

THE TRANSGENDERIST

JUNE 1994

A Publication of Transgenderist's Independence Club, Albany, NY

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - Winnie [REDACTED]

Only a week ago, I was running my car heater; now I need the air conditioner. It's finally *really* feeling like Spring, and I'm looking forward to the Tiffany Club Spring Fling outing in Provincetown next week. Hope to see some of you there.

This issue contains the second installment of Tina's autobiography. At the Tri-Ess meeting last Saturday, she provided entertainment with her blues guitar, including her own stuff. Her guitar case is also original: recycled corrugated cardboard! We also have a reprint from *Cross-Talk* on "telling your partner" and a very sad story from one of our vendors. Hope those of you who have promised to write will have some articles ready for next month.

DINNER PARTIES: Seven people signed up for our May party, but when Joan called the Northway Inn to make reservations, she found that they had two wedding receptions that evening and could not take us. So, she found an alternative restaurant - *Oceans Eleven* on Western Avenue (Rt. 20), midway between the end of the Northway and Rt. 155. I was able to call all except one to tell them of the change of venue, and we left word at the Northway Inn to redirect any who asked for the TGIC party. Anyway, six of us had a good meal at the new restaurant, and nothing was said about our appearance.

The next dinner date is *June 11* at 8 pm, and we will again try to make reservations at the *Northway Inn*. Please sign up at the club room or call Joan by Thursday, June 9. *Leave your number* so we can call to confirm whether "go" or "no" and verify the location.

Unless anyone has strong feelings otherwise, we will not plan on dinner parties during July and August, but will resume in September. So, if you haven't come to any yet, June is your last chance for a while. Of course, anyone is free to go out anytime, alone or with a friend. When you're not in a crowd of CDs, you might even pass!

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Before I get back to the arrest of 1966, we'll take some time to amble about while we "see Tina bopping about here and there" for a while. I graduated from high school in 1960, and attended a two-year community college in Troy. I had a room for a couple of weeks in Troy and that was Tina's very first time out in public among people. Guess what? First time right? Some guy has to try to pick me up! An education right away! He was in a car. I quickly learned the art of walking against one way traffic. Good thing Troy has so many one way streets. At one point I ducked into an alley. He drove right up to me, and continued trying to coax me into the car, but I wouldn't. He was quite persistent, but so was I. Finally, he drove off with, "Boy, you must be a man hater," as his parting shot. Now, I was lost, but that was OK. I'd just walk around until something familiar showed up. It did and I got back to my room without further incident. It wasn't that bad really, any 19 year old girl with a level head would have handled it the same way. My baptism into the public as Tina.

Tina did the laundry in and around Sidney, N.Y., had coffee and a cigarette in a diner there wearing a short sleeve blouse and nice, very femme hairless arms. I worked there for Bendix-Scintilla Co. in the summer of 1961. I had a beautiful old 1936 Plymouth black four door sedan. One time, a guy at work saw "me and my girlfriend" driving up the street in my most noticeable car. I don't know where "I" was. It was fun, but it was lonely.

I did take a bus from Sidney to Oneonta once. When I got off the bus in Oneonta, I felt absolutely on top of the world in a slim, black sheath dress, white sweater, heels and a curly black wig. I will never forget that moment. Maybe the moment before had something to do with it. I waited politely for the girl in front of me to step into the aisle. She said to me, "Go ahead, I got some stuff to get together". I clearly sensed that she was talking to me, girl to

girl. That was the first time for that to happen to me, and it's for real. When a lady talks to another lady, there is a somewhat different inflection or tone of voice, or something readable. When I sense that coming from a woman, I feel very, very privileged, and part of something very special. I bought a tuna sandwich at a restaurant, bought a hair net at a supermarket, and hung out at the bus station waiting for the bus back. Walking four blocks back to my room at Sidney gave me the clearest message about how uncomfortable high heels can get after a while.

