact Emerald Fantasy and see if they have time to teach an old dog new tricks, like how to do make-up or choosing wigs. But alas! they were in the middle of renovating and had no time.

Angie suggested that I get my hair done at Diversity Hair Designs, instead. Little did I know that the fun was about to begin! After a long walk down Broadway (the cabby dropped me off on the wrong end of the street).....

Oh, heck! Let's have fun....

(Pardon me, Mickey S.) It was raining in the Emerald City when the cabby dropped me off 15 blocks from Diversity Hair Designs. I walked through the doors of Diversity Hair Designs. My hair was a mess and I was cold and wet. The place smelled of chemicals and burning hair. Whew! What a smell! Seems the heater had just been started for the winter.

There was this dame with the good looking gams looking strangely at me.

"Yes, may I help you?"

I stood there nervously for a few moments. There were several blue haired ladies watching and I didn't want them to know why I had come there.

Finally, after what seemed an eternity, I muttered.

"Angie sent me. I need a hair cut."

She had puzzled look on her kisser, then her eyes brightened and with a twinkle in her voice that matched her eyes, she said, "Oh, you want to see Martin! I'll make an appointment at 12:30 for you."

It was going to be another hour's wait - time for cold feet - but I persevered and thanked the doll with the good looking

gams and said that I'd return. I rushed out the door and into the street as a big black auto nearly ran me down. (OK, it was a bicycle really).

I wandered around for about an hour looking at the unique shops in the area and teetering between "Run, Claire!" and "You can do it!" feelings. When I returned, Martin was there and he spotted me.

"Hi, there! Why don't you sit over here?" he said, trying to put me at ease. He asked me how I wanted my hair. I told him that I wanted to avoid wigs, if possible, and that I was going on the Dignity Cruise. From that point on it became an information party with everyone chiming in. All, that is, except for the little blue haired lady, who just kept smiling.

After a little over an hour of hearing how to tease my hair, wig recommendations and seeing pictures of another cross-dresser, I got another piece of information that required immediate follow-up.

I left the salon and headed for downtown Seattle, just catching the next bus. I asked the driver to let me off near the Bon Marche, for I was about to meet with a lady. I was getting very nervous again, feeling very much like a spy.

Having seen her picture, I waited until she was free.

"Are you _____?"

"Yes."

"Martin sent me. He said you could help."

"Martin who?" she replied.

"The Martin at Diversity Hair Designs."

"Ohhhh...."

She made a phone call, and returning with a big smile said, "We have a special dressing room for you." For the next several hours what was once filled with trepidation became a most pleasurable adventure.

I returned to my room in the Emerald City with several outfits, a lot of information and new found friends. I cannot begin to thank the lady at the Bon. There was no staring or odd looks, just a beautiful smile and a lot of comfort. It's getting a little bit easier to enjoy being myself.

Time to Start Living Again

By Debbie [REDACTED]

I love going to conventions. The camaraderie, the friendship, the seminars, partying, and of course the vendors. My major problem is as I walk through the vendor area, all the stuff keeps whispering my name. "Debbie, Oh, Debbie I'd look great on you. You'd be pretty wearing me." The worst vendor is the photographer. The camera beckons—"Don't you want a picture of yourself? Sure you do! How about another? And another?" Yes, I love conventions—they're always very relaxing, soothing and extremely tiring (either I'm getting older or it's getting later earlier). Being surrounded by hundreds of loving, accepting people is just too wonderful for words. Conventions have auras.

I just returned from a convention last weekend. It was everything I had hoped and expected. I caught up with girlfriends I hadn't seen in several years and met bunches and bunches of new friends. (By the way, that's why I always try to work the registration desk at conventions I attend; you get to meet almost everyone.) Because it was my first convention in over two years, it caused me to reflect on my past, present and future.

My mid-life crisis started in 1991. It was then that I realized I wasn't happy, and I decided I deserved some happiness. So with a great deal of fear, apprehension and pain; I divorced my wife, left my children and went searching for happiness. I started attending transgendered conventions and group meetings. I loved it. I was young, pretty and part of the "in-crowd." That was something the nerd, John, never experienced. I'm not proud of it now, but I was vain. I reveled and loved being the girl that everyone wanted their picture with at the conventions. I wore short, skin tight dresses and skirts. I showed a lot of curves and legs. In fact, I had the dubious honor of being told by Virginia Prince that my dress made a beautiful belt! — I took it as a compliment. Don't get me wrong, I've always been a caring, loving person, but I was extremely narcissistic and shallow.

Now I'm older and due to a couple of very emotionally harsh years, I've aged. Yes, my stomach has somewhat expanded and some wrinkles have appeared on my face, but they didn't age me. It was my outlook on life. I'm no longer the innocent, naive person I was seven years ago. I've been transformed from a young exuberant girl full of life to a mature, somber, distrustful woman.

Oh, it is a pity—I so enjoyed life for those fleeting years. For the last couple of years, though, I've faked being cheerful, funny and sunny. I was really depressed. John couldn't or wouldn't share his pain and heartache with my family and friends without explaining that I was a crossdresser. (I didn't need more stress). At the same

time, Debbie wouldn't share her grief with my transgendered friends because I didn't want to appear weak (one of those stupid guy things). In fact, I couldn't even share my grief and pain with my second wife, Deborah, because she was trying to deal with her feelings resulting from my ex-wife's actions. It was a tough time for all three of us (Debbie, John and Deborah).

The convention last weekend opened my eyes and started a warming trend in my soul. It helped me see how the shallow girl and hollow woman needed each other. I realized that by themselves both are pitiful creatures, but together they had a potentially wonderful future. So, I've decided it is time to start living again. I want the best traits of both. I want to be an exuberant, mature woman, full of love and life.

It was amazing! Once I let it go of my feeling of loneliness and despair at not being a "Barbie Doll," I felt the love at the convention. No, I wasn't surrounded by sisters wanting to get their picture taken with me, as at past conventions, but I felt more compassion and caring than I have in many years. "How did it happen?" you ask. I talked, listened and looked people in the eye. I accepted people for who they were. I really met them and, you know, I discovered a secret. People actually like me, not because I was a "Barbie Doll" but because of who I am. I had a great time.

Don't worry, I haven't lost my sense of humor, I still love pretty clothes (although not quite as short or tight), and I still like to be considered pretty. I've regained my desire to party late into the night, and beautiful clothes still call my name as I pass by. But, looks and "passability" aren't as important - they just don't seem as important. I feel like the weight of the world has been taken off my back.

I know that reality is just around the corner. My life isn't wonderful, and I still have a ?#%@\$ ex-wife and many other problems to resolve with the weekly help of my therapist. But hopefully my youthful euphoria will return and my caustic depression will be replaced with promising hopefulness. Time will tell.

Last weekend, I was reminded that I have a right to be happy, but I'm the only person responsible for my happiness. So if you have problems, don't lock yourself in solitary confinement—let your friends help you. You'll feel better in the long run. An unexpected benefit is that as your friends get to know the real you, your friendships will deepen.

(Ed. Note: Debbie [REDACTED], a regular contributor to the Femme Mirror, is our Cover Girl for this issue.)

Second Glances

by Anne

Things are not always what they seem. After my first article appeared in the January Southern Belle, I was surprised at some of the reactions I got from the members of Sigma Epsilon. Everyone seemed so complimentary and apparently thought I was an unusually accepting and understanding wife of a cross-dresser. Believe me, it's been a long and difficult road to get where I am, and I felt that perhaps another article might help set the record straight. I have hesitated for months because my odyssey in coming to accept being married to a crossdresser is intensely personal and I am, by nature, a very private person. However, after talking with so many of the members of Sig Ep, whose wives are in various stages of their own journeys of acceptance, I felt that by sharing my story, I may help other wives realize that what they feel is not unusual.

My first inkling of my husband's other life came before we were married. He confessed to me that he had a deep, dark secret to share that might change the way I felt about him. I worried about it for days before he could actually come out with the truth. He told me that he used to dress up in women's clothes. After all the dire things I had been imagining (and believe me, my imagination can run wild!), this seemed almost a relief. My brain latched onto those two little words, "used to," so even though it seemed somewhat strange to me, I considered it a part of his past, and not an evil one at that. (After all, dressing up in women's clothes was something I myself did every day!) It certainly did not change my love for this wonderful man, who trusted me enough to share something so personal. At this point he truly thought this was something he had given up for good so that he could build a life with me, and I thought it was simply something he had done to help him cope with life when he was going through an unhappy marriage and difficult divorce.

I'm not sure exactly when I realized that this was not just something in the past. As we grew closer, it became apparent to me that my husband-to-be's desire to crossdress had not gone away. He revealed to me in subtle ways that he would like to resume this activity. He suggested it might help me understand his predilection if I spoke with another crossdresser. He had explained to me that there was a group of similar-minded men who met monthly, and he had developed a telephone-correspondence with someone he had met on the one occasion he had attended a meeting.

Now I must explain here that this is when I started to have misgivings. As I mentioned earlier, I am a very private person. I do not discuss my problems or personal issues with anyone. To actually call up a perfect stranger and discuss my fiancé's desire to dress like a woman was beyond my ken. How on earth could he expect me to do such a thing?! Eventually, he persuaded me that this person shared his secret and would certainly not betray any confidences, and it seemed extremely important to him that we do this. So we called. As odd as it sounds now, I really can't remember the conversation, except for the one important question I had for this friend: "Will it escalate?" That was my main fear. (And yes, fear is the right word.)

I must digress here a bit to explain that I had another question, but I did not voice it to anyone other than my future husband. That question was, "Why?" (And as I've since discovered, these two questions are quite typical.) The ponderous question of "Why?" may never be answered. We do know that my husband's mother had wanted a girl when he was born and dressed him for quite some time in girls' clothes. This was something we discovered at the same time (and fairly recently). It may or may not have anything to do with it. However, I have decided that the answer to this question is ultimately not important. We all know that part of who we are is genetic and part a result of the various experiences in life that have affected us. I am who I am. My husband is who he is. The "Why?" is irrelevant.

The other question is the one that I had the most trouble with. When I eventually talked to "the other cross-dresser," this is the question I put to him. He seemed pretty reassuring that it wouldn't escalate beyond whatever point it had already gone. This is something that I once again latched onto. After all, we had just been talking about it, but not really doing anything. My husband did "dress" for me once before we married, but without makeup, wig, or shoes, so it seemed harmless enough. He said he just liked the "feel" of women's dresses and lingerie. I could accept that. When we got married, I really didn't think it would go beyond that point. I even had a surprise for my new husband! I packed a silky nightgown for him in with my own lingerie for our honeymoon. He seemed so touched and pleased and I basked in his pleasure. I was also patting myself on the back for being such an understanding and open-minded wife. Little did I know I was unleashing some really pent-up desires. When I told him I

Second Glances (continued)

didn't mind if he dressed, I truly meant it. The problem was, I didn't know what he meant by "dressing."

The progression was something like this: First, he wanted to sleep in panties or perhaps a gown. Next, he wanted to wear panties almost daily under his male clothes. Then, he wanted to put on dresses, slips, and stockings. Eventually, he wanted to add breasts. Finally, when he said he wanted to "complete" it, with make-up and wig, I balked. I had hit my limit. Despite the assurances that this wouldn't escalate, that is precisely what had been happening! To my mind, he was trying to turn himself into a woman, and I absolutely did not want him to do this. We had a real crisis.

My dictionary defines crisis as (1) a decisive or vitally important stage in the course of anything; a turning point; a critical time or occasion, (2) the point in a play or story at which hostile elements are most tensely opposed to each other, and (3) the point in the course of a disease at which a decisive change occurs, leading either to recovery or to death. Every one of these definitions describes in some way our situation. We were at a critical point in our marriage and understanding of each other; we were tensely opposed to each other; and the result could be recovery or death of our relationship.

Without going into too much detail, suffice it to say that there were heated arguments, tearful pleadings, angry "purges," and desperate attempts at understanding. There were times I felt that his desire to crossdress was like an alcoholic's desire for liquor. And I said as much to him. I had always believed people can and must control their actions in order to have a civilized society. At this flashpoint of our volatile situation, I lumped crossdressing into the pot of undesirable behaviors. After all, it was turning my husband into a woman!

But eventually, he convinced me that he was not trying to become someone else (namely, a woman), but merely expressing a side of himself. He is this person and I'm convinced that part of the reason I fell in love with him is because of his feminine side. If I were to remove that (even if I could), he might not be the man I love. Yes, there have been times I've wished it away, and I wouldn't be honest if I said otherwise. But when it comes right down to it, I want him the way he is. I've had to rescue his things after a purge, angrily reminding him that he was discarding items I had selected and given him with love. (How dare he!)

We've weathered a number of smaller storms along the way. Getting me to attend my first Sigma Epsilon meeting, which was the subject of my earlier article, was one such milestone. Earlier, getting me to look at him the first time he wore make-up was another. (I was absolutely terrified at what I would see!) And we still have moments when he pushes for things I'm not comfortable with or ready for.

This article sat in my desk drawer for five months (except for these last few sentences), waiting until I was ready to share it. My husband has asked me for months when would I write another article, not realizing it was done. I knew the day would come that I could mail it in, but it's not necessarily on his schedule. And so it goes. We will work through things as they crop up, because we are committed to each other and to our marriage.

My advice to you cross-dressing husbands is this: be patient and communicate. Don't push too hard. To the wives I'd say: be honest about your feelings. Even negative feelings are okay, as long as you communicate them to your husband. I may never be to the point of acceptance my husband would like, but I do understand a lot more than I used to and I am trying. As my journey continues, I'm certain there will be issues that at first glance may seem to be something I can't handle. But I have discovered that, on second glance, some things are not as bad as they first appear.

Having a husband who crossdresses is not such a bad thing. A little odd, perhaps, and something to get used to. But because I love him and accept who he is, I accept the whole package. And he accepts me the way I am, which sometimes means he has to realize that it takes me time to get used to something different. As in any good marriage, we depend on love, acceptance, patience and communication to see us through.

(Ed. Note: See Anne's article, "First Impressions," in the Spring 1997 Mirror. "Second Glances" is reprinted from the Sept. 1997 issue of the Southern Belle, newsletter of Sigma Epsilon Chapter.)



Hey, Good Looking

No Nonsense

Here are some useful tips from the people at No Nonsense hosiery. You can visit their website at <http://www.nononsense.com>.

Selection Tips

If you fall right between two sizes on the size chart, go with the next one up, since too tight fit makes for more runs and holes. Hosiery should be snug to avoid bagging at the knees or ankles, but if they're too tight, panty hose are susceptible to runs and holes.

For a smooth close fit, select styles with a percentage of spandex.

If you're the "toe-run" type, leave a little extra room in the toe area when putting hose on, or select reinforced toe styles.

To create a streamlined, slimmer look, match hosiery with color of shoes and clothing.

Dress Code

Always remove rings and moisturize hands before pulling on hose.

After putting on your hosiery, dampen your hands and carefully smooth upward, for a more perfect fit.

Need a tiny adjustment? Don't yank or pull. Instead, inch hose up from your ankle to waist, or take them off and start over. They'll last so long, you'll be glad you did.

Care Guide

When hand washing hosiery, make sure your detergent doesn't contain bleach, which can remove color and damage fibers.

Here's a little know fact: when machine washing hosiery, turn it inside out to avoid lint build-up. Then stash your hose in a mesh lingerie bag and wash in the gentle cycle.

To remove excess moisture, place one or two pairs on a towel, roll up and squeeze towel lightly. This eliminates stretching when hanging hosiery to dry. Do not dry hosiery in dryer.

Always store hose in a separate lingerie pouch to avoid needless shags and pulls from rough drawer edges.



More is More

Remember that there is safety in numbers. It's a good idea to keep a couple of pair of panty hose around, at home, or even in your desk drawer at the office. Leave it to Murphy's Law to ensure that you'll get a run on the day of your important interview or the night of your big date.

Save money by stocking up on hosiery during sales. That way you can be sure to have that extra pair when you need it.

Lifesavers

In case of emergency, keep a bottle of clear nail polish handy to halt those pesky pantyhose runs in their tracks.

Wearing hosiery under trousers is a tried a true form of visible pantyline prevention. If your hosiery has a slight pull or hole, don't toss them out – keep them to wear under trousers.

When packing hosiery for traveling, carefully roll hosiery into a loose ball, store in a plastic bag, and tuck into appropriate space in your suitcase.

Michelle's Makeup, Makeovers and More #10

By Michelle [REDACTED]

A column devoted to helping all of us special girls look and feel our very best. Tips from the experts on the latest trends in fashion, health, glamour and more. On a personal note, I really miss each and every one of my sisters of Phi Epsilon Mu. It has only been two months since I attended a meeting, but it seems like much longer. The sisterhood that I had been a part of for the past year or so is something that I'll always cherish. It was one of the compelling reasons that I have been able to progress on my journey as I have. My love and thanks goes out to each of you. And now for the good stuff.....

Beauty or the Beast: One of the key elements being featured this season is the eyes. Whether the natural eye is large or small, dark or light, it will be the strongest facial feature for the coming season. An array of bold liners, illuminated powders and interesting shadows, eye makeup has never been more dramatic.

Glamour-eye Tips:

For evening: A dusting of metallic shadow draws attention to the natural sparkle of the eyes. Use a brush or your finger - sponge applicators lay on color too thick.

To attract attention: Nothing is more effective than mascara skillfully applied so the lashes are extremely long. Thick, dark lashes capture attention...they frame the eyes and draw people in. It is not only the thickness of lashes but also the distance between the lash and brow. Lengthen that area by applying light shadow just under the arch of the brow. Don't forget a well-shaped brow must always frame the eye.

Seductive Eyes: Adding a few bold strokes of kohl to accentuate the shape of the eyes can easily create a seductive eye. It darkens and intensifies the initial colors used. First, dust heavily with loose powder un-

der each eye; this gives you a dry, smudge-free surface on which to stroke the kohl. Follow the natural curve of the eye from the inner corner outward around the lower lid. Darken the lid with shadow from lash to crease. Finally, brush away any excess loose powder. Apply three or four coats of mascara. Keep cheek and lip colors pale - pink shades are very effective.

To accentuate color and shape of the eyes stick to nude colors for the lips and cheeks. Any eye shadow can be intensified by using black shadow or kohl. If the natural eye color is blue or green play up their cat-like quality by adding dark shadows. If the eyes are close-set, light shadow in the inner corner will make them appear wider. If the natural eye is hazel or gray intensify with smoky colors. Brown eyes have natural depth that can be emphasized with smoky shades. For a change try a dash of color (blue, green, or bronze) on the lids.

The importance of color - color creates a feeling of glamour and excitement. Curvy lines and a wash of blue create clarity. It is important to use a light touch in order to keep eye colors from looking dated. For instance, when using blue, apply the blue layer from lash to crease almost transparent, and be sure the edges are well blended. Then add a gentle sweep of white.

White is just as useful as black when creating light and dark contrasts for special effects. To open the eye, use white liner underneath the lower lashes. Dust white shadow at the brow bone. Then, trace the eye with black pencil gradually thickening the line toward the outer edge. Make a slight upward lift just past the edge of the eye. Apply mascara generously. Dry and separate each lash. The total look in hair and makeup for spring and summer reflects the best looks of the late 60's and early 70's refined to complement the fashion mood.

BC / CD Stone Age Crossdressers

By Melissa Anne



Hey, Good Looking

A LADY'S WARDROBE

By Dae Thompson

Excerpt from Dae's Wardrobe Seminar Manual

There is nothing that does more for a lady's self-image than knowing she is properly and attractively dressed. There's a special, emotional lift you get from looking your best, and it's at those times that you're happiest and most productive. The obvious question is: Why can't you look and feel that way all of the time?

Being praised by others is nice, but it isn't enough. It's what you see in the mirror and your reaction to your image that is important. Everyone wants others to see us as we see ourselves. Your own beautiful self-image is one of your most precious possessions. Your use of fashion can help others to see the real you! Remember: you are what you feel; what you feel you project; and what you project, those around you see.

Don't force the issue of style. Your style will develop gradually as you practice the basics of fashion and become increasingly aware of the importance of your individuality. As your confidence builds, you'll find yourself taking more chances, having more fun and, your personal style will naturally emerge and blossom!

Just remember, wear your clothes, don't let them wear you. Stick with colors and styles that work for you, regardless of the fashion trends and fads.

Your fashion image should be a unified whole. All of your garments, accessories and makeup must work together. If you disregard one aspect, you risk destroying the total impression you want to create.

Once you know your real assets and liabilities, you'll be ready to use the designer's tools of color, line, texture and balance to create the optical illusions and to capitalize on your good points and minimize the others. Choosing a wardrobe will be much easier if you have a clear idea of the kind of lady you want the world to see. Today's truly confident lady has control of her emotions and dresses to express the variety of her inner feelings.

Fashion styles and trends tend to be repeated approximately every twenty years. A 'FAD' is something that comes and goes rather quickly and doesn't affect the mainstream of fashion. Fads are usually worn by the younger gals. A 'TREND' affects fash-



ion across the board, moves in slowly and stays popular much longer.

'FASHION' is something you buy, 'PERSONAL STYLE' is a skill you have to learn. The key to Personal Style, to being remembered, is individuality. Fashion is only as good as it looks on you!

HOW TO WEAR COLOR

Color is one of the most powerful factors in your everyday life. Almost everything has a color, and it influences how you think, feel and react. There are symbolic and historical meanings that people associate with colors and their combinations.

Color can be a powerful stimulus or a soothing sedative. Use color as a mood setter to make an impression or to express your feelings. People will react to color first when they see you. The impact of your colors will be swift and strong. So, if you use color correctly, you will get results!

We all have a basic color aura which cannot always be altered with cosmetics.

Different seasons, can mildly alter your skin tone because of suntanning.

You can use bright or contrasting colors to highlight your figure assets and Personality Area. You can use dark colors to minimize your figure challenge areas.

The intensity of a color will affect the reflection of the color in your skin tone. Bright colors can make you appear paler. Dark, dull colors can drain your face of color. Rose, burgundy, plum and cherry red reflect a rosy tone on the skin, avoid if you have a ruddy complexion. Coral, mustard, rust, and chartreuse reflect a yellow tone, avoid if you have a sallow complexion. Pale, delicate skin tones look best with pale, light colors. If you wish to wear a color that isn't flattering to your skin tone, use a touch of white or off-white around your face.

