



# The Phi Journal



ISSUE 28

Editor - Wendi Beeman

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## GREETINGS FROM THE PUBLISHER

Before you read another sentence, I want to tell you (or remind you) that the next Phi Chapter meeting is on Saturday **21 November**, not 28 November. Selma has another engagement on the usual fourth Saturday. I'm sorry to note that this change creates a conflict for dual members of Phi Chapter and Renaissance, but I guess we just have to accept the fact that we live in a world that is less than perfect. Do let Selma know that you are coming. (609 428 8448)

Speaking of Renaissance, please look at the last page of this newsletter. This is a copy of a notice from our sister club telling about our joint dinner meeting in December. The *Moshulu* is a very nice place to eat - good food in elegant surroundings - and the \$22.50 price is most reasonable. Wives and significant others are more than welcome (mine expects to come). If you don't receive this Phi Journal before JoAnn's 21 November deadline, give her a call anyway.

Included in this mailing are copies of the notice and program schedule for the February IFGE meeting in Chicago. To keep the weight under one ounce, I'll hold the registration form and the American Airlines discount form until the next mailing. If you're in a hurry, call Merissa at 617 358 2305.

Just before Fantasia Fair last month the *Wall Street Journal* carried a feature article about cross dressing in Japan. I'm copying it on the back of this page. Some of you may want to write to Robert L. Bartley, Editor Wall Street Journal, 200 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10281 and tell him about cross dressing in the USA. Jane

## THE NEW PUBLICATION: A COMMENTARY

In the last *Phi Journal* I wrote about a new publication for TV readers, *En Femme* magazine, published by our Robyn Ann Dormer. I want to add some comments on this topic.

There are numerous publications catering to the crossdressing scene. From TV group newsletters such as our own *Phi Journal* to the more sophisticated publications such as *Tapestry* and the slick four-color often-pornographic magazines, you can have your pick. Now there is a new one on the block. A slick publication, *En Femme* is not. But does the magazine have a place in the paraculture?

I think it does. Obviously it is an infant that must learn how to

# Frustrated Japanese Salarymen Sometimes Enjoy Dressing Up

## Casting Off Shackles, Japanese Salarymen Put On Frilly Dresses

\* \* \*

Elizabeth Club Is a Refuge  
For the Furtive Pastime;  
Keeping Wives in the Dark

By PETER WALDMAN

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Why are his trousers vermilion?  
Why does he claim he's Castilian?  
Why do his friends call him... Lilian?

—Stephen Sondheim

TOKYO — Futaba tried on his first dress—his mother's—two years ago. And the 25-year-old computer programmer has been wearing women's clothing three nights a week ever since.

Akeme, a 48-year-old trading-company executive, says he fought off the temptation for years but finally gave in to skirts and stockings last May.

Sayuri, worried about shocking his wife and children, indulged this passion for seven years, alone in hotel rooms. "It was a lonely life before the Elizabeth Club opened up," says the 56-year-old real-estate executive who, like all patrons at this nine-year-old establishment, uses a woman's pseudonym. "Here, we can relax."

### Craving Escape

Situated in the heart of Tokyo's frenetic Akihabara district—the busiest electronics marketplace in the world—the Elizabeth Club caters to businessmen from all over Japan seeking refuge from the gray mood and blue suits of a drab, male corporate culture. Inside, dozens of these restless males outfit their alter egos in a huge selection of women's clothing, while they sit and chat gaily in their favorite female roles.

The Elizabeth Club is not, however, a gay bar. Indeed, most of its members are "typical, married men," says the club's manager, Yumi Kataoka. "Homosexuals go to their own bars in other parts of town," she explains.

The club represents a reaction against the peculiarly Japanese code of conformity and hard work that restricts the lives of this country's salarymen, or wage earners. "I feel so much lighter as a woman than as a man," says Mariko, a 26-year-old book-binder, dressed one evening as a china doll, albeit one missing two front teeth.

