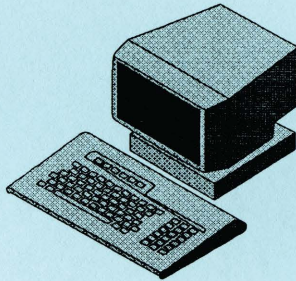


THE TARTAN SKIRT



Magazine of the
SCOTTISH TV/TS
Groups

New Series No. 5
January 1993



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THE TARTAN SKIRT

The Magazine of the
Scottish TV/TS Groups

Editor: *Anne Forrester*

New Series No. 5

January 1993

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BITCHING

or WHY BE HORRIBLE TO ONE ANOTHER ?

by Anne Forrester

Personally I like dogs, and I find that dogs generally sense this and consequently tend to like me. This sense of mutual liking is reminiscent of a mirror; or in the words of John Bunyan, the instinctive reaction is on the lines of his character in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "Mr Be Done By As You Did". Like most sometime dog owners I also find that the female of the species is generally more likeable and affectionate than the male. Male dogs tend to be aggressive. They bark and growl more and are easily trained to attack strangers. Bitches, on the other hand, while they are intensely defensive of their young are usually much more easy-going: they bark less and are much more likely to be friendly with strangers. So why is it that when we meet a human female who is aggressive and snaps noisily around all and sundry, metaphorically biting them on sight, we refer to her as 'a bitch' rather than a dog? And when we see a woman making nasty sniping attacks on others, criticising her sisters and generally behaving in a pseudo-male way we generally dislike her: so why do we say that she is 'being bitchy'? I wish I knew.

What I do know, however, is that while some women are renowned as being 'bitchy' characters, most are not. 'Sisters under the skin' is almost a watchword with most women, and feminine nature is much more attuned to sympathy, caring, nurturing, and a non-aggressive approach to life. Those who (to use a phrase coined by Dr Virginia Prince) believe themselves to be 'bigenderal' - that is, able to express both the masculine and the feminine sides of their nature - tend to let these feminine attributes dominate their characters; and they must certainly do this if they are to appear at all genuine when cross-dressed or seeking to cross the gender boundary as a permanent move. So why is it, I wonder, that so many of our sisters in the

gender community seem unable to avoid that 'bitchy' behaviour that we find to unlovable in genetic women ? Examples of this 'bitchiness' are not hard to find.

A member of one of the Scottish Groups recently received a letter in response to a circular that had been sent out. It came from a (so-called) 'Support' Group from 'across the border' that shall be nameless (but whose reputation for being generally unwelcoming - or at best, indifferent - to strangers is well-known). The writer disagreed with a statement made in the circular, but instead of querying it had dipped her pen in (? diluted) vitriol and written an unnecessarily 'bitchy' letter. Why ? I recently received a letter (again from outwith Scotland) from a very troubled individual who was definitely suffering from a gender dysphoria. She had tried going to her local 'support group' and again had found a disinterested attitude and a total lack of sympathy for her problems and concerns - let alone support. Again, I wonder why ? Indeed, I am sure that we must all know the occasional individual in our own community who is regularly, and almost instinctively, brusque and rude to others, rubs them up the wrong way and creates antagonisms where none need exist. So why do they do it ?

Surely with all that genderphobia going on out there, all those macho redneck types getting their knickers in a twist about people (like us) who prefer lifestyles other than their own, and all those 'catch-all' laws that all those 'morally righteous' and 'religious' (but unloving) individuals use in order to complain that by choosing *our* own lifestyles we are therefore causing 'a breach of the peace', we have better things to do than be 'bitchy' to one another.

For goodness sake, girls, let us stop all this in-fighting and nastiness. Thankfully the 'bitches' in the community are few and the truly feminine ladies are the overwhelming majority. If you are one of the 'bitchy' minority, however, in the words of the song please "move over, darling". Go back into the closet until you feel better. 'Bitching' we can do without. ■

AIDS and HIV DE-MYSTIFIED

or "AIDS - DON'T DIE OF IGNORANCE"

by Dr Derek Farr*

First recognised in 1980-81, AIDS has been described as "the scourge of our times" - and, despite a great deal of publicity, it is probably still the least understood by the general public of all medical disorders. Indeed, due to widespread public ignorance about AIDS there is an equally widespread irrational fear of the condition and of those who suffer from it, leading to it also being seen as the 20th century equivalent of the ancient "curse" of leprosy. People have the same irrational - and unjustified - fear of contracting the condition by simple social contact with sufferers. A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing, so maybe a little *more* knowledge may help to dispel some of the myths and misunderstandings about this illness.

What is AIDS - and what is HIV ?

First, what is it ? The full name of the condition is the **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome** - hence 'AIDS' (and not *Aids*, as 'the media' often have it). The body normally has a natural defence mechanism against infection - a combination of the action of cells and chemicals within the body that recognises and destroys 'invading' foreign bodies such as the bacteria and viruses that cause disease. This mechanism is known as the immune system. Now one of the viruses that may invade the body is the **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**, and its effect is to destroy that normal immune system, so that the body then becomes

* The author was for many years in charge of a NHS laboratory that tested tens of thousands of blood samples a year for HIV and hepatitis.

susceptible to any other infections that may come along, most of which it would normally 'throw off' by the action of its immune system.

Unfortunately, HIV itself doesn't just invade the body - the virus buries itself within the body's cells and reproduces itself along with them, so that the body is permanently infected with the virus and no normal means of destroying 'invading' viruses are effective. Once infected the individual remains so for the rest of his or her life.

How does HIV affect the body ?

First, the bad news. Although the body can not destroy the HIV virus within its own cells, it does at first react by producing chemicals known as antibodies, which would normally attack and destroy the invading virus had it not hidden itself within its unwilling host's cells. However, these antibodies can be detected and act as a marker of the virus's presence, although they do not appear until some considerable time after the individual becomes infected and it is usually up to three to six months later before they can be detected. At present there is no test that will detect the HIV virus itself, but by demonstrating the antibodies against HIV a person can be diagnosed as 'HIV antibody positive'; although this does **not** necessarily mean that they have (or will develop) AIDS.

Following infection with HIV the virus usually lies dormant in the body for a long time - often up to five years or more - before it suddenly (and for no obvious reason) becomes active and starts destroying the immune system. Even then, this does not *necessarily* lead to AIDS. A condition known as AIDS-Related Complex (ARC) may develop, in which the individual becomes susceptible to a number of infections, but the body still has some defence against them. Full-blown AIDS may or may not follow, and when it does the body becomes susceptible to just about *every* infection to which it may be exposed, and although the individual infections can be treated in the normal way as they occur there is no treatment for AIDS itself. You must understand that AIDS is not a disease itself - it is a syndrome (*i.e.* a

combination of signs and symptoms) that renders the body liable to other diseases - and AIDS sufferers most often die of a form of pneumonia (*Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia), or a skin cancer (Kaposi's sarcoma), although tuberculosis is also becoming a major cause of deaths in AIDS sufferers.

How easy is it to become infected ?

So that is the bad news. The good news is that HIV infection is actually quite hard to acquire. There are only two things that will transmit the virus from one person to another - blood and semen - and (unlike hepatitis B, which is transmitted in the same way but is *much* easier to contract) the HIV virus lives only very briefly outside the body.