ACCOUTREMENTS

The little accoutrements that you carry in your handbag can bear the mark of a true lady. They should, therefore, be feminine and first class. It should always be a pleasure, not an embarrassment, to pull out your wallet, eyeglass case, compact or cigarette lighter or whatever various and sundry paraphernalia you may carry in your purse.

Most of these articles, if they are quality, will last several years, are relatively inexpensive, and are definitely worth the money for the good feeling they give you and the first-rate image they present.

It is not necessary to buy everything at once. Start with the most important article, a fine leather wallet, and make additions whenever possible. Wallets, should be slim, not stuffed to the gills. Additional items a lady may wish to carry is a nice pen, small note pad, address book, mirror and cosmetic case.

Instead of carrying a wad of tissues, consider the all-too-long-forgotten fine lady's handkerchief. Handkerchiefs afford a very inexpensive touch of lady-like elegance. Try putting a few dabs of your favorite fragrance on your hankie, which will float out each time you open your purse.

Mary, Mary, Mary

Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was slightly grey.
It didn't have a father, just some borrowed DNA.
It sort of had a mother, though the ovum was on loan.
It was not so much a lambkin, as a little lamby clone.
And soon it had a fellow clone, and soon it had some more.
They followed her to school one day, all cramming through the door.
It made the children laugh and sing, the teachers found it droll.
There were too many lamby clones, for Mary to control.
No other could control the sheep, since their programs didn't vary.
So the scientists resolved it all, by simply cloning Mary.

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Our Gender Family #7

by Rachel Miller

I Hate Being Wrong Especially About Fishing

On alternate years we vacation with my family in Wisconsin and go "Up North" to Eagle River with its surrounding chain of 27 interconnected lakes. At the inaugural event Marsha and I shared a lake house with my mom, brothers, their wives and four nieces and nephews. John and Tom are f[ish]anatics so I spent most of my time with the others. It was a wonderful experience but I was determined to do some male bonding the next time. I bought a fishing license and prepared for the big event but it was traumatic discovering my wake up call arrived at 5:45. Hey, #S@%!^&*, I'm on vacation!

Making coffee, grabbing a donut, rounding up the gear and preparing the boat was fun in an off-beat way and soon we were on the quiet, peaceful lake. We picked the perfect spot and readied the lines and bait. Ahhh... After ten minutes of silence and inactivity I launched a conversational opening. Shhh, you'll scare the fish. This bonding stuff was more difficult than anticipated.

Soon mosquitoes, the Wisconsin state bird, arrived in force. The next half hour I was occupied smacking those black-winged, blood-sucking critters. A billboard proclaimed, "The Pack Is Back" with a picture of the insects not the football team. The bugs can't be back, they never left.

Lest you think it a total disaster, I caught a 6-inch perch. He put up a tremendous battle, but I landed him without a net just moments before it started to rain. Those droplets were the crowning moment and I asked to be put ashore to nap, swim and drink beer like a civilized person. I took a lot of guff and Tom added to the embarrassment by making my experience part of his class' math test. If you pay \$350 for a round-trip airline ticket and \$19 for a non-resident fishing license and catch a 3-ounce fish, what is the price per pound? Mortifying!

Unwilling to risk a repetition I recruited Marsha's son Howard as the designated California fishing representative. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience and made a trophy hat this year for whoever caught the biggest fish. All the essentials were attached—bobber, compass, multiple fishing lures and flies, a button proudly proclaiming, "If This Hat's Missin' I've Gone Fishin'" along with basic medical supplies such as aspirin and a bandage. The embroidered visor served notice that the owner was a charter member of the "Laid Back Fisherman's Association" and a sales tag flapping in the breeze seemed to make the ghost of Minnie Pearl their patron saint.

The rivalry was instantaneous and intense and spawned a minimum of two daily fishing expeditions. They even used the excuse of taking the kids out just to have another chance to catch the big one. The bantering was incredible until John had what he described as his best fishing day ever and landed a pair of 17-inch small-mouth bass. They were magnificent and we all duly admired them as well as the fish fry he prepared. Howard ceremoniously placed the hat on John's head, cameras

flashed and he reigned as the king fish[erman].

We left Saturday morning and regrouped at John's house in Milwaukee. Howard wanted to permanently mark the winner on the hat to make it a true traveling trophy and trouble soon surfaced. We wanted to show the date, winner, type of fish and length, but John wanted to add "Times Two" because he caught two equally large fish. We thought that was inappropriate and assumed the issue was settled until John approached me later and said we had to talk.

He was VERY upset because no one understood how important this was to him. I was upset because he singled me out—the only non-participant. Then came his reasoning, reasoning I didn't want to hear. He pointed out that through my writing I sought understanding and acceptance from others who didn't necessarily relate to cross-dressing. Since I wanted them to understand something that was important to me, he concluded that I ought to be more willing to listen to the needs of others, even if those needs didn't seem important to me.

OUCH! I hate to be wrong, even worse about fishing, and when it's my brother, arghhh! After all my groaning I had to admit he was right and I apologized. Do you know how often brothers do that? I promised to not only do better but even write about the learning experience and found a relevant quote from an unexpected source—Albert Einstein:

"It is not enough that you should understand about applied science in order that your work may increase man's blessings. Concern for man himself and his fate must always form the chief interest of all technical endeavors ...in order that the creations of our mind shall be a blessing and not a curse to mankind."

Although I'm not a scientist I can't let what I'm doing overshadow my concern for the fate of others. Sometimes it is important to care more about other things, including how my brother feels about small-mouth bass.

Do you have any bass that might be looking for more attention...?

(Ed. Note: Rachel Miller welcomes your comments. You may visit her web site at: <http://members.aol.com/RachelMill>)



Tri-Ess International Proudly Announces the 1997 Chapter of the Year and Commended Chapters for 1997

The Tri-Ess 1997 Chapter of the Year is Sigma Epsilon Chapter of Atlanta, Georgia. From its founding ten years ago, Sigma Epsilon has been in the forefront as a flagship chapter of Tri-Ess. Winner of several Commended Chapter awards, Sigma Epsilon was also the Tri-Ess Chapter of the Year in 1992. In that same year Sig Ep, as the chapter is fondly known, hosted a highly successful Holiday En Femme.

One of many factors contributing to the success of Sigma Epsilon is their excellent newsletter, the Southern Belle. We are pleased to present some articles from the Southern Belle in this issue of the Mirror. Written before Sigma Epsilon was notified of their selection as the 1997 Chapter of the Year, these articles say a lot about the reasons for Sig Ep's success.

Named as a Tri-Ess Commended Chapter for 1997 was Chi Chapter of Chicago, long the largest chapter in Tri-Ess and the perennial hostess of the Holiday En Femme and the Be-All-You-Can-Be Weekend, as well as SPICE and IFGE conferences.

Also named a Tri-Ess Commended Chapter was Beta Gamma Chapter of Minneapolis, the 1996 Chapter of the Year, whose meteoric rise and continued growth in membership and in new programs shows no signs of slacking off in 1997, and who will hostess the Holiday En Femme in the Fall of 1998.

PROCLAMATION

Dear Sisters at Sigma Epsilon Chapter of Tri-Ess:

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Sigma Epsilon Chapter is the 1997 Tri-Ess Chapter of the Year. The outstanding support programs, the nurturing of newcomers, the enthusiasm for SPICE, and indeed, for every Tri-Ess support program, the steady growth as tracked by quarterly audits, the vigorous involvement of the wives, the journalistic excellence of the Southern Belle - all proclaim that "Sig Ep Has Done It Again!"

Sigma Epsilon Chapter will receive this high honor during the Holiday At Sea this coming January. Congratulations, Sisters, on your magnificent work!

Love to all of you,

Jane Ellen Fairfax, Chair, Tri-Ess Board of Directors

PROCLAMATION

Dear Sisters of Chi Chapter,

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Chi Chapter has achieved recognition as a Commended Chapter for the year 1997. The explosive growth in membership, the continued excellence of the Chi Tribune and the programs for wives, couples and newcomers, and the uniquely creative programs have combined to place Chi in the top echelon of Tri-Ess chapters. I know how much time it takes to compile the Directory, and I appreciate the labor of love Denise and her staff have put in on this most important project.

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

PROCLAMATION

Dear Sisters of Beta Gamma Chapter,

It is my great pleasure to inform you that Beta Gamma Chapter has been named a Tri-Ess Commended Chapter for 1997.

When Tri-Ess International was seeking desperately for someone to step forward and publish the Sweetheart Connection, Onnalee asked, "How can I help?" When we sought a chapter to hostess the 1998 Holiday En Femme, Sofronia replied, "Let Beta Gamma do it!" Want to expand the chapter newsletter? Not only did Sharon volunteer, she got the job done in living color! The growth of the membership serves as living testimony to the notion, "If We Build It, They Will Come." Beta Gamma has built, and is building still. And they are coming!

Beta Gamma Chapter will receive this high honor during the Holiday At Sea this coming January. Congratulations, Sisters, for everything you have accomplished!

Love to all of you,

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: Barbra [REDACTED] NJ-3291-T

Phone: 1-800 [REDACTED] (Code 4985)

E-Mail Denise: [REDACTED]

Albany NY Metro Area

LAMBDA CHI LAMBDA

P.O. Box 97, Ilion NY 13357

Contact: Evelyn NY-3277-H

Buffalo, NY Metro Area

NU PHI CHI

Buffalo Belles

P.O. Box 1701, Amherst, NY 14226

Contact: Denise NY-3404-N

Phone: 716 [REDACTED]

Region 2 (Middle Atlantic/Ohio Valley)

Trenton, NJ Metro Area

SIGMA NU RHO

1092 St. Georges Ave., Ste. 234,

Rahway NJ 07065

Contact: Carol Ann Lee

Phone/Fax: 908 [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Northern Pennsylvania

Endless Mountain Girls

EPSILON MU GAMMA

P.O. Box 4, Three Bridges NJ 08887

Contact: Alice [REDACTED] NJ-4160-H

Phone: 717 [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Northern Ohio, Western PA Area

ALPHA OMEGA

P.O. Box 2053

Sheffield Lake, OH 44054-0053

Contact: Elaine Lee OH-9034-B

Phone: 216 [REDACTED]

Lansing, MI Metro Area

FORMING CHAPTER

Contact: Jayne MI-4333-F

Baltimore, MD Metro Area

FORMING CHAPTER

Contact: Diane Johnson (MD-4435-S)

P.O. Box 27407, Towson MD 21204

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

E-Mail Contact: Grace

Region 3 (Southeast)

Charlotte, NC Metro Area

KAPPA BETA

P.O. Box 12101, Charlotte, NC 28220

Phone (Sherry): 704 [REDACTED]

E-Mail (Diane): [REDACTED]

Web Site: [http://www.3dcom.com/tg/](http://www.3dcom.com/tg/triess/kb/)

triess/kb/

Raleigh, NC Metro Area

SIGMA RHO DELTA

P.O. Box 61406, Raleigh NC 27661

Contact: Beverly NC-4268-B

Phone: 919 [REDACTED]

Raleigh, NC Metro Area

TAU GAMMA

P.O. Box 25282, Raleigh NC 27611

Contact: Melissa NC-4534-E

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Web site: [http://www.geocities.com/](http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/9073)

WestHollywood/Heights/9073

Atlanta, GA Metro Area

SIGMA EPSILON

Box 272, Roswell, GA 30077

Contact: Lauren GA-3390-H

Phone (Lauren): 770 [REDACTED]

E-mail (Karen): [REDACTED]

Web page: [http://pages.prodigy.com/](http://pages.prodigy.com/kerricd/sigep.htm)

kerricd/sigep.htm

Nashville, TN Metro Area

ALPHA PI OMEGA

P.O. Box 871, Brentwood, TN 37024

Contact: Laury TN-3934-W

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Web Site: [http://mindspring.com/~apotris/](http://mindspring.com/~apotris/webpage.txt)
webpage.txt

Region 4 (Mid-South)

Houston, TX Metro Area

TAU CHI

P.O. Box 1105, Alief, TX 77411

Contact: Jane TX-1757-M

Phone: (713) [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Austin, TX Metro Area

ALPHA TAU

P.O. Box 2753, Cedar Park TX 78630

Contact: Megan Anne TX-4423-C

Phone: (512) [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Region 5 (Mid-West)

Chicago, IL Metro Area

CHI Chapter

P.O. Box 40, Wood Dale, IL 60191

Contact: Candace IL-3416-M

Phone (Candace): 630 [REDACTED]

E-Mail (Denise): [REDACTED]

Web Site: [http://users.aol.com/triess/trisss/](http://users.aol.com/triess/trisss/chimain.htm)
chimain.htm

Minneapolis, MN Metro Area

BETA GAMMA

P.O. Box 8591

Minneapolis, MN 55408

Contact: Sofronia Anne MN-3264-G

Phone: 612 [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Web site: <http://www.tri-ess.com>

Springfield, MO Metro Area

SIGMA MU

P.O. Box 2502 #198

Springfield MO 65801

Contact: Judy Daniels 417-831-3433

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Region 6 (Mid-Continental)

Denver, CO Metro Area

DELTA

P.O. Box 1165, La Porte CO 80535

Contact: Joni CO-3726-W

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

New Mexico, So. Colorado, W. Texas
 PHI Fiesta Chapter
 8200 Montgomery NE #241
 Albuquerque, NM 87109
 Contact: Marie NM-9009-G
 Phone: 505- [REDACTED] 3

Region 7 (Northwest)

Calgary, Alberta Metro Area
 PHI SIGMA
 755 Lake Bonavista Dr. S.E., Box 81115
 Calgary, AB T2J 7C9, Canada
 Contact: Jacqui FCAB-4106-F
 Phone: (403) [REDACTED]

Moscow, ID Metro Area
 FORMING CHAPTER
 Contact: Laurie ID-1704-W
 E-Mail: [REDACTED]@m

Grants Pass, OR Metro Area
 Rogue Valley Girls
 RHO GAMMA
 P.O. Box 5551, Grants Pass OR 97527
 Contact: Lori OR-4319-L

Eureka, CA Metro Area
 FORMING CHAPTER
 Contact: Lois CA-2148-M

Region 8 (Southwest)

Los Angeles, CA Metro Area
 ALPHA
 Box 411352, Eagle Rock Station,
 Los Angeles, CA 90041
 Contact: Kathy Helms
 Phone: (818) [REDACTED] 8

Tulare, CA Metro Area
 TRI CHI
 P.O. Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275
 Contact: Carol Beecroft
 Phone: (209) [REDACTED] 5

Santa Cruz/Monterey Metro Area
 FORMING CHAPTER
 MU BETA
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 Castroville, CA 95012-0729
 Contact: Fran CA-1282-V
 E-mail: f [REDACTED]@m

Phoenix, AZ Metro Area
 ALPHA ZETA
 Box 1738, Tempe, AZ 85280-1738
 Contact: Cindy N. AZ-2817-N
 Phone: 602- [REDACTED] 9
 E-Mail: [REDACTED]@n
 Web Site: <http://tri-ess.org>

Tucson, AZ Metro Area
 TAU UPSILON
 8802 E Broadway #145, Tucson, AZ 85710
 Contact: Rebecca AZ-3954-B
 Phone: 520- [REDACTED] 2
 E-mail: [REDACTED]@i

Las Vegas, NV Metro Area
 THETA UPSILON GAMMA
 P.O. Box 42401, Las Vegas, NV 89116
 Contact: Denise A. Hill
 Phone: 702- [REDACTED] 1
 E-Mail: [REDACTED]@et
 Web Site: <http://www.intermind.net/theta/theta.html>

Region 9 (Florida)

Orlando, FL Metro Area
 PHI EPSILON MU
 P.O. Box 3261
 Winter Park, FL 32790
 Contact: Alice FL-3077-E
 Phone: 407- [REDACTED] 9
 Web Site: <http://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- [REDACTED] 9

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 25th Subscriber!

Our subscription list for support of crossdressers' wives and significant others has signed its 25th 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 [REDACTED].

Regards, Beverly

To subscribe to the list, send e-mail to: <[REDACTED]> 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!**

SIGN ON NOW, AND HELP SPREAD THE WORD TO ANY OTHER WIVES/SO'S YOU KNOW!

Chapters On Line!

Does YOUR chapter have an e-mail address? We are receiving an increasing number of inquiries in response to Tri-Ess's Internet presence as well as to ads in gender community publications. Whenever possible we refer inquirers to the nearest local chapter. A Helpline or an E-Mail address makes the referral process much more efficient. To list your chapter's local E-Mail address or Helpline number, contact Jane Ellen Fairfax at [REDACTED].

From the Internet

Versions of this have been circulating on the Internet. We know men and women are different, but what about men who crossdress? We've got the answers to that!

WOMEN SPEAK IN ESTROGEN AND MEN LISTEN IN TESTOSTERONE MATURITY:

Women mature much faster than men. Most 17-year old females can function as adults.

Most 17-year old males are still trading baseball cards and giving each other wedgies after gym class. This is why high school romances rarely work out.

(And why crossdressing males never get beyond the "teenage girl" stage!)

HANDWRITING:

To their credit, men do not decorate their penmanship. They just chicken-scratch.

Women use scented, colored stationary and they dot their "i's" with circles and hearts. Women use ridiculously large loops in their "p's" and "g's". It is a royal pain to read a note from a woman. Even when she's dumping you, she'll put a smiley face at the end of the note.

(Crossdressers, to their credit, also decorate their letters to each other. They've even been known to decorate their e-mail!)

COMEDY:

Let's say a small group of men and women are in a room, watching television, and an episode of the Three Stooges comes on. Immediately, the men will get very excited; they will laugh uproariously, and even try to imitate the actions of Curly, man's favorite Stooge.

The women will roll their eyes and groan and wait it out.

(I never watched any crossdressers watch the Three Stooges. Comments, anyone?)

BATHROOMS:

A man has five items in his bathroom—a toothbrush, shaving cream, razor, a bar of Dial soap, and a towel from the Holiday Inn. The average number of items in the typical woman's bathroom is 437. A man would not be able to identify most of these items.

(But a crossdresser could!)

GROCERIES:

A woman makes a list of things she needs and then goes out to the store and buys these things.

A man waits till the only items left in his fridge are half a lime and a beer. Then he goes grocery shopping. He buys everything that looks good. By the time a man reaches the checkout counter, his cart is packed tighter than the Clampett's car on Beverly Hillbillies. Of course, this will not stop him from going to the 10-items-or-less lane.

(Crossdressers tend to shop like women, making a list and going efficiently up and down the aisles. Getting out of there before they're read may have something to do with it!)

SHOES:

When preparing for work, a woman will put on a Mondri wool suit, then slip on Reebok sneakers. She will carry her dress shoes in a plastic bag from Saks. When a woman gets to work, she will put on her dress shoes. Five minutes later, she will kick them off because her feet are under the desk. A man will wear the same pair of shoes all day.

(A crossdresser will wear the same pair of tortuous high heels all day!)

GOING OUT:

When a man says he is ready to go out, it means he is ready to go out. When a woman says she is ready to go out, it means she WILL be ready to go out, as soon as she finds her earrings, finishes putting on her makeup...

(A crossdresser is like a woman in this regard, except it takes "her" twice as long to decide which earrings to wear!)

CATS:

Women love cats.

Men say they love cats, but when women aren't looking, men kick cats.

(Crossdressers love cats. Crossdressers also love dogs. Walking the dog gives them a reason to go out walking in their dresses at IAM.)

OFFSPRING:

Ah, children.

A woman knows all about her children. She knows about dentist appointments and soccer games and romances and best friends and favorite foods and secret fears and hopes and dreams.

A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house.
(A crossdresser is acutely aware of those short, very nosy little people living in the house!)

DRESSING UP:

A woman will dress up to: go shopping, water the plants, empty the garbage, answer the phone, read a book, get the mail.

A man will dress up for: weddings, funerals.

(A crossdresser will dress up for no reason at all.)

LAUNDRY:

Women do laundry every couple of days.

A man will wear every article of clothing he owns, including his surgical pants that were hip about eight years ago, before he will do his laundry. When he is finally out of clothes, he will wear a dirty sweatshirt inside out, rent a U-Haul and take his mountain of clothes to the Laundromat. Men always expect to meet beautiful women at the Laundromat. This is a myth perpetuated by re-runs of old episodes of "Love, American Style."

(Crossdressers do laundry very furtively, sometimes waiting until after midnight to visit the Laundromat. It's hard to explain why a single guy is washing items of women's clothing!)

WEDDINGS:

When reminiscing about weddings, women talk about "the ceremony."

Men talk about "the bachelor party."

(Crossdressers talk about the beautiful gowns.)

SOCKS:

Men wear sensible socks. They wear standard white sweat socks. Women wear strange socks. Socks that are cut way below the ankles, that have pictures of clouds, that have a big fuzzy ball on the back.

(Crossdressers never wear socks! They just don't look right with heels!)

NICKNAMES:

If Gloria, Suzanne, Deborah and Michelle go out for lunch, they will call each other Gloria, Suzanne, Deborah and Michelle. But if Mike, Dave, Rob and Jack go out for a brewsky, they will affectionately refer to each other as Bullet-Head, Godzilla, Peanut-Head and Useless.

(If crossdressers Mike, Dave, Rob and Jack go out dressed to a restaurant, they call each other Michelle, Diane, Roberts and Jacquie!)

EATING OUT:

... and when the check comes, Mike, Dave, Rob and Jack will each throw in \$20 bills, even though it's only for \$22.50. None of them will have anything smaller, and none will actually admit

they want change back. When the girls get their check, out come the pocket calculators.

(Crossdressers get read because they pay their bills like Mike, Dave, Rob and Jack!)

MIRRORS:

Men are vain; they will check themselves out in a mirror. Women are ridiculous; they will check out their reflections in any shiny surface: mirrors, spoons, store windows, Joe Garagiola's head. (Crossdressers are much vainer than women. Any reflective surface will do, but forget Joe's head - JoAnn's long blond wig's got it covered!)

MENOPAUSE:

When a woman reaches menopause, she goes through a variety of complicated emotional, psychological, and biological changes. The nature and degree of these changes varies with the individual.

