



News & views

Vision • Integrity • Quality

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A publication of the Renaissance Transgender Association, Inc.

TRANSGENDER
COMMUNITY

Renaissance to Host 4th Gender Congress in 2000

In June of 1997 Renaissance hosted the 2nd International Congress of Sex and Gender issues at the Parkridge Hotel in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Professors, learned doctors, counselors, therapists, and members of the transgender community from all over the world converged for a two and a half day (Friday-Sunday) conference about gender issues. Papers on a variety of topics were presented (many are available on our website <http://www.ren.org>) and seminars were held. By all accounts the event was a success. At the end of the 2nd Congress, Renaissance passed the baton to Dr. Stephen Whittle from the School of Law, Manchester Metropolitan University in Manchester, England.

The 3rd Congress was held at Exeter College of Oxford University last month. At that event Dr. Whittle was able to announce that the Renaissance National Board of Directors has voted to host the 4th International Congress of Sex & Gender Issues in the year 2000.

"We are both proud and happy to host the 4th Congress," said Acting Chair of the Renaissance National Board, Dr. Carol Cobb-Nettleton. She added, "The organization learned many good lessons when it ran the 2nd Congress in 1997. Now we will continue in applying that knowledge to produce another world class event and contribute to dissemination of knowledge on transgender issues."

The 1st Congress was held 1995 in California by the Center for Sex Research at the CA State University at Northridge. It was not their intention to host another Congress. Now the Congress has become a continuing event and has the blessing of Center for the year 2000 in Philadelphia. The Board has established several committees to carry out the organization of the 4th Congress. The Steering Committee is composed of JoAnn Roberts, Diane Dale, Terry McCorkell, Angela Gardner and Dr. Carol Cobb-Nettleton. At press time

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1999 Brings Changes to N & V

Your January 1999 issue of *Transgender Community News & Views* will be another milestone for News & Views, and for Renaissance. The National Board of Directors voted unanimously at its last meeting in September to upgrade the publication you are now reading from a newsletter to a magazine format. This will make TG Community News & Views the only monthly magazine devoted to the transgender community. There has been no monthly for the community since the demise of Kym Richards' publication, *Cross-Talk*.

A complete redesign is in the works. The Editorial Board will meet this month to discuss various design options. The most visible change

will be the addition of a magazine cover featuring a brand new design, cover art and a higher cover price. The current newsletter sells on the newsstand (in limited distribution) for five dollars. The new magazine will start with a cover price of \$8 and will go up in price as more pages are added. For the time being, the size will remain at 24 pages, but ultimately that will increase to 36 pages and a cover price of \$10.

Having a monthly magazine allows for wider distribution through newsstands and bookstores around the country, which will result in a greater visibility for Renaissance and a growth

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Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

Wilmington, Delaware: meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808. Phone: 302-376-1990 or email to: <sadeCD@aol.com>.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia: Write Renaissance GPC, 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, PA 19087. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia. Doors open at 8 pm all year 'round, Call 610-975-9119 for information.

Lehigh Valley/Pocono area: Renaissance Lehigh Valley, PO Box 3624, Allentown, PA 18106. Meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Allentown area. Call for directions and more information, 610-821-2955, or email to <RenLV@ren.org>.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, PO Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (780-1578) or send email to: <lsv@ren.org>.

Affiliates

California

Orange County: Powder Puffs of California, PO Box 1088, Yorba Linda, CA 92686, or email to <ppoc@aol.com>

Connecticut

Bridgeport/New Haven: connecticUTView, c/o Denise Mason, PO Box 2281, Devon, CT 06460. Monthly newsletter and activities.

Georgia

Atlanta: The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 770-939-0244, or email to <aegis@mindspring.com>.

Information resources & referrals.

Atlanta: Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 770-939-2128.

Illinois

Chicago: The Chicago Gender Society, PO Box 578005, Chicago, IL 60657, 708-863-7714.

Louisiana

New Orleans: The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 56836, New Orleans, LA 70156-6836, 504-833-3046. Website: <www.gga.org>. Email: <crysgga@juno.com>.

