



Renaissance News

Volume 5, No. 1

Vision - Integrity - Quality

January 1991

Evening Magazine brings avalanche of inquiries

The Renaissance segment on Channel 3's *Evening Magazine* program broadcast in late November has brought in an avalanche of inquiries to the national and local chapter phone lines.

Gloria [REDACTED], Greater Philadelphia treasurer, monitors the line for that chapter. Almost immediately after the program aired, the phone started ringing, and the pace continued well into the next day.

"The phone has been ringing off the wall," [REDACTED] said the day after the broadcast. "I would just put the phone down and it would ring again."

Kelly [REDACTED], director of the South Jersey chapter, reported that "the show wasn't over ten minutes before the phone started to ring." One call, she said, was from a woman who wanted to get a Renaissance membership for her husband for Christmas.

During the first week more than 100 calls were received. Most of the callers requested information on the organization. However, some called to thank Renaissance for "being there" or to praise the organization for its courage. A handful of callers were experiencing severe personal problems, and until they saw the program they had no where to turn. No negative calls were received.

This is by far the greatest response from any Renaissance television appearance.

Because the segment produced by KYW-TV will be offered to other Group W stations around the nation for their own local magazine

programs, the segment carried the national phone number and address. Inquiries will be forwarded to the appropriate local chapter or affiliate.

The seven and a half minute segment on Renaissance—quite long by television standards—led off the *Evening Magazine* broadcast on Nov. 29, taking precedence over a segments on Princess Diana and Carly Simon. Several members were featured in interviews taped at the October Greater Philadelphia meeting. They were Pam, MaryAnn Kirkland, Beth and Rachel M., Brenda Davidson, and Pamela Westin. Several other members were also shown attending that meeting.

In addition, the segment captured Angela Gardner and JoAnn Roberts

speaking to students at Lehigh University. Paul Hanson's transformation to Paula Jordan Sinclair was also shown, along with shots of Paul arriving at his office and "sound bites" of him explaining the goals of Renaissance.

Gardner, who is now in charge of the national public affairs efforts, noted that the audience's exposure to a transvestite's "masculine side" provided a unique impact to the segment. "That really showed we are normal, everyday people," she said.

Evening Magazine host Ray Murray introduced the segment by explaining that it was produced in response to complaints he had received about a previous piece on a

(continued on page 4)

T'was a fortnight before Christmas...

*And all through the Inne,
Gorgeous ladies had gathered;
Many of them men.*

The holiday gala sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Chapter December 9th may not have been the traditional Yuletide event envisioned by Clemmet Moore, but that didn't dampen the enjoyment of the approximately 75 Renaissance members and friends who attended the party at the Inne at the Fox Barn in Great Valley.

Besides exchanging holiday greetings and showing off their party dresses and evening gowns, the

guests saluted several persons for their exemplary service to Renaissance and to the transgender community during the past year. The awards were presented by the national Renaissance organization.

MaryAnn Kirkland received the "Woman of the Year" award for her many volunteer activities and for setting an outstanding example of personal growth for others. MaryAnn heads the pen pal project, serves as the Greater Philadelphia representative to IFGE, and is a member of the college speaking team.

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CHAPTER INFORMATION

New Jersey

South Jersey: Kelly [REDACTED], chapter leader. Write Renaissance SJ, c/o P. O. Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 641-3782.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Angela Gardner, chapter leader. Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Winter hours: starts at 8:00 p.m. Call (215) 946-8887.

Pennsylvania

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Brenda Davidson, chapter leader Write LSV-Renaissance, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets the first Saturday of the month in Camp Hill, Pa at 8:00 p.m. Call (717) 780-1578.

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* * *IMPORTANT * * *
Until Further Notice
The Reading Chapter
Has Suspended Operations
.....

Renaissance News

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For current information call (215) 630-1437 24 hrs. a day.

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

NATIONAL INFORMATION

✓ Renaissance has a new mailing address, please correct your records: P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa., 19406.

✓ Renaissance has a new phone number as well. Call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day for current information about events and activities.

✓ The board of directors has approved a new policy for the development of chapters and affiliates.

— Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit in-

stitution in their home state (except Pa.) before asking for chapter status.

— Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance affiliate will pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlimited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

Calendar of Events

- January**
5th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
5th Ren. LSV Chapter
19th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter
- February**
2nd Ren. So. Jersey Chapter; J.M. Kauffman, M.D. to speak on endocrinology and metabolism.
2nd Ren. LSV Chapter
16th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter
22-24 Texas 'T' Party B&P, San Antonio, Tx.
- March**
2nd Re. So. Jersey Chapter
2nd Ren. LSV Chapter
16th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

AND, DON'T FORGET ABOUT...

- Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 7-What Is Renaissance?, and 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics.
- 3R addiction recovery support group meets at King of Prussia on third Sat. of the month.

- The Pen Pal Project. If you are willing to write letters to pen pals, please inform MaryAnn Kirkland or write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.
- A few copies of the Deluxe Edition of Dr. Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* are still available at \$39.95 postpaid. Make checks payable to Renaissance.
- Call the new Transsexual Hotline if you need need someone to talk with. Call (609) 561-1135 between 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST, or FAX (609) 561-5799. This service is provided by the South Jersey Chapter.

JoAnn Altman Stringer
SURVIVAL™

In the past, I have panned television talk forums as being only marginally helpful to those of us in the transgendered community, and I will in the future. But one recent *Sally Jessy Raphael* program touched me probably more deeply than any other television program has ever done.

The show was not about gender issues at all. Yet, it was about issues that strike each one of us to the core: healing. John Bradshaw, family counselor and author of the best-seller *Home Coming*, was the featured guest. Bradshaw tries to show people how to heal themselves and deal with current problems by getting in touch with the person inside of themselves. His philosophy is that many of our problems—drugs, suicide, alcoholism, et cetera—stem from issues in our past, often relating to things we never received as children such as acceptance or understanding from our parents. This baggage has become part of who we are and often causes us to act in self-destructive ways. If we can deal with the old issues, Bradshaw teaches, our current problems will be easier to handle. While the basic premise of his concept is not new, his approach in dealing with these issues is revolutionary.

Bradshaw put Sally's audience through several of his therapeutic workshop sessions. One of these involved a small group of people and a woman in the center of the group. The woman closed her eyes while each of the surrounding people told her things like "You are a very special person" and "We accept you just the way you are." These were things she never heard as a child. Hearing them affected her so deeply she cried, as did some of the people in the group around her.

Bradshaw wants us to touch our emotions and memories; to understand that it is alright to have them; and to express them. One of his workshops exploring memories af-

fecting me more than anything else in the show.

He asked his audience to close their eyes and go back in their childhood to the first house they can remember living in. Go back to your bedroom, visualize your parents, almost feel an out-of-body experience. Remember some of the things that happened during those years — unhappy times, joyous times. Visualize yourself as that young child sitting on the bed. Tell that child you are from his/her future and you are here to take them with you. Tell them to pack a small bag because you will be leaving soon. Take the child by the hand and visualize yourself walking out the front door with this image of the child-like you. The child will want to look back, but may not.

You are then told to walk along a path where there will be a turn. Around that bend will be the most important people in your life at the present time. You are to introduce them to the child. Then you take the child to the beach or to another quiet place. Sit together, hold the child's little hands, and tell him or her that you want them to come live with you, that you will be their protector, that you will provide for them, and that you will love them.

This is bringing the past to the present, eradicating all of the old, negative issues you grew up with and putting them behind you.

I felt much pain as Bradshaw was guiding the audience in this time travel experience. As a young child, I did not understand what was wrong with me. I didn't know why I didn't seem to fit in and was always the outcast in school. Other boys shunned me, making me feel I was not one of them. Although, girls generally accepted me since my clothing could be considered feminine. I withdrew from the world and told myself it was OK to play alone, spending hours amusing myself with dolls and playing make-believe.

My parents also treated me differently with a kind of a special pampering. Often, they showered me with presents that created a rift between my sister and I. She saw they were spoiling me - something they didn't do to her. I felt responsible for causing this split in my family. Many times my parents would leave me sitting in the car for hours while they went into a bar with friends. This made me feel that they didn't want to be seen with me. My father never really told me he loved me, though he did show me attention. I always felt that I had to be what they wanted me to be, never what I wanted. Their way was always right, and my way or desires never counted.