Sexual intercourse with an infected person can transmit the HIV virus, whether between homosexual or heterosexual individuals. The virus can also be transmitted by the transfer of blood, although you should know that all blood used for transfusion (at least, in western countries) is tested for the presence of antibody to HIV, using extremely sensitive techniques. Donating blood can not possibly expose you to any risk at all, as all the apparatus used is sterile and disposed of after use, and the blood supply is now as safe as science can make it. Nevertheless, blood transmitted accidentally (as in road traffic accidents, *or* when helping a person who is bleeding and you have open cuts or sores on your own hands), *or* during sexual contact where there may be a break in the skin (or a faulty condom is used), *or* - potentially the most dangerous route - by intravenous drug abuse when needles are shared, can all pass on the HIV virus.

Most gay men nowadays practise safe sex (*i.e.* avoiding penetration altogether, or using extra-strong condoms), and currently the most common cause of infection is becoming heterosexual transmission. Female drug abusers who are infected often turn to prostitution to pay for their drug habit, and so pass on their infection to heterosexual male contacts, who in turn pass it on to their wives and partners. If in doubt, remember: the safest sex is solo sex !

Probably the greatest degree of public ignorance is in respect of these means of infection. Apart from promiscuous sex and accidental exposure of open cuts and sores to blood, HIV is actually quite difficult to contract. **It is NOT possible to pick up HIV infection through normal social contact.** Shaking hands, common use of crockery and cutlery, *etc.*, pose no threat whatever. The HIV virus lives only briefly outside the body and its cells, and is not transmitted except *via* blood and semen. Kissing (with the possible exception of deep 'French' kissing) is generally considered safe.

So what are you to do ?

The message, therefore, is that the so-called 'leper syndrome' - avoidance and social shunning of people who are HIV-positive, or even those who have full-blown AIDS - is simply unnecessary cruelty to people who are ill with a disorder that you can not possibly catch from them under any normal circumstances. AIDS victims, and those who are 'merely' HIV-positive, deserve all the sympathy and love that we would give to anyone with any other illness. If you meet someone who has AIDS, or is HIV-positive, give them a hug and let them know that you understand and sympathise, and love them none the less.

If you are still worried there are two simple precautions against HIV infection that you can easily carry in your purse. An adhesive plaster (*e.g.* an 'Elastoplast' or 'Bandaid', to cover any open cuts on your hands if you are called upon to help a bleeding accident victim) and a condom if you are likely to have sex. The simplest precaution, however, is knowing just what the risks are, and avoiding them. Don't use drugs - especially if this involves injecting yourself; don't have promiscuous sex; and don't expose open cuts or sores (*e.g.* on your hands) to other people's blood. As the headline in one newspaper said when the first government campaign was launched to inform people about this infection. **"AIDS. Don't die of ignorance !"** ■

THE PLAN

I see them walking, holding hands,
Sometimes I see her push a pram';
But my pain I know, and none can see
For I know it can never be me.

I'm trapped within the mould
And I must act like a man,
Though I feel like an animal caged
I must stick to the plan.

This plan was made by man, not God,
And from birth I was moulded to be
The same as men the world over;
No chance to be just me.

Why can't I wear my pretty dress
And be just who I am ?
But that would spoil this man-made world,
And shatter his bloody plan.

So I must live stuck in the mould,
With only a frequent reprieve.
When I really want to "run with the wind" -
Instead I "blow with the breeze".

How can we fight this awful plan,
That moulds the mind of our fellow man ?
With free expression there just might be
More people who are just like me.

Susan Hunter ■

MY JOURNEY

by Susan Hunter

In this day and age they say that everything should be categorised. This is part of the story of my journey to find myself: who - or what - I really am.

My name is Susan Hunter. In the past few issues of *The Tartan Skirt* you have seen some poems I have written to express some of the things that I feel, and now this is a short summary of the past few months in my life.

To say that I have been confused is probably the understatement of the year. My heart and head tell me that I am one thing and my body tells me another; and that is the first stage of confusion. So what am I? A crossdresser or a transsexual? I have spoken to many members of both the gender support Groups that I have attended, some crossdressers and some transsexuals. Each is so different from the other, and yet so alike. The one is a part-time and the other a full-time role. Both require hard work if they are to be successful. A crossdresser enjoys the moment when she dresses - he becoming a she. A transsexual, on the other hand, feels she is a she all the time. On closer inspection I feel that I fall into the TS category. So what do I do next?

I had been given the name of a Doctor who specialises in gender problems, so I phoned and made an appointment. The next problem was how to tell my family? My wife already knew of my crossdressing and the wish that I had been born a woman, but this did not make it any easier when I told her. My son was a different story. I always thought that he had a feeling that there was something different about his Dad, but he could not guess what. Things came to a head one night when a girl friend of his

ended up in hospital, he asked for the car, and I said no. In the argument that followed harsh words were said and it was the first time that anyone has called me a pervert - and a sexual one at that. I certainly did not feel that I was that, so after things had calmed down we talked. He asked questions and I tried to answer them, but felt that I was getting nowhere so I went out to let things calm down. When I came back you would have thought that nothing was out of the ordinary. It seemed that my wife had spoken to him and explained things. I don't really know *what* was said, but all was quiet and there was a level of acceptance.

Some time later a TS friend of mine needed some work done on her car. Mark (my son) was the man to do the job, so I asked him and he said yes. On the way to my friend's house he asked some more questions. Was she 'a girl-girl' or 'a man-girl'? What a question. After some explaining I kept the subject going and told him about my own visit to the Doctor, and he asked what had changed my mind. I think he thought that I could get a pill that would 'cure' me of my problem. After more discussion I told him that I could end up living as a woman full-time. By this time we had arrived, and so nothing else was said, but this was actually part of a plan to show that transsexuals do not have tails and horns growing out of their heads. In fact, he liked my friends. (I say friends, because since that night I have introduced him to a few more). What's the term the young use? 'They're brand new'. Just normal girls.

Other things have been happening. At work I had taken a course to become a First Aider in the factory, and this meant that I had to work closely with the nursing Sister. One day she said "Sit down and tell me your problems". I don't know if this was a joke or not, but I said I would not know where to start, and I did not know if she would understand. "Try me" she said, so I started at the beginning and told her the whole story. She did not seem surprised or upset, but went on to tell me that she had 'read' me ages ago, and was waiting to see if I would tell her. I asked how

she had 'read' me and she pointed out a few things that I had thought were not noticeable such as walking, body gestures, *etc.* I guess that most transsexuals who are not fully open try to hide their true selves, but there are times when the guard goes down and the real *you* shows through. Since then the nurse and I have had a good many discussions, and she has been a great help and encouragement.

Some time ago my uncle, who was ill with cancer, asked me if I could find out about the Church of Scotland healing ministry. I phoned my own Minister, who was a great help, and while speaking with him on the phone he asked why I was not at church more often. I used to go every week, being a Sunday School teacher. Well, with working week-ends and other things going on in my life I told him that I had a lot on my mind and was thinking about a lot of things. To tell the truth, I almost told him the whole story then and there, but I held back. Two or three weeks later, at the Church Fair, I told him that my Uncle had since died. We spoke for a time and then he asked about me. I said that I felt that I had 'taken him to the water but had not let him drink'. Maybe he had a right to know the whole truth. Having been a church Elder for 20 years I did not want a scandal at the church should the truth be known, so I gave him a brief summary of my past and what might happen in the future. He listened and then said that God made both man and woman, with a little bit of each in the other, and this did not make us any less a person.

Only time will tell what will happen next, but I feel better that I had told my Minister, and thank God that he tried to understand. ■

---oooOOOooo---

"We would wonder less what people think of us if we realised how seldom they do"

From a Church Parish Magazine

RUN WITH THE RIVER

When I was just a little girl
I didn't have much fun.
It took me all my time to walk -
I certainly couldn't run.
My idea of fun would be
A walk around our town,
Never knowing who I'd see
Who could crash my world around.