Menopause in a man provokes a uniform reaction—he buys aviator glasses, a snazzy French cap and leather driving gloves, and goes shopping for a Porsche.

(Menopause gives a crossdresser an "excuse" to take hormones and other risks.)

THE TELEPHONE:

Men see the telephone as a communication tool. They use the telephone to send short messages to other people.

A woman can visit her girlfriend for two weeks, and upon returning home, she will call the same friend and they will talk for three hours.

(When crossdressers aren't talking on the phone for three hours, they're tying up the line surfing the web!)

DIRECTIONS:

If a woman is out driving, and she finds herself in unfamiliar surroundings, she will stop at a gas station and ask for directions. Men consider this to be a sign of weakness. Men will never stop and ask for directions. Men will drive in a circle for hours, all the while saying things like, "Looks like I've found a new way to get there." and, "I know I'm in the general neighborhood. I recognize that 7-11 store."

(Crossdressers drive just like men, only more so, when dressed. They're afraid of being read if they stop to ask directions!)

ADMITTING MISTAKES:

Women will sometimes admit making a mistake.

The last man who admitted he was wrong was General George Custer.

(The last crossdresser who admitted she was wrong was a Neanderthal!)

TOYS:

Little girls love to play with toys. Then when they reach the age of 11 or 12, they lose interest.

Men never grow out of their obsession with toys. As they get older, their toys simply become more expensive and silly and impractical. Examples of men's toys: little miniature TV's. Car phones. Complicated juicers and blenders. Graphic equalizers. Small robots that serve cocktails on command. Video games. Anything that blinks, beeps, and requires at least 6 "D" batteries to operate.

(Crossdresser never grow out of their obsession with shoes, purses, wigs, dresses and makeup!)

PLANTS:

A woman asks a man to water her plants while she is on vacation. The man waters the plants. The woman comes home five or six days later to an apartment full of dead plants. No one knows why this happens.

(A crossdresser will water the plants. The woman comes home five or six days later to beautiful plants, but wonders how she managed to make such a mess of her closet and drawers when she packed for her trip!)

CAMERAS:

Men take photography very seriously. They'll shell out \$4000 for state of the art equipment, and build dark rooms and take photography classes. Women purchase Kodak Instamatics. Of course, women always end up taking better pictures.

(Crossdressers purchase those throwaway cameras by the case! If they are rich crossdressers, they buy digital cameras and clutter their web sites and e-mail messages with the photos!)

GARAGES:

Women use garages to park their cars and store their lawnmowers. Men use garages for many things. They hang license plates in garages, they watch TV in garages, and they build useless lop-sided benches in garages.

(Crossdressers use garages to hide their stash, and to hide themselves if company shows up unannounced!)

JEWELRY:

Women look nice when they wear jewelry.

A man can get away with wearing one ring and that's it. Any more than that and he will look like a lounge singer named Vic.

(Crossdressers look like Christmas trees when they wear jewelry.)

SPORT ARENAS:

Simply put, men can always find their way around stadiums and arenas.

The women usually end up following men.

(Crossdressers never enter sports arenas!)

TIME:

When a woman says she'll be ready to go out in five more minutes, she's using the same meaning of time as when a man says the football game's just got five minutes left. Neither of them is counting time outs, commercials, or replays.

(When a crossdresser says she'll be ready to go out in five more minutes, she's using the same meaning of time as when a builder tells you your new house will be ready in five weeks. Neither is counting time lost to rain, labor strikes and material shortages!)

CONVERSATION:

Men need a good disagreement to get talking, e.g., "Wow, great movie." "What are you, nuts? No REAL cop would have an Uzi that size." "Well, maybe he got it because he knew about those Mafia guys", etc. Women, not having this problem, try to initiate conversations with men by saying something agreeable: "That garden by the roadside looks lovely." "Mm hmm." Pause. "That was a good restaurant last night, wasn't it?" "Yeah." Pause. And so on.

(Crossdressers NEVER lack for conversation starters. There's the clothes, the wig, the shoes, makeup and accessories, and that's only what sister Susie wore last Saturday night!)

FRIENDS:

Women on a girls' night out talk the whole time. Men on a boys' night out say about twenty words all night, most of which are "Pass the Doritos" or "Got any more beer?"

(Crossdressers on a girl's night out talk all night, and that's just barely getting through each one's "first time out" stories!)

RESTROOMS:

Men use restrooms for purely biological reasons.

Women use restrooms as social lounges.

Men in a restroom will never speak a word to each other. Women who've never met will leave a restroom giggling together like old friends.

(Crossdressers use a ladies' restroom for purely biological reasons, and get read because they DON'T attempt to socialize with the other women there!)



President's Corner

By Lauren

Four years ago, this September, I accepted the presidency of Sigma Epsilon. Probably like everyone who has ever held this post, I didn't feel fully confident in my ability to lead our Chapter. There were some members who strongly opposed my being president and felt I would destroy the chapter, and today, I'm sure a few still believe I've lead in the wrong direction.

What I've attempted is to put aside friendships and personal interest, and instead, to look at what was best for the chapter as a whole. I have attempted, over the years, to bring Sigma Epsilon's focus back to the original philosophical intent of Tri-Ess, by directing our support toward those crossdressers living in fear of exposure and intolerance from society, family, and peers. We would hopefully, in the process, help our sisters and their spouses better understand this need for crossgender expression, and find ways of expressing this need without endangering their marriage and relationships. Unfortunately, some within Sigma Epsilon wanted only to make our chapter into a jolly ole crossdressing social group where anything goes and to hell with how wives and significant others feel. The insensitive self-centeredness and self-indulgence of these individuals spoke volumes as to why the leadership of Sigma Epsilon needed to keep the chapter focused on support for both the crossdresser and the spouse.

I am happy to say we have created a safe and positive environment in which crossdressers and their spouses may meet other crossdressers, make friends, and expand their self acceptance through varied support and social programs. Most newly emerging crossdressers feel "totally passing" to be their first priority. They fear ridicule and the shame and embarrassment of being recognized as a guy in a dress. In Sigma Epsilon they learn that self acceptance and projecting a positive self image better serves their self esteem and passability. Through varied programs and caring friends, we learn that self acceptance leads to a resolution of our inner conflict of guilt and shame and gives rise to balance in our lives and compromise in our love relationships. Our goal to promote a more positive self image is interwoven within our support and social activities.

As a result of our varied support and social programs, Sigma Epsilon has become a leader within Tri-Ess. Today we offer a Web Page, information hot line, a first rate monthly newsletter, monthly meetings within an elegant four star hotel, a newcomers' support group, college speakers programs at Emory University, Oglethorpe, West Georgia College, and now Georgia State University, volunteer programs with the A.G.M.C., dining at Atlanta's finest restau-

rants, theater and symphony events, outings (botanical gardens, shopping, bowling, etc.), make-up and wig classes, visiting vendors, formal events like the Spring Cotillion and our Annual Christmas Dinner, etc. etc. We have even been able, through monetary contributions, to help other organizations like I.F.G.E. and S.P.I.C.E. And we continue to expand by considering additional programs and services for the future. Yes, I can proudly say this chapter is unique, bold, and successful!

If you have never visited other chapters around the country, then you have no way of realizing just how special Sigma Epsilon really is and therefore may just take everything about Sigma Epsilon for granted. Believe me, you have something very special in Sigma Epsilon and you shouldn't just take it for granted!

Well, why is Sigma Epsilon so special? Because we have been blessed with so many members, past and present, who care and are willing to give their time and talents toward helping others and the chapter.

In September many of the leadership positions within Sigma Epsilon will be filled with members holding office for the first time. These sisters have stepped forward to volunteer to help lead Sigma Epsilon forward. Their position and responsibilities will, at times, require sacrifice. They will have to give up precious personal time from family and personal interest to perform their duties of office. Sometime it will even cost them money that often does not get reimbursed by the chapter. They willingly accept these duties because they care! As a result, I feel very good about their dedication and the direction they will lead. A chapter grows by evolving and moving forward, but most important, a chapter survives and grows because its members care and commit time and talent toward helping others. When one gives, one receives!

As I step down, no legacy could be more important to me than to see Sigma Epsilon thrive and grow because our members love our chapter as much as I do.

Thank you for allowing me to serve!

(Ed. Note: Lauren's remarks are reprinted from the Sept. 1997 Southern Belle. Tri-Ess thinks Sigma Epsilon is pretty special, too! Sigma Epsilon Chapter has just been named the 1997 Tri-Ess Chapter of the Year!)



My First Meeting

By Jass

Boom - crash!!! Thunderstruck!!! There I was, having my door opened by a doorman. I had finally come home. As the valet pulled my vehicle away, I was standing at the front entrance of "Home Westin." "My heart was racing as I took those first steps, and I saw the group sitting there in the lobby, some dressed and others not. Oh, how my heart sang, "Sisters!"

"Hi!" - "Hi!" - "How are you?" - "I'm Jass." - "Hi!" - "Hi!" - "Fine!" - "Had a good trip?" - "Jass." - "Yes." - "Hi, I'm Jass!"

It's a wonder that someone did not have to call 911 - Just a mental heart attack - (lots of flowers, please!) Make my headstone read: "May she rest in peace...for she made it home."

Who's the person with the camera??? Sure has a wonderful smile. Seems outgoing - nice outfit - well, here goes..."Oh, ah...Hi, I'm Jass." - "Hi, I'm Stephanie." - "No, I didn't know that." - "I'm #63 of the members you've actually met?" - "Well, sounds good to me!" - "It's just as good as # 1!"

On and On!!! - New sisters - I can't remember all those names! - Did I bring the right outfits? - "Boy, Ill never be as good looking as all these girls. "Hi - I'm Jass."

"So glad to meet ya'll." Boom - crash - ZZZZ.....

It's Saturday - got to be at the Newcomers' Meeting - at 10AM, I think. - What to wear? - Shoes that don't hurt - denim skirt - pretty floral blouse. - Open that door - walk right out as the woman you've always wanted to be!!!

"Hi, Trisha - I'm Jass." - "Hi, Gayle - Hi Tiffany - Hi Steph - enjoyed last night." The answer to your question is attitude - dress as you feel, but attitude makes us what we are.

Lunch with the girls downstairs - afternoon with the girls upstairs - then supper. - How does a woman eat Italian without drips? - Sit up! - You're not in the Bubba mode - back straight - feet crossed - small bites - blot lips - drink through straw. - How's my lipstick?

Chocolate!"

"Hi, Elaine! - I'm Jass. - Can I sit here? - No, you don't say! - Wow! - Great! - When? - Where? -Costs what? - What size? - Where? No, I've got two sons and I'm divorced. - I live by

myself and I'm beginning to enjoy it. Getting late - See ya in the mornin' at 9 AM in Bubba clothes. - What a drag!"

Sunday AM - breakfast with the gang. Good company - nice folks - laughter. To me it was the most wonderful, warm, close knit, stimulating, informative and simply enjoyable weekend that I can remember since childhood. I want to thank everyone for making it so.

(Reprinted from the Southern Belle. Just a sample of why Sigma Epsilon is the 1997 Tri-Ess Chapter of the Year!)



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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 busty 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)

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.

Poet's Corner

Why?

by Brigid WV-3874-R
(Written in 1972)

It's all because
Not really all
But that is a good part of it
Yet they're beautiful too
The clothing of the opposite sex
And yet I don't think
It's beauty entirely
A mystery really
Why I like the feel of them
Why I like the look of them
Why I like the feel of them
The lacy racy underthings
Intricate snaps and springs
Fluffy puffy sleeves
Exotic stuffs and weaves
Slender tender clothes
Massaging legs and toes
Crafty devices
Mechanical engineering
Used in ways endearing
To fashion frills and flounces
To cope with twirls and bounces
To flutter, reveal and flatter
To compliment the person
To enhance the raiment
And make each lovely garment
An individual enhancer.

Afterthought in 1996:
Why the need to explain
Why not just accept the gain
Why the need to justify
Again and again and again
No need at all
Except to share it all
Again recall
The bliss of all of this.

Sigma Epsilon - In the Beginning.....

By Joan Ann

With ten years behind it as a chartered Tri-Ess chapter, it might be interesting to look back toward the origins of Sigma Epsilon Chapter. Though not a charter member, I joined early in the second year and would like to bring back some memories of that time. For the initial Sigma Epsilon year this history depends on a query to Tri-Ess National, on friendship and correspondence with Sigma Epsilon's first president, Joan Fry, and on continuing contacts with charter members such as Robin K & Joy, who are still rather regular attendees.

Joan Fry ferreted out information on crossdressers in seven southeastern states by attending small widespread meetings with other interested crossdressers and transgendered types. Renee Rodgers, the sometimes leader of an Atlanta open transgender group, was a helpful activist and long-time friend of the new chapter. She and a Protestant minister, Stephanie, were both helpful in searching out a suitable meeting place, which at that time turned out to be a Unitarian Church on Chattanooga's southeast side. It was Joan who appeared, enfemme, before members of the church board, to explain crossdressing and answer their questions. She dates the first meeting as early Fall of 1987. Robin says there were about sixty people at that first gathering. A group photo taken months later shows consolidation, with about two dozen regular attendees.

My own association with Sigma Epsilon began when I ended 1987 as a retired bachelor, recently widowed and living alone after a daughter's wedding. Library research had led to articles in profes-

sional periodicals by Virginia Prince. A letter to her P.O. box, listed in one article, produced a timely and informative response that led to my joining Tri-Ess. Its directory listed Sigma Epsilon as more distant than New Orleans and Orlando, but it was the only one of the three then holding regular meetings. "Ya'll come!" replies from Joan and chapter secretary Leone got me to their April '88 meeting.

It was a fantasy fulfilled and much improved upon. Newsletters had prepared me for a churchyard picnic. It was about a four hundred mile road trip for me, so I checked in at the recommended nearby Ramada, and in time to get acquainted with many of the group, which soon numbered over 15, and a handful of fascinating partners.

Then it was time for my makeover. Valentine had a sister sit in to take complete notes as she chose suitable shades for foundation, eye makeup and blush/lipstick shades. She began each step herself and then allowed me to complete each stage. To this day, I still have the original notes and use essentially those recommended shades.

After half a century of closeted isolation, I was "coming out" to meet others like myself. It turned out to be only the beginning of a year during which I determined to move as far out of the closet as opportunity and good judgment allowed. With the help of Sig Ep sisters, and contacts generated through chapter affiliation, that year contained an amazing progression of events.

(Reprinted from the Southern Belle.)

WANTED: BIG SISTERS

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MARLENE, PO BOX 4067, VISALIA CA 93278

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

BOOK REVIEW

Transitions

Author: William Bridges

A Book Review by Melissa [REDACTED]

Recently joining the ranks of the unemployed has given me time to think and reflect both on my past as well as my future. Along with looking for another job I have been doing quite a bit of research on the feasibility of "going full time" as Melissa.

When I purchased *Transitions*, I was actually looking for a set of instructions on how to go about the process of transitioning and living as my gender instead of my birth sex. Fortunately, what I received was a book that gave me an understanding of what transitions are really all about.

Every transition that we experience is comprised of three distinct phases, Endings, The Neutral Zone and Beginnings.

Endings

"What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from." T.S. Elliot "Little Gidding"

This was the part that I had the most trouble understanding. In today's mechanized and automated society, we tend to look at every event in our lives as the beginning of something new without realizing that something old has to end first.

When you graduated from high school and started college your transition from being dependent on your parents to becoming an independent adult began with the end of a lifestyle that you had gradually transitioned into. The previous May you were a high school senior, top of the food chain, someone that was looked up to. In September you were a college freshman, the lowest rung on a new food chain. A familiar and comfortable part of your life was ending and a new part was beginning to emerge. You were ending your childhood and beginning your transition into adulthood.

There are four parts to the ending process, they do not have to occur in any particular order and some may be more obvious than others, but they will occur.

Disengagement

When you went away to college you disengaged yourself from everything that was familiar and comfortable. Your mother wasn't there to wake you in the morning, she wasn't there to fix your favorite meal, etc.

In the stories from the ancient world, the disengagement process is a frequent one. Christ spent forty days in the wilderness prior to beginning his ministry. Sometimes in these stories, the disengagement step is not voluntary. Jonah decides to flee from God's instructions and spends his disengagement in the stomach of a large fish.

Whether your disengagement is voluntary or involuntary, it is critical to be separated from the old ways to facilitate your transition to the future.

Disidentification

In most cases, disidentification is really an inner process of disengagement. While you are physically separated from the old, you begin to question the ways in which you identified yourself. As a high school senior you were looked up to, your opinions about teachers and classes were listened to. As a college freshman you did not even know where all of the buildings were located, and you were rarely listened to.

The process can be very distressing, especially in vocational transitions, where the old roles and titles were an important part of your identity. The impact of a job loss can be much greater than one would imagine. I recently lost my job, and this process of disidentification can be a very rough but necessary one.

Disenchantment

Separated from the old identity and the old situation, you are floating in a limbo. While in this limbo other aspects of your life are continuing, many with ties to the old. The reality of "the sun will rise in the morning", "your mother still loves you", "life goes on", etc., are necessary to help you move through this period of disenchantment.

Sometime during the first weeks of your freshman year the thrill and excitement of being a college student ended. Things you did in high school got you into trouble in college. With one or two hundred students in a lecture, you had been reduced to a number. You began to question your decision to attend college, and you probably went through a period of wanting to go home. You were disenchanted and wanted to hold onto the familiar and comfortable.

The point is that your disenchantment, regardless if it was caused by a minor disappointment or a major shock, is the signal that you are moving into a transition.

Disorientation

The "reality" that is left behind by any ending is much more important than a picture on the wall. It is a sense of which way is up and which way is down; it is a sense of which way is forward and which way is backward. It is, in short, the time in which you will orient yourself to move forward into the future.

These steps or processes do not necessarily appear in any given order. I have used your experiences as a college freshman which began with disengagement (going away to college), disidentification (moving from a position of leadership in the adolescent world to a position of a college freshmen in the adult world), disenchantment (the thrill of being in college is over and I want to go home) to disorientation (finding yourself in the new world).

Now imagine that you discovered that a person who called themselves your friend was telling lies about you. Disenchantment (why would they tell a lie like that about me), disorientation (what in the world is going on), and as you discovered that others were telling the same lies, you would probably move right into disidentification and disengagement.

In my situation, my previous employer created the disengagement when he informed me that my job had been eliminated. Disorientation set in almost immediately. Should I go to lunch,

should I go home, what should I do? I cleaned out my office and left. Disenchantment came in the form of anger at being fired because a bunch of senior managers failed to do their jobs.

Disidentification was tough because when someone asked me what I did, I had to tell them that I was unemployed and looking for a job.

It was not only necessary for me to work through these steps to continue with the rest of my life, it was good for me. After resolving my anger, frustration and sense of identity I was then ready to start my future with a renewed positive attitude.

I was still struggling with my Ending when I purchased Transitions. Understanding what I was going through didn't make it any easier, but it did make it clearer.

The Neutral Zone

Any time a door is closed in your life, do not be afraid to let it remain closed, do not wear yourself out attempting to open a door that is shut tight. The door was closed for a reason, and because you cannot understand the reason at this moment does not mean that your life is finished.

One of the difficulties of being in transition in our modern society is that we have lost the appreciation for this gap in the continuity of our existence. For many of us, emptiness represents the lack of something. When the something is as important as relatedness and purpose and reality, we try to find ways of replacing these missing elements as quickly as possible. The Neutral Zone is a critical part of the transition process, it is a temporary state in which we need to utilize the time to discover who we are and where we want to go.

It does not matter whether you created the Ending or that the Ending was started by another, the old and familiar is over. You have managed to traverse the Disengagement, Disidentification, Disenchantment and Disorientation steps, now take advantage of being between the Ending of the old and the Beginning of the new. This is the time that you may decide to start that business you have dreamed about for years; or to study law or medicine because it has been your dream to be an attorney or a doctor; or to simply move to the country and chill out. For years you have been concentrating on meeting your responsibilities to others, and that is good. The old is past and you now have the opportunity to look at yourself as a whole and not simply as one who meets their responsibilities to others.

Making A Beginning

"He has half the deed done, who has made a beginning" Horace "Epistles". It is when the endings and the idle time of neutrality are finished that we can launch ourselves anew, changed and re-

newed by the destruction of the old life-phase and the journey through the nowhere.

The previous sentence goes against everything in our mechanistic and logical culture. We live in a context where everything starts with a switch or a key. If it does not start, we follow the step by step procedures to discover why and fix it.

I appreciate your doubts about my sanity in believing that this is true because I struggled with this concept myself. I have spent almost half of my life writing computer programs; on or off; yes or no; you cannot complete step 2 without completing step 1 first. This is true with computers and other mechanical objects, but not with people. We must have an ending of the old before we can have a beginning of the new.

I have read the book twice now and I have reread several chapters several times and I have looked back on my own life to see that I had incomplete transitions in my life. What I thought were new beginnings quickly turned into endings because I had not allowed myself the time to completely end the old life-phase and journey through the nowhere.

I would highly recommend this book for everyone. It does not matter whether you are looking to live full time as your gender, you are going through a divorce, or you are looking to "come out of your closet" for the first time, Transitions will help you understand what is involved in every transition.

Book Review

by Sofronia Anne

Bert & Lori

By Robert J. Rowe

RUN- do not walk- do not pass go, do not collect two hundred dollars. Don't do anything except RUN- to your friendly bookstore and purchase, *Bert & Lori*, by Robert J. Rowe, with a forward by Vern L. Bullough. The book is subtitled-The Autobiography of a Crossdresser. THEN- take it home and sit down and READ it!

This book is a landmark!

Quote from the dedication page: "...as well as to my Tri-Ess 'sisters' with thanks for their encouragement and help."

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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:

Carol Beecroft
P.O. Box 194
Tulare, CA 93275

"I promise the courtesy of a reply to all correspondence from my Tri-Ess sisters."