My father was what is called in the West a "rounder." Because he grew up in the "Old West," he was almost a caricature of someone who stepped out of a Louis L'Amour western. He would get drunk maybe four times a year, riding up to the house and falling off the horse. He also played around with other women for many years before my mother died. Once, he left the house giving me the responsibility of telling my mother he had left.

All of these things from my childhood were coupled with the gender problems I had known about since I was 3 years old. I didn't know who — or what — I was, didn't feel loved or accepted, and was scared about where life was taking me at what seemed like a thousand miles an hour. I felt no control of my life.

Going back to my childhood, bringing that naive child to the present, helped relieve all of the pain and anger I had carried for so many years. Now that the past is behind me, I can move forward to what lies ahead.

Bradshaw's *Coming Home* is about all of us and what we have felt. If we can finish with the past once and for all, our futures will be much brighter.

Annual awards highlight holiday gala

(continued from page 1)

Meritorious Service Awards were presented to Brenda Davidson, leader of the Lower Susquehanna Chapter, Angela Gardner, former director of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, and Kelly [REDACTED], second-term leader of the South Jersey Chapter.

Dr. Carol Cobb-Nettleton and Dr. William H. Stayton were also given Meritorious Service Awards for their assistance to Renaissance and to transgendered persons. Dr. Stayton has made his offices available for Renaissance meetings since the organization was founded. Both he and Dr. Cobb-Nettleton have served as advisors to the group.

After a no-host cocktail reception featuring hot hors d'oeuvres, the guests enjoyed a buffet dinner. Background music during the reception and dinner—as well as a

wide variety of dance music afterward—was provided by D. J. Marsh.

Many guests won door prizes: a \$50 gift certificate for Macy's provided by the chapter, a \$50 gift certificate courtesy of Marilyn's Wigs, two \$15 gift certificates and several free make-over certificates provided by the Center City Merle Norman salon, and several bottles of wine

donated by Alison Laing.


This was the third year that the holiday gala was held at the inne, and once again the staff made the guests feel totally welcome. In fact, the Inne was so welcoming that plans have been made to have this year's holiday party there. The date has been set for Saturday, December 7.

Evening Magazine brings avalanche of inquiries

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California transgendered evangelist. He and former co-host Mary Ann Grabavoy got a case of the giggles when closing that segment. This behavior prompted Sinclair and others to request the show provide fairer treatment to transgendered people.

Also of special note was the fact that Murray noted that those Renaissance members who appeared in the new segment did so "at considerable personal risk." He said they were "exceptionally brave" in helping the public understand the transgendered phenomenon.



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THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

If, as some music industry observers have said, Madonna arranged to have her newest video banned by MTV to create publicity, it worked. The Material Girl has won the top spot in this month's column.

Actually, the top spot really belongs to Madonna's new beau, a male model named Tony Ward who plays opposite Madonna in the torrid "Justify My Love" video. A couple of months ago, the tabloids were hot with stories about the new romance between the two and the fact that Ward liked dressing up to look like Madonna. This tidbit came from Ward's former girlfriend, Jayme Harris, who was quoted as saying that "Tony wanted ... to play my love slave and maid."

Knowing that about Ward, we were particularly excited to read that the "Justify My Love" video featured both Ward and crossdressing. While much fuss was made about the crossdressing in the video, one has to look very fast (and with the trained transgendered eye) to see the one or two actors in drag.

But even that brief glimpse may have been too much for the MTV execs. A newspaper music critic noted that it was probably just this sort of non-traditional activity that got the video banned. The critic noted that other videos played on MTV have more nudity and suggestive female sexuality than "Justify My Love." Madonna said the images in the video were typical human sex fantasies. Perhaps the MTV executives felt they were too close to home.

♣ ♣ ♣

But there *are* segments of the entertainment industry where crossdressing, bondage, homosexuality and general kinkiness spell success. We are speaking, of course, of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* which celebrated its 15th anniversary recently. Of the decade and a

half since he brought Dr. Frank-N-Furter to the screen, Tim Curry said, "It's been a awfully long time since I dressed up as a sweet transvestite."