A stream flows into a burn,
Its origins far away.
It aims for its final goal
And searches to find its way.
I feel I am that little burn -
I stumble and I dither
But I strive to be what I am,
And run with the river

Now the little girl who couldn't run
Is certainly having fun
With friends who are the same as she;
She runs the river, full of glee.
To run the river is a wonderful thing,
It helps in so many ways.
The unseen benefits that it brings
Are evident each day.

Susan Hunter ■

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BE ALL YOU CAN BE

by Donna T

Reprinted from *The TV-TS Tapestry*, Issue No 61

My secretary tells me I am a perfectionist. I really don't think so. It would only take the undivided attention of a Hollywood make-up artist for a month or two; a wardrobe consultant and a dressmaker for two or three months (and finally a dress that fits in the shoulders *and* the waist !); a coach for walking, sitting and standing for nine months to a year; a wig specialist; a couple of years with a voice coach; oops ! better not forget a color, image and fashion person to make me look like the person I am. Then, when I step out of the closet I certainly will be all I can be. It may take me until I am seventy years old to get out of that closet, but I sure will look great !

I see a problem here. Some of the help I need could be available at a local support group, but I don't think I can go there until I have my act together. I don't want them to think I don't know how to do what I don't know how to do.

Something is not quite right. When I start working on important things, it all falls apart. This makes me think I'm not on the right tack. For example, I would like four or five good photos of my *femme* self; but only, of course, if I could look attractive and feminine. Somehow I don't think K-mart's 48 photos for \$ 12.95 will do the trick. Calling a professional photographer would lead to a great deal of embarrassment, so that's out. If I wait until I get my act together in my seventies my old age pension won't be enough to pay for the pictures.

On the other hand, my therapist thinks that with a few years of therapy, and a lot of painful work, he can cure me of this crossdressing disease. (I love optimistic people !). The subject of twice a week at \$ 75.00 *per* wasn't mentioned.

Actually, what I really need is to find a girl friend who would like to become the wife of a crossdresser. (What woman wouldn't ?). If she were over six feet tall, unevenly proportioned and built like a line-backer, we could even share our wardrobes. She could teach me how to walk, and act, and dress, and talk, and... Somehow I think that may not be any easier than dealing with the therapist for several years. Could it be that the way to do this is to just accept my *femme* self the way she is today ? That I should trust that she will do better in the future if she works at it and just starts to relax ?

I wonder if I went out to one of the support groups, even though my hair and voice are not perfect, would I be accepted ? Or would my appearance cause them to reject me ? I'll bet that they are all perfect ladies in those groups, and I would be the *only* one there who wasn't perfect. Still, something tells me I should give it a shot. After all, when I was first learning to walk I fell down. But I did learn to walk. Since then I've covered a considerable distance. Maybe I can work on being perfect as I go. That might be the best way to get there. ■



INTOLERANCE

BAD NEWS FROM AMERICA

by Merissa S. Lynn

An Editorial reprinted from *TV-TS Tapestry*, Issue 62

A few weeks ago I was in the audience for the show *Night Talk with Jane Whitney*. The topic was Religious Intolerance. Jane's guests included Sister Mary Elizabeth, an Episcopal nun who had had conflicts with her church because of her transsexualism, Father Jim, a gay Anglican priest who was outed by his bishop with disastrous results, and a Catholic priest and nun who were removed from those services because they fell in love and were married. They were joined by Father Peter, an Episcopal religious extremist.

Listening to Father Peter was like watching a cheap horror movie, except it was real. What made it truly terrifying was to realize there are thousands of Father Peters out there, and some of them are trying to push through legislation that would legitimize their hateful views. For instance, in Colorado there is the proposed Amendment #2. This amendment to the Colorado State Constitution would legalize discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation (that includes all of us), and would forbid any Colorado citizen from ever again voting on any ordinance that would provide protection for any member of the gay community or our community. Scary, isn't it? It gets worse.

In Oregon there is Ballot Measure 9. This is a proposal to amend the Oregon State Constitution to legalize discrimination. It is a proposal sponsored by a powerful group of people who oppose basic human rights for lesbian and gay

people. (That includes people who are perceived to be lesbian or gay, which includes us. We are all in the same boat on this one). These people would prohibit all governments from promoting, encouraging, or facilitating homosexuality or perceived homosexuality. Think about this for a minute. The Oregon State Constitution would officially declare us to be abnormal. Any government agency could deny services to any individual or group thought to support us. All books and magazines thought to promote homosexuality would be banned from libraries. No related topic could be discussed on television. State licensing agencies could legally discriminate against any person perceived to be homosexual or who runs a business for gay people. The licensing boards would have to revoke licenses to individuals deemed abnormal. The court would be required to remove children from parents perceived to be gay. Intolerance, hatred, fear...it goes on and on.

As I listened to Father Peter speak, it was as though he personally wrote Amendment #2 and Ballot Measure 9. I felt chills. God created people different to give the world balance, and here was a person who claimed to believe in God using God to promote hatred, and to justify keeping the world out of balance. It seems so simple to me. Homosexuality is a natural phenomenon. Like cross-dressing and transsexualism, homosexuality has been a fundamental part of the human experience as long as there has been a human experience. It has been found in every society, and in every walk of life throughout history. Yet ignorance and intolerance, especially religious intolerance, continue to cost good people their happiness, their jobs, their families, and far too often, their lives. They cost society its neighbours, its friends, and productive citizens. I have dedicated my life to overcoming this devastating ignorance and to helping people learn respect for other people's differences. I eagerly ask others to do the same. Human lives and the creation of a harmonious balanced society free from hate depend on it.

One final comment. While we work to overcome society's ignorance and bigotry, let us not forget to overcome our own! ■

GENDER DIVERSITY and RELIGION *

One of the things that many of the gender community find disturbing is the attitude of much (although not all) institutional religion to crossdressing, transgenderism and transsexualism. Judaism and Islam both take firm stands against any transgender behaviour, the Jewish view being found in the Bible in *Deuteronomy*, 22: 5: "No woman shall wear an article of man's clothing, nor shall a man put on woman's dress; for those who do these things are abominable to the Lord your God". Unfortunately, despite this being a Jewish rather than a Christian religious law, many moralising Christians also look to this text and use it as a reason for condemning all members of the gender community. But is this reasonable?

Few crossdressers or transsexuals feel inclined seriously to argue theology with those who disapprove of them on religious grounds, any more than they will argue with Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and other religious 'activists' who knock on our doors, and often prefer simply to turn their backs on the whole scene of institutionalised religion. However, it may be as well to be clear just what it is that is being argued, both for your own peace of mind and also in order to be able to dispute these intolerant views when you encounter them. While most institutional Christianity shows a distinct lack of charity (not to say theology) when it comes to gender issues, the stricture against crossdressing is not straightforward, and anyone who calls him or herself

* *The author of this article holds a degree in theology and is also a Lay Preacher.*

'Christian' - whether they actively practise their religion or not - should be sure of their ground and prepared to apply more charity (not to say more theological integrity) to their attitude.

What is the Biblical position ?

There are two main tenets of Christianity that are often forgotten by so-called 'Christian moralists'. The first of these is St Paul's simple instruction to "Leave no claim outstanding against you, except that of mutual love. He who loves his neighbour has satisfied every claim of the law...every other commandment there may be, are all summed up in the one rule, 'Love your neighbour as yourself' " (*Romans*, 13: 8-9). Sadly, this is scarcely the attitude adopted by many Christian 'moralists'.