Missouri

St. Louis Gender Foundation, P.O. Box 9433, St. Louis, MO 63117. Phone: 314-367-4128, email: <stlglf@aol.com>.

New Jersey

N. Central Jersey: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 2972, Princeton, NJ 08543-2972. Call 732-219-9094. Email: <vikkimmotg@aol.com>.

Western Central New Jersey: New Jersey Support, call Susan at 973-334-0416 or Dorothy at 215-744-4746 (weekends only). Write PO Box 0034, Montville, NJ 07045 for information. Email: Susanw@aol.com. Meetings are the first Saturday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing.

New York

Manhattan: Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), 561 Hudson Street, Box 45, New York, NY 10014. Call 201-794-1665, ext. 332. Email, <uravampire@mindspring.com>.

Long Island: Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE), PO Box 1311, Water Mill, NY 11976-1311. Phone 516-283-1333. email to <brenvee2@aol.com>.

Oklahoma

Central Oklahoma: Sooner Diversity, part of the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance (COTA). Write to P.O. Box 60354, Oklahoma City, OK 73146. Email to <cota@transfemme.com>, website: <www.transfemme.com/cota>

TRANSGENDER News & COMMUNITY Views

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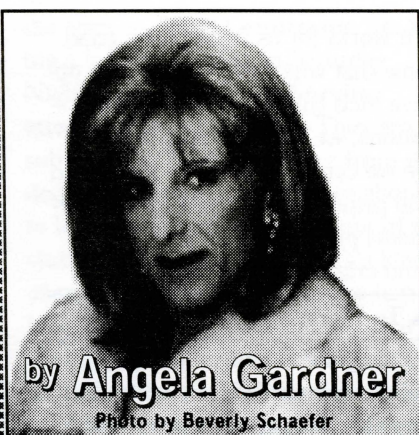
Articles, opinion pieces, and letters to the editor are always welcome. Ideas for articles and opinion pieces should be sent to the National Office marked Attention: Editor. Or by email to <editor@ren.org>. Complimentary and irate letters to the editor may be sent to the same address.

Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the transgender community and the general public. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, make your check or M.O., payable to our National office. Your contributions will help us continue our efforts to provide education about transgender issues. Donations can also be made through your local United Way agency.

Electronic Subscriptions

You can get *Transgender Community News & Views* by email every month delivered automatically right to your email box for only \$15 a year. That's half off the regular paper subscription rate. Send your \$15 plus your email address to the Renaissance National Office.

News Beat & Reminder



Welcome to October, we all know what that means — Halloween! Yes, once again the holy day of obligation for crossdressers has arrived. Being an actor it's a tough time for me cause someone always wants me on Halloween night for some acting assignment or another. This year I may have to miss the always wild and crazy **Henri David Halloween Ball** to make a couple of bucks.

One year I was able to do my acting assignment as a female character and then just toddled along to Henri's party in my costume from the show. This time I won't be able to get away with that, unless I want to appear as a butch gangster from the '30s. Oh well, perhaps there'll be time to turn "him" into a butch, female gangster. Only time will tell.

If you're new to the scene and don't know about Henri David's bash, here are a few details. It happens every Halloween in Philadelphia. (and has since the late '60s.) It will be at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza this year and if you have been saving up for "the" place to make a drag debut, this is it. Over 2000 people attend the party in costumes that range from only body paint to exquisite creations that took all year to make. And of course there's a whole slew of men in drag. If there's one place in Philly were your average, garden variety crossdresser won't stick out like a sore thumb, it's the Henri David Ball. Call Henri's jewelry shop, Halloween (yeah, he loves that holiday) at 215-732-7711 for more info.

The Media Loves Us!

Suddenly there has been an explosion of TG awareness by the legit media. *A&E* is running a documentary on transgender activism called *Investigative Reports: Transgender Revolution* (*A&E*, October 5, 9pm), Marriette Pathy-Allen (long a photographer of the community) produced a show for cable, and now CBS's *48 Hours* is looking for fodder for a show on gender dysphoria.