♣ ♣ ♣

RHPC invites trivia questions. But not liking to be obvious, here is one from a different entertainment medium.

What famous actor made his theatrical debut playing all ten male roles in an Andy Warhol play called *Glory, Glamour and Gold* opposite an assortment of transvestites, notably Warhol superstars Candy Darling and Holly Woodlawn? A. Joe Dallesandro, B. Robert De Niro or C. Richard Gere.

♣ ♣ ♣

A little drag didn't hurt the television show *M*A*S*H* either. Remember Klinger? Now, another cast member has started wearing dresses. Gary Burghoff (Radar), portrays an old lady in an upcoming horror flick called *Small Kill*.

♣ ♣ ♣

Peter Townshend better be careful, or he will get banned from MTV. Recently, he said that he is gay or bisexual, depending on where he was quoted. But in the book *Rock Lives: Profiles and Interviews* by Timothy White, he also discussed his gender identity.

"I know how it feels to be a woman because I am a woman," the guitarist for The Who said. He clarified that statement later by saying, "I know how it feels to be a woman."

♣ ♣ ♣

With all of this crossdressing in the entertainment industry, where do you think the drag capital of the world is? Hollywood, New York? Try Indianapolis, Ind. According to local columnist Lucy the Lip, the Hoosiers claim the title because one can see a drag show seven nights a week at one of six clubs.

♣ ♣ ♣

That news will surprise the folks in San Francisco where on Halloween drag is almost a civic duty. For those who have never seen the spectacle, a 70-minute video is being distributed that captures the high points and low points (mostly low) of the 1990 celebration. Publicity material promises "hundreds of outrageous drag queen in outrageous party mode; slinking before the camera, tasteless conversations, sidewalk antics, arrivals (mostly graceful) and exits (mostly graceless)."

The VHS video is available for \$25 from Leiphart Video, 2000 Van Ness Ave., #301, San Francisco, CA 94109.

♣ ♣ ♣

With so many entertainment items in this month's column, you may have thought that only celebrities were in the news. Not so. Breasts were also big during the past few weeks...

First, there was the story out of Scotland about the response of Nicholas Hall's body to the ulcer drug—Tagamet—made by Smith-Kline Beecham. After taking the drug for a time, he had to start wearing a bra to support growing breast tissue. Gynecomastia, or enlarged mammary glands in men, is a documented side effect of the drug, listed in several physicians' reference books. The book we checked said milk secretion can also occur.

But Hall claims he was surprised by the growth in his chest. He was even more surprised when another doctor detected lumps and ordered a mastectomy. Hall says he will sue SmithKline.

Those who may wish to try the drug in hopes that it will have the same side effects on them are cautioned that Hall's breast development was, shall we say, less than some may desire. He only grew to a

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THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

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32A, and that was one only one side of his chest. The other breast reportedly remained normal.



There are men who are happy with bigger chests, and for them doctors have developed a special breast implant. No, these are not intended to fill out a deeply plunging bra, but to give the appearance of hours spent in the gym. The silicone implants increase the size of the pectorals.

The operation, performed under general anesthetic, costs between \$3,500 to \$6,500.



Now that equal opportunity has entered the field of chest enhancement, men as well as women can openly fret about the safety of the pads used for the surgical procedure. And just in time, for a federal judge has ordered the Food and Drug Administration to release more data on the safety of implants.

The material relates to animal testing conducted for over 20 years by Dow Corning Corporation of Midland, Mich., as well as records of complaints made by people who have had problems with their implants. A Dow spokesman said that the product is safe, and dismissed claims that implants cause cancer.



Thanks to a surprise ruling by the Hamilton County sheriff, a transsexual inmate confined to the

Silverdale Workhouse in Chattanooga, Tenn., won't have to resort to ulcer drugs or implants to continue her transition to womanhood. The sheriff ruled that the county would pay to continue her hormone shots while she awaits trial on credit card theft and credit card fraud.

When the person, who authorities refused to identify, was arrested, police thought she was already a female. They discovered their error when they prepared to transfer her to the workhouse. Once there, she was examined by jail doctors who said that withholding hormones could create other medical problems which the county would be responsible for.