It is also often forgotten by these same critical and unloving apologists for institutional Christianity that the Biblical stricture against crossdressing occurs in the book of *Deuteronomy* in the *OLD* Testament. Now if one is to accept this one part of the Bible, addressed to a purely Jewish audience some 3000 years ago, as applying so literally to a non-Jewish audience today, one can not then logically ignore the rest. Biblical fundamentalists tend to be very selective in their use of the scriptures. If they seek to maintain such strictures as that in *Deuteronomy* against crossdressing, then they should also logically follow all the other Old Testament strictures, such as that in *Leviticus* 4 to abstain from all animal fat and blood; and very few indeed of these moral critics follow a strict kosher approach to diet and adopt a *totally* fat and blood-free vegetarian diet.

However, Christians are supposed to accept the *NEW* Testament as God's message and guidance for them. Now the one overwhelming belief of the Christian churches that distinguishes them from all others is that "God is Love" (*I John*, 4: 8). In particular, it is clearly stated of Jesus in the letter to the Hebrews that "By speaking of a new covenant, he has pronounced the first one old; and anything that is

growing old and ageing will shortly disappear" (*Hebrews*, 8: 13). In other words, the New Testament injunctions to Jew and Gentile alike to love one another have *replaced* the detailed rules and regulations of specifically Jewish religious observances, and the specific condemnations, of the Old Testament.

Not all Churches are the same

Yes, I know this is obvious, but not everyone appreciates the sometimes very substantial differences in outlook to be found outwith the 'mainstream' of religious observances. For example, if you are disillusioned with institutional Christianity - and many members of the gender community are (quite understandably) - then take heart, for not all churches have such a narrow approach.

As an example of a different approach consider the order of service in the Universalist Unitarian Church, which openly welcomes all lifestyles, including those of crossdressers, transgenderists, transsexuals, gays and lesbians, at its services. Their service opens with a quotation from R.W.Emerson's *Journal*: "I will live my life as I like". It then continues with an 'Affirmation', said out loud by the whole congregation, that runs:

**LOVE IS THE SPIRIT OF THIS CHURCH,
AND SERVICE IS ITS LAW.
THIS IS OUR GREAT COVENANT;
TO DWELL TOGETHER IN PEACE,
TO SEEK THE TRUTH IN LOVE,
AND TO HELP ONE ANOTHER.**

The moving spirit of the Unitarian Church is not to tell people *what to believe*, but *how to behave* in order to remain in peace and a loving relationship with all mankind.

Their service ends with everyone reciting 'the Pueblo Closing:'

**HOLD ON TO WHAT IS GOOD, EVEN
IF IT IS A HANDFUL OF EARTH.
HOLD ON TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE, EVEN
IF IT IS A TREE THAT STANDS BY ITSELF
HOLD ON TO WHAT YOU MUST DO, EVEN
IF IT IS A LONG WAY FROM HERE.
HOLD ON TO LIFE, EVEN
IF IT IS EASIER LETTING GO.
HOLD ON TO MY HAND, EVEN
WHEN I HAVE GONE AWAY FROM YOU.**

No, this is not a missionary attempt to convert you. It is just an attempt to show that not all religion turns its back on the 'love thy neighbour as thyself' concept, nor is it all hostile to the gender community; just as not all 'orthodox' critical Christian attitudes to gender diversity are defensible. Indeed, it is my own belief that much of what today passes as Christianity can actually be more accurately described as 'Churchianity' - a set of rules and regulations cast in stone, and rendered just about as hard and immovable by the practise of generations of bigots cursed with moral tunnel vision.

So, to sum up

If you believe that there is a God, and that God is love - as the Christian churches have taught for the last 2000 years - then you can not logically believe that the ancient Jewish strictures against gender diversity that are still perpetuated by so many of the institutional Christian churches are either relevant to Christians in the light of there being a *New Testament*, or morally defensible. And whether or not you have any conventional religious belief, just hold on to the most compelling Christian directive (and moral imperative) of the last 2000 years, given without any qualification - "Love one another" (*John*, 15: 17). ■

GOING PUBLIC

by Janyne Cresop

Reprinted from *TV-TS Tapestry*, Issue 62*

I have often heard crossdressers say society will not accept us, or the public isn't ready for us, or some similar statement. Of course it's true, and the public will never be accepting of us until we are accepting of ourselves and are accepting of society. The world will never invite us out into it in our clothing/gender choice. The only way the world will ever get used to seeing genetic males in a feminine gender form is by seeing us and interacting with us.

I can remember when seeing an openly gay couple was shocking. Now, it's commonplace. Inter-racial couples were very rare. Now it's seen all the time. The world around us only had to get accustomed to it to accept it. Crossdressers tend to isolate themselves and not be seen. That's OK if it's your choice, but it's we, not them, who make it so.

The civil rights movement, gay and lesbian activists, and the womens' movement have all done their part in changing oppressive laws and in clearing away the sexual stereotyping that used to shape our society. There is no reason that we can't go public if we want to. The law is on our side. The rules are in place. It's OK to do it...really it is.

*An edited version of an article that originally appeared in *The Flip Side*, (New Orleans, Louisiana).

Those ladies who go to the Holiday en Femme, or the Texas Tea Party, or Fantasia Fair tell grand stories about going out in public and being totally accepted. They shopped and dined and strolled around and felt just as feminine as their little hearts could stand. The reason is because the hotels and restaurants and stores were expecting them and wanted the money in their purses. Nice fat male incomes, combined with the spending desires of women on vacation...a marketing dream.

Everybody prospers from this. Crossdressers meet the public, and the public meets us. The people of Houston, or San Antonio, or Provincetown get just a little used to crossdressers and the crossdressers get a little used to the public. It can and does work.

Many of us come from a shame-based background. We are ashamed of ourselves because we have deep feminine feelings. We grew up shamed by those feelings and learned at an early age to keep them hidden. When I was a little boy I learned that my girl feelings were bad, that "...little boys don't do that...only sissies do that...you'll never be a soldier if you wear nail polish". The little girl inside me learned to expect to be laughed at, because that's what happened to boys like me. I learned that at home, not by exposing my *femme* self to the world. I also learned to assert myself in many areas, and would never accept ridicule for my actions or beliefs, except for my crossdressing.

We all come from different places. Going public is a deeply personal and individual thing. Each of us who chooses to do so will proceed at her own pace. Crossdresser support groups may be just another closet to come out of. They don't really get us out into the world, they just put more of us into one room (or closet).

I have dreamt of a day when I could go anywhere as any gender form I choose. The reality of that scenario is that it's my own discomfort that prevents it, not the society I

would prefer to blame. The punch line to all of this is that there are politics involved. Educating the public to be aware of us, and to expect to see us around, requires us to participate in society. Convincing the business community that they need our spendable cash is a good start. We must now let our representatives know how we feel, and lend our support to the organizations that further our interests through their own. Most importantly, we must help each other along the road to self-acceptance.

This is a highly visible lifestyle. The thing that makes it work comes from deep inside and cannot be seen from the outside. Except for the fact that I crossdress, I think of myself as pretty much a mainstream kind of person. My limited experience with the straight world so far has been pretty positive. The people I have come into contact with who, for some reason or another, learn that I crossdress, have all taken it with a positive attitude.

As you can probably tell, I am bullish on straight society. It's the arena I want to play in. I believe we will see a day when it will be OK to use whatever gender form we deem appropriate for the occasion, the only boundaries being those of good taste.

I also think the only way to attain that freedom is to affirm our friendship with the so-called 'straight' society, with dignity in what we do, pride in how we do it, courtesy and respect for the people we come into contact with, and the feeling that they are our friends and not our enemies.

Society may be ready for us. Are we ready for it? ■

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ARE YOU ON THE RIGHT TRACK ?