For years we couldn't get arrested (well, OK, maybe we could get arrested) but now... Time is doing articles on us, major television programs are interested. It might be a good idea if we all got agents. But, remember girls, the media's attention span is only as long as the last sound byte. We won't have their focus for long and we'd better make the most of it. If you decide to contact any of the shows doing pieces on TG issues, make sure you are serious in your intent to help others who may see the program, and make sure your facts are straight. Contact Renaissance, or any of the other organizations in the community, and ask their advice on how to handle the producers you will be working with. Even though shows like *48 Hours* are more likely to give a balanced, objective, non-sensational view of the TG community, and you as an individual, they're still looking for ratings points. It's still a show. Be careful, and be professional. Otherwise, good luck with your fifteen minutes of fame.

If you want to check with 48

Hours to see if the still need subjects, the producer's name is Dominic Perez. You can email him at <dzp@cbsnews.com> or use the old fashioned phone and call 212-975-4848. The documentary will explore the major issues affecting the transgender community, such as the struggle for equal rights, violence/hate crimes, job discrimination, child custody/visitation rights. Mr. Perez (a relative of Vincent Perez?) seeks to "profile dramatic and compelling characters and stories involving preoperative and post-operative (FtM) female to male and (MtF) male to female transsexuals struggling to overcome great obstacles..." in order to achieve their gender goal. See ya on the telly.

More Media

Of course ads and sitcoms featuring men in dresses have always been around, 'cause there's nothing as funny as a manly man dressed like a woman. Bob Hope and Milton Berle knew that pretty well. The Bud Light girls, or the guy who loses the bet and has to come to the diner in a frock, are always popular with the media because the juxtaposition is funny. A recent television ad for Goodwill (sent to me by Jane Peabody) featured a transgendered woman collecting male clothes to donate with the tag line, "You're not the man you used to be... in fact, you're not a guy anymore." (This ran in San Francisco, but still...)

Mentions of crossdressing to get a laugh have become more matter of fact than they used to be. Back in the '70s Archie Bunker was shocked to find that the lady he had just saved from an accident was actually a guy. Now TG references are not always the whole show, but a sub plot or even a throwaway line in the dialogue.

You knew I'd have an example, didn't you? Just last night the new show *Conrad* featured a plot involving Conrad's sister, the anti fur activist. She is telling Conrad that her group tries to protect all the fur bearing animals, including squirrels. Conrad asks, "Who wears squirrel anymore." The sis-

News Beat...

ter replies, "There are always hard up transvestites." Now, before you start writing hate mail to the producer, think about it. The line is funny. It gets a laugh because of the injection of the word "transvestites" into an otherwise innocuous conversation. If the writers had used "mall chicks" or "disco bunnies" it wouldn't have been funny. And, it's true. many cross-dressers can't afford a mink or even a fox fur, so squirrel is the alternative pursued by many of us who have a thin wallet.

With each reference to transvestites, transsexuals, or transgendered we come closer to everyday acceptance by the masses. That's a good thing. They may not understand us but they will begin to see us as normal parts of the landscape; like guys with long hair or tattoos, and girls with piercings, just there, not worthy of any special comments. Of course we're always happy to accept and occasional, "Whoa, is she hot, or what?"

Your Golden Years

What will we do, not too far down the road, when it's retirement time and we need to find a nice place to spend our twilight time? don't kid yourselves girls, there's blue hair and support hose in all of our futures. The time is now to start thinking about how we'll spend our reclining years. I got a mailing the other day at the Renaissance office from an "alternative retirement village." It was mainly at gays and lesbians, but they accept parents of gays and lesbians, and they did mail literature to us, so I'm assuming they're open to transgendered clientele.

It's called The Palms of Manasota and as you might expect, it's in Florida. They offer all the amenities and they have a website. Visit the site at <<http://www.prideworks.com/palms/brochure.htm>>. Call 941-722-5858 .for more info.