"I would rather not spend \$40 a month of the taxpayers' money for these shots. but I realize that we are responsible for him (sic) while he is incarcerated, and that is part of his medical treatment," said Chief Deputy Jim Hammond.



Police in Costa Mesa, Calif., made a similar mistake in October when they stopped two people leaving a women's rest room at a Billy Idol concert. The two were women, but police ordered one of the pair to be checked by two employees of the Pacific Amphitheatre just to make sure.

As the women left the restroom, they found their path blocked by four police officers who said they had received complaints about men

using the ladies room. "Everything's cool," Lorie Spencer told the cops. "We're women bodybuilders, and people have made this kind of mistake before because of our muscles. But we're women. Look at our breasts."

One officer reportedly replied, "You're in Costa Mesa now. You look like transsexuals to me. Are you in the middle of a sex change?"

Spencer showed police her driver's license, but because Bridget Morton had no identification with her, they threatened her with jail unless she could prove her gender. That was when the panty check was ordered.

Spencer and Morton have filed a \$1 million police misconduct suit against the department.



Of course, it is easy to be fooled by women looking like men, men looking like women and wolves looking like grandmothers. Remember Little Red Riding Hood?

Marjorie Barber, professor of English at Harvard University did, and will present her findings as a guest lecturer at Stanford University's respected School of Psychology later this month. The title of her paper: "Red Riding Hood and the Wolf in Bed—Freud, Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety."

Robert De Niro acted with an otherwise all-transvestite cast in Warhol's play. You too can be a "Goodfella" by sending clippings relating to crossdressing to Miss Sinclair at the Renaissance office. Be sure to note the date and name of publication. A special thanks to Sharon [redacted] for her many contributions to this column.

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To the Editor
READERS WRITE

Leaders must have special qualities to succeed

To the Editor:

Your article in the *Renaissance News* of October causes me to make the following remarks. You ask, "What's in it for me?" regarding the coming election of officers in the various chapters of Renaissance.

To my way of thinking, when anyone stands for any office, anywhere, that candidate—believing that she or he is qualified—must have a broad pair of shoulders, stout enough to bear the weight of many members (sisters) to cry upon! This will be quite prevalent if the person is new in her elected office.

These shoulders must also be solid enough to ward off those who would deny her ability. They must also support a head with enough brains to separate the wheat from the chaff in making decisions and laying down the law during her term of office. Maintaining peace in our ever-growing local group is as important as the growth and expansion of Renaissance as a national organization.

Granted, there are far too many holding office who have either used up or worn out the ability they once had. Yet, these same people use every trick possible to remain in office! Why is this? It is my observation that when people who have never held a position of authority either in civilian or military life

volunteer their assistance, they become more dictatorial than Adolph Hitler. How many have the guts to say "If nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will not serve"? There are by far too many people in this world who cannot see the trees for the forest. This is doubly evident in organizations such as ours, whatever its name—Tri-Ess, Rainbow, ETVC or what.

Napoleon is reputed to have said, "Every French soldier carries in his cartridge-pouch the baton of a marshal of France." Leaders are born, not made. Therefore, in some

manner these potential leaders must be found, trained, and developed. Or, as Benjamin Franklin said, "We must indeed all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

—Sharon [redacted]
Vallejo, Calif.

Sharon's letter discussed two important subjects. We have selected the part regarding leadership for this issue. Her thoughts on our community will be published in a future issue.

—Editor

SRS on demand risks hope for others

To the Editor:

I would like to make a comment on the "sexual reassignment surgery (SRS) on demand" talk that has been bandied about at recent meetings by several parties.

If you recall some of the history of transsexualism, about 20 years ago SRS was obtainable almost on demand. You went to a psychiatrist and were certified sane, then you went to a lawyer for the papers, and then you saw the surgeon. Presto! You were a woman! There was little psychological counseling and no real life test. As a result, the long term success rate of post-ops was so bad that there was serious talk about banning SRS in this country! Since

then, research has found that there are such things as "type IV" transsexuals or whatever, who are poor candidates for SRS.

The Standards of Care were developed, and most competent doctors use them as a guideline. Psychiatric counseling and the real life test give the transsexual some needed time for emotional growth and experience prior to SRS. Today, the success rate for post-ops who have followed the Standards of Care is over 90 percent.