Tina has bopped around Northern New Jersey, and New York City when I worked for Bell Labs, and around the Capital District when I got back up here, and worked for General Electric, and then a television repair outfit in Schenectady. It was all a kick but also very lonely and got nowhere.

It was around this time, when I learned there were other transvestites. I was not the most unique and weirdest freak on earth after all! I know that this is true for many, many transvestites. We have a weird childhood in total ignorance, hiding and donning womens' clothing in secret places, jerking off, and then being overcome with guilt and shame. Often getting rid of our stash of wigs and clothing, only to start swiping or collecting again, never understanding why we are like this, and too ashamed to tell anybody. Many crossdressers have gone through adolescence this way, learning in their twenties or later, that there are others like them.

The false shame and guilt acquired from ignorance, and blind taboos, and irresponsible lack of any sex education of little children, is a terrible, terrible crippler. In my case, I had no normal sex life at all. Many years later, when I did get married, my wife became painfully aware of the fact that I totally missed out on the art of romancing a woman. I got infatuated and had crushes but they never really got

anywhere because I never pushed or pursued it. Never asked my parents either. The taboo continued. There was lots of stuff never discussed. They assumed everything would go alright, and so did I assume all would go well with love and marriage. I thought stuff would just happen. Love would happen, and then all the rest would happen in turn. I did get married much later, but it wasn't OK at all.

Still in my twenties, I finally got in touch with another cross-dresser, a traveling salesman. He was dressed up, and wanted me to treat him as a woman, including sex. He was married but bisexual. I learned that I was not homosexual, never really had any problem wondering if I was. I was also not homophobic. Still, this was a turnoff. I was discouraged from attempting any other contacts. Back to being alone again.

Before I go any further in this biography, I'm going to jump ahead into the present and give you a picture of what I do as Tina today. I've been looking for a good quality cassette recorder for making demo tapes to promote my music. A few days ago, I went down to an area in Colonie where I go shopping as Tina. This time I took the bus down at about 10:30 or so, picked up a Want Ad Digest and looked through it while having a coffee at Wendy's. Then I went over to a nearby Radio Shack and asked about cassette recorders for making demo tapes. The head salesman discussed technicalities of making a decent recording, most of which I already knew about. He actually gave me a decent price: just under \$200 for recorder, mikes and desk stands. I told him I already had a passive mixer. He even ran off a billhead with prices. I've been in this Radio Shack as Tina before, so I'm in their computer as Tina. (I don't seem to have any trouble sounding enough like a woman when I talk. I am practicing developing a female singing voice. That takes concentration, control and patience.) After that I bought a book at a bookstore that I had visited a week or so before as Tina. This whole general area is a place reserved for me to go as Tina. Then I hit the Price Chopper and looked around a couple more shops and took the bus home.

The difference between now and years ago is that I am totally self confident, know it, and therefore that's what I project. People react to the subliminal stuff you broadcast. If you feel confident and OK, that comes out in your appearance too. These days as Tina, I am just a little more outgoing than my male persona. I have discovered a little trick to boot. I will walk into a store, maybe for the first time, or I've been there before as Tina. I will say something in the way of small talk to the clerk or owner, something uplifting and positive. This breaks the ice, disarms the person, and now I am a somebody, not a totally anonymous and possibly mysterious person. It all works in my favor, and the other person is saved from wondering or deciding that I'm a freak. But it must be founded on self confidence and feeling OK about yourself.

Now back to the arrest of November 1966. There is so much bad news I have to relate on this whole story, I decided to put something good in for a breather. My life has not really been full of misery, but one may get that impression from this account. In '66, I lived with my parents outside Ballston Spa, and I had to drive into a hay field down the road to change. It was a Saturday night. I had recently bought a very nice auburn wig of shoulder length, wore a black sweater and skirt, fancy stockings were in vogue, and I wore heels.