If it works for us it would be good to know that when we have to give up the five inch stilettos due to various conditions, we'll have a place to live where we can wear sensible shoes and a floral print dress without giving anyone heart problems. See you at the arts and craft class, dearie.

Back To Here and Now

Since I haven't retired just yet let me tell you about the busy whirl of activity that has occurred in recent weeks The biggest thing that kept me occupied for one day, at least, was that little party on the Hudson, **Wigstock**.

On September sixth I wore my most sensible platform sandals, short shorts, and animal print top to take to the turnpike and journey to Manhattan. It was a beautiful day for glamour, sunny but not too hot, with a cool breeze to waft the finery of the multitude. There was a brief backup at the tunnel when all that man made wig fiber (concentrated in one place as the queens converged from all over the East Coast) started to coagulate in the tunnel heat and oily atmosphere, and it was only through the valiant efforts of an heroic hairdresser from Hackensack, who utilized an industrial strength detangler, that the clog was broken and the bewigged multitudes broke through to Manhattan.

Wigstock is all about wigs. That was the spirit behind the first Wigstock, lo those many years ago. Gimme hair down to there! As long as it's Mod Acrylic. Now, the focus has blurred. While the majority still proudly wear their wigs, others have moved into different areas of personal expression. There were outlandish outfits, piercings, wild makeup, leather, rubber, and several people in just plain shorts and Ts. (What's up with that?) There were men in women's clothes, women in men's clothes, gay people, straight people, bi people, and probably a few aliens. There were wigs every where, from the top of the giant screen television halfway down the pier, to a bewigged foot in a plaster cast, and a small,

radio controlled car called the Drag Buggy.

Despite some technical problems ("Honey, we're gonna need more monitors than that!" "Oh my God, where's my lash adhesive?") the show got started on regular old "drag time," supposed to be 2, but closer to 3. All the while the crowd kept streaming in. The police were stopping traffic on the West Side Highway so the revelers could cross and make their way to the pier. Crowds of onlookers gathered on the East side of the highway and availed themselves of the many opportunities to get that special photo or video of the good, the bad, and the ugly.

My attorney, Leslie, (I never go out in public without good legal advise) and I wandered around the basic black (faded to gray) asphalt pier and snapped pics of the most wonderful costumes. On the way in we ran into Village Voice columnist Michael Musto on his way to cover the event. Michael had his wig in hand and he paused, after we had compared notes on what it's like to be well known reporters for major media outlets, and got his coif adjusted. I think you'll agree it's a good look for him.

There was a warm, fuzzy sense of well being attached to the day. It was relaxed and pleasant to be there with all the other wig fans — feelings no doubt brought on by the positive psychic vibes of the day that were amplified by the giant screen televisions and energy of the professional drag artistes... or maybe it was that Bloody Mary I had with brunch in the Village. It took me back to my college days attending outdoor rock shows. Unlike back then I neither had a jug of soda half full of hooch in a paper bag, nor did I get a horrible sunburn. A sensible drag queen always has her #48 sun block at hand during the summer months.

Visit the Wigstock Pictorial online at TGForum and see some of the pictures I got.

News Beat...

<<http://www.tgforum.com>>.

Back to Studio 54

As a young crossdresser I missed the glory days of **Studio 54**, the club that defined Disco back in the 70s. I was a manly rocker back in those days and dutifully hated Disco. Just goes to show how a girl, er, boy can change in 20 years. It wasn't till the 80s that I got in touch with my big haired, overly made up femme self and hit the New York club scene. So, it was fun to get a call from **Spike Lee**

Productions to appear in a film called *Summer of Sam*. It's set in 1977. What did they want me to do, you ask? Be a drag queen, honey! Ah, typecasting at work again. A couple of Fridays ago it was back up the Turnpike to 54th Street (through some of the worst merging at the Lincoln Tunnel that I've ever seen) to get gussied up for Spike. I admit to some disappointment when I found that I was not to be the only TG love-ly on the set. Most notable for their participation were the fabulous **GemGender** and the hot little honey I worked with a few years back in the film *Stonewall*, **Baroness Fiona**. The Baroness is sexier than ever, and Miss Gem's corset was oh so tight.