There are persons who would like to destroy this high success rate and endanger the very surgery they are trying to obtain.

—Jackie K.

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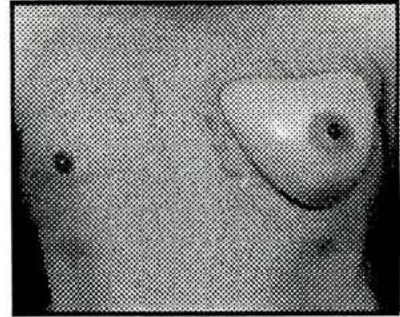
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New policy allows other groups to affiliate with Renaissance

A new policy adopted at the December board meeting promises to expand Renaissance on the national level. The policy offers affiliate charters to other organizations nationwide.

Guidelines have been set up to make sure that the groups interested in becoming an affiliate of Renaissance agree with the goals, policies, and operation of the Renaissance Education Association, Inc. Yet, while having no legal connection, they will maintain an association through use of the name, publications, and joint activities.

Affiliates will be charged a one-time fee of \$25 and a subsequent annual fee of \$10 to cover the cost of entitlements.

These entitlements include:

- A copy of the *Chapter Handbook* and tips on organizing a local group;
- A complete set of *Background Papers* and *Community Outreach*

Bulletins with permission for unlimited unmodified reproduction so long as affiliate status is maintained; and

- Participation in the National Referral Service.

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Affiliate chapters must have a minimum of five national dues paying members, and would be expected to encourage all their members to become national members of Renaissance. National membership by all members of the affiliate is not required. However, the leader of the affiliate group would be expected to be a member of Renaissance.

The affiliate would be encouraged to use its own unique name, but in association with Renaissance,

such as: "The Newark Newgirls, an affiliate of Renaissance".

The agreement of affiliation may be terminated without cause by either party. Renaissance will refund any unused portion of the newsletter column costs but not the one-time or annual fees. After the termination, the former affiliate will not be able to claim connection with Renaissance or use the name or logo, or the copying and distribution of Renaissance literature without permission.

A draft of the policy was sent to several groups which had expressed interest in affiliate status. Their comments were useful in drafting the final policy approved by the board.

Groups wishing more information about affiliation should write to Alison Laing in care of the national office—Post Office Box 552, King of Prussia, PA 19406.

Oh, No!

"Wanna-be" talent abounds

With apologies to Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, star has been born...

This past August, at the Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter's first annual anniversary luau, Knute L., a LSV chapter member and local opera star, made his soloist debut as Elsa [redacted]. She selected Figaro's aria from *The Barber of Seville* by Mozart. But she sang her version in a manner more appropriate to the occasion as the "Beautician of Seville."

While members of the audience report that the divas at the Metro-

politan Opera have nothing to fear from Elsa, her unique presentation, interpretation and stage presence made her performance of of the high points of the show.

Elsa also anchored the chorus line for the Harrisburg Hula Hula Hipsters, and led the audience in a rousing version of "The Lumberjack Song." Her new agent threatens to make her available for similar functions at a nominal fee. However, a slightly larger fee will be required to keep her off stage.

Other outstanding performances at the luau were Morgan with her renowned impersonation of Ann-

Margaret, Kerry as Dolly Parton, Brenda Davidson in a sultry blues number, and Rose Z. "Momma" [redacted] belting our "I Will Survive." Trudy Henry was moved to give an impromptu performance of "I've Got Those Transvestite Blues."

Many called the show a rousing success. This was evidently sufficient praise to prompt the performers to begin rehearsals for next year's show.

We apologize for the lateness of this item. The correspondent was in such rapture after the show that she was only recently able to pen this article. —Editor

THE *JoAnn Roberts*™ ICONOCLAST

TORONTO, CAN. — One wonders at times about the meaning of a "support" group...

Veronica Brown writing in the November issue of *Twenty Minutes (The XX Club)* takes issue with transsexual Sarah Luiz. Luiz, you may recall, had a much publicised battle with Blue Cross/Blue Shield, over payment for her hormone therapy and reassignment surgery. She has since settled with the medical insurer for an undisclosed amount of money and plans to have her surgery in Montreal.