Femme Name _____

Code Number _____

Here's how to write a Pen Pal through the Forwarding Service:

- 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.
- 3) Place this envelope inside another envelope and address this outer envelope to:

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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: [REDACTED]
 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

DECEMBER 1997

20: Puttin' on the Ritz, Chicago IL, Chi Chapter, PO Box 40, Wood Dale IL 60191-0040, (630) [REDACTED]

ADVANCE NOTICES - 1998

JANUARY 1998

16-19: Holiday At Sea, Miami-Bahamas & return on Royal Caribbean's Sovereign of the Seas, (800) 247-7021

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) [REDACTED]

APRIL 1998

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

JUNE 1998

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

JULY 1998

15-19: SPICE VI, Atlanta GA, Dr. Peggy Rudd, PO Box 5304, Katy TX 77491, Fax (281) 347-8747, E-mail: [REDACTED]

AUGUST 1998

22- 29: Dignity Cruise #10, Roundtrip from Barcelona, Spain, visiting Cannes, Monte Carlo, Sicily, Corsica, Rome & Malta, on Royal Caribbean's Vision of the Seas. Call Brenda at Cruises, Inc., Toll Free at 1-800-247-7021

OCTOBER 1998

28-01: Holiday En Femme, Minneapolis MN, Beta Gamma Chapter, PO Box 8591, Minneapolis, MN 55408, (612) [REDACTED], E-Mail: [REDACTED]


Telling Your Children

by Jane Ellen Fairfax

Recently a crossdresser asked me if he should tell his 11-year-old son about his crossdressing. I have condensed the main points of my answer below, in the hope of providing some general guidelines to consider in reaching such a decision. The choice of whether, when, how, and why children should or should not be told is highly personal. Each child, and each family, is different and has different needs.

The first principle about telling the children of your gender gift is that there is no principle. To our knowledge, no one has done prospective studies on the consequences of telling, or not telling, children. It does not appear that telling children about crossdressing encourages them to take up the practice. For many years, we have worked with families struggling with this issue. A few observations have occurred:

- 1) The very worst time to tell a child is adolescence. When a child is struggling with his own emerging sexuality and gender expression, the last thing he needs is to have a parent's sex and gender issues thrust on him. If you decide to tell your child, you should consider doing so very soon. At 11, puberty is just around the corner.
- 2) Most people decide to tell their children on a "need-to-know" basis. If you are going to work extensively in the community, and be out and about, it is probably best to tell your child. In this way, you will have control over what he is told, and how. If someone else tells him first, you will have not only the crossdressing issue, but also the thornier issue of trust to deal with.
- 3) Much of the child's reaction depends on whether the parents present a united front. If your wife is encouraging and supportive, this factor will work for you in a big way. Children want first the secure knowledge that any given factor will not disturb the stability of their family. When the father tells them about the crossdressing, their first thought will be, "What does Mom think about this?"
- 4) You may be surprised if you get some sort of non-committal reaction from the child. The news may be overwhelming. You should not push too hard, but you should re-expose him in low doses so that he does not go into denial.
- 5) If he has another supportive relative with whom to talk over these issues, that is all to the good.
- 6) How the child does in the long run will depend on the fruits crossdressing bears in his life. He will need his father for a masculine role model. Crossdressing should not interfere with his social life. The crossdresser's desire to "be everything he is" should not prevent the child from bringing his peers home. Nor should the crossdresser try to force his values on his children's friends.
- 7) If you have any security considerations, we would advise meeting them by stressing to your child the impropriety of "telling other people your business." One doesn't tell peers what salary Daddy makes, or what he occasionally likes to wear.
- 8) An 11-year-old child may or may not have fears that he will lose you as a father. If he does, reassure him if you can truthfully do so. You are his father, regardless of what you are wearing.
- 9) Love. Where children get plenty of this commodity, they do not tend to blot it out because of crossdressing.
- 10) As always, you do well to stress self-expression rather than the superficial clothing.



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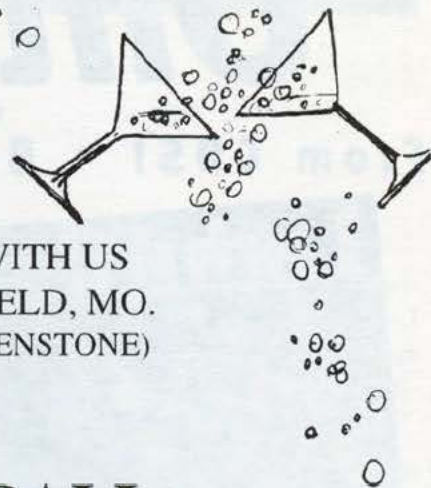
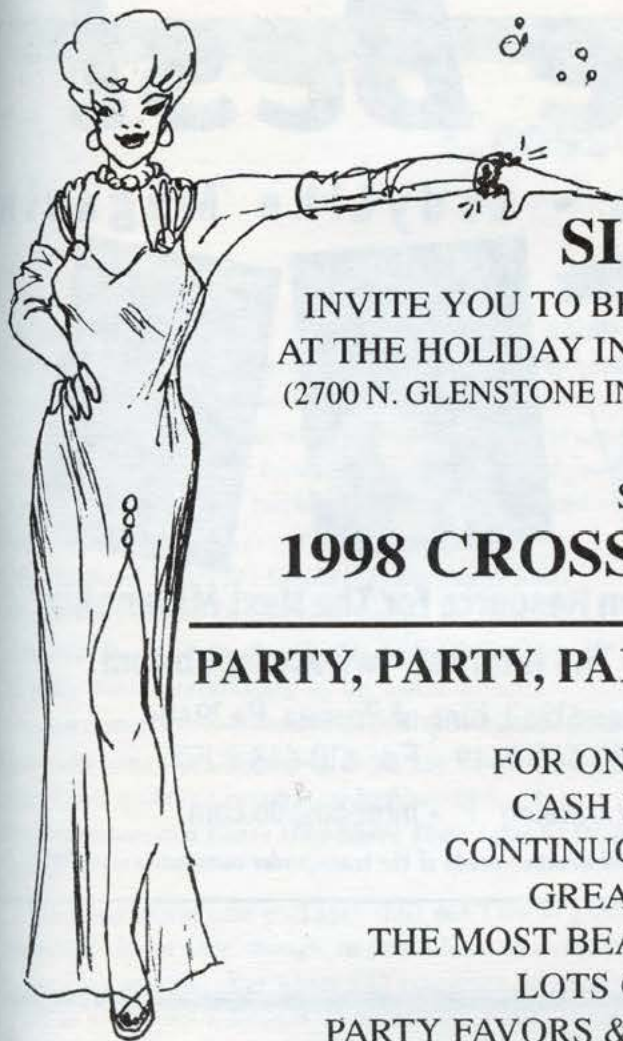
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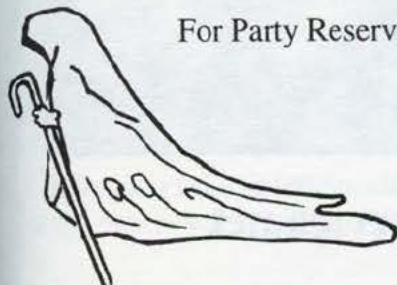
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Crossdressing 101

A College Course for Crossdressers' Spouses

by Frances Fairfax

If you are a crossdresser's spouse or partner, (or a crossdresser, for that matter!) you've probably been bombarded by book recommendations. Each friend you chat with has her own favorite, one she found most useful when she was first trying to cope with crossdressing, or one she found most insightful several years later. Let's assume you have just been given, as was a friend of mine recently, a "care package" of several such books:

My Husband Wears My Clothes by Dr. Peggy Rudd

Vested Interests by Dr. Marjorie Garber

You Just Don't Understand by Dr. Deborah Tannen

Coping With Crossdressing by Dr. JoAnn Roberts

Crossdressing, Sex and Gender by Drs. Vern & Bonnie Bullough

Crossdressing With Dignity by Dr. Peggy Rudd

The Cross and the Crossdresser by Vanessa S.

Crossdressers and Those Who Share Their Lives by Dr. Peggy Rudd

What a wonderful care package! Just don't try to gobble all those cookies at once, though, or you'll have an awful case of mental indigestion! But where DO you start? If I may be so bold as to suggest a spouses' "Crossdressing 101" curriculum for the 1997-98 school year, it would go something like this:

Your Fall Semester would start out with the Peggy Rudd classic, *My Husband Wears My Clothes*. Take your time and digest this one, and don't be afraid to enter into your emotions, even the stages you've already "put behind you." For homework, review the communications techniques Walter Bockting taught us at SPICE, then practice them with your husband. Schedule some time to talk over some of the issues with your husband. Take it in very small doses. You will not be graded, and there is no term paper due this quarter!

Next, I'd tackle *Coping With Crossdressing* by JoAnn Roberts. JoAnn is a crossdresser, but this is a practical, down-to-earth sort of book. It's good to know what an experienced community leader thinks is important for wives to understand. By this time you and your husband should be talking on a regular basis. ("Yeah, sure!" you might say, but this is important. If the two of you don't talk until there's some big bad issue to talk about, you've let those easily handled mole hills turn into Mt. Everest!)

Now I'm going to assign some outside reading! (I might as well confess right now..... I'm one of those teacher types. I might

have turned into the "old maid school teacher" my mother herself wanted to be, except my dear husband came along while I was still in college.) Anyway, get your hands on Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand*, about the different male-female communications patterns.

The next book in the regular fall curriculum ought to be *Crossdressing With Dignity*. Can a crossdresser (can his wife?) move beyond stereotypes, fear, guilt, shame, etc., to find not only self-acceptance but peace and dignity? Peggy shows us how in this very practical book, full of personal anecdotes and hope. Don't skip over the research summaries and tables in the back. You must have them memorized by the end of the semester! (NOT!)

For light reading over your mid year break, browse through *Crossdressers and Those Who Share Their Lives*. You'll meet some interesting people through the photos and text. And no, that's not Peggy's Melanie on the cover!

The Spring Semester of "Crossdressing 101" takes you into some upper-level material (If you'll look in the Course Catalog, it's the equivalent of History 300), but don't let that scare you. *Crossdressing, Sex and Gender*, by the husband-and-wife team of Drs. Vern and Bonnie Bullough, is a comprehensive multicultural history, right down to current explanations of crossdressing and what to do about it. It's fascinating! This one book will take you all the way to next June and a college degree!

Now you're ready for Graduate School. *Vested Interests* is by Harvard English professor Marjorie Garber. The book jacket calls it a "tour de force of cultural criticism" - and that's an understatement! It's best taken in small doses, but you may be unable to put it down, even if you've never heard of half the books and plays she mentions in which some form of "crossing" occurs. This one isn't about us coping with crossdressing; it's about our collective culture coping with "crossings" of all sorts. If you have another whole summer to spend reading, just start on *Vested Interests*.

You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned *The Cross and the Crossdresser*. I'll get back to it at another time. The religious issues involved in crossdressing, and the available books and articles on the subject, deserve a course description of their own!



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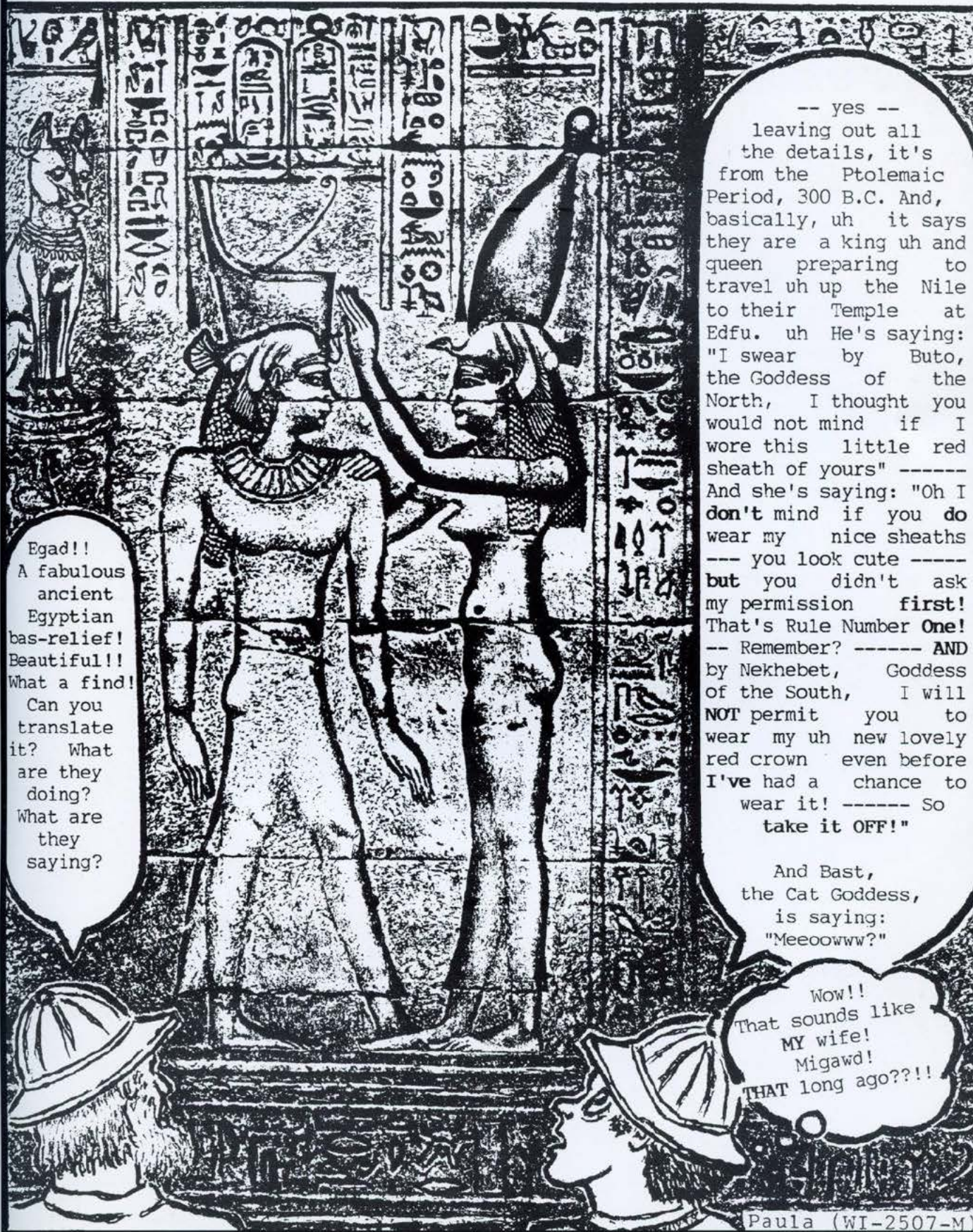
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What a find!
Can you
translate
it? What
are they
doing?
What are
they
saying?

-- yes --
leaving out all
the details, it's
from the Ptolemaic
Period, 300 B.C. And,
basically, uh it says
they are a king uh and
queen preparing to
travel uh up the Nile
to their Temple at
Edfu. uh He's saying:
"I swear by Buto,
the Goddess of the
North, I thought you
would not mind if I
wore this little red
sheath of yours" -----
And she's saying: "Oh I
don't mind if you do
wear my nice sheaths
--- you look cute ----
but you didn't ask
my permission first!
That's Rule Number One!
-- Remember? ----- AND
by Nekhebet, Goddess
of the South, I will
NOT permit you to
wear my uh new lovely
red crown even before
I've had a chance to
wear it! ----- So
take it OFF!"

And Bast,
the Cat Goddess,
is saying:
"Meeooww?"

Wow!!
That sounds like
MY wife!
Migawd!
THAT long ago??!!

Paula (WI-2507-M)

Heels Beside the Shore

By Sue CA-2384-S

I sat beneath the stars tonight, how long I couldn't say,
Thinking of the way things were and how they are today.
Tears fell from my eyes that night, on my knees in the rain and sand.
A young man cried, with a soldier's pride, a pistol in his hand.
I know it's wrong, but my pride's so strong, the longing I can't suppress.
No man, I find, in his right mind, would ever wear a dress.
A soldier in a far off place, the rain, the beach, the sand.
The things he craves, or a lonely grave? The choice is in his hand.
Tonight the smell of perfume as I walk along the strand.
Tonight I brush my skirt aside as I kneel upon the sand.
Again I'll go down on my knees on the beach, upon the sand.
There's no rain, and within, no pain, and no pistol in my hand.
I turn my eyes to heaven. The stars like angels smile.
Again I'll say the little prayer I've said for quite a while.
Thank you, Lord, for making me the way that You have done.
Thank you for the extra bit, the part that all "woman."
A little bit of tenderness inside this manly frame.
From that day forth, I've looked with pride and never more with shame.
I hear high heels walking on the boardwalk by the strand.
I can smell sweet perfume and see waves caress the sand.
I feel evening's gentle breezes play with skirt, and hair, and more,
As tonight I walk the boardwalk alone beside the shore.
Yes, tonight I walk the boardwalk, and as a man let me confess,
I love the way it makes me feel when I go walking in a dress.

the Society for the Second Self, inc.

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September 18, 1997

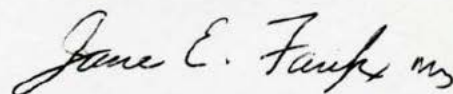
Dear Tri-Ess Sister,

You will probably notice a change in the appearance of the Mirror with this issue. Starting with the Summer 1997 volume, the Mirror is being laid out professionally. Because of the continued growth of Tri-Ess, the enthusiasm of our members and chapters, and the ever increasing volume of inquiries to our Houston office, we are moving forward to streamline our operations while maintaining our commitment to quality in all our services and programs. The changeover has caused this issue to be somewhat late, but we anticipate getting back on schedule within the next issue or two. We hope you will enjoy the new look of our favorite journal.

You will find enclosed the first installment of the new Tri-Ess Membership Directory. Denise and her Chi Chapter Staff are working quickly to produce the pictorial section, which you will receive in upcoming months.

The Holiday En Femme 1997 is unique in the history of Tri-Ess! A Holiday at Sea! This exciting Bahamas Cruise, the creation of Peggy Rudd of Dignity Cruise fame, offers us opportunities for unique experiences en femme. Having cruised with Peggy ourselves, Frances and I know that everything she does is top class. Shopping, entertainment, food, scenery and sheer fun - this Holiday has it all! And for no more than you would spend for an ordinary Holiday on land! Please note, however, that this is not an event where you can register at the door! Cruises sell out quickly! While the snow swirls and the wind howls, you can be partying with your sisters in the warm Bahamas! But only if you act now - before the November 7 deadline! See you on board, mate!

Yours in sisterhood,



Jane Ellen Fairfax

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***Tri-Ess
Membership
Directory***

Profiles Only

Section B

Directory Information

We are attempting to produce a membership directory as often as needed for our members. We realize that it has been a while and we are hoping to turn that around. In order to speed the delivery of the directory we are shipping it in sections. The first section, which is enclosed is the PROFILE ONLY section. Later, during the upcoming months, additional sections will be issued. It is practically impossible to keep current, as soon as a directory is printed it is obsolete, this due to the incoming new members and the required time for editing, etc. Hopefully, in the future we will be able to provide the directory on CD-ROM or by internet directly to the members.

Please check over this issue and if you had sent in a PROFILE ONLY and find you are missing or the profile is incorrect, please let me know. Also, anyone who wishes to update their profile or add a photo, please see the box below.
Denise Peters, Editor

UPDATE NEW INFORMATION

Updates and or new informations, photos etc may be made by mail or computer E-Mail.

Mail;

Please TYPE or COMPUTER print out your profile if at all possible.

All photos must be croppable to 2x2.5 inches without reduction or enlargement, B&W preferred. Unacceptable photos will not be used.

Send your updated Profile and or Photo to:

Denise [REDACTED]
PO Box 1138
Lake Zurich, IL 60047-1138

E-Mail:

Direct [REDACTED]

You may type your profile in or upload it as a file. All popular file formats accepted (EXCEPT MS WORKS). Photos in GIF or JPG format also accepted.

If you would like your E-Mail address listed in the directory, please furnish that also. (Caution: some E-Mail addresses have your real name, please understand this before providing it.)

Jerrie Lynn Pell City AL-3471-W

Jerrie writes to tell us that she has moved to Alabama and says that things are pretty much the same, except that she feels more free to be herself. She still loves to let Jerry or Jerrie Lynn have their respective times. She and her loving wife have been married for over twenty years and have a son and a daughter. Their daughter has entered and won many beauty pageants! Jerry is in the fabrication business for countertops and her wife is a seamstress. She would like to get her cosmetology license and have her own beauty shop. In her words, "All I know is that Jerrie Lynn is really here and there is no hiding her anymore. There have been too many years of that. I just hope she can have the love that I have had for so many years. I feel she will."

Susan Auburn AL-3574-H

Susan says she is in her late thirties, has a college education, and works in a profession. She has been dressing as far back as she can remember, starting when her older sister would dress her up in her clothes. Susan is married to a fairly understanding and supportive wife. These days, she dresses mostly at home, although she has gone out in public at home and in other cities. Occasionally, Susan and her wife will get dressed up and go out together when they are in a large city. Susan views herself as a sophisticated, professional career woman with traditional feminine tastes and attitudes (sort of a liberated Southern Belle). Her interests range from fashion to nutrition and fitness.

Kim Birmingham AL-4374-P

Kim, age 36, dresses mostly at home. Dresses in public at chapter meetings. Recently out of the closet. Kim's wife is aware of crossdressing but not supportive. Enjoys music, golf and dancing. She would like to hear from other CD's in Alabama.

Lori Russellville AR-1010-Q

Lori states that due to many factors, she has not been able to do much dressing the past few years, although undies are part of her daily wardrobe. She also sleeps in a nightie every night. She and her wife get away one weekend each year as girlfriends. Lori is interested in computers.

Jackie Conway AR-3770-H

Jackie has been around for about five years. Wife is unsupportive and does not understand. Mentally I am Jackie for part of every day and have been for over three years. I dress only when my wife is on vacation because of respect for her. Married for 36 years and have two daughters. Jackie has interests in woodworking, bass fishing and she exercises daily.

Laurie Cottonwood AZ-3052-E

Laurie is slender, slight of build, feminine & can easily pass. She has dressed since a child, has a large wardrobe & dresses regularly. Laurie loves the Arts & enjoys Literature, History & Philosophy. She collects vintage wines & cult movies. Of course, she loves fashion, jewelry, etc. She will correspond.

Rachel Phoenix AZ-3191-S

Rachel is in the early stage of crossdressing; she travels within the U.S. each week. She has an unsupportive spouse, therefore Rachel can only dress while on her business trips. Her objective is to meet other members around the country, gaining their insight & knowledge, to gain confidence and leave the closet.