Drove down into Schenectady, got a Neba Sandwich that I ate in the car, then drove down to the Albany area looking for something to do. I wound up getting a coffee at a diner in Latham. There were two State Troopers there. When I left, one of the Troopers stopped me outside and asked for I.D. No point in hiding anything, my driver's license identified me as a male. I was told to lock my car, and rode in the police car to Troop G headquarters. They had a time finding a law to arrest me on. There was no question that they were going to arrest me on something. They got me on a detail under the vagrancy law, contriving to conceal my true identity. The fact that I was employed made no difference.

They called in a judge who ordered me to see a psychiatrist. Failure to do so would put me in jail.

As I already stated, the psychiatrist got me off the hook. I was scared enough by the whole event to make an honest try at dumping the whole cross dressing thing and "going straight". I sought to seriously get involved with a woman and have a love affair. I succeeded, but that opened up yet another Pandora's Box which turned out to be another behavioral problem in my life. This other problem did not get properly addressed until about eight years later when my father died and my psychosomatic hypochondriac mother drove me nuts. I had grown up learning my mother's neurosis and carried it into my love relationship. It didn't help that my new girl friend had another boy friend that she didn't have the guts to tell me about. I knew something was up, and it triggered my insecurity. It was a nervous and very insecure half-relationship that lasted one year and fell apart. The end of it was a relief from hurt.

(To be continued next month)

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Transgenderist's Independence Club (TGIC) is a nonprofit, educational, non-sexual social support group for persons wishing to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of gender, including crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends.

TGIC Officers

President	Winnie
Vice President	Joan
Secretary	Joyce
Treasurer	Winnie
Newsletter Editor	Winnie

The **Transgenderist** is the newsletter of TGIC, published monthly and mailed First Class to members, prospective members, friends, professionals, and exchange publications.

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TGIC General Membership Dues: \$40/yr

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REACHING OUT TO OTHERS - Dave Nurmi

Dave Nurmi is a vendor to the CD world. He may be reached at his business:
N.S. PRODUCTS, Box 250 669, Glendale, CA 91225-0669
Phone: 818-957-2310 (FAX-1547)

I receive many letters each day, week, month, and year and none has ever touched me like this one did. I have tried for over 10 years, to reach into the closets and reach the person that is feeling alone and unworthy. This came to light again this month (March 94) when I was following up on an old mailing list. I was using the mailing to update and attempt to contact old customers and persons that I have not heard from in quite a while. I usually get back a large percentage of 'box closed' or 'moved-forward expired', but when I opened this letter, I was devastated. I only share this letter with you because I feel that WE ALL need to do more in the outreach area. Vendors, club members, even those that do not participate in organized clubs, WE ALL need to attempt to reach the people like the one described in this letter I received. I have omitted some information for the privacy of the family and I have changed the name of the family involved. Most of you already know me and understand this is an honest effort to open your eyes and take that extra step through what ever means you have. Computer BBS, letters to the editor, letters to 'Dear Abby' or any of those other publications, adult or regular.

Here is the letter. Please read slowly and soak up all of the feelings. It will never leave your mind once you have read it.

FEB. 28, 1994

YOU SAY IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE YOU HAVE HEARD FROM MY SON. WELL, I GUESS IT HAS BEEN. YOU SAY THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE HIM BACK WITH YOU. WELL, SO WOULD I. WE FOUND HIM DEAD ***-***-***. YOUR LETTER OPENED A LOT OF WOUNDS AGAIN. MY HUSBAND DID NOT KNOW OF OUR SONS CROSSDRESSING UNTIL WE FOUND HIM DEAD. IN A WEDDING DRESS NO LESS. I REALLY FEEL SORRY FOR THE YOUNG AND OLD WHO FIND THE NEED TO CROSSDRESS AND THE EROTIC SEX THAT GOES WITH CROSSDRESSING. PLEASE DON'T SEND ANYMORE MAIL TO OUR HOME

THANK YOU

MOTHER OF 'JOHN SMITH'

Well, there it is. My hands still shake everytime I read it. What could I have done differently to stop this tragedy? What could you have done differently to stop it?