I am sure that many of you have heard the analogy of gender life with a railway journey across a big country. One gets on the train and then has a choice. One can go the whole way to the end of the line. Alternatively, one can get off at any station along the line, look around and either decide to stay at that place or to get back on the train and go further along the line. This is just like the gender journey.

For most of us we start off as children by sniffing around the booking office (looking at and feeling some feminine clothes), eventually buying a ticket and getting on to the platform (actually trying on some items of clothing), until we get on the train and start to do our own thing - anything from occasional to regular crossdressing, and from simply putting on the clothes to perfecting the 'whole girl look', and thence - for some of us - to a gradual realisation that we are actually transsexual, and thus to the eventual destination of reassignment. However, where we decide to get off the train, and whether or not we decide to continue the journey, is up to us and, as with daily life, the gender journey is not quite straightforward and we face the age-old problem - decisions, decisions !

Of course, put in simple terms it should be (relatively) easy. Are we TV, CD, TG or TS. In fact, things aren't that simple. (Indeed, what do some of these terms actually mean ?). Gender life is not easily put into such clear-cut boxes. A wish to put on occasional items of underwear, putting on the 'whole girl' look, and wishing full re-assignment, are all very different things, but they so easily lead one into the other. The problem, often, is knowing at which station to get off, and where to leave the train. The further down the line that one travels, the greater become the pressures to

take the line of least resistance and simply stay on the train and go to the end of the line; and that may not always be the right thing to do. Everyone is different, and there is no moral or physical imperative that says either that one must stay on the train, or that one may *not* get off the train if one is not totally convinced about going the whole way.

Pressures and persuasions on crossdressers and transgenderists to go to the end of the line are often compelling; but not everyone is transsexual. A general desire to 'be a woman' is simply not good enough evidence that one is TS. The true TS *knows* that she is female, regardless of the 'outside plumbing' with which she was born. There is no doubt in her mind, but an overwhelming drive to *be* a woman, and not merely to look like one. Dressing in female clothes is not particularly important; even joining in gender groups becomes unimportant; the only thing that matters is *being* a woman, and just 'sinking back into the woodwork' of female society.

It is in these different needs and pressures that we all too often fail our TS sisters. We talk about gender 'social and support groups', but most often these are almost entirely *social* and devoted entirely to the crossdresser, with very little of the *support* that the true TS needs. Perhaps, as a community, we are being insufficiently feminine in our actions, and giving insufficient attention to those of our community who need special support for a long - and often arduous - gender journey.

At the same time, perhaps we should also give rather more thought to where we might need to get off the train ourselves. Yes, I know, genderism is to be enjoyed rather than just talked about; but if we don't sometimes stop to think where we are going, and how we can help our fellow travellers, we are simply carrying our male thinking and actions over into genderland and not *being* feminine. Men have been selfish, unthinking and uncaring like that for centuries. If we actually like women (and why else would we be in the gender community ?) then perhaps we should try a bit harder to think and act like them. ■

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MORE ABOUT NAMES

In the last issue of *The Tartan Skirt* we listed some of the most popular first names chosen for girls, as given in the birth announcement columns of *The Times*. You may be interested in the following list of the 20 least popular Christian names, all of which appeared in *The Times* between 1838 and 1900, and all of which have now fallen into spectacular disuse. (You may also have fun working out which are boys' names and which are girls').

Abishaig	Ham
Amorous	Lettuce
Babberley	Minniehaha
Brained	Murder
Bugless	Salmon
Clapham	Strongitharm
Despair	Tram
Dozer	Uz
Energetic	Water
Feather	Wonderful

Aren't you glad that you can chose your own *femme* name ?

TOO TALL ? DON'T WORRY

If you are worried about your height and are afraid that you are too tall to pass as a girl, then you can stop worrying. Julia Kurochkina, an 18-year Russian student from Moscow, is a striking six-foot tall and she's drop-dead gorgeous. She is also the latest *Miss World* ! ■



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FANTASTIC FANTASIA

THE 1992 FANTASIA FAIR

by Anne Forrester

Fantasia Fair is the longest established of the great gender events (this year was the 18th annual Fair), and it is still probably the one that most genderists regard as the ultimate experience. Organised by the Human Outreach and Achievement Institute of Boston it occupies ten days in October when crossdressers, transgenderists, transsexuals and their families and friends come together in New England in the Fall. Provincetown (known locally simply as P'town), at the very tip of Cape Cod to the east of Boston Bay, is not only a very historic site - it was here that the Pilgrim Fathers first landed in the Mayflower in 1620, and many of the houses date from that seventeenth century time - it is also one of the most open and tolerant communities anywhere in the western world. All life styles are welcome and the only constraint is that one does nothing to hurt others. The town has a large Gay community, and as an example of its openness the weekend at the beginning of this year's Fair saw 6000 Lesbians in town to celebrate womens' week (I even got chatted up by a couple of them !); the genderists of Fantasia filled the town for the next week; and the following weekend there was an influx of the leather brigade. I asked one girl serving in a shop if she ever got confused. "No", she said. "This is my fourth season in town and I got over my confusion the first year. But you should *see* the 'ordinary' tourists who think they are just coming up to the tip of the Cape !". I did. And they *were* confused !

During the Fair the participants stay around the town in a range of Inns and Guest Houses, and just live as their own *femme* selves for the whole time, eating in the town's many fine restaurants, shopping till they drop (mainly in the

fabulous jewellery stores - I came home with six new pairs of earrings, three silver chains, two pendants and a brooch), and generally enjoying a great time. The Fair has a very full programme of events ranging from workshops on makeup, hair and wig care, *etc.*, through more serious discussions on family problems, the problems for 'new women' (*i.e.* post-op TSs), legal and social problems, and how to 'transition on the job'. There were also two very moving services in the Unitarian Church (where we were made *very* welcome by the local congregation).

At the same time, the Fair is FUN. Apart from formal dinners and awards ceremonies there is a Fashion Show, in which the girls show off their best day and evening wear on the catwalk, a Fantasy Ball where everyone dresses as outrageously as they wish, and the Fantasia Follies, a variety show at which the girls 'strut their stuff' on stage. Of course, all of these events are open to the public, who turn out in strength and thoroughly enjoy themselves. (This year's Fashion Show and Fantasia Follies were also video taped, and a copy will be available in the New Year for rental by gender Groups in Britain).

Having had my visit last year cut cruelly short by a health problem I was determined to enjoy myself this year and appeared in both the Fashion Show (modelling British clothes, including the tartan of course) and the Follies. I even won a trophy at the Fantasy Ball for 'the most original costume' ! (Those who know my usually rather conventional image will be surprised to know that I went as a Domatrix in leather mini-skirt, 4" heels and leather-studded collar and cuffs. And by the end of the evening was I regretting those 4" heels !).

Of course, all play and no work makes Jill a dull girl, so I got caught up in that as well. The day before leaving home for the Fair I had a 1.00 am phone call (someone had forgotten the 5 hour time difference), asking if I would edit and produce the daily Newsletter for the Fair, so with strange computer hardware and software, and the invaluable help of an American CD friend with whom I had

undertaken similar exercises previously, I managed just that, as well as having fun. Provincetown is an old whaling town, and still is except that nowadays one hunts whales with a camera rather than a harpoon. A day on the ocean waves (yes, it's the real Atlantic) saw a friend from Philadelphia and I windblown but awed with some marvellous close up sightings of whales, including one of the rarest living creature on earth, the North Atlantic Right Whale, of which there are now only 300 left in the world.