Brown thinks that Luiz is a "cry-baby" and her pleas to the media simply a ploy to get attention. Brown claims that Luiz "got the goose that lays the golden egg and she's slowly strangling it for the rest of us."

Sounds to me like Brown is the cry-baby, although she denies it, because Luiz "beat the system" and received a settlement. Insurance carriers have been denying claims for reassignment surgery since the early 1980's. I received a job offer in 1986, well before Luiz's story became public, and the medical insurance package contained the plan details of four different carriers.

Each carrier specifically excluded sex reassignment and cosmetic surgery from coverage.

As for Luiz's aspiration to become a model and an actress, let time tell. Who knows? Maybe there is another Meryl Streep or Sigourney Weaver trapped in that body along with Sarah.



NEW YORK, N.Y. — Virginia, I had nothing to do with this...

There have been many debates over "closed" versus "open" membership for support groups. Members of **The Gathering**, a primarily transsexual support group, voted just a few months ago to open the membership to non-transsexuals. The former co-ordinator for the group, David Tolbin, lobbied for the change.

Now, returning to the fold, after a lengthy hiatus, is the group's founder, **Jana Thompson**, who wants to return The Gathering to its former TS-only status. To her credit, Thompson is soliciting input not only from members but from interested outsiders.

Thompson claims that transvestites are only interested in "clothing

and photographs." That is tantamount to saying all blacks are lazy and eat watermelon or all Italians belong to the Mafia. She further says there are "too few transsexual groups."

Yes, Jana, and for good reason. The few TS-only support groups around are kept going by one or two people. Many transsexuals sever all ties from their support groups after their surgery.

I think that The Gathering would probably have folded after Thompson left if Tolbin, a genetic, non-transsexual, non-crossdressing male, had not picked up the pieces.

I also observe unstable numbers in the transsexual population of Renaissance and similarly in the TS-only support group in Philadelphia, which periodically, like the Phoenix of fable, rises from its own ashes.



TEMPE, ARIZ. — No more Hatfield's & McCoy's, we hope...

I was extremely pleased to see *Friendships, Making Them, Keeping Them* (RenNews, Vol. 4, No.6) reprinted in the November issue of *The Cactus Flower*, the monthly newsletter of Alpha-Zeta Tri-Ess.

continued next page



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THE **ICONOCLAST**™
JoAnn Roberts

Because of my personal stance on a particular Tri-Ess policy, many of that organization's groups refuse to share their newsletter with **Renaissance**, which I think is silly. Fortunately Alpha-Zeta, **Fiesta Chapter** (New Mexico), **Chi Delta Mu** (Florida) and **Chi Chapter** (Chicago) have not been so myopic in their view.

For example...



CHICAGO, ILL. — Sometimes the path of information is circuitous...

The December issue of the *Chi Tribune* (**Chi Chapter**) reported some of the activities at the **Tri-Ess Holiday En Femme** in Houston.

The group elected **Jane Ellen Fairfax** to the chair of the board of directors with Chi's **Naomi Owen** as vice-chair. Fairfax's partner, **Frances**, was elected secretary.

Additional items of business included the news that Tri-Ess is filing for a 501(c)(3) tax exemption which has necessitated changes in its By Laws. The group also suspended granting any new chapters until the new By Laws are ratified.

The good news for Tri-Ess members, though, was the defeat of a proposal to raise national dues to \$50 a year.



SEATTLE, WASH. — To everything, turn, turn, turn...

One of the most active groups in the country seems to be hyper-active these days. Our sisters in **Emerald City** are in turmoil and a faction seems poised to break away to form a new group.

So what's new? The EC group was born of the **Northwest Gender Alliance** and the **Cornbury Society** was born of EC. This mitosis is about to happen again.

The November *Emerald City News* was rather cryptic about the impending split and just who the principals are in the action. Some of the questions raised before the

membership by **Micki** [redacted], the group's secretary, are:

Is EC a social or political group?

Is EC a democracy or aristocracy?

Is EC a non-profit organization or a business?

I expect that this turmoil may be a boil over from friction generated during the "90 in 90" event sponsored by the group.

Stay tuned for more details.