I am not trying to point blame on any of us, but maybe, just maybe, one of us, you or I, could have said one sentence to him to help him understand that he is not alone. He is not a deviant. He is not strange or alone. We are a community, and it is important that we all reach out, touch each other, and say, I am ok, we are ok, you are ok.

Well, enough of my preaching. Please, do not destroy this letter from where ever you obtained it from. Place it in a place where you can read it, see it, remind you about where you were as a young man, how you felt, did you feel alone, different, maybe even suicidal? Not everyone is strong enough to stand up through that kind of pressure.

THE FEAR OF TELLING YOUR PARTNER

Last month I said that we would address the issue of fear this month, the fear that we must overcome in order to tell our wives or girlfriends of our feminine side.

What is fear? Well, Webster's defines it as "painful emotions excited by apprehension of impending danger."

Fear is a rather strange thing. Many of us have been in combat, WWII, Korea, VietNam, or Desert Storm. Yes, we were afraid, and I think it was because of that fear that we were able to return. It prevented us from letting down our guard.

But the fear that we faced in combat or any other dangerous situation just cannot compare to the fear that we face in telling our wives, our girlfriends, our parents, our (fill in the blank) about our crossdressing. What is worst is the fact that our fear is self-perpetuating; it is our fear itself that keeps us from overcoming our fear.

What is there to fear in telling someone of our *femmeside*? We fear rejection and ridicule. I think this is what makes the fear of telling so uniquely different from any other fear that we may experience.

Any of you who have been through a divorce know the pain that is felt. I think it is a pain that is most similar to that which we fear will occur in telling that someone close about our *femmeside*. We desire love, and we desire to be loved, and we fear that we will lose that love that we cherish and desire.

Our society has not yet fully come to accept the idea of men dressing as women. We fear becoming the butt of the town gossip. Many of us are in a professional position and we fear that the ridicule will lead to loss of social and financial status. We fear being looked upon as someone less than normal.

It is these things we fear that makes overcoming our fear so difficult, and yet we must overcome our fear of fear if we are to overcome that which we fear.

What is worst is that our fear causes us much mental anguish. As crossdressers we have very strong feelings. The inability to share those feelings with those we love, the need to keep those feelings secret, places an extra heavy burden on our mind.

How much easier would it be to overcome our fear if we could reasonably predict the outcome from telling someone about our *femmeside*? If we could gauge the persons reaction, then we would have a reasonable idea of whether that person will accept us. The major problem here is that our fear has already caused us to make a biased prediction against telling the one we love. In order to make a reasonable prediction we must put aside that bias, and become observers.

There are a number of ways we gauge a persons reaction. One way would be to watch some of the talk shows like Sally Jessy Raphael or Jenny Jones and then discuss the topic of the show with the person that we wish to tell about ourselves. By discussing topics other than that of crossdressing, we do not tend to lead suspicion as to our motive for the discussion, and thus we get an idea of that person's attitude to all people of difference. If there is reason to believe that a person will be accepting of crossdressing, it is that they are open-minded enough to accept people of all differences.

Another tool that we may employ is crossdressing for events like Halloween or Mardi Gras, or crossdressing for bedtime fun. Of course, this can only be done if you are known to do things just to be somewhat silly at times. If you are always serious -- never doing anything just for a laugh -- then there will be cause for suspicion.

How well educated is your wife? It has been found that the better educated a woman is, the more likely she is to accept your *femmeside*; but at the same time, many

women who have an average or less than average education have been just as accepting. My own wife has never completed high school and yet she is very accepting and sometimes even helpful.

We must, of course, be mindful of the "this kind of thing only happens to other people ... never in our family" concept. The deeper we are into a relationship with a wife or girlfriend, the bigger the shock. With parents there may be the tendency for self-blame, a desire to know what they did wrong. (Children pose another problem, which will be discussed in a future column.)