Members who aren't married say they are looking for wives. Kyomi, 36, who is striking in deep-blue eye shadow and white blouse, says he is eager to find a mate, but only "an ideal Japanese woman—someone who is traditional, kind, obedient, gentle and caring." So far, he says, he has found "no prettier girl" than himself.

Open seven nights a week, the Elizabeth Club draws 400 to 500 visitors a month, says Ms. Kataoka, the manager. Its 600 regular members pay annual dues of 5,000 yen (less than \$35), plus a door charge of 4,000 yen per visit. That buys them access to everything they need for an evening's metamorphosis, including makeup applied by trained beauticians and a complete selection of padded bras and spike heels. The club also maintains a wardrobe of more than 200 outfits, which it rents for fees ranging from 1,000 yen for a schoolgirl's frock to more than 10,000 yen for a sequined wedding gown.

### Big Men's Lacy Lingerie

This all started a decade ago when a Tokyo gravestone salesman named Minoru Tanaka, who is now 48, learned from his wife, an employee of a lingerie shop, that there existed a large, untapped underground market for oversized garments. The entrepreneurial Mr. Tanaka and his wife soon opened a women's-clothing boutique—for men.

A year later, one of their customers suggested to the Tanakas that they provide space for their clientele to change clothes and to mingle, and the Elizabeth Club was born.

The establishment built up its membership with the help of aggressive advertising, mostly in sports and business publications and on late-night television. Today, the club spends three million yen a month on ads, Ms. Kataoka says. In addition, the Tanakas publish Japan's only cross-dressing magazine, a monthly journal called *Queen*, which reaches 5,000 subscribers.

Cross-dressing is not new to Japan. Ever since a prudish shogun banned women from the stage 400 years ago, the leading *oyama*—male actors who specialize in playing female roles in Kabuki theater—have held celebrity status here. Indeed, many Japanese regard the best of these female impersonators as the essence of femininity.

And since early in this century, women of all ages have been packing the Tokyo and Osaka theaters of the Takarazuka Review, an all-female troupe that pleases its screaming audiences with tales of cowboys, pirates and samurai.

To the dismay of Elizabeth Club members, however, what passes as good, clean fun on stage is shunned in real life. Most club members hide their pastime from family and friends, choosing to live double lives.

"Away from here, I'm a perfectly normal man," says Akeme, the trading-company executive. "Sure, I've tried on my wife's clothes once or twice, but I would never tell her. She wouldn't understand."

Another member, Saeko, who won't divulge his age but says he fought in World War II, wasn't so cautious. He says that years ago he outraged his wife when he admitted to using his private room in their home for cavorting in women's clothing. "I've been doing it all my life," he says.

"It helps me stay young."

Once a year, some club members do show off in public, when 60 or so travel by chartered bus to a hot-springs resort or Buddhist temple for a special weekend outing. The group usually tries to avoid crowds, but as any visitor to this country can attest, that is virtually impossible. "People giggle and pretend not to notice us," says Futaba, the young computer programmer.

Mariko, the 26-year-old toothless china doll, takes his cross-dressing more seriously than some others do. To him, his weekly romps at the Elizabeth Club are less flights of fancy than they are protests against what he sees as the cruel world of Japanese malehood.

"Marriage life isn't fair," the bachelor complains. "Men have to earn money and uphold the family's dignity, while women can relax and play tennis every day." Mariko, who says he first thought about cross-dressing at age 10, recently told his mother about his interest and also mentioned that he never wants to get married.

His mother, he says, "just listened."

crawl before it can walk. Having been involved in starting publications in the past, I know that finances must be a first consideration. Building a base of readers and advertisers takes time. And without them you cannot grow and become sophisticated. Already the magazine has promised some new and innovative articles for future issues. It is also talking about two colors for advertisers (it is strictly black and white now).

I think the magazine has a place, especially if it chronicles well the activities and events in the eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland areas. Not that it shouldn't eventually think in terms of national and possibly even international recognition, but the region I mentioned is ripe for a good, solid TV publication. The magazine has natural ties to this region.