Sandy Tucson AZ-4220-G

Sandy, age 49, is single and a Doctor of Radiology. She seldom dresses at home, but dresses for meetings and to go out.

Michelle Anne Chandler AZ-4305-M

Michelle Anne, single, never married looking, some college. Unable to drive; enjoy most types of music; avid photographer. I am interested in any and all contacts.

Georgia Lee Phoenix AZ-4332-B

I am 51, and up to now I have dressed alone at home and that only recently. My wife does not approve or know. I have stifled this part of me long enough. I am in sales and look forward to the rest of my life with who I really am in association with others of kindred spirit.

Carol Mesa AZ-4337-W

Carol, age 58, contract manager- wife very opposed to crossdressing of husband.

Susan Golden Valley AZ-4359-C

Susan, 56 and retired, has been closeted CD until the Texas T Party of 95. A widower for 1 1/2 years I now have a wonderful lady friend, who loves me and I love her, encourages me to dress whenever the opportunity arises. We have on occasion gone to casino's and dancing when I dressed en-femme. I pass but for my voice. I own some old cars that I am restoring. Then I am in male attire. I found it too difficult to crawl around and paint cars while wearing a cocktail dress and heels. My lady and I enjoy playing golf, boating, dancing, traveling and just having fun. We would like to hear from you and get together when possible. We are new members of Tri-Ess and Spice.

Toni Tucson AZ-4522-S

Toni, age 55, dresses exclusively at home at present. Wife knows about Toni but not understanding nor supportive. Dress only when home alone. Enjoy music, gardening, home maintenance and improvement and reading.

Janet Prescott AZ-4615-P

Janet, age 49, 5'8", 180#. "I work in the advertising & Marketing field. I dress as often as possible, mostly when out of town on projects or longer assignments as my wife categorically eschews the process. We have no children, but she has two daughters (who live in town now too and who she is scared will discover my "secret"). I am animated and articulate; I enjoy sports, art, wines, mature walks, snooker, cribbage and learning more about computers. And---after 25 years, I still like the AD & MKT business. Oh Yes---and for the record I do love my wife, but this may be the end for us if we can't find a way to come to mutually beneficial terms on it all."

Myrna Louise Victoria B.C. BC-1512-C

My name is Myrna, age 49. I dress mainly at home, but have been out for walks on calm evenings. I'm hoping to meet new friends and reacquaint with old friendships. I hope to regain my confidence and restore my balance within. I enjoy reading SC-FI, watching TV, music, astronomy (beginner), and learning to be a more passable woman. Will answer all correspondence.

Charlene Kelowna BC-3901-S

Charlene dresses 2 to 3 times a month at home and is not able to make excursions out. Charlene's wife is very supportive and shared in Charlene's pursuit of learning and self awareness. Charlene would like to communicate with others who strive for a positive balance of masculine & feminine in their lives. Charlene's interests are: Family, Carving, Playing Guitar, Golf 1, hiking and other activities dealing with nature

Laura BC-3926-L

Laura, 34 yrs old, has been a closet crossdresser for years and has never been out in public. She is now looking forward to meeting and writing to other sisters. Laura is an outdoor guide and enjoys photography, travel, skiing, and all things feminine. Laura has an understanding SO who also enjoys the same.

Leslie Whistler BC-4185-T

I am a 62 year old white heterosexual crossdresser. I only venture outside my home on Halloween night. I have a university education and I am living with a loving supportive wife. My religion is Scottish Presbyterian. My wife and I love the outdoors. We like to log, mountain bike hike and camp. In the wintertime we enjoy downhill skiing.

Michelle Port Moody BC-4570-M

I'm a 43 year-old married transvestite. (I haven't learned to accept this fact) I have been dressing for as long as I can remember I always thought it was a phase that would go away! I dressed very, very occasionally until about 6 or 7 years ago. At that point in time I much I enjoyed dressing, feeling feminine and sexy, even though I felt guilty and disgusted with myself for doing so. After going through the usual purges (mental, too cheap to throw anything out) the crossdressing seemed to escalate with each series of purges and start-ups. With each step I got closer to the feminine look I wanted. After much research on the Internet, reading books, professional counseling for both of us we have decided to apply for membership to Tri-Ess. We are at a loss as to how to proceed with crossdressing now as part of OUR lives. We both want to deal with the crossdressing in a way that is comfortable for both of us! I would like, if possible, to talk (email) to someone of like mind.

Patricia Brazil BR-4325-C

I'm Patricia Cross, age 54 and officially a Tri-Ess representative for Brazil. I dress openly but not full time. Divorced, 3 kids who know and try to understand my cross dressing. Books & articles about physicolgy & sex and gender. Write cross dressers and wives.

Jeannette Corona Del Mar CA-2848-M

Jeannette says she has been crossdressing since [she was quite young; she remembers dressing in her sisters dance dress at 11, complete with nylons & high heeled shoes. She is married to a wonderful woman who supports her & often buys her clothes. Jeannette does not go out.

Judy Culver City CA-2885-L

Judy says she doesn't look her age of 70! She is a retired editor with interests in philosophy, astronomy, history, current events & reading. Judy claims dressing feminine is a soothing and enjoyable experience and it brings down her blood pressure.

Janyne Long Beach CA-2984-C

Janyne is married to an reluctantly understanding wife. She is on-participative. Janyne is recently out of the closet after years of secretly dressing. Interests are: cooking, photography, motorcycles, square dancing and writing. She would like to correspond with others.

Diana Beck Hanford CA-3048-B

Diana is 44 and married. She and wife, Eunice, were married in 1976, from 1981 thru 1993 they lived and worked in North Carolina. During that time they were active in Kappa Beta Chapter and were the founding editors of "The Pink Slip", which is the chapter newsletter there. Diana is now retired from her position on the faculty of a University in North Carolina, having taken medical retirement. Her area of specialization is Computer Applications in Chemistry. In the future, you will find Diana and Eunice active in the National Couples Group/Tri-Ess and Diana will be helping Tri-Ess founder Carol Beecroft with her business Chevalier Publications.

Victoria Westlake Village CA-3487-F

Victoria is a native Californian, in her sixties, with several engineering degrees, and a long corporate career. She is married, has six children and twelve grand-children! Although a life long crossdresser, she has only recently begun to venture out to group meetings. Victoria attends meetings specifically to dress.

Carin Sacramento CA-3580-D

Carin, age 65, is a retired aircraft mechanic. She is interested in sports; she plays golf almost daily! Carin dresses at home almost every day. She is a widower and totally in the closet. Carin's fear is that her children will discover her crossdressing.

Tommi Lakewood CA-3592-S

Tommi says she enjoys photography, bicycling, camping, fly fishing, and country lore. She enjoys working with her hands and has become a fairly skilled knifemaker. Sewing interests her, too. Her crossdressing has been with Tommi since childhood, whether she liked it or not. She kept this secret to herself until this past year when she discovered other crossdressers. Tommi has shared her crossdressing desires with her wife, who is only adamant of it. Tommi has begun to attend PPOC meetings this past year. She would like to correspond with other sisters at or past the crossroad.

Stacy Alta Loma CA-3703-C

Stacy, who has been dressing for 27 years, learned of Tri-Ess through Prodigy. Her wife knows and accepts the crossdressing, but does not like to see Stacy dressed. Both Stacy and her wife are interested in meeting other couples to share stories, gain acceptance, and receive support and understanding. Stacy would like to hear from other cross dressers and her wife would love to hear from other crossdressers and their wives and how they have dealt with handling crossdressing.

Dona Laguna Hills CA-3839-L

Dona, age 43, enjoys dressing up but seldom ventures out into the public. She has a very understanding and encouraging girlfriend who is supportive in Dona's actions. Dona enjoys working with computers, singing, playing the piano and writing music. She also is a prt time instructor at a local community college and teaches some computer related calsses at work. Dona is a happy, joyful person who enjoys life.

Teri Ann Santa Barbara CA-3859-G

Teri Ann, a closet CD since 4, has now, at 52, realized her dream of many years - honesty with those she loves. Last Fall she attended the Holiday En Femme in Burbank CA and for the first time ever was able to talk face to face with other CD's. During those four days, she feels she grew measurably and the Sunday evening following, she told her wife who is now more at ease with the situation. They agreed not to let their three children know, but Teri Ann is very happy and relaxed. She goes out many times a month and seems to pass best in the evening. She loves her femme side, silky clothing, stockings, heels and make-up, scarves and jewelry. She will answer letters as quickly as she can, and wants local sisters to contact her for house parties and "woman talk."

Pat San Clemente CA-3893-F

Pat likes to dress at home. She hopes to get out more and is reaching out for accepting. She is very interested in corresponding with others. Pat is a college graduate and professional, however, crossdressing brings her the most personal satisfaction. She promises to write to all.

Bobbie Los Angeles CA-4042-O

Bobbie, divorced, Japanese and age 50 has attended her first Chapter meeting, which is her first time out. She enjoys ballet, ballroom dancing, line dancing and poker club.

Ellen Lemoore CA-4043-C

Ellen has been crossdressing since she was about six or seven years old. She only dresses at home and at Tri-Chi Chapter. She's been married for over forty years, she has five adult children, four boys and a girl. Ellen's spouse wants very little to do with her crossdressing. Ellen is a retired aviation petty officer from the U.S. Navy and a retired firefighter/dispatcher from Civil Service. She enjoys classical music, forties and early fifties swing and most soft music types. She welcomes correspondences with other crossdressers.

Elizabeth Stockton CA-4085-R

Elizabeth, age 50, has been married to a supportive wife for 19 years. She just came out after 40 years of secretive crossdressing. She has never dressed in public due to being in the public eye. Elizabeth and her soulmate just found out about Tri-Ess and will be attending meetings in the central valley whenever possible. They plan on being active in the couples groups and would like to hear from northern Central Valley sisters and couples. She enjoys teaching, remodeling houses and driving older cars. They both enjoy shopping, travel, Tri-Ess meetings and have just taken up sewing.

Stephanie Canoga Park CA-4094-K

Stephanie says, "I am 37 years old and married with a 6 year old daughter. My wife is tolerant of my activities, my daughter doesn't know yet. I am employed as manager of a manufacturing plant. I enjoy tennis and boating."

Grace Anaheim CA-4123-S

Grace writes us that she is a senior citizen, retired doctor. She says she has time galore to crossdress. Very good organist and harmonica player

Lynn Crescent City CA-4136-R

Lynn, age 40, masters degree, high school teacher. I have never been to any meetings. I have never met another CD. Wife knows, tow daughters dont (ages 10 and 12). Wife is somewhat supportive. She is afraid to meet other wives. Both of us are Christians and active in our Lutheran Church. Very musical family.

Joyce Charles Southern Calif CA-4189-B

Joyce is 53 years old. She has been an engineer and currently owns her own aviation company. Her wife is aware and quite supportive of her activities. Joyce dresses at home and to go out with her wife for walks, dinners, and shopping excursions; to attend symphony orchestra and jazz concerts; and to go to the theater. She has traveled, flying her own airplane, mostly in the southwestern u.s.; She will venture further afield as her personality develops and she becomes more confident in herself.

Shaundra Santa Barbara CA-4198-M

I live in a small town. I dress mostly at home and at the beach in the summer, I am 44 years old, have danced in ballet for 25 years, and recently started on pointe. I'm married to an understanding wife and enjoy ballet, filmmaking, cooking and nature.

Elizabeth Los Angeles CA-4211-K

Elizabeth, 38 and married, enjoys going out with her supportive wife for shopping, dining and other activities. She attends chapter meetings and regularly associates with other CD friends. Elizabeth has a BS in Physics and owns her own business.

Patti Fort Bragg CA-4212-L

I'm 42 years of age and married. I enjoy fishing, camping and going shopping with my wife.

Elizabeth Santa Rosa CA-4218-C

My name is Elizabeth and I live in Santa Rosa California. Elizabeth is 38 and interested in computers. I also own a computer. I also like country music. Elizabeth is single. Elizabeth dresses at home and is very much interested in coming out of the closet to get more in touch with her second self. Elizabeth seeks others that will understand her in a supportive environment. Elizabeth is very interested in meeting her sisters here in Santa Rosa.

Karyn Fresno CA-4273-H

Karyn is 49, an engineer, and married. Her wife is VERY supportive. Enjoys camping & travel.

Nichole Sebastopol CA-4299-C

Nichole, age 38, college, MBA, married engineer. Only fine the opportunity to dress as I would like at home & occasionally on vacation. I would like to meet others with same interests.

Linda Redondo Beach CA-4304-W

Linda, 58, dresses a lot at home and goes out once in awhile alone. She has just joined Tri Ess and feels ready to venture out and express herself more. She looks forward to meeting other crossdressers, their partners, and making friends. She enjoys sports, music, history, and trivia.

Stephanie Northridge CA-4307-S

Stephanie is widowed and retired.

Carol Santa Barbara CA-4308-P

Carol, age 57, "I have been dressing most of my life, but only recently have 'come out' to join others at meetings. Married, wife does not know, or at least, does not discuss this. Enjoy talking with sisters at meetings, finding common ground we all have."

Jennifer Fresno CA-4323-

Jennifer, age 31 and divorced is a cabinet maker and non-religious.

Jennifer Canoga Park CA-4330-B

Jennifer is married and an engineer. "I dress mostly at home, but I recently started going out occasionally to Alpha Chapter meetings. My wife knows about Jennifer and is helpful, but reserved. I'm retired, but active in engineering field. I enjoy music, art (both as artist and viewer), skiing and running."

Roxanne Sacramento CA-4335-P

Roxanne is 65 and just starting to come out. Wife very supportive, she wants Roxanne to dress well and look good. Retired and collect toy fire engines, enjoys art, shopping and feeling feminine. Fond of helpful Tri-Ess sister in Tuscon.

Jennifer Porterville CA-4345-W

Jennifer, age 44. I have dressed mostly after work wherever I could find a safe place. I just discovered and joined Tri-Ess and am looking forward to the chapter meetings and activities I've heard about. My wife and oldest children know about Jennifer but have never met her. My wife is willing to learn more and work out some compromises for the first time in 22 years of marriage and intolerance. I enjoy music and the art of being beautiful and feminine. I would like to learn how to dance. I'm looking forward to writing to other crossdressers. Any words of encouragement and support for my wife would be appreciated, especially from Baptists, as my wife thinks crossdressing is a "sin".

Marlene Palmdale CA-4445-M

Marlene, 35 states: "I dress mostly at home, but am looking forward to attending chapter meetings. I enjoy the internet, music & cars. I'm interested in writing to other crossdressers."

Jenna Long Beach CA-4455-C

Jenna, age 44 is married to Mary who is supportive but apprehensive. We enjoy music, roller blading biking and going to the beach. Would like to meet all our sisters.

Charlette Port Hueneme CA-4456-S

Charlette, age 45, and single, dresses mostly at home, but goes out occasionally, especially at Halloween. Her Fiancee knows about her dressing and accepts it, but is fearful when out in public. She is very helpful with clothes & make-up. No one else in the family knows about her dressing. Charlette enjoys Computers, reading, music & audio-visual gadgets. She would be interested in corresponding with other crossdressers especially on E-Mail.

Judy San Diego CA-4458-F

Judy, age 39 and unmarried has been a crossdresser all her life. "I have only dressed in private (so far). I would like to meet other sisters so that I can grow and develop into the person I feel inside me." Currently working as an electronic systems designer, she enjoys art, fashion (especially shoes!), computers and reading.

Julia Dixon CA-4470-S

Julia 47 states: "I have been a crossdresser since early childhood, as long as I can remember. I usually wore my sister's clothes, and thought that I was the only one like me in the world. Then, when I was a teen, I discovered that my earliest childhood friend was a crossdresser also! After that, we shopped together for moral support. I usually dress only at home, but I have been out to bars and passed. My wife is very supportive and helps me buy. My favorite things are miniskirts, heels, and pantyhose, since I have long, slender legs which I have been told are very sexy. My hobbies are amateur science, reading, writing and sailing. I will answer and look forward to any and all sister's correspondence. ALL will be answered."

Nicole Friant CA-4476-A

Nicole, age 42, 6ft, 145lbs with a very supportive & loving wife. I enjoy dressing at home and rarely go out dressed in public. I am just starting to understand and accept Nicole and look forward to her future.

Melissa Burbank CA-4484-H

Melissa Hayes, married and have one step daughter who does not know. "My wife Amada loves and accepts me, the whole me. I am in to spirituality, philosophy and generally not taking anything for granted."

Tammy Pico Rivera CA-4498-B

Tammy is single, self employed and has attended college.

Julie Anne San Diego CA-4499-B

Julie Anne, 52 is married and dresses mostly at home. "My wife and daughter are both aware of Julie Anne and are somewhat supportive. My Hobbies include: playing guitar and singing, motorhome camping, square dancing, and computers. I plan to become active when we move to the Los Vegas area in 1997.

Ann Fresno CA-4552-L

Ann has been married for 10 years, is 30 and lives in England. She has been dressing since childhood and has a loving wife who unfortunately is not supportive. She still dresses at home but would like to go out and socialize. She is also interested in music and art.

Stephanie Los Angeles CA-4561-R

Stephanie is single, 29, is a college grad and lives in LA. She works in the film business, dresses at home but her roommates and most friends don't know. She has yet to attend a meeting but is looking forward to "going out" in a social environment. Interests include modern art, film, photography and travel (when she gets the chance). She would like to send a photo but has never had one made.

Jasmine Gilroy CA-4582

Jasmine, age 39 and employed in the construction field. "I've been dressing for 34 years now, off and on. I've given this subject much thought in those years. I'm married, for six years now, and have recently told my wife. It is so weird having everything out in the open, after all its been a secret for a long time, but I think I'll adjust. I hope to find balance, as well as friends, there have been so many manic episodes. I'll have no desires to dress for years at a time. Suddenly my only conscious thoughts I own are dressing up. Any who, I only dress at home and my wife is hanging in with me, so life is good.

Susan Fort Collins CO-3481-B

Susan has been crossdressing for as long as she can remember. She dresses mostly at home, although she has been out a few times. She is 41, married with one son. Susan's wife used to be understanding but recently has turned hostile. Susan enjoys playing tennis, hiking and camping, although most of her time is spent working. She has recently begun attending Delta chapter meetings. She owns her own business and is building a home on top of a mountain.

Tasha Denver CO-3737-B

Tasha, 42 and-divorced, enjoys the opportunities of chapter involvement at the Delta Chapter, (newsletter editor, 1993, President 1994), but at the same time get frustrated that we don't do more. She sketches, cartoons and enjoy trying to craft/invent CD parapenalia such as hip pads and breast prosthesis. If you are visiting Denver, we would love to meet you at Delta Chapter.

Angie Fort Collins CO-3869-H

Angie "discovered" her femme persona only five years ago but with the incredible support and encouragement of her understanding wife and best friend, she has rapidly come a long way in understanding and enjoying this new dimension to her personality. They enjoy many common interests including their passions of traveling and golf, plus sewing, quilting, shopping, model railroading, classical and 50's music and gardening. Angies wife has sew most of her wardrobe. They recently attended Fantasia Fair and Holiday Enfemme (the greatest) and are excited about the wonderful friends they made at both events. They love retirement and its freedom and look forward to attending more gender events. They enjoy corresponding with other sisters and will answer all.

Diane Colorado Springs CO-4298-E

Diane, mid 40's. Dress mostly at home but have gone out in semi-public a few times. Spouse is tolerant. Enjoy family work and computers. Wish to make friends in area for socializing. Am somewhat shy about passing but wish to go out more, especially if I have someone else to accompany me.

Glenda Bailey CO-4565-P

Glenda is in the mid 50's and dresses at home. Her wife is mostly supportive and basically understanding. Glenda likes music, antiques, old cars, motor bike riding, and history. She would like to associate with other crossdressers and wives.

Juliann Stamford CT-2967-S

Juliann dresses in private as often as possible, home & on business trips, but regrets that she has not come out yet. Juliann's wife is kind & loving, knows of her crossdressing but grudgingly accepts it. Being CEO of her own business requires much of Juliann's time, but she still finds time to enjoy sporting events & parties.

Barbara Jean Riverside CT-3854-W

Barbara now lives practically full time as a woman caring for her disabled wife. Her responsibilities, emotions, clothes, makeup, personality, compassion, and gender have all come together in a real life situation. This lifestyle has given her a very deep insight into what its really like to be a woman and she loves every moment of it. Barbara looks forward to meeting local sisters and hearing from those remote. Beside being a woman she is interested in personal computers, electronics and woodworking.

Jill New Haven CT-4344-A

Jill, 61, writes that the first time she went out she dressed as Marilyn Monroe dressed as a witch to a 1985 Halloween party. She passed! Someone took a picture of her and she couldn't believe it was her. Ever since she's been cranking out pictures with the most horrible results. She limits her going out to very select private parties on a local level.

Pamela Washington DC-4541-R

Pamela, 48, has dressed entirely at home, but would love to dress at chapter meetings and go on excursions with sisters. She has in the past repressed her femininity, but her desire to express it is now strong enough to help her overcome her prior inhibitions.

Recently separated, Pamela would like to make friends with all sisters and correspond with all who would like to. She enjoys 19th Century American and classical history and is an avid runner. She is 5'10", 139 pounds and has a dress size of 6/8

Cynthia Tampa FL-2789-S

Age 64, 5'9, single, gainfully unemployed. Enjoy dressing, personal computing, model HO scale railroad, photography and attending Sigma Epsilon meetings. Do not go out in public dressed en femme, yet. Dressing off and on since mid-teens, more so after becoming gainfully unemployed in 1990. Love pierced earrings and beautiful clothes. Former secretary, currently corresponding secretary for Sigma Epsilon. Appointed Tri-Ess Director Big Sister Program Dec 1993. Member Tri-Ess, Sigma Epsilon and I.F.G.E. since about 1988. Attended Paradise in the Poconos, 5/90; Southern Comfort '91 & '93, and Holiday En Femme '92. Will answer all letters.

Bobbie Tallahassee FL-3098-H

Bobbie says she enjoys hunting, fishing, cars, cooking & sewing. She has never gone out dressed, tho she has a understanding wife. She would like to write & share with other sisters.