Perhaps the biggest factor in determining if a wife or girlfriend will accept will be the condition of the relationship. It **must be on sound footing!** While things like ultraconservatism, personal bias, religious and family upbringing will play against us, if the relationship is sound and there is nothing otherwise that would make her consider ending the relationship, then the chance of acceptance is far greater than the chance of rejection. If there are other problems in the relationship, then **these must be resolved before the injection of another!**

Of utmost importance also will be your attitude **as a man** towards women and women's rights. Do you help in the house? Do you encourage your wife to be all that she can be? How well could you accept the concept of her being the major breadwinner in the household? If you do not consider her to be truly equal to you, then there is little likelihood that she will accept your femininity. Your chances of being accepted really are dependent on how you treat her, not only as a wife, but as a person. If you have always treated her as an equal, then you really have nothing to fear, but if you have treated her second class, then how can she understand your desire to be like one that you consider to be of a lower class of being than you consider yourself to be?

How should we tell our wives? The operative word here is **gentle**. While no matter how we opt to tell her, it will be a shock, and we should do all that we can to

make that shock as little as possible. I prefer the written word, which allows us to think out our exact wording beforehand, unhampered by questions or the shock of the person we are telling. However, this is not the only method; use what is comfortable for you.

What should we say? Compassion and concern for her, and our own education as to why we crossdress should be the rule. Of utmost importance will be that we also convey our feeling of love for her, **and that our love for her is not conditional on her acceptance.**

We must recognize that our wives also have fears. Her first and biggest fear that she will have in finding out about our *femmeside* is that we are gay or that we are planning a sex change. She will view our crossdressing as a threat to the security of her marriage, and one which she will have no weapon that she can fight back with. We must calm this fear, and show her that our being crossdressers does not mean we plan to leave her for another man or to becoming a woman ourselves.

If we are to have any hope of her accepting our *femmeside*, we must show her that our femininity is an extension of who we are, and is what makes us the person that we are. As I have said before, to me femininity represents gentleness, it means being compassionate and concerned, loving and kind, and above all caring about others. Are we this when we are dressed as males? If not, it will be difficult to show her that our crossdressing is a tool used to improve our personality, to make us the type of husband that she can be proud of being married to.

She will fear that her children will also be crossdressers and she will fear her own rejection by friends and family. These are also issues that will have to be addressed eventually, but they are not the major concern at this time.

There are a number of good books on the market today that will help your wife to better understand this phenomenon of crossdressing. They are: *My Husband Wears My Clothes** and *Crossdressing With Dignity** by Dr. Peggy Rudd; *The Transvestite and His Wife** by Virginia Prince; *Coping With Crossdressing** by JoAnn Roberts, and *Wives, Partners and Others*, a collection of articles from *Tapestry*, which is available from IFGE. Having one or all of them prior to telling the wife is highly recommended.

I think the real tool to eliminating our fear of telling our wives or girlfriends of our feminine side is self-education. If we educate ourselves about our own crossdressing and our need to crossdress, and most importantly educate ourselves about our wives, learning their feelings, and learning their fears, we can prepare ourselves to address those feelings and fears. Perhaps the one biggest thing that will be done in telling our wives and girlfriends about our crossdressing is that we will further open the lines of communications between them and ourselves. Once we open those lines completely, we will be able to discuss the issue without fear.

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Cross-Talk #55.

*These books are advertised in *Cross-Talk* and are also available from IFGE.



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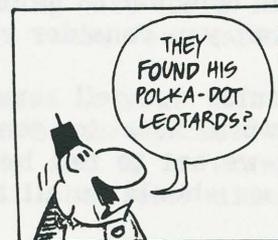
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**STONEWALL 25 MARCH AND RALLY -
Winnie B.**

The Congress of Transgendered Organizations (of which TGIC is a member) has passed a resolution to support and endorse the **Stonewall 25 March and Rally** on June 26, 1994 in New York City. This is the 25th Anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion in which gays, including many crossdressed, fought back against the police ejecting them from the *Stonewall* tavern in Greenwich Village. However, many in our "gender community" cannot wholeheartedly support **Stonewall 25** because the organizers do not specifically include "Transgendered" in the title of the March, and some are planning a counter-demonstration to protest this omission. Personally, I believe that "transgendered" has not yet achieved a sufficiently wide consensus for acceptance as the best label for the entire "gender community", so it is somewhat premature to promote it.