The editors have done at least some of their homework. They were smart to include a questionnaire in the first issue, asking for comments on articles and stories in the magazine as well as requests for future items. The promise is there. Now it is up to us, the readers, to make them deliver on that promise by supporting the magazine, not only as subscribers but as contributors and advertisers. The *Phi Journal* wishes Robyn and her staff the best of luck in the venture.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE WEST COAST

The *Emerald City News* reports that the Seattle City Council has passed a public accommodations amendment to the city's open housing ordinance. This amendment forbids discrimination against TVs and TSs in stores, motels, restaurants, rest rooms, and other establishments operated for public use. According to the newsletter, Seattle is the first city in the country to guarantee the rights of our paraculture. *Mendi*

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Everything I have ever read on helping women into a more or less comfortable coexistence with their partner's transvestism emphasizes one fact above all else: the most effective support comes from other women who have already been able to achieve this degree of tolerance and understanding." *Julia, Emerald City News*

TREASURER'S REPORT

On hand after 26 September meeting	\$4.00
24 October receipts	
attendance fees - 8 x \$15	\$120.00
thrift shop	\$25.00
total	\$149.00
24 October disbursements	
Selma - 8 x \$12	\$96.00
Balance forward after 24 October meeting	\$53.00

*Emily*

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1 November 1987

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**November 21st Meeting:**

We are going to have a special guest for November's meeting. Dr "Bud" Heuer from Temple University will be speaking to us about feminine speech patterns. Many of you expressed an interest in developing a voice for you girlself, so here is your chance to learn from an expert. Dr. Heuer has been associated with Fantasia Fair and works with transexuals here in Philadelphia. Mark your calendar for the 21st.

**Christmas Party News: Date Change & Deposit Required**

Our membership directors, Angela and Trudi, along with Tina Louise, President of Phi Chapter, have been wearing down the heels on their pumps putting our joint Christmas party together. They wanted a location that would be central for members of both groups, provided good parking facilities, and, of course, served good food at a good price. Well, it looks as though they've found us a place. Their recommendation for the party is the Tall Ship, *Moshlu*, docked at Penn's Landing on the Delaware River. Trudi went there personally to discuss the party and explain who we are. The management has absolutely no concerns about our crossdressing and welcomes our business. (See, it's not so terrible as you think !). The date will be *Sunday evening, December 13th*, starting with a No-Host cash bar at 7:30 pm. The full course dinner will cost \$22.50 per person, tax and gratuity included. Parking is directly in front of the ship, and there is plenty of it. We need to make a reservation and give them a \$100 deposit, fast.

So, we need you to do two things **immediately**. First, call JoAnn and give her a verbal reservation so we know the number of people involved. Second, make out and mail a check to Renaissance for the \$22.50. These checks will not be deposited until we are sure we have the minimum number of people.

This is a great opportunity to dress up, get out, and make some new friends. Share the Christmas spirit with your sisters. Call now and write that check.

**Payment of Renaissance Dues**

Our mailing list now tops over 180 names. While we are very pleased with your response to our efforts, Renaissance cannot operate as a charity. We have some important work to accomplish in educating both members of our community and the public. That work involves expenses which must be paid from the Renaissance treasury. If we are to survive as an organization, we must have operating funds. Please use the form below to pay your 1987-1988 dues. We are going to start trimming the mailing list of those who have not contributed or have not attended a function.



**Renaissance/Phi Christmas Party Reservation** - \$22.50/person for Associate & non-members  
- \$17.50 for Full Members of Renaissance

Please reserve \_\_\_ places at the Christmas Party for me. Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ made out to Renaissance.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
( JoAnn must have your verbal reseroation by November 21st and your check by November 29th.)

- Seasons Greetings! I have previously paid my dues, thank you.
- Merry Christmas! I want a Full Membership in Renaissance. Enclosed is an additional \$30 for 1987-1988 dues.
- Happy New Year! I'll take an Associate Membership. Enclosed is an extra \$12 for a subscription to the Renaissance News for 1987-1988.
- Bah, Humbug! I do not wish to receive further information from Renaissance.