Peggy Melbourne FL-3134-B

Peggy says she is fortunate to be married for 42+ years to a very understanding woman. She says that she dresses every day at home after work. Peggy's goal is to take her wife out to dinner. She has turned into a compulsive shopper for women's clothes.

Karen Port St. Lucie FL-3720-R

Married, 45. I have not ventured out in public yet. I like to dress at home and have recently been experimenting with cosmetics. I have dreamt for the day that I will come out and maybe even go to the mall clothes shopping as my other self. I have recently come to terms with my second self after many years of guilt and hiding, and have decided that I want to be happy and my femme self certainly does that for me. My wife is somewhat understanding and doesn't hate me for dressing but doesn't help either, so if I'm to come out of the closet, I must do it myself I'm currently looking for outside help with support group. Interests include running, computer bulletin boards, simple repairs and especially tinkering in anything electronic.

Joanne Miami FL-3725-H

Married, 60. Joanne only dresses at home, but does wear some feminine clothing under her street clothes all the time. She has a very understanding wife and they share a lot of each others clothes which helps the clothing budget. Joanne is interested in writing to and meeting with her sisters. She also would like to organize some social activities with members in the South Florida area. Her main hobby is Amateur Radio and enjoys talking to people all over the world. She also likes computers and camping.

Carol Ann Orlando FL-3809-A

Construction, divorced, 51. Dressing since age 4. It is with great relief and happiness to know your society is there for people like myself, who like to crossdress but don't have anyone who really understands the trials, fears and secrecy that a crossdresser lives with. I live alone although I'm not, because I have my feminine self with me, who I call Carol Ann. Since accepting her as a real part of myself, my life is more peaceful and serene. I dress up all the time I'm at home but have never gone out in public, but I sure would love to I love going to the beach, music, dancing, sewing and going shopping at the mall. I'm now back in college taking computer courses hoping to change careers. I have a deep love for God, for without His help, wouldn't be whom I am today.

Joni De Bary FL-4049-B

Joni tells us that her wife is not very supportive and she must be extremely discreet. She is married, attended college and has a career in finance.

Julia Coral Springs FL-4110-G

Hello, I'm Julia. I live in Coral Springs, Florida. At the present time, I am the housekeeper in my own condominium. I enjoy crossdressing very much and I dress up mostly at home but I also "downplay" it in public. I am trying to discover the woman I was during one of my previous lifetimes. I am what could be called a "beyond" of sorts who believes in reincarnation. My current interests are popular music, television drama, natural alternative medicine, and handicrafts.

Sandy Casselberry FL-4137-W

Sandy, age 43, dresses all the time at home and goes out whenever possible. Sandy enjoys music, chess, movies and traveling.

Sally Orlando FL-4187-S

Sally has been crossdressing since age 12. She is now in her 30s. Her wife of 17 years is very supportive and understanding, however her children are not aware of Sally's crossdressing. She dresses mostly at home, but ventures out in public on occasion. Sally is looking forward to becoming active in Tri-Ess, and the Phi Epsilon Mu chapter of Central Florida.

Michelle Orlando FL-4191-G

Michelle, in her 40's, dresses mostly at home. She wants to get involved with the Gender community and is interested in making friends with other sisters. Michelle enjoys fishing golf, computers, cooking and country music.

Vivianne Melbourne FL-4204-S

Vivianne is 55 years of age and married. Her wife knows but is not understanding. Vivianne is a retired Navy officer and dresses mostly at home, but loves to go out when she can (which is not enough). She has attended a Phi Epsilon Mu meeting. She enjoys shopping, reading and travel. She is semi retired, enjoys furthering her education and has accomplished some post MS work. She would be interested in corresponding with other crossdressers.

Alycia Fort Myers FL-4274-E

Alycia is 59 and a medical professional, who enjoys going out shopping and other outside activities. My wife, Jeanette, knows about Alycia and is warm and supportive. We enjoy camping, sailing, drama and classical music. I am interested in setting up a support group in this area. Having committed to writing a book on heterosexual crossdressing, committed us to attend Southern comfort and meeting other sisters.

Roni Miami FL-4379-G

Roni, age 56, is married and dresses only at home. Her wife knows but is not supportive. Roni enjoys dressing but would like to delve more deeply into the reasons why we crossdress. Also needs help in putting myself together. I would like to make contact with any members in the Miami area. Talking with other people that crossdress is so new to me. To be understood about my experiences is so uplifting. I would like to write other members.

Marie Miami FL-4404-D

Marie, age 53, married and a writer dresses mostly at home. Her wife knows about Marie and is understanding and supportive. She enjoys the arts, history, reading and writing.

Sabrina Ocala FL-4481-R

Sabrina, married, B.S.; Criminal Justice Management (1980) M.P.A.; Master's, Public Administration (1988) Retired U.S. Air Force ICBM Missile Operations Officer. Dress at home; except when I attend Chapter meetings. Wife is aware of my crossdressing; does not condone it; but tolerates it (most of the time). I enjoy reading, the movies, archaeology, natural history, digging for dinosaurs in Montana; and my favorite past-time: Pursuing all information relating to the President Kennedy Assassination and the subsequent government cover-up. Also pursue all information relating to UFOs and the subsequent government cover-up. Very interested in communicating with other crossdressers and their significant others. Feel free to contact me at my e-mail address [REDACTED]

Jane North Miami FL-4500-M

Jane is 49 and loves to go out shopping and dining. She has girl friends who are supportive and go places with her. Jane likes dining, plays, shopping & golf.

Selena Seminole FL-4517-T

Selena is in her 40s and like so many of us started when she was very young. At present she dresses only in private. Selena's wife has known for a long time and is trying to understand. Along with joining Tri Ess, Selena has joined her local chapter and is looking forward to meeting others.

Ashley Cape Coral FL-4525-F

Ashley, 44, writes that she goes out during the day and in the evenings. She has a boy 9, and a girl 10, and they both know. She likes to fly light planes and ultra lights.

Madeleine Orlando FL-4533-B

Madeleine writes that she dresses quite frequently at home and goes out occasionally. Her wife is very supportive and they enjoy movies and traveling together (sometimes dressed, sometimes not.) They are very interested in communicating with other crossdressers and wives in particular.

Diane Orlando FL-4543-H

Diane lives in Orlando, is 44, has been married for 18 years and is a regional sales manager. He has an understanding wife who has encouraged them to join Tri Ess. Diane writes that she, his wife, has carried a heavy load with "my fem self" but also appreciates the qualities it brings to "our marriage". They also enjoy travel and good friends.

Alexann Boca Raton FL-4586-O

Alexan Ann, 62, writes that she dresses only at home. Loves to shop, go antiquing and is learning to sew.

Wendy Roswell GA-2952-F

Wendy is married to a wonderful accepting wife; she lives in the Atlanta area. Wendy loves art and music, although she doesn't claim to be an expert. Wendy dresses mostly at home, although she has been out on few occasions with her wife.

Jacqueline Augusta GA-3518-H

Jacqueline is 43 years old, married with two children. Her wife has not met Jacqueline at this time. She has been dressing for over 25 years. She has recently joined Sigma Rho Gamma chapter and intends to join Sigma Epsilon shortly. Jacqueline would love to correspond and meet other crossdressers.

Beverly Acworth GA-3567-C

Beverly says she likes to watch movies, go to baseball games, cruise the mall, and go out to nightclubs whenever possible. She just started dressing in public a few months ago when she attended her first Sigma Epsilon meeting and she is still learning new things and meeting new friends. It's been wonderful! Beverly strives to pass even more now through a regimen on skin care and gradual weight loss. She feels better now than she has in years.

Jennifer Stockbridge GA-4032-S

I am from England and have recently sold my companies in the U.K. and retired in Atlanta. I am married with three children. My wife knows, helps and understands my crossdressing. I do venture out dressed. I would be interested in corresponding with other members.

Kimberly Auburn GA-4164-M

I live in Auburn Georgia, single, and am a member of Sigma Epsilon. I live with my father and am trying for a degree in Horticulture because I enjoy gardening & landscaping when dressed as a man but when crossdressed, I like going to nightclubs to relax. On the rest of the days I stay home and take care of my father who is confined to a wheelchair. I am only able to dress once or twice a month.

Fay Fort Mcpherson GA-4288-T

Fay has been crossdressing as long as she can remember. Unfortunately, her wife is very unaccepting but her mother is very supportive. She intends to live full time as soon as she retires. She likes computers, books, and shopping. Fay says she feels most at peace en fem and wishes she had had the courage to come out sooner.

Lori Aiea HI-2922-P

Lori says that she dresses at home, not having ventured out. Her wife knows, but does not fully understand or accept. She would like to hear from those with understanding wives. She would like to meet members, visiting Hawaii. Lori enjoys a wide variety of sports, including basketball, bowling, golf and softball. She is also active in her church.

Elise Honolulu HI-4503-J

My femme name is Elise, and I am a divorced, 56 year young, African-American heterosexual. I am a non-smoker and non-drinker. I weigh around 160 pounds and I am 5'11" tall. I have been experimenting with cross-dressing at home with lingerie and intimate apparel. Occasionally, I will wear androgenous, unisex clothing when out with friends at the park or beach. I enjoy self reading (spiritual, -help, and recovery books are MY favorites), music (lite jazz and new age wazu), walking, aerobics, and cat(s) are also an important part of my life. I relish being around upbeat people with a genuine sense of humor. I am active, and receive a lot of emotional and spiritual support, from my friends in various 12-step recovery programs.

Heather Boise ID-4373-B

Heather, aged 36, just opened the closet door. She has a loving and supportive wife. Heather is passionate about music, loves to read, enjoys gardening. She would like to correspond with sisters living in rural areas.

Alice Sun Valley ID-4460-K

Alice Foster, age 53, I dress mostly at home & have never know or spoken with another CD. My wife knows I am a CD but my college age children do not. I only acknowledged to myself that I was a CD by name 3 years ago & spoke with my wife a year and a half ago. I enjoy art and literature. I am interested in knowing more about myself by meeting with others who are like me.

Michelle Samuels ID-4527-S

Michelle, 38, writes that she only dresses at home and has never met another crossdresser but would like to. She likes to read, listen to music, play cribbage, and cooking. She would like to meet and correspond with others like her.

Frances Grangeville ID-4563-S

Frances writes from Grangeville, ID, "I dress at home. There is not a chapter close to where I live although a friend is trying to get one started about 100 miles from here. My wife is terminally ill with cancer and does not know. She is in a long term care facility. I started exploring myself when my wife went into this facility. I enjoy the outdoor activities that are available to me in this area such as hunting fishing and camping. It is nice to know there are many others like me".

Marcia Peoria IL-2566-H

Marcia, married to an understanding & supportive wife, has been out for 5 years. She is interested in military history, photo collecting and playing the 5 string banjo. Marcia's goals are outreach and support for new members nad to try and make them feel welcome at their first meetings.

Carol Joilet IL-2870-G

Carol states that she has an understanding wife and dresses 2-3 times per month to go out shopping or go to a small museum, the zoo or botanical gardens. Hobbies include gardning, reading, golf & music. She would like to meet others.

Karen Kay Morton IL-2886-R

Karen says that she dresses only at home, but she hopes to get out (to costume parties, at least) as she gains experience. Her sisters understand, but as yet, not the rest of her family. She is interested in computers, sailing and art.

Charlene Oak Park IL-2955-F

Charlene has always dressed alone and remained indoors. She has taken some make-up lessons and ventured out in public. Although previously married and a father, she has never told anyone of her CD activities. She enjoys to travel, read, go to movies and activities that keep her fit and trim. Her size 14 wardrobe is growing.

Sharon Washington IL-2966-B

Sharon is married to an understanding wife, she is an active member of a Protestant church. Sharon enjoys jogging, swimming and golf. Sharon also enjoys all types of music and avidly reads history and popular fiction. She has been dressing in front of her wife for 5 years, but not in public.

Marnie Chicago IL-3271-G

Marnie began dressing as a result of having played a girl in a camp theatrical at the age of 8. She has become comfortable with her situation but feels some sort of monumental change in one's daily lifestyle is mandatory to gain acceptance, rather than just 'strutting your stuff'. She has attended chapter meetings but is retriected by family and wife's negative feelings about the subject.

Nancy McHenry IL-3623-G

Nancy writes that, in her 70's now, her first recollection of dressing was around 8 years old when an older sister dressed her in bloomers and a dress; she has been enjoying every since. Although married, Nancy feels that her wife would not understand her fancy dresses only at home. When she goes out, she wears ladies underwear under her male clothes. Nancy would like to hear from other members near her. Fearful of her feelings for the longest time, Nancy is now contented to know that their are others just like her. She is very happy to be a Tn'-Ess sister.

Janet Addison IL-3684-D

Janet started dressing at age 6 with full crossdressing at age 10. Liked to read, watch sports, movies, doing things feminine, chess and TV novels. Have had at least 30 hours of electrolyist and ears pierced in 1969.

Linda Rockford IL-3763-M

Linda is 52, married, and a college graduate, employed as a sales manager. She is a Christian and lives in Rockford. Enjoys dressing mostly at home, but does get to dress while on business trips. Looks forward to learning from her sisters. Thus far, has been able to enjoy dressing without her family's knowledge. Hopes to have her family's understanding in the not too distant future. Enjoys Chinese cooking, computers and old automobiles. In addition to these activities, reading is a big part of her life. Is attempting to do a little writing for her own enjoyment and satisfaction. Very interested in meeting and writing to her sisters. If someone writes, she promises to respond.

Linda Techny IL-3806-A

Linda is 40 years of age and has been dressing since she was 6 years old. She restricts most of her dressing time during business trips and hopes to make contact with the other members when she is on the road. Linda would love to hear from other members in order to sustain long lasting pen pals. She plays tennis and golf and loves to shop for women's clothes. "Though I haven't ventured out in public, I plan to very soon with the help of a big sister.

Sarah Chicago IL-4051-H

I am emerging as a self accepting crossdresser with the support of my wonderful wife. I look forward to bringing Sarah out of hiding and into active involvement with Tri-Ess. Reading and music are two of my hobbies.

Miranda Arlington Heights IL-4098-M

Miranda Stevens is Vice President of the Chi Chapter of Tri-Ess and has responsibility for program development. She has participated in outreach at colleges and youth groups. She was Co-Chair of Be All '97 in Chicago, and had major responsibility for program and workshop coordination. Miranda is also an outspoken human rights activist. She is Vice Chair of It's Time, Illinois, (ITI) a political action group for the Illinois transgendered community. Her main contribution to ITI has been in the documentation of hate crimes and discrimination. The report, now in its second revision, was originally presented to the Chicago Commission on Human Relations. She helped coordinate several Transsexual Menace actions in Chicago, including the Christian Paige vigil and American Psychiatric Association demonstration, and spoke out about crimes against transgendered people at the +96 Anti-Violence March, sponsored by Queer Nation and the Horizons Anti-Violence Project.

Morrigan Schaumburg IL-4366-L

I am 24 years of age and divorced (but currently attached). I am a musician with a day job who enjoys getting in touch with my inner femininity. Interests include music, fashion and computer.

Bobbie Buffalo Grove IL-4450-M

Bobbie, age 48 is married with 4 children. Her wife Sandy knows about Bobbie but children don't. "My wife is very supportive. I like reading, writing, photography and conversation with interesting people."

Laura Joliet IL-4464-K

Started at age 10 and did so at every opportunity since. Told wife in 1978, 2 years after we were married. She is tolerable to my needs, but not as supportive or involved as I wish she would be (but she may change). Luckily we wear the same size and have the same tastes. Two teenage children are unaware. Tri-Ess and Chi-Chapter are great! Great and supportive sisters to share my fears and dreams with. I like to bowl, golf and dress! My next goal is to go out during the day!

Andrea Schaumburg IL-4467-F

Andrea is 23 and single. "I am an apprentice in the sheet union. My hobbies include, woodworking, mountain bikes and computers."

Janet Indianapolis IN-3966-P

Janet, age 44, a college graduate, works in sales and has been dressing since she was 8 years old. Her favorite activities are to go shopping with her very understanding wife for all the feminine things she likes so much. dresses (only at home so far), and learning the feminine way. Although she started dressing very young, she didn't accept herself as a crossdresser until the age of 39. Janet's hobbies include; woodworking, gardening, and reading histories and books on Philosophy. Janet and her wife invite others to correspond, especially other wives who need the support and encouragement of an understanding wife. We will respond to all letters

Claudia Portage IN-4099-K

Claudia writes: Interests include photography, flying, scuba diving (PADI Master Instructor) working part-time as an EMT, computers, reading, cooking and travel. Been dressing since early teens. Came out about 6 years ago and would like to get more involved with the community and helping others. Just completed and passed Indiana Registered Nurse Certification. Would like to hear from other sisters.

Arlene Wichita KS-4347-P

Arlene writes that she is new to crossdressing and finds it fun and relaxing. She does it mostly at home but she would like to meet others in Northern Oklahoma and be where she can be her 2nd self.

Karen Henderson KY-3983-M

Karen is 54 years old and has dressed only at home so far. She has a wonderful and supportive wife. She also has 6 grown children, all out on their own who do not know of Karen's existence. Karen's hobbies are, nature photography, computers, and motorcycle touring. She really enjoys going shopping with her wife.

Rachel Radcliff KY-4597-T

Rachel, 58, writes that she is a widower and retired from the Military. She travels to Central Florida every week and sometimes stays in the Orlando area. She enjoys music, history and model railroads.

Marcia Harvey LA-4338-S

Marcia, age 52. I dress at home and go out occasionally. I enjoy music, politics, motorcycles and drag. I'm single and looking for a CD organization in New Orleans, La. I also come to Houston area occasionally.

Debbie Cambridge MA-3372-S

Debbie writes that she has been dressed in public with other crossdressed friends. She feels that Tri-Ess is explicitly addressed to her needs as a crossdresser. She is 41, married, with a BA in Philosophy, and works as a computer programmer. Her interests include; chess, photography, philosophy, European history, languages, fashion & cosmetics, and exploring & developing the inner feminine self Debbie likes to read a lot, art, nature, and talking with and being with friends and meeting new ones.

Kendra Boston MA-4607-C

Kendra, age 53 is married and has been dressing since she was a kid. "I have worn total womens clothes except for a skirt when traveling and shopping, however my 20 year old bread make me hard to figure out. Now that I have found Tri-Ess I will be shaving in June and I will move into a wig and makeup. I am nervous but committed. I have not shared my femme side with anyone, until now. I really want to know the woman within me. I am excited. I would love to correspond and thus have a companion on the journey."

Katherine Belleville IL-4520-F

Katherine, age 27, only dresses occasionally in public but would greatly like to join other femme and real sisters in night out on the town. Single; will have masters degree in Human Resources in March; Computers; Catholic.

Tina Freeport IL-4590-S

Tina, age 42, has been dressing for many years. At this point she only dresses at home, but hopes to become involved in Chapter soon. One of her goals is to attend a Holiday En Femme during the next couple of years. Her wife knows about Tina, and is trying to be understanding and supportive. Tina enjoys music (Big Band, folk, and classical), history, and old movies (especially sappy ones!), loves curling up with a good book, and enjoys playing with her dog. She is looking for support and acceptance, and is very interested in writing to other crossdressers.

Dee Schereville IN-2890-O

Dee has been out enjoying her femininity for the past three years; married, her wife is moderately supportive. Her hobbies and interests include- gardening, puttering around the house, shopping, going to the beach & reading As a Tri-Ess member, Dee says, she hopes to enjoy her femme sisters & develop her femme side.

Joelle Beverly Shores IN-3129-M

Amanda says that she spends the year living half in the North, and the other half in sunny, warm Florida. She dresses at home, not having ventured out, but soon hopes to. She attended Holiday En Femme in Houston in 1990, & recently joined Chi Chapter. She enjoys reading, kites, and bicycling. She hopes to learn more about her femmeself in the near future.

Jackie East Chicago IN-3558-G

Jackie is married to a very understanding and supportive wife. She limits her crossdressing to the privacy of her home, although she plans to attend social events and meetings with Chi Chapter in Chicago. Jackie is 54 years old, steelworker, and a part-time college student. Between classroom attendance and her job, her free time is limited, but she does enjoy gardening in the summer. She is also very happy doing housework, dressed of course. Jackie would like to hear from her sisters, she promises to answer all letters.

Teddy Terre Haute IN-3637-K

Teddy is the father of grown children. Has only recently emerged from a 50+ year cocoon to experience the joys of her Feminine self and the thrill of all aspects of female appearance. Although mostly a home dresser (her wife is reluctantly accepting), has occasionally appeared en femme at private meetings and parties and hopes eventually to pass as a professional woman in her early fifties. Interests include travel, music (opera, classical, jazz, and sixties), movies, especially foreign films, literature, history, and writing, plus tennis and bicycling. Eager to make friends in the Chi community and will correspond to the best of her ability.

Vicki Fort Wayne IN-3782-A

Vicki is a fun loving country gal who enjoys CW lip-sync with Wynonna, Reba, Tanya, and Patty Loveless among others. Enjoys racing Corvettes on the weekend with her wife. Her wife is unaware of her cross dressing except for the lip-sync performances. Enjoys corresponding with other sisters and will respond to anyone. Her first time out was at the 1990 Be-All. Has been cross dressing since the dinosaur age. Really enjoys the country western music scene. Has 5 children and 9 grand children- talk about feeling old!

Nancy Winnipeg MB-4334-R

Nancy, aged 53, has recently come to terms with the cross-dressing and now has an understanding of the childhood and adolescence developments leading to this acceptance. Her wife, Louise, is aware of Nancy, but does not fully understand the situation. Nancy and Louise love to travel and have been to many parts of the world.

Heather Riviera Beach MD-3014-K

Heather has been dressing since age 10, but her wife of 20 years does not understand or tolerate it. Thus, she only dresses when she travels on business trips or when she is single handed sailing. (Heather's only hobby is sailing). Hopefully a group will form in Baltimore so Heather can finally meet some sisters with similar interests.

April West Bethesda MD-3155-A

April has been out for only the past few years. April's wife knows but does not approve. She can do what she wants behind locked doors, just as long as her wife does not see it. April needs the company and help of others. She likes to shop for women's clothing, enjoys movies & watching TV. She also enjoys board games that require knowledge. She is also a World War II buff.