P'town is also proud of its history as the site of the Pilgrim Fathers' first landing, and I climbed the 280 foot monument for a fabulous panoramic view of the Cape, Boston Bay and the north Atlantic, chatting with two ladies on my way down who were surprised to come across another British accent, but who accepted me without question as just another British woman tourist. (The monument, incidentally, is unwittingly a monument also to English bigotry and intolerance, with stones set in the wall inside commemorating the founding of all the New England towns founded and settled by those driven from home by religious persecution - Truro, Falmouth, Plymouth, Barnstable, Hull, and so on. As we all know, that bigotry and intolerance continues in Britain today, only apart from Northern Ireland it seems to be driven more by homophobia and genderphobia than by religious belief).

After the Fair I stayed on in P'town for a few days to unwind gradually before changing back into 'male drag' for the first time in two weeks, for the journey home. The Fair was a great experience. Although I was the only European there I met many very dear old friends - CD and TS - and made a number of valuable new ones. Make no mistake, however, Fantasia Fair is expensive - especially when taking air fares into account. (Indeed, there were several mutterings at the Fair that it is in danger of pricing itself out of the market. Let us hope that wiser counsels prevail). However, I have provisionally booked myself in for next year (if my bank balance will stand it). It is all summed up on a button badge I bought in a Feminist bookshop in P'town. *Enjoy life. This is NOT a dress rehearsal !* ■

THEY'RE PLAYING OUR TUNE !

Whenever there is a solemn state occasion, or a national team wins a sporting event, they play a 'national anthem'. Perhaps it's about time that the gender community had its own 'national anthem'. Certainly there are plenty of possible tunes around. Which of the following do you think would be most appropriate ? (Or perhaps you have some other ideas of your own).

I've looked at life from both sides now (Carly Simon)

I am what I am (from "La cage aux folles")

I enjoy being a girl

Anything goes ! (the Cole Porter 1930s hit)

And for the more vain amongst us:

I'm so pretty (from "West Side Story")

Or of course, for the female-to-male TS or crossdresser, from "My Fair Lady" there is always the 'anti-' song:

Why can't a woman be more like a man ? ■

Two thoughts for the day...

For others:

Minds are like parachutes. They only work when open !

and for you:

Enjoy life. This is NOT a dress rehearsal. ■

A DAY TO REMEMBER

by Jeanne Maxwell

Earlier tonight, as I sent off my booking form for the *Edinburgh Festival Weekend* in May I was reminded of the very first time I ventured out into the big big world of Weston, Scarborough and Colwyn Bay weekends. It was definitely 'a day to remember'.

I rose early that morning, washed and dressed carefully and discreetly in serge skirt, white blouse and navy blue jacket. I made up modestly, finishing with lipstick and scarlet nail varnish. A last glance in the mirror and out to the car, flinging my handbag and suitcase in the back. This was it...I was off on my big adventure.

I had been at many meetings of the Glasgow Group, and a few in Edinburgh, but this would be my first trip away from home. I had a long drive ahead of me from Glasgow to Weston-super-Mare, and I was in a state somewhere between terror and elation. I knew that sooner or later I was going to have to meet the call of nature. This I hoped to deal with by skillful use of a plastic funnel and a large plastic bottle, but what worried me most was the inevitable refuelling of the car.

After a few hours my petrol gauge warned me that something would have to be done about that pretty soon, so I drove into the next motorway service station and parked alongside the petrol pumps. I slipped gracefully from the seat and was about to take the petrol pipe when I realised that to get to the cash desk I had to walk what seemed like miles across a forecourt to where three young ladies sur-

veyed the customers. What little courage I'd taken in my hands slipped away like water and I slid back into the car and drove off.

A few miles further on I realised that I had to go through with this or I might as well go home. I drove into the next service station and ended up at the pumps facing in the wrong direction, but only a dozen steps from the kiosk. Having filled up with petrol I crossed to the desk. I had taken a £ 10.00 note from my handbag, and passed it over. "Have you got the twopence?" the young lady asked. "Oh, I'm so sorry. I've left my purse in the car, I'll go and get it". "Never mind, love" she replied, "we'll not miss twopence". So I left in a daze. I had passed. I was in heaven.

The rest of the journey passed without incident and I arrived in Weston in the early afternoon. I remembered that the hotel was somewhere along the east side of town and drove along there to park near the pier. I couldn't remember the name of the hotel but I had all my papers in my handbag...or were they in the suitcase...or in the car boot? They were nowhere; but I could picture them quite clearly sitting on the sideboard at home, where I had left them.

I thought. What am I to do? I remembered that the hotel had an unusual name that didn't mean anything particular...something like *Norval* or *Madal*. I resolved to drive around all the back streets until I recognised a hotel name. I was looking for some sort of second-rate place that would put up with the likes of me, but no bells rang. I was lost, 400 miles from home and nowhere to go.

I rang telephone enquiries (they weren't automated in those days). The lady could not think of any hotel with a name like that, but suggested that I call at the Tourist Information Office on The Parade. I thanked her kindly, and rang off. She was right, of course. But whether it was the tension and worry or not, I now found myself panicking. There was no way I was going to wander in to that office dressed

as I was. I drove to a quiet car park and stripped off shoes and skirt, put on trousers, socks and sandals, pulled a jumper over my blouse and carefully wiped off lipstick, powder and eye shadow. My wig was packed away carefully along with rings, necklace and earrings. I looked at my bright scarlet nails...too much work had gone into them. I would wear my black leather driving gloves.

Ready at last, I sauntered nonchalantly into the Tourist Office, where the lady behind the counter asked if she could help me. "I've done an awfully silly thing" I explained. "I've come all the way down from Glasgow for a reunion with some old friends and I've completely forgotten the name of the hotel. I wonder if you have a list of hotel names I could look at to see if I can recognise the right one". She passed me a list and I read it up and down - but still no bells rang.

"I have a rough idea of the location of the hotel" I said. "Have you a map showing where each hotel is?". "Certainly" she replied, and handed me a small folded-up map. I took my gloves off and unfolded the map. We both stared at my ten scarlet finger nails. "Oh", she said, "I think you'll find your friends at the *Rozal* hotel". I gasped..."I don't think so, I've passed that hotel at least half a dozen times today and it looks far too posh for them". "Really, sir" she went on, "I'm sure that's where you'll find them".

I thanked her and wandered out. I hadn't realised until then that everyone in Weston knew about the Weekend at the *Rozal*. Back in my car I drove along The Parade and passed the *Rozal*. A tall woman - easily six foot six - strode up the steps two at a time with suitcase in hand. I knew then that I had arrived at last. ■



HANDY HINTS

Save your toner and cleanser

When applying toner or cleanser, use a cotton wool ball that has been rinsed under the tap and squeezed out. It will not then absorb the toner or cleanser, but transfer it directly onto you. Much more economical.

Get rid of that cigarette smell

If you are a non-smoker and have been at a group meeting (or elsewhere) where others smoke, your clothes are bound to smell of stale cigarette smoke - and if you have borrowed any of your wife's things, she is bound to notice. When you get home try giving the clothing a whirl in the tumble dryer - no detergent, no magic formula, just a good old tumble. It works wonders at removing that stale tobacco smell.

Don't be a heel to your heels

If you drive while dressed, you'll know that it's murder on heels - especially if they are higher than 1" or thereby. If you can't keep a pair of flatties or sandals in the car for driving, just kick your shoes off and drive in your stocking feet. It's more comfortable, you have extra fine control through the direct contact with the pedals - and it is much cheaper to wash your nylons than to have your shoes re-healed.

--oooOOOooo--

HAVE YOU READ ?