WALTHAM, MASS. — I was extremely sorry to hear that **Vernon's Specialties** was robbed twice in as many weeks in late October.

According to police reports, an armed man entered the store just after employees opened for business and demanded to be taken to the store safe. When the gunman was told they did not know where the safe was, he threatened to shoot them as he searched the store.

Eventually, the robber forced his way into a locked office where he found the safe. He then forced one of the employees to carry the safe outside to a waiting car and an accomplice. The thief also ransacked the cash registers.

Reports say the cash stolen amounted to over \$10,000 but I have it from a reliable source that it was much more than that amount.

Two weeks earlier, thieves threw a cinder block through the back door and emptied a cash register.

The only good thing I can say is that no one was injured.



WALTHAM, MASS. — Reminds me of a Roman Catholic church sermon on any Sunday...

The latest *Update* from the **International Foundation for Gender Education** (IFGE) contains an article entitled *Merissa's "Wish List"* in which **Merissa Lynn**, IFGE Executive Director, details fund raising targets for the organization.

Topping the list is \$200,000

annually for payroll. Next comes \$60,000 annually for "scholarships" so selected people can attend the IFGE conventions to receive awards and make presentations. Third on the list is \$25,000 initially and \$10,000 annually for free books to public and college libraries. Last on the list is \$55,000 to open a West Coast IFGE office. Grand totals: \$350,000 to start and \$325,000 on an annual basis.



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CALIF. — It's interesting that IFGE, which is still struggling to define its purpose in life, is even contemplating such grandiose plans like a West Coast office, but it seems to be a reality.

A special committee consisting of **Rénee Chevalier, Sr. Mary Elizabeth SSE, Wendi Pierce, Merissa Lynn, Yvonne Cook** and other "un-named persons" will present a proposal to the IFGE board meeting in April to open a West Coast office under the directorship of Sr. Mary.

Does this mean IFGE will be underwriting **J2CP**, the transsexual information service co-founded by Sr. Mary? Perhaps.

The special committee was formed this past October in Provincetown, Mass., during **Fantasia Fair** by the IFGE executive committee which unanimously agreed such "centers (italics mine) should be a fundamental part of IFGE's services to our community..."

Veni. Vidi. Vici.

Next time, Ari, pay attention.



Nota Bene: The opinions expressed here are mine and mine alone. They do not represent any "official" position of the Renaissance organization or any other person.

If you'd like to comment, positively or negatively, please write to me at P.O. Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA 19406. I'd like to hear your opinion of things.

ANNOUNCEMENT

For the past three or four years there has been a rather continuous level of conflict between me, JoAnn Roberts, of Renaissance, on one side, and Virginia Prince, along with other officers of Tri-Ess, on the other. The conflict has been about the relative merits of closed organizations, like Tri-Ess, and open groups, like Renaissance.

This conflict became rancorous at times and was doing no good, either for our two groups, nor for the community at large.

Therefore, we are sure everyone will, on the one hand, be surprised, and on the other relieved, that we have "kissed and made up" — not only figuratively, but literally as well. At a cocktail party at Fantasia Fair, I approached Virginia to "step

outside" for a moment. Not to settle the matter with fisticuffs in a masculine manner, but to reach an understanding and, in effect, sign a peace treaty between ourselves. We agreed that it is the right of the members of any group in the TV/TS/TG community to set their own criteria for membership and to conduct their groups in any manner they see fit.

We gave each other a big hug and agreed that we would henceforth stop all discussions of open vs. closed in connection with the policies of our's or other groups. We further agreed to work toward a unity, not only between our own groups, but for the community at large. Both of us, as founders of our respective groups, agreed to be friends to each

other and we hope that the members of both Renaissance and Tri-Ess will follow our example.

We both realize there is so much to be done by our community to help bring knowledge and understanding about our TV/TS/TG culture to the larger society that we would be wasting our talents quibbling over the internal policies of our respective groups.

With these thoughts in mind, we both sign this "peace treaty" and it will be published jointly in the Tri-Ess *Femme Mirror* and in the *Renaissance News*.

So the hatchet is buried. Let us now get on with the important business of our community.

JoAnn Roberts, Renaissance
Virginia Prince, Tri-Ess



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