Vera Rae Parkville MD-3582-H

Although in her mid-40's, Vera Rae has only recently come out after years of neglect. Her wife is mostly sympathetic and is trying to gain in understanding. A talented professional image consultant from the Philadelphia area showed Vera Rae some of Vera's possibilities. Vera Rae hopes to start attending a suitable support/social group in the future, especially with her wife. Vera Rae is active in her parish church, enjoys reading, listening to classical music, and loves to visit Maryland's eastern shore. She is also a great Orioles fan! Any sincere correspondence with sisters or their families would be welcomed.

Diane Towson MD-4435-S

Bob, 59, Diane's masculine half, has been dressing for forty five years. Ann, Bob's wife, has known for twenty of the thirty-four years they have been married. Together they picked Diane's name. Diane enjoys classical music, theatre, (in her guise as Bob she has done a little acting and some liturgical clowning) and sports. Ann says if it has a ball, Diane will watch. She enjoys writing. Has written two c/d short stories, and some poetry. Diane is working to become more active in the cd community. She is contacting sisters in the Maryland Area in an effort to start a support group.

Sherri Annapolis MD-4569-P

Sherri age 38, married, 4 children. "I dress only at home. I told my wife of 10 years about this 8 months ago, she's fairly accepting. I enjoy music, movies, sound recording, being outdoors, etc. I am 5-7 & 145 lbs, am interested in hearing from others & their experiences.

Lisa Kaye Sykesville MD-4608-K

Lisa Kaye: age 46. Three children, grown and living in separate state. Divorced from second wife. Since her departure, I have found myself (my feminine self) strongly surfacing. I am so very ready to blossom and I want to do so publicly and decently along with others who can understand me as Lisa. I am very proud of my feminine self and her appearance. I am definitely heterosexual and I very much so enjoy the company of a female companion, but she will have to be very understanding of my commitment to my feminine self. My male self enjoys fishing, camping, season tickets to the new Baltimore Ravens. (with special apologies to my sisters in Cleveland.) and Civil War encampments. Lisa enjoys shopping, socializing & dining out, and dressing frequently. I am very grateful for Tri-Ess being here and looking forward to the future as an active member.

Christine Covert MI-3068-B

Christine is married with six boys; her wife knows of her crossdressing, but will not participate. She dresses at monthly social events & on business trips. Musical interests include: playing the guitar, piano, and clarinet, and singing. Styles range from rock to classical, with particular interest in Christian music. She is interested in learning different hair styles and makeup techniques.

Kristy Fort Gratiot MI-4074-U

"I have been crossdressing since the first grade. I had an older sister and would sneak into her room when no one was home and try on her panties and gym bloomers. As I grew things began to fit better and I enjoyed it more. I remained a boy, however, playing ball and doing boy's activities. I dated the prettiest girls in school and I married the most beautiful, loving and fun loving girl in the world. The crossdressing stopped and was in abeyance for about five years. We had two beautiful girls who have made us very proud. I loved my wife so much I was afraid to confront her with this, although in retrospect I seem to feel she probably would have accepted it. Very sadly, my love died (leukemia) in May, 1989. I miss her so and always will. However, now that I'm living alone I have a great wardrobe and can be a girl all day in the house. I enjoy sailing, golf and working out, as well as computers with MIDI, and piano.

Barbara Coloma MI-4215-K

My name is Barbara, I am 47 years old and have been dressing off and on now for about 40 years. I am twice divorced. I have 2 daughters with the youngest one living with me full time. Her mother told her about my dressing but we don't talk about it at all. Now about myself. I only dress when I am alone. I like most types of music, sports, movies, plays and travel. I would like to meet and talk to others like myself. To make new friends, share stories with and learn to better myself.

Kristy Waterford MI-4260-M

Kristy, age 37 married, no children, but do have two cats. Have been crossdressing since my teens but only in the last year have I "come out". Tri-Ess provided me with my first contact with other Cds. With the support of my understanding wife and Tri-Ess, I have become very comfortable and happy with my femme self. I enjoy several outings a month, shopping at the local malls and dinner out. My best femme experience to date was a makeover session at one of the local department stores and a photo session at Glamour Shots. Business travel also permits me opportunities to dress. My wardrobe is fairly complete and, as my wife will attest, I have a weakness for shoes. I am helping to form a Tri-Ess chapter in Southeast Michigan and will correspond with other sisters by mail or E-Mail.

Lisa Hartland MI-4601-S

Lisa, 29, writes that she dresses only at home and her wife knows about Lisa. She enjoys music, art and computers.

Kay St. Louis Park MN-3795-L

Kay writes that she is 50, although most people say she looks much younger. A crossdresser for years, Kay has done most of her dressing at home, however, she does manage to get out quite frequently for shopping trips to the mall. She is quite passable and has very few problems in public. Lynda says she will definitely correspond with others, and she will answer all letters. She is very interested in members who have attended Dream Conventions. Her hobbies are-. photography, cross-country skiing and hiking.

Carla Roseville MN-3996-L

Carla dresses at home (Still working on make-up and hair) and occasionally attends Tri-Ess. Her wife is not understanding, not even willing to discuss it. She would love to hear from sisters or accepting wives who might give advice in this situation. Correspondence is important to her. Carla is 55, a teacher, enjoys travel, does some writing and is a voracious reader. She is both a theater buff and a baseball fan.

Sharon Minneapolis MN-4041-O

Sharon, 46 is married and a member of Beta Gamma chapter, currently serving as editor of the newsletter.

Delaina Maple Grove MN-4058-L

Delaina is 42 years old and has only become involved in groups like Tri-Ess and CLCC within the last year. She dressed most of her life. Her wife and daughter know and are supportive. Her son does not know as of yet. Her main is meeting other sisters and going to events like Fall Harvest.

Karen Duluth MN-4186-H

I have been crossdressing, on and off, since I was nine or ten years old. My wife does not know about my crossdressing and, based on her background, I doubt that she would understand much less approve. Until recently, I have suppressed the desire to dress since we first started to talk about getting married five years ago. I recently discovered Tri-Ess on Internet and found a whole new community out there with the same desires and fears that I have. I immediately joined Tri-Ess and feel better already. With a rough cut, 200 pound, 5'9" frame, I would need a lot of work to become passable on a dark night. My other interests include: flying, boating, and scuba diving.

Carole Plymouth MN-4294-H

Carole has been crossdressing since age 8 or 9. She cross dresses at every opportunity, usually at least once a week. Unfortunately her spouse strongly dislikes her crossdressing. Consequently, Carole has been able to attend only one Tri-Ess chapter meeting. She loved it!! Carole loves pretty things, especially shoes. Fortunately, she can wear a size 8 or 1/2. She is hoping that circumstances will change so that she can be more active in her Tri-Ess chapter. Carole occasionally ventures out en femme but, so far, only in very low risk situations.

Alissa Minneapolis MN-4477-D

Alissa, age 63 and married. "I dress strictly at home. My wife knows about my CD'g and does not approve nor wish to see me en femme. I enjoy music, computers, and Ham radio. I like to correspond with people via e-mail, especially other CD'rs."

Barbara St. Louis MO-2573-H

Barbara is 47 years of age, divorced, and loves old houses, cats, books, music, fishing, 60's and 70's Rock, and classic music. She dresses daily however she doesn't go out. Her former spouse is now her best friend who helps her with dressing. Barbara has a very large wardrobe and a large doll collection. She would like to share experiences with others either in person or through the mail. Barbara enjoys period clothes and ultra feminine fashions.

Jane Arnold MO-4122-F

"I am a frustrated male. Married father of one daughter. I have been crossdressing since about the age of 10 years old. I am now 51 and have crossdressed off and on up until the age of about 25. In the last 15 years when I could not any longer ignore this wonderful feeling anymore. I now am ready to go out into the world as a woman. I need help dressing, applying the right makeup, and buying the right clothes. So far I have not been good at any of these things. I would like to meet a sister who would help me to become the true cross dresser and let me help others. All replies will be answered because I want to help anyone who feels the same as I do."

Merle Troy MO-4255-C

Merle is 53 and retired Air Force. "I enjoy wearing silky underwear and furs. I am married but my wife does not understand, but tries to be supportive. I enjoy model railroading, fishing and camping."

Sheryl Lynn Kansas City MO-4397-L

Sheryl is 42 and dresses mostly at home. I have been out en-femme 3 or 4 times. I have gone to several meetings of Kansas City Crossdressers and Friends, but I don't really approve of the "and Friends" part which includes transexuals, homosexuals, etc. I am strictly heterosexual and very much in love with my wife. She knows of Sheryl by my 3 children do not. E-Mail is welcome.

Georgia Springfield MO-4473-M

Georgia, age 48, must dress away from home, wife knows, unsupportive (Hostile). Interests include radio controlled airplanes, boating (full size), auto racing (full size), reading, biblical studies.

Valerie Jackson MS-3757-C

Valerie is in her late 40's and has not yet been married. She is an engineering technician who is currently working toward a bachelors degree in art with an emphasis in sculpture. While thus far Valerie has only dressed at home, she is very interested in extending her femme activities 'outside'. Her interests extend from astronomy and other sciences to metaphysics and psychic phenomena. Prospecting for gold and gems is also an activity and pursuit she engages in whenever time permits. Indoors, Valerie is usually listening to classical music while sculpting or reading.

Barbra Concord NC-3677-A

Barbra dresses each and every chance she gets, usually several times a week. She goes to all chapter meetings. Barbra is married with three adult children. Only her youngest daughter and sister have seen Barbra. Her hobbies are: auto sports racing and wood working. She is interested in corresponding with other sisters.

Katherine Durham NC-3716-D

Kathy is married with two young children under 10. She is in her early 50's and works in her profession at the Ph.D. level. She enjoys fashion, moderate exercise (golfing), and travel. She spends most of her time in job-related and family-oriented activities. Kathy enjoys dressing up and would like to meet others who enjoy the same. She is interested in learning more about cosmetics and accessories. Her crossdressing activities have been limited to private times at home alone and on business trips. Kathy's goal is to dress up for social interactions with other sisters in a public setting such as shopping, entertainment or dining.

Elisabeth Ann Matthews NC-3743-H

Ann is a newcomer to Tri-Ess, having joined while attending the '93 Texas "T" Party, her first community event. She is married to a very supportive spouse. Ann passes fairly well and goes out occasionally, but is still refining her image and prefers to spend most of her time at home. Never at a loss for something to do, Ann enjoys reading, playing the piano and organ, language study, ballroom dancing, cooking, and needlework. Her favorite sports are: distance running, archery, cycling, and golf, and she likes to play bridge and chess. Ann devotes part of each day to personal correspondence and would enjoy hearing from anyone who would like a pen-pal.

Dyan Malden NC-3882-R

Dyan dresses three or four times per week although she has never left her "closet". She has an extensive wardrobe. Dyan likes cooking, gardening, cars, most music, animals, travel, and her feminine self. She would like to meet other sisters who would help her get ready to go out in public.

Kristy White Oak NC-4116-B

Kristy Lee, 30 years old, married with 3 daughters. Wife knows and is understanding and supportive. Children unaware. My wife and I would like to correspond with other crossdressers and wives.

Stephanie McKaye Cary NC-4426-K

Stephanie, age 35 is very shy and is just beginning to get in touch with her feminine side

Debbie Raleigh NC-4441-N

Debbie, age 45, new to organization, dresses only at home, looking forward to meetings. Divorced father of two sons, 13 & 11, 2 Australian shepherds, a cat, rabbit, hamster & gerbil. Loves all outdoor activities.

Joy Ellen Raleigh NC-4447-M

Joy, age 50, has recently acknowledged and accepted her crossdressing. She crossdresses at home with her wife and has attended some TGA and Kappa Beta meetings. Joy & her wife are very interested in gaining friendships and support from other crossdressers and hopefully their spouses.

Vikki Fayetteville NC-4528-H

Vikki Jane, 19 going on 44, loves to dress at home and has not yet gotten up enough nerve to go out in public. Her girlfriend is an angel, is supportive but new to this. We would love to correspond with others.

Claire Boone NC-4540-S

Claire is a junior with a major in marketing at Appalachian State University. She writes, "I dress mostly at home but long to go out in public". She loves Civil War history.

Breanne Minot ND-4227-D

Breanne is 40 and married. "I have been crossdressing as far back as I can remember. My wife has known since shortly after we were married 20 years ago. She is tolerant but not actively involved. I dress up as often as I can, usually when home alone and occasionally in motel rooms. My children are unaware. I am thrilled to discover an organization such as Tri-Ess. Due to where I live I do not have the opportunity to venture out but would very much like to have someplace to go & someone to share with. My hobbies are classic & muscle cars, anything automotive, sports, hunting & fishing. Favorite music: rock & roll. Very interested in corresponding & possibly meeting other crossdressers, hopefully in my area.

Elizabeth Rose Omaha NE-4518-C

Elizabeth Rose is 48 and single. "I have been wearing women's clothes since I was about 11 years old. I wear dresses almost all the time when not at work. I will sometimes wear them to my aunt's home. Very few people I know have ever seen me wearing any woman's clothes. My Ex-wife did not even know. I can't tell anyone because very few would accept me. My brothers, sister and parents don't know. My hobbies include antique tractors and old machines as well as wood working.

Kimberly Manchester NH-4539-G

Kim, age 49. My wife and I are separating over the issue of crossdressing. Presently I dress only at home. I have two college age children who know about Kimmie and I have the support of neither of them. I enjoy Classical & Religious music, XC skiing, 10 speed bike riding, fishing & informal target shooting. One of my greatest enjoyments is in writing to all the wonderful new friends I have found since I have finally accepted My previously suppressed feminine nature. I enjoy coffees, reading about life's issues as they relate to crossdressing as well as discussions about fashion and makeup.

Barbara Anne Dumont NJ-3291-T

Barbra Anne writes that her interests include shopping for new femme clothes, military history & reenactment, travel, computers, housework, & home repairs. When she joined the Chi Delta Mu chapter, Barbra came out of the closet and into the world. Since the last Directory, Barbra's wife now goes to meetings with her and is more understanding toward her, as Barbra is toward her. She is willing to answer all letters she receives and will return a photo for same.

Loren Jackson NJ-3775-B

Loren says her main joys are: Jazz, silent movies, cats, home cooked meals, good conversation, and women's clothes. She has dressed since childhood and has dressed at home. After reading about Tri-Ess, she decided to let Loren out of her male persona and allow her to learn to look and act as a woman.

Paula PHowell NJ-3784-W

Paula is in her early 20's and a college student. She is also a former member of the Armed Forces. Because of her living situations, military and college, her dressing has limited. Paula is looking forward to graduation and living in her own apartment so she can freely express her femmeself. Although she fully accepts her second self, Paula does not feel that going public would be right for her. She would, some day, like to meet an understanding woman, developing a everlasting relationship, eventually marrying such person. Paula is looking forward to finding and joining a local chapter. She would like to hear from other members. All thoughts and ideas and support would be welcomed.

Carol Ann Matawan NJ-3818-L

Carol Ann dresses mostly at home although she has ventured out on occasion. At 50 years old, Carol looks forward to attending local chapter meetings. She has a knowing and understanding wife and three daughters. Carol Ann would love to correspond with any sister from anywhere. Her interests include: cooking, sewing, and loves to work out.

Kristine Wayne NJ-4070-R

Kristy, age 29, wife knows and is supportive and tries to understand. Dress strictly at home. Kristy enjoys old movies, Star Trek, Heinlein, Twain, hockey and baseball. Kristy and her wife are currently expecting their first child.

Maryann Hillsdale NJ-4168-J

Maryann dresses mostly in private. Her family understands why she needs to dress. She enjoys listening to music and reading cook books. She is starting to work for herself and likes good food.

Barbara-Fiona Rochelle Park NJ-4207-P

Barbara-Fiona, married over 30 years and closeted for 40 years, since age 13 is finally breaking out. Just found out about Tri-Ess, joined, confessed recently to wife who is understanding and is a saint with support, feminine tips with makeup and clothing. Barbara-Fiona is still in stage 2 and growing more secure - dresses at home, Tri-Ess & safeclubs often with her wife. Hobbies include: correspondence, reading, gourmet cooking, aerobics, shopping for more fem clothes, but dare not en femme yet. Goals: to be made more passable & venture in public. I have now realized myself as now a complete person, the peace and serenity have affected me positively both mentally & physically.

Leigh Anne Bedminster NJ-4280-S

"I am a married, Protestant college graduate in my fifties. My interests include politics, economics, religion, stamp-collecting, correspondence (by letter or E-Mail), literature and the Arts.

Kaara Plainsboro NJ-4408-M

Kaara, age 39. I only dress at home and have no experience en femme. Recently married to a very supportive wife, wish we met years ago. I enjoy music, dining out, boating, science fiction, and computers. My wife and I are interested in correspondence with other members. We are new to the community and have never attended any meetings or events.

Donna Linden NJ-4509-B

Donna, age 40. I dress only at home and when alone. My wife knows about my crossdressing, but I'm still ashamed to do it in front of her. I'm paranoid about anyone finding out about my crossdressing.

Deborah Margraten NL-4622-W

Deborah helen Lake - The Netherlands. Married, age 50. Professional writer (fiction and non-fiction) Fully out. A very supportive SO. We travel together often as a female couple. Very interested in helping any TG/Spouse if possible.

Christy Albuquerque NM-4420-T

Christy, age 44, married with children. All know and are understanding. Her hobbies are golf, chess, and traveling. A fun loving person who likes to have a good time. Will answer all letters.

Camille Bras D'or Nova Socia NS-4545-W

Camille, or Cammie if you like, was born 42 years ago in Montreal and now lives in the Canadian Maritimes. She is a life-long crossdresser who only recently became aware of the facilities available to people who share her interests. The maritime provinces are not a place where this type of information is widely available. Her wife is aware of her activities and understands her need to dress but is understandably confused by it.

Camille enjoys hunting and fishing, music (all kinds), tinkering with things such as digital electronics, and of course computers. She has never attended any functions for crossdressers nor has knowingly met another crossdresser face to face. She is looking forward to interacting with other like minded souls...and to help her wife who she loves dearly, to develop a peace of mind.

Diane Eureka NV-3559-P

Diane 44, writes that she has been dressing since childhood and loves to shop for her fem self. She is self-employed in construction and enjoys hunting and fishing "en fem".

Wilma Las Vegas NV-4343-R

Wilma, age 43 likes camping, fishing, watching baseball and shopping. Also attending club meetings and meeting others.

Jackie Henderson NV-4409-L

Jackie, 57 and single is a member of Theta Upsilon Gamma. Her interests are computers, stockmarket, boating and trips. She travels on many occasions both business and pleasure. She enjoys shopping for clothes for herself. "I love living in Las Vegas because it is a wide open town, very good for crossdressers."

Simona Reno NV-4443-T

Simona, age 39, is single and has a trade business. She dresses mostly at home but goes out sometimes at night. She hopes she can dress full time. Simona loves music, electronics and computers. She is sentimental and really needs friends and sisters.

Cari Ann Las Vegas NV-4490-S

Cari Ann is 53. "I am a hard working person and have been most of my life. I have a strong fem side and I want to let it out. I am very stable to all those around me. I judge people for what show me not for what people say they are. I want to be a member because I want to know other people that have my kind of feeling.

Gloria North Hornell NY-2900-Z

Gloria, age 42 wishes to communicate with others. Some of her interests are: astronomy and model railroading.

Jill Tonawanda NY-2950-L

Jill Age: 43, began crossdressing at about the age 5; married, she does not venture out, although her wife is accepting. Jill likes to camp, crosscountry ski, bicycle, play raquetball & enjoy most sports. Hobbies are: photography coin collecting, and antique shopping.

Barbara Brooklyn NY-2959-H

Barbara, Age: 36, Living alone and working at home, Barbara finds that she has plenty of time & opportunity to dress. However, she feels that her size, 6ft, 280 lbs, restricts her from venturing out. As a writer, with 3 books in print, she has little time for hobbies.

Stephanie Brooklyn NY-3084-W

Stephanie Age: 55, is married to an understanding wife; she does not venture out and is practicing her make-up, Stephanie enjoys travel, taking walks & tennis.

Pat New York NY-3141-T

Pat Age: 40, says she enjoys spending time with her family, skiing & golfing. She has expanded her dressing over the years & now tries to dress a few times a month. Pat's wife tolerates her crossdressing but does not encourage it.

April Islip NY-3575-W

April writes that her interests include, cooking, writing, poetry, caves, outdoors, the theater, and just about everything except sports.

Danielle Great Neck NY-3739-F

Danielle has been crossdressing since age 13. She has a wonderful wife who is somewhat understanding, but, so far, has limited her acceptance to lingerie and that only during intimacy. Danielle says she is not passable, yet, but with a little work and a lot of weight loss, who knows! She restricts her crossdressing to her home. Danielle would love the opportunity to correspond with, and hopefully gain enough confidence to meet with other sisters in the near future. Danielle enjoys travel, playing golf, and she worships the sun.

Laura Amherst NY-4200-S

Laura, late 40's, enjoys traveling, music, art and nature. Her partner is supportive. She would like to correspond with others using E-mail Member of AOL her screen name is [REDACTED].

Fiona Manhasset NY-4502-R

Fiona, 29, is a new arrival to Tri-Ess. She always enjoys dressing and becoming more accomplished in the feminine arts is an ongoing pursuit. Photography, writing cards and the outdoors are a few of her interests. Fiona greatly looks forward to chapter meetings and welcomes any correspondence from those who wear women's clothes.

Alison New York NY-4542-B

Alison, 36, is single and occasionally dresses at home. She works with the disabled and is very afraid to tell anyone.

Laura Pleasantville NY-4572-S

Laura, is married and a technical professional. She enjoys a wide variety of music, especially jazz, Indian classical and electronic.

Traci Staten Island NY-4573-E

Traci, age 42. "I've been dressing since I was about 11 years old. My wife has recently become aware & is very understanding. Because I have opened up to her, I now want to reach out to other members of our community.

Julie Ann Cadyville NY-4593-C

Julie Ann, 57, writes that she is happily married with a supportive wife. She enjoys camping, hiking--an all around country girl. She has been going to Fantasia Fair for several years.