Some Books Reviewed

He Says, She Says: Closing the Communication Gap Between the Sexes by Lillian Glass. New York: G.N.Putnam. 1992. ISBN 0-399-51737-5. \$ 19.95

Quite apart from questions of appearance and dressing, any genetic male who wishes to pass convincingly in the female role must learn to communicate in a female manner. Women communicate so differently from men that often they may as well be speaking another language - indeed, Deborah Tannen has referred to two distinct languages, 'male and female genderish' - and anything that helps each gender understand the language of the other must therefore be of interest.

The author of this book, Dr Lillian Glass, was a professor at the University of Southern California and currently has a private practice in Beverly Hills where she teaches communication skills to a number of well-known actors, politicians, etc. Inevitably, one must compare her book with *You Just Don't Understand* by Deborah Tannen (London: Virago. 1991. £ 5.99 pbk: reviewed in *The Tartan Skirt* NS. No 3, July 1992); and I am afraid that Dr Glass' book just does not come up to the same level of expectation.

Like Deborah Tannen, Lillian Glass identifies a number of important ways in which men and women differ in their conversational styles and language - indeed, she devotes one whole chapter to listing 105 differences in body language, facial language, speech and voice patterns, and behavioural difference patterns. Also like Tannen, she analyses the effects of these differences when men and

women seek to communicate with one another in a variety of situations. However, it is from here on that she lost me. Lillian Glass is obviously a dedicated feminist: so am I, but I found her emphasis - and her own method of communication - unbalanced and irritating. Her basic assumption is that female language is the *only* correct way to communicate, and that the communication styles of men are intrinsically wrong and must be corrected. On page after page phrases such as "men must learn to..." and "men need to..." recur time and time again. Indeed, in a chapter devoted to 'Closing the communication gap in your intimate relationships' she lists 34 things that men *must* learn to do or not do, but only 11 *suggestions* addressed to women.

Of course, what Dr Glass says is true. If we are to understand one another men *must* learn to understand - and speak - 'female genderish', in everyday life as well as in the cross-gender community. However, this is not just a one-way process. If men and women are to communicate on even terms, women must also learn to understand (even if not to speak) 'male genderish'. For our own purposes, yes, if we wish to pass successfully we *must* learn to communicate in a female way; but it is irritating at the least (and insulting at the worst) to be told so in such a one-sided and patronising manner.

Although not yet published in the UK, this book will probably appear here before long, and can in any case be ordered through any good bookseller (remember to quote the full details given at the top of this review, including the ISBN number). Personally, however, I would not be inclined to bother, and my own very strong recommendation would be for anyone in the cross-gender community to obtain, read and study Deborah Tannen's book *You just don't understand*. It is both more sympathetically and more realistically written, and is of much greater practical help.

A.F.

NOTE: Anyone interested in following up the article on reincarnation as a possible explanation for cross gender behaviour that appeared in the last issue ('Born Again Women?'. *The Tartan Skirt* NS No.4, October 1992) might find the following books of interest. Each of them is now out of print but may be available through your library or found in a second-hand bookshop):

Life Before Birth by Peter and Mary Harrison. London: Futura. 1983.

Reports a number of cases where small children who could not possibly have learned such information from their everyday lives talk in detail of lives in a previous existence, the memory of which appears to disappear as they grow up.

Glimpses of the Beyond by Jean-Baptiste Delacour. Lewes, Sussex: Harwood-Smart. 1974.

A slightly tedious book about 'out of body experiences', recording "the extraordinary experiences of people who have crossed the brink of death and returned".

Reincarnation ? by Ian Wilson. Harmondsworth, Mddx: Penguin. 1981.

The opposite viewpoint. A critical study of reincarnation theories as demonstrated by cases of hypnotic regression, where hypnotised individuals 'recall' past life experiences, most of which can be attributed to details learned during their present lives and hitherto forgotten. (But it ignores most other sources of evidence, and the book is best read in conjunction with *Life Before Birth* - see above). ■

PASSPORTS FOR GENDER DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS

Gender diversity can cause enough problems for individuals in their everyday lives, but those wishing to travel abroad face other difficulties, especially with the issue of the new common format European Community passports. A recent enquiry to the United Kingdom Passport Agency has produced the following definitive comments concerning transsexuals.

"Applicants for the standard United Kingdom passport are required to state their sex on the application form as this information is recorded on the data page of the new style machine-readable passport in the European Community common format which is issued by all United Kingdom Passport Offices. The current practice with regard to transsexuals is that a passport is issued in the name and style adopted by the applicant upon production of documentary evidence of the change of name and confirmation from a doctor or hospital that the applicant has undergone gender reassignment surgery or, if not, his or her orientation to the new gender is expected to be permanent.

In all the new style passports the holder's name is shown without prefix and, in the case of transsexuals, the adopted gender is shown, not that recorded on the birth certificate. Thus the gender shown on the passport matches the name and appearance of the holder.

With regard to passage through immigration control, both here and abroad, it would be impracticable for someone who has undergone gender reassignment to continue to use a passport issued in his/her former identity. They should apply for another passport in the new gender and have the existing one cancelled.

You enquired whether people could hold two passports in different identities to enable them to travel in different gender roles. I am afraid that this cannot be done. The United Kingdom passport is an internationally recognised document of nationality and identity and as such must be issued in the name and style that the holder is generally and habitually known. In the case of someone who switches gender roles according to circumstances a passport must be issued showing the sex shown on their birth certificate."

Although the current position for British transsexuals is thus clear, the position of British crossdressers who wish to travel internationally while dressed in their adopted gender role seemed less clear, so an enquiry was made of the Immigration Service Headquarters, and this produced the following reply:

The Immigration Rules require a person on arrival in the United Kingdom to produce on request by the immigration officer, a valid national passport or other document satisfactorily establishing his identity and nationality. Since British citizens do not require leave to enter, the immigration officer will only examine their passports in order to satisfy himself that they are the rightful holder and a British citizen. Once he has so satisfied himself his examination will cease.

While a British citizen travelling in a gender identity opposite to that shown in their passport, may cause the immigration officer to take a little longer than usual to be satisfied about their identity and nationality, in accordance with the Rules, it should not normally be a problem. If such a person is concerned that their passport alone is not sufficient evidence to satisfy the immigration officer, they may choose to carry other evidence which they will believe will

help, but this is entirely a matter for the person concerned. I hope you find this information helpful.

M.V. Stanley
Chief Immigration Officer

While in America...

CROSSGENDER PHOTOS ON AMERICAN PASSPORTS

Reprinted from *The TV-TS Tapestry*, Issue No 61

An American male crossdresser living full-time in the female role applied recently for a passport. She was told that she had to submit pictures that would present her in a way that would agree with the sex listed on her birth documents. She replied that this did not make sense as she would be travelling as a woman even though the sex listed on her passport would be male. It was suggested that she write to Washington and she subsequently received the following reply:

Dear Jane:

I refer to your February 8 letter requesting that photographs depicting you as a female be accepted for your passport application. A passport is defined by Section 101 (a) (30) of the Immigration and Nationality Act as "any travel document issued by competent authority showing the bearer's origin, identity, and nationality if any, which is valid for the entry of the bearer into a foreign country". As you are aware, an individual's sex is an integral part of that person's identity. A passport must reflect the individual's correct sex so as to meet the criteria of the law.

Federal regulations also provide, in effect, that the photographs to be used with a passport application should satisfactorily identify the applicant. Because of this element, the Department of State previously has required photographs from a passport applicant which depict the sex of the applicant as indicated on the citizenship evidence unless the applicant is a postoperative transsexual or a preoperative transsexual who can be documented as in the final stages of treatment prior to surgery en route to that surgery.