TGIC has received a number of announcements for events associated with **Stonewall 25**, sponsored by a number of downstate gender groups. The following paragraphs outline these events; contact the club for more information. If anyone wants to organize a TGIC delegation, please let me know.

**THE FORGOTTEN STONEWALL:
REMEMBERING THE TRANSGENDER
REBELLION, June 16**

To be held on Thursday, June 16, 7 pm at:
Network Room, 3rd Floor
L&G Community Services Center
208 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011.
(212-620-7310)
7 pm: Welcome and refreshments
7-8 pm: Networking and tabling
8-9:30 pm: Speeches and entertainment
9:30 pm: Stonewall Commemoration

STONEWALL 25 TG CAUCUS, June 25
The Metropolitan Gender Network will host the *Stonewall 25 Transgender Caucus* in Greenwich Village on Saturday, June 25, 3-5 pm, at the International Action Center located at 39 West 14th Street, Suite 206. For updates, contact:

Metropolitan Gender Network
561 Hudson St., Box #45
New York, NY 10014
201-794-1665 Ext. 332, or 718-461-9050

STONEWALL 25 MARCH, June 26
To mark the 25th Anniversary of the *Stonewall Rebellion*, there will be a March & Rally in New York City on Sunday, June 26. A block of rooms for transgendered participants has been reserved by the **Greater New York Gender Alliance (GNYGA)**. Contact TGIC for more information, or call Linda Frank of GNYGA: (212) 765-3561, Monday through Thursday evenings from 6 to 10 pm EST.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POLICY: Short announcements and advertisements from Club Members are published free for two consecutive months, unless cancelled by the originator or a specific request to continue is made.

SUNSHINE CLUB WEEKEND IN VERMONT
The Sunshine Club, our sister group in Western Massachusetts, is holding its 2nd Annual Weekend in Warren, Vermont on June 10-12. If you are interested in joining them, contact Roberta [REDACTED], PO Box 149, Hadley, MA 01035-0149.

ROBERTA'S FAMOUS STEAKOUT, June 25
Roberta Dearborn is holding her 12th Annual Steakout at the *Wayland House* on Saturday, June 25 at 6pm. Cost is only \$12, but reservations *must* be made by Tuesday, June 21. Send Check or MO to:
Roberta Dearborn, PO Box 1382, Waltham, MA 02254
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CALENDAR

Regular Meetings are held every Thursday at the TGIC Club Room on Central Avenue in Albany, 7:30 - 10:30 pm. Some come earlier and stay later, but it is wise call if you are not a Keyholder or if it is your first visit. Come dressed either way, meet and talk with friends. Many continue to socialize at one of the Central Ave. night spots after the meetings.

JUNE 1994

Jun 2 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Jun 9 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Jun 11 Saturday, 8 pm
 Dinner Party, Northway Inn
 Jun 16 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Jun 23 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Jun 30 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

JULY 1994

Jul 7 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Jul 14 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Jul 21 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Jul 28 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

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MAJOR COMING EVENTS

Contact TGIC for more information. Some registration brochures are available in the Club Room

June 8-12 *Be All You Want To Be*,
 Pittsburgh, PA
 June 10-12 *Sunshine Club Weekend in*
Vermont, Warren, VT
 July 6-10 *Spouses & Partners*
International Conference for
Education (SPICE), Chicago, IL
 Aug 17-21 *3rd Annual Transgender Law*
and Policy Conference
(TRANSGEN '94), Houston, TX
 Oct 4-7 *Dignity Cruise V*, Pittsburgh
 Oct 16-23 *Fantasia Fair*, Provincetown
 Nov 17-20 *Fall Harvest '94*, Iowa City

Vogue

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