Roxanne Coram NY-4617-B

Roxanne, age 42, is married with 3 children. "I dress at home or while away on business trips. I've never gone out dressed. My wife is very supportive, our children don't know about my dressing. I enjoy camping, shooting sports, theater, reading, sci-fi, and family time.

Susie Cleveland OH-1352-D

Susie is a long time member of Tri-Ess; she is single with some college. Her profile is short is simple. She says that she is open minded and easy going. Susie says she likes most all kinds of music.

Janet Huntsburg OH-2561-H

Janet, 40, writes that she often dresses at home and has again begun attending chapter meetings as she has not been an active member for some time. She enjoys music and is very active in radio controlled model airplanes.

Josephine Cleveland OH-3292-W

Josephine started out at 10 going nude but came across girls clothes (Long story) and dressed up. I enjoyed dressing up and passing myself off as a girl. First only at night. But it felt so good I did it in the daytime. Now I do it anytime I'm in the mood.

Lori Grand River OH-3691-T

Lori dresses mostly at home but has, on rare occasions, ventured out with the support of her Tri-Ess sisters. Her wife knows of her crossdressing and is making an effort to be understanding and supportive. Lori enjoys music, dining out, boating, gardening and yard work. Although not that interested in correspondence, she may, from time to time, correspond with other crossdressers and their families.

Diane Cleveland OH-3960-P

Diane is married and dresses only at home. Diane's wife knows and is understanding. Her interests include; Sci-Fi, fantasy, golf and science.

Jill Cincinnati OH-4315-A

Jill, a member of IFGE & Crossport, is a married heterosexual cross dresser. Out of the closet since May, 1995. Ventures outside dressed very often. Wife and children know. Wife is not supportive, but tolerates dressing, many straight people know and are accepting. I love quiet times, meeting other cross dressers, computers, God philately, railroads, prestidigitation and my family. (Not necessarily in that order.) Attended Be-All 95 and Texas 'T' Party '96. I write a regular column for crossport and do other free-lance writing for mainstream publications.

Lois Strongsville OH-4501-S

Lois, age 48 - I have only recently discovered that I am mnot alone. I am very new to the Tri-Ess club experience and am now slowly building up wardrobe and makeup. My wife is not aware of Lois, but maybe someday in the future.

Vicky Cincinnati OH-4531-S

Vicky, 37, is a self-employed professional, divorced, and has a steady girlfriend. She wants to thank Tri Ess for all the help and is looking forward to being a member.

Eve Cambridge ON-4176-R

Eve, age 59, dresses at home and while traveling. Her spouse extensively supports her crossdressing. Her children don't know and are out of the nest. Eve studies the psychological and physiological aspects I.E. David, the first sex.

Veronica Scarborough ON-4258-B

Veronica, age 56, dresses at home and has a very understanding wife with whom she shares clothing and accessories. She is particularly interested in learning more about crossdressing and meeting and writing others who share this interest. Her other interests and activities include model railroading, baseball, swimming and music. She is an active member of her softball association, where she coached her son's team and still plays in the adult division.

Vicki Klamath Falls OR-3460-O

Vicki writes that she is 55 and has enjoyed crossdressing for many years although she has only been fully dressing for the past 7 or 8 years. She is married and her wife seems to accept Vicki although she still seems somewhat confused about it, but is willing to learn as much as possible. Vicki only dresses at home but also desires to venture out in public. She enjoys outdoor activities, especially camping, hiking, gardening and biking. Vicki also likes to work with wood, antiques and do general repairs.

Paula Redmond OR-4549-L

Paula, 40, writes that she weighs 150 pounds and loves to teach and play golf, travel, and go camping. She is interested in corresponding and meeting other CDs and females. She also would like to find employment where she could crossdress. She enjoys doing remodeling and other types of handy work.

Allison Cave Junction OR-4567-C

Hi, I'm 52, single and a lifetime crossdresser. I dress daily at home but enjoy going out with the girls, Dancin', concerts and being with my friends. I'm very interested in meeting new friends and sharing experiences.

Debbie Jo Fairfield PA-1655-G

Debbie Jo writes that she likes to watch old movies and work in her garden. Her family does not know of her second self. Debbie likes to wear most any kind of dresses or a skirt and blouse. She is not able to get out because of her family situation.

JoAnn Williamsport PA-3080-M

JoAnn, in her mid-50's, works in the service industry. She is retired from the military and likes reading and garden work. Jo Ann is very family oriented. Still a novice at crossdressing, she only dresses at home. She feels she needs lots of work. Jo Ann feels she is at a crossroad in her life; she says the years are flying by and she would like to express more of the complete her before it is all over. A dream of Jo Ann's is to find that special and wonderful significant other who would love her for all that she is! Jo Ann says she will respond to all who write.

Carrie Bromall PA-3989-B

Carrie is 57 years of age, married with three adult children. She has done all her dressing in private and her wife does not know. I need to gain more confidence before I let her know of my interest. Carrie is extremely interested in learning more about crossdressing. Her interests are; music, woodworking, photography and flower gardening.

Rita Chalfont PA-4046-J

Rita writes, "71 year old, single Christian. Dress only at home what little chance I get. Where I live is not for dress-up. Would like to hear from other sisters from close as possible to Lehigh Acres. If you have a place where I could dress please let me know. At this time I am a retired veteran but would rather be working, living somewhere else."

Melody Bridges Lansdale PA-4247-B

Melody Bridges, age 49 does not cross dress to go out but would like to learn more. formerly: professional Magician, professional Photographer, FAA Certified Flight instructor, SCUBA diver, competitive Rifle/Pistol shooter, Tournament Chess player, Presently: Tournament Bridge player.

Dee Indiana PA-4614-R

Dee, 50 is a married technician. "My wife rejects my femme side. I only dress at home but would like to get out. I enjoy all sports, reading, movies, and history (Civil War). I feel alone and would really like to meet with other crossdressers and their understanding wives.

Lee Mt. Pleasant SC-4599-L

Lee, 44, has recently come out of the closet. She has been crossdressing since at least the age of 6. She is college educated, divorced, and currently unemployed. She enjoys canoeing, kayaking and birding. She is undecided about living full time as a woman but is leaning in that direction. She is enjoying support from friends and is forming a group in Charleston, SC.

Michelle Sioux Falls SD-4382-S

Michelle, age 30, dresses entirely at home. Her wife is understanding, but the relationship is struggling and needs support. Michelle enjoys gardening, sports and camping. She and her wife are very interested in writing to other crossdressers & wives. They are also very interested in going to chapter meetings.

Lynn Memphis TN-3625-B

Lynn has been crossdressing since age 1.1. Her wife knows but doesn't approve of her dressing. She enjoys going out to dinner with her Triess group and friends. She also enjoys golf, dining, shopping and swimming. Looks forward to meeting and socializing at Sigma Epsilon chapter in Atlanta. She will go out dressed in other cities with friends (female) when able both day and night.

Marti Sparta TN-3664-C

Marti is a fledgling CD who came out to her wife two years ago. Since that time they have both struggled with the effects of the change in their relationship and she says they have endured some troubled times but they are still together and working at it. She would really like to meet others who could help her with her transformation skills and would be willing to spend some time just talking. She enjoys photography, music and bicycling. She is very interested in corresponding with other sisters and will answer promptly.

Wendy Kingsport TN-4301-H

Wendy is 25, single (but hopeful), and works in the computer support field. Although she has been dressing since age 3, she has only recently begun to accept and embrace her feminine side. She only dresses at home, but would like to eventually be able to go out en femme, although living in a very conservative and "old-fashioned values" area raises some concerns about security. She is a rock musician and songwriter, and loves to read sci-fi and fantasy. She is eager to learn makeup, fashion, and shopping tips from her more experienced sisters.

Laura Nashville TN-4311-L

Laura, 49 years old, married, four children, has been dressing since childhood. Most of my family knows, but think I have stopped----need to find a way to tell my wife again so that I can get her support and help her to understand. Have learned much lately about myself on the "Net".

Gwen Mt. Juliet TN-4438-G

Gwen, age 38. "I dress mostly to go to chapter meetings and occasionally at home. My wife has difficulty accepting and my children don't know. My interests are music and computers.

Michelle Fort Worth TX-3816-G

Michelle writes us from Ft. Worth, Texas. She's a divorced, computer programmer, and a Catholic Christian. Age 51, she enjoys shopping, dining out and attending meetings en femme. Her daughter knows and is supportive. She enjoys music, art, computer bulletin boards and travel. She is interested in corresponding with other cd's and their wives via mail and E-mail,

Frances Mansfield TX-3822-B

Fran writes, I only dress at home as much as possible, Frans wife is having difficulty accepting the crossdressing but her two daughter accept it matter of factly. Fran has found a supportive group in the Delta Omega Chapter. She is very interested in corresponding with other members via mail. Fran hopes to soon be attending Delta Omega Chapter meetings and is working on the courage to go en femme. She says with a little help from God and her new friends at Triess she can put her life in some kind of order.

Leslie Houston TX-4081-W

Leslie writes us that she is a married, college educated, professional in the accounting field. She says she has been crossdressing as far back as she can remember, mostly at home but occasionally going outside. She writes, "It is total anathema to her. I take chunks out of her heart everytime she gets any inkling that I am crossdressing or expressing in some way my feminine side. When she has found I have been crossdressing, my clothes end up being sent to Goodwill and we seek help with the professionals. I have told her that we can not continue with that. She has not mentioned the "D" word (Divorce) yet. I Have hurt her but I can't resist.

Sandy Killeen TX-4100-R

Sandy is in her 50's, dresses at home. Wife knows about dressing but is not understanding. She is a night club owner. Sandy enjoys sports, reading and music. She would be interested in meeting other crossdressers and wives.

Frances Crosby TX-4201-B

Frances is 51 and married. "I dress when my wife is gone but would like to dress more often and go shopping." She likes camping, and home repair. She has a degree in tool & die making.

Diane Watauga TX-4261-H

Diane, age 56, Co-editor of chapter news letter. "I hope to convince others of the benefits they will receive by contributing some of their time & effort. Am interested in learning how other clubs accomplish all they do. Wife of two years is very supportive. I have attended Texas "T" twice."

Kris Humble TX-4380-S

Kris, age 40. I dress as often as I can and go out as often as I can. My mother, father and certain friends know me as either male Kris or female Kris. I enjoy dancing, camping, scuba diving, being a bartender, and jet mechanic. I would like to meet other crossdressers when and where ever I am.

Diane Conroe TX-4385-K

Diane is divorced and a systems programmer.

Abby West Texas TX-4398-K

Abby is a engineer in R & D and interested in aircraft, flying, cooking, hiking, art and enjoying life.

Stacy Missouri City TX-4403-R

Stacy is married and has two wonderful daughters (3 & 5). Unfortunately, her wife is not supportive of crossdressing. "I have been crossdressing since I was 10. My mother caught me several times, so I had to do it secretly. In 1986, I came to the U.S. from Mexico and enrolled in Environmental Sciences and received a degree 4 years ago. I got married 6 years ago and started a family, but doing so at 35 has been very stressful and it seems that at this point in time the only thing holding me are my daughters. The past two years, I have been crossdressing frequently. I guess you can all understand what the feelings go through when you put on that special thigh-highs or pantyhose, sexy lingerie and dressing up. I feel I leave behind all my worries and I am transported to another place or even time.

Audrey Houston TX-4417-D

Audrey dresses often and goes out often as well as chapter meetings. Her wife knows about her activities. She enjoys movies, art and computers.

Megan Anne Cedar Park TX-4423-C

Megan Anne, age 51. "I dress only at home. My wife knows about my dressing, she is trying to understand my needs but she is not actively supportive. I enjoy jazz, reading, kayaking & fossil hunting. I am very interested in hearing from others like me.

Helen Houston TX-4449-W

Helen age 44. After many years of pain and denial, Helen was born in 1996. Special thanks to Gordon, and all my friends who helped me realize my dream. I am looking forward to meeting new friends so I can share all the emotion & love in my heart.

Bonnie Waco TX-4459-M

Bonnie, age 54, married, BS, Physics, two children and three grandchildren. "I dress at home and plan to attend chapter meetings dressed. I have only recently told my wife about Bonnie and I think she will be understanding and supportive. Only time will tell. She has indicated that she will attend chapter meetings with me. Our children do not know that Bonnie exists. I enjoy music, photography and problem solving related to my work. My greatest joy is our three little granddaughters.

Dee Beaumont TX-4474-H

Probably like most, I was a closeted member of the gender community for a long time. Today, I live two lives. Within my sphere of acquaintances, there are those who know fully of my femme side. I see myself as a "work in progress"; a growing individual with many interests from reading technical work to the fine arts, from making a nice home to sports and the theater arts. I fully expect to develop my femme self to the point where I have acquaintances who know me only as a woman (albeit a tall one). Due to my employment I travel frequently, responses to communications may be delayed. Before you ask, the answer to that frequently asked question about going out in public is "Yes".

Donna Kerrville TX-4489-B

I am 37 years old and dress mostly at home, with an occasional drive thru the country. My wife knows about Donna, but for only a short time now. We are still in the discussion and adjustment stage. She has been understanding, but still does not totally understand why. I do hope that as time passes that she & Donna become close friends. I enjoy reading, golf and dancing.

Michelle Lubbock TX-4508-T

Michelle, age 48. I dress mostly at home and sometimes we (wife Julie and I) go out to a local gay bar - we hate the risk and lack of security - to have a drink and shoot a game of pool or just listen to the music. My children are all grown and do not know (at least I don't think so) about my cross dressing. My wife, second one, previous wife died of cancer 3 years ago - but she was very understanding and "for" my cross dressing. My current wife (and last one) is very understanding and thinks that I look cute in a dress or skirt. Her only concern is the safety issue.

Raquel Cypress TX-4536-O

Raquel is fairly new to crossdressing but is fortunate to have a wonderful wife who enjoys "Raquel". We don't have any children as yet, maybe because she confess to being a computer addict. she enjoys surfing the net and has her own Web Page. Address:

Janet Texas City TX -4612-B

Janet is a 45 year old DWM who is a casual gal who loves music, reading and early mornings. She is a woman who would like to become more involved and return to society the blessings she has received.

Jan St. George UT-3472-S

Jan is 68 years old and dresses in lingerie at bedtime having reaching this understanding between she and her wife. Jan has told her wife of her desire to dress totally En Femme and they both want to pursue this desire through an avenue available to achieve a common ground. Jan's wife would like to hear from other wives of crossdressers, Jan has a College degree in music and is now retired, although she still plays for dances. Her other hobbies are: bowling, golf and photography. She will answer all letters promptly.

Jennifer Salt Lake City UT-3779-E

Jennifer was raised in New York City but now lives in Salt Lake City. She writes, I've crossdressed since my early teens. My hobbies include music and stereo equipment. I'm also in charge of a small fantasy book discussion group. I'm very much in the closet. Going for short walks or rides in my car late at night. I enjoy sitting on my back patio watching the rain and lightning or in the winter the snowfall. I find this the most relaxing time for me while crossdressed.

JoAnn Sandy UT-3827-P

JoAnn enjoys cooking, fishing, hunting and shopping for clothes. I love to dress but I only do it at home. I have a great wife who is both supportive and encourages me. Someday we hope to take a trip up the west coast, just a couple of girls out having fun.

Gwen Sandy UT-3978-M

Gwen is aged 59 and has been dressing since she was 9. Her lovely wife has known since before they were married and she has been quietly supportive of her crossdressing for the past 40 years. Gwen has yet to venture out but believes that to be a possibility shortly. She, and her wife, will be joining Alpha-Rho and are looking forwards to being part of that group. Their interests are: travel, camping, fishing, bowling and numerous other interests. Drop them a line if you like, they will be happy to hear from anyone about the subject(s) at hand.

Linda North Salt Lake UT-4078-R

Linda, married, engineer, age 44. Dresses only in private. Her wife knows but does not understand. Linda hopes to progress to the state that she may one day

Ellen Midvale UT-4217-L

Ellen is 30 and single. She started rummaging through her sisters closet when she was twelve years old, eighteen years later she has a closet of her own and that one is bursting at the seams! Ellen has been hiding herself from the world and is only now peeking her head around the door and is excited about the world that is opening up to her. She enjoys the outdoors, reading, movies and loves a good poem. Correspondence is welcome.

Karen Kane County UT-4505-G

Age 53, have not totally "dressed" since 1981. "Dresses" only my at home. First crossdressing experience at age 4 when I tripped over the hem of my mother's dress and cracked head, bringing everyone in the house to the scene. Secretly wore mother's and sisters clothes at every lonely opportunity from age 7 through High School. Returned Mormon missionary, now excommunicant Married. Active In SSS In 1970s-80s. Former pasteup artist for Femme Mirror (78-79). Fairly passable 15 years ago, who knows now? Several successful forays out in public long ago. Interests: everything from fossils, archaeology, art, British Isreal, to hiking, and writing. I believe strongly in the fight for freedom of action and rights of privacy in America.

Cheryl Denise Portsmouth VA-1468-B

Cheryl dresses only at home when the children are gone, for now, but would love to go out dressed in the future. She has a very tolerant, but not yet understanding wife. Cheryl hopes to be able to meet other sisters and their wives in her area, and possibly help with chapter activities. She feels that with patience and more of the right kind of exposure, her wife will reach the point of support and understanding. Cheryl is active in her church, has a pilot's license, is a tropical fish hobbyist, and has recently become a computer buff. She also enjoys experimenting with cosmetics, watching "CD" related movies/shows, reading "CD"fiction stories, and anything feminine. She encourages all letters and promises to respond promptly.

Claire Norfolk VA-3527-S

Claire, age 47, dresses exclusively at home, with make up when circumstances permit. Her wife is aware of her crossdressing but is not sympathetic or understanding. An aspiring writer of fiction, Claire finds some comfort writing crossdressing stories, none of which are complete enough or ready for publication. Claire is an avid and eclectic reader with a wide range of interests, both fiction and non-fiction. Besides the obvious interest in feminine things, Claire enjoys cooking and collecting recipes. Other interests include: history, archaeology, art, architecture, and military aviation.

Seana Harrisonburg VA-4317-H

Seana, married, Phd, artist, teacher, Protestant-Buddhist-Taoist. Crossdresses partially (no wigs, makeup) only at home - like to mix male clothing with a skirt & women's lingerie.

Christi Alexandria VA-4326-A

I am 36 years old. I dress only at home. I need contact with other cross dressers to share my feelings and experiences. I am still very confused about this and would like an understanding ear.

Stephanie Wells VT-4336-S

Stephanie, age 55, married. Wife not supportive, dress mostly at home - has ventured out once or twice. Plays golf, fishes, hunts, enjoys chess. Life oong crossdresser in the dark, just coming out.

Ellen Bremerton WA-3128-A

Ellen writes to say that she leads a very active life. She and her wife love to travel, play golf, camp & ski. She also likes to read, cook and run. (She runs because she likes to cook!) Ellen dresses at home but she hopes to attend chapter meetings in the near future. Perhaps some day even attend the Holiday En Femme. Ellen's wife is very loving & extremely supportive. They are both trying to learn more about crossdressing.

Felicia Bremerton WA-3744-B

Felicia, age 63, is only 3 months old as her egg has been in dormancy for many years now. She dresses only at home and is learning more of the u@ and complexity of a "young lady". There is no lady here to help this "@", so it has to be matter of observation and reading etc. Has been very active in the local community both in singles' support and in a musical group. It has kept me very active, I enjoy so many hobbies that it would be impossible to start to list them. However, indoor plants and by "rose garden" are top on my list. Have a cat called "kitty". Have one son. Have been active in church work in the past and was on the "board". Have also been president of several local organizations. I will endeavor to reply to all that care to write in the group. Would enjoy hearing from others. I am in a "sponge" mode. Felicia is coming out of her shell, finally!

Kerolyn Mill Creek WA-4610-B

I dress only at home and on late night trips out to my empty office, but have never been out in public. I have never been a part of any group like this before, nor have I ever met anyone who shares the same interest/feelings. I am VERY athletic, ski, run, bike, golf, climb, swim, etc....and currently work in the software consulting industry.

Amy Menasha WI-3336-R

Amy dresses mostly at home in office attire, and sometimes attending meetings in Chicago with a very understanding and accepting wife. We would like to hear from other couples in WI. Her other interests are: Shopping for feminine clothing, Golf, and surfing the Net.

Alicia Twin Lakes WI-3440-W

Alicia dresses mostly at home but enjoys going out to chapter meetings, dinners and events and meeting her sisters. Her wife is understanding. Alicia enjoys woodworking, photography and decorating.

Sandy Delafield WI-4086-P

Sandy married, age 53, MA degree in education, Catholic. Just coming out from years of shame, guilt, repression. Beginning to understand and accept self. Wife threatening to leave if I go to meetings. Scared and need some relief as I reach out, need nurturing and prayers.

Kendra Hayward WI-4157-U

Kendra is 44 and married to a wonderful understanding wife. She makes up at home as often as she can. Enjoys doing the housework and wash. She also enjoys shopping for femme items. But she does not get much chance to dress during the summer months when she works as a professional fishing guide. She would like to attend a convention for a private time and to be who I am for a longer time than just a few hours at a time. I would welcome any correspondence with any sisters.

Janene Masontown WV-4521-K

Janene, 58 (looks much younger) is divorced. "I have crossdressed since childhood and dress mostly at home and have a lady friend who is supportive but my children aren't. I would like to go out more dressed and enjoy, music, history, driving, dancing, model airplanes and more contact with other CD's and other friends of CD's.

Vanessa Shepherdstown WV-4566-W

Vanessa, age 37. I dress at home and have only ventured out occasionally. My wife knows about Vanessa and is supportive most of the time. I am a gourmet cook, mostly Asian cuisines, and am interested in travel, shopping and gossip. My wife and I look forward to attending Tri Ess functions in the future.

Kimberly Ann Southern Wyoming WY-4327-W

Kimmy, age 39, divorced, dresses mostly at home. Been to some chapter meetings, enjoy shopping, dislike paying credit cards after shopping. Hobbies include computers, astronomy, fellowship. Presently on a quest to understand God's word, the bible, and to be a servant to the Father, this life is temporary, but God is forever. Fashions come, fashions go, the heavenly Father has the best fashion sense. Amen.