However, in addition to your letter, the Department is receiving an increasing number of enquiries regarding this particular issue. The concerns expressed by you and others who have contacted us reinforce the belief that, in the light of today's society, it would be difficult for the Department to define exactly what would constitute "male" or "female" in regards to appearance. Therefore, while the Boston Passport Agency gave you the correct information as to photograph requirements for passport applicants as they existed at that time, the Department has decided to change its policy concerning this issue.

The Boston Passport Agency has been advised that you may submit with your new passport application the photographs which were previously rejected. You should also submit acceptable evidence of US citizenship, an identification document which corresponds with your photographs as a good likeness of you as at this time, and the passport fee.

You are strongly advised that possession of a passport which contains a photograph depicting the bearer in a manner inconsistent with the sex entry listed in the passport may subject the bearer to delays and inconveniences not normally encountered by other travellers, including possible denial of visas and entrance into certain countries. Should you encounter these types of difficulties while travelling, you should be aware that there may be little the Department can do to assist you.

I regret the inconvenience encountered by you in this matter.

Sincerely
William B. Wharton, Director
Office of Citizenship Appeals and Legal Assistance

It is hoped that all of this information will be useful. Certainly, the Editor knows one British crossdresser who re-entered England from the USA without trouble while dressed en femme and carrying a passport in his male identity, as well as two Canadian crossdressers who do so regularly when travelling in both directions between Canada and the United States. If anyone else has experience of this sort please write and tell us about it. Ed ■

HAPPINESS IS...

Many women love dressing up in beautiful feminine clothes. It is perfectly natural that some men should have a similar desire to dress up. But male clothes are so boring ! No wonder these men turn to womens' clothes ! Why should women have all the fun ?

The secret of happiness of being a TV is not to agonise about it. Treat it as a positive rather than a negative side of your personality.

(Reprinted from International Repartee No 13, Pink Pages Supplement.

CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN



Dear Editor

I am writing to ask for your help with finding people who would be prepared to take part in a study about crossdressers and their partners. I am currently seeking couples to fill in a few questionnaires each - it would probably take about an hour to do - which are concerned with peoples' personalities, their feelings about their relationship and their, or their partner's, crossdressing. All the questionnaires would be sent out under plain wrap and can be filled in anonymously. All information provided would be stored securely with all replies treated in the strictest confidence. Any couples agreeing to take part in the study would not be required to meet or talk to the researcher at any time, although a contact number would be provided for anyone wishing to discuss any queries that they may have.

Anyone interested in taking part, or receiving further details about the study, should contact Kathryn Nicholson Perry at the following address:

*Dept. of Clinical Psychology
Institute of Psychiatry
De Crespigny park
Denmark Hill
London SE 5
Tel: 071 703 5411, ext 3223/4*

*Yours sincerely
Kathryn Nicholson Perry
Psychologist*

Make a clean breast of it

There is a double reason why most of us would never have 'passed' at the court of King James VI & I. Young girls went bare-breasted - as a sign of their virginity !

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NEWS FROM THE SCOTTISH GROUPS

ABERDEEN. The last meeting of 1992 of the Grampian Gender Group - 3G - in November was one of the best yet, with members and guests welcoming Gina Turnbull of A & A Wigs (Edinburgh) for a demonstration and talk about wig and hair care. Those present came from as far apart as Inverness to St Andrews, with a special welcome to Paula who had come all the way from Cumbria to visit us. Despite a problem with the central heating in our normally warm and comfortable premises (overcome with many thanks to Christine, who found us some free-standing heaters) there was a warm and happy pre-Christmas feeling about.

There was no meeting in December (it would have been just a week before Christmas), but a Christmas donation was made to the owners of the premises that they so kindly make available to us throughout the year.

GLASGOW. No news from Crosslynx (the Glasgow and the West of Scotland TV/TS Group) by the time we went to press, although a little bird whispers that they soon hope to have some good news regarding premises.

EDINBURGH. The Scottish TV/TS Group had its usual pre-Christmas get-together at the end of November (so much more convenient than trying to meet on Boxing Day, which would have been the usual 'last Saturday of the month'). Presents were distributed (although no-one dressed up as Mother Christmas) and there was a lot of warm and friendly chatter. As in Aberdeen, there was no meeting in December, as this would have fallen on Boxing Day. ■

SEVEN BRIDES - BUT NO BROTHERS

During the fine weather of last spring bank holiday, seven potential brides arrived at a discreet hotel in Torquay, with all their finery and accompanied by various wives, photographers and helpers, for a traditional wedding - but with no sign of any groom. Yes, you're quite right, it was another of those 'TV Weekends' - but one with a difference.

On the Saturday evening there was a pre-wedding meal (that looked more like a hen party), and on the Sunday the brides all assembled in their wedding gowns and head-dresses, complete with bouquets, and spent a marvellous afternoon being photographed in the lovely gardens and on the hotel patio, before changing into going-away outfits for a grand joint reception. This was a traditional wedding buffet, complete with cake and even more photography.

Certainly a rather 'different' way to spend a bank holiday, and one that was thoroughly enjoyed by all concerned.

If you would like to experience a similar weekend for yourself you will be interested to know that there will be another event in 1993, from 1 to 3 May, when the theme will be a spring Fashion Fun Weekend. Further details can be obtained, in exchange for a 9" x 4" stamped addressed envelope, from Ms Christina R. Peel, Flat 1, Cerrig Llwyd, Bryn-y-Neuadd, Aber Road, Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd, LL33 1HH, Wales.

(PS. For non-Celtic readers, that place name is pronounced Thlan-vire-veckan). ■

DID YOU KNOW ?

It's hair-raising !

Do you find your body hair a nuisance, and would you like to be rid of it all - permanently ? There is actually a medical condition where this occurs. It's called *alopecia universalis* - but as the cause is not properly understood, there's no known way of contracting it deliberately. Sorry. (On the other hand, if you had been born an oriental you would probably have no body hair anyway).

And if you are worried about *losing* your hair there is only one proven way to prevent it. It's called castration.

If you have trouble plucking your eyebrows, relax and think yourself lucky. In Renaissance Italy it was the fashion to shave them off altogether.

And vice-versa

Female-to-male crossdressers who aim for 'the whole boy look' may be thin on the ground, but they do have some advantages. In the 18th century Anne Bonney and Mary Read were pirates who wore mens' clothing and fought beside their men. When they were caught they were able to escape the death sentence because - unlike most other pirates - they were able to claim that they were pregnant !

Wish you were able to change your sex without the hassle of electrolysis, hormones and reassignment surgery ? If you were an oyster you would change sex regularly according to the temperature of the water around you. Alternatively, if you were a Sea Bass you would be female until your fifth year, and then probably become male automatically ! ■

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE VERY FIRST

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The cost for sharing a twin room for Friday and Saturday will be £120.00, and for a single room £160.00. Due to the anticipated demand don't delay, or you could miss out on one of the premier events of the year. **Book as soon as possible.**

To book your place send a deposit of £ 30.00 by the end of October 1992. Cheques, made payable to *The Edinburgh Festival Weekend*, should be sent to:

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The Tartan Skirt

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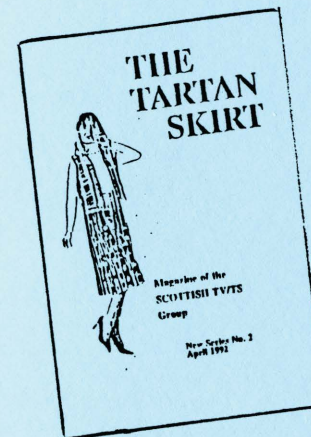
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