Our role in the film was to be part of the crowd outside the club waiting to be picked to enter. As we stand there with the other background types, but looking more fab, of course,

the stars — **John Lequizado** (looking a lot like Travolta in Saturday Night Fever) and **Mira Sorvino** attempt to enter the club. They are subjected to haughty rebuke from the door staff, and just as they are about to leave John Savitch comes out of the club with his entourage. (He's a kind-of macho Warhol.) He sees the hapless couple, takes their picture, and then cajoles them into coming along in his limo to a really hopping place.

While it made for a great scene, it dashed any hopes I had of appearing at the bar in an intimate little scene with either John (or Mira). When the film arrives in theaters look for my back. They had me all in silver, including a silver mylar wig.

Miss Gender told me that she has auditioned for a major role in a film that will start shooting soon. It's top secret right now, so this writer is not allowed to breath (or type) a word. If Miss Gender get's the role I'll tell you all about it.

Activities For The Glamour Enhanced

In addition to Henri David there are a few other events coming up. The Greater Philadelphia chapter is planning a costume party at this months meeting on the 17th. (Remember Vendor Night is coming in November.) That gives you a couple of weeks to fine tune your costume for Henri's. The Fetishes Boutique of Philadelphia is sponsoring a Voluptuous Victorian Tea Party (wear your corsets girls) on October

25 from 3:30 to 6:30 at a gorgeous Victorian bed and breakfast. (I've seen the place, it's really nice.) Tickets are \$10 in advance. Call the boutique for more info at 215-829-4986. And don't forget their Custom Fang workshop on October 7th. Get the canines you've always wanted just in time for Halloween. That old standby of the TG community, **Fantasia Fair** is happening in Provincetown, Massachusetts October 18th thru 25th. It features such institutions as the FanFair Follies amateur drag show, and the FanFair Fantasy Ball. This year the Ball will be in the Vixen Lounge. Meow! For more info visit the Fair's website. (Get URL) **The Diabolique Fetish Masquerade Ball** occurs on November 19th. contact 215-829-4986 for ticket info. Oh boy, another chance to wear those fangs. At press time the GPC Holiday Party scheduled for December 19th was undergoing a rethink. Info handed out at the September meeting is not accurate. Contact the chapter for updated info. (If things have been rearranged in time there may be a flyer in this issue.)

That's it for this month my precious pets. Have fun at our special time of year. Till next time, here's a big kiss! (Air kiss only, don't want to smudge the paint.)



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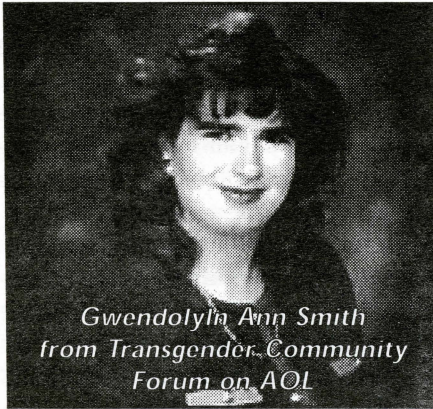
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One To One With Randi

by Miranda Wright

This Month: Gwendolyn Ann Smith

In August, the Renaissance Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter brought a proposal to the National Board asking the Board to support themovement to return the Rainbow Flag, long a symbol of the GLBT



Gwendolyn Ann Smith
from Transgender Community
Forum on AOL

community, to its original configura-
tion. As we go to press, the board has
not acted on the proposal, but will in

the near future. On a national level,
one of the "flag bearers" of the move-
ment is Gwendolyn Ann Smith who,
in addition to her activism and web
design, serves as the Area Coordinator
for the Transgender Community
Forum (TCF) on America Online.

Q. Thanks for spending some time
with us. To get us started: Who is
Gwen Smith?

A. Well, I'm a thirtysomething
woman of transgendered descent.
Over the last several years I've been
involved with transactivism, especially
on the electronic frontier, and primar-
ily through the TCF on America
Online.

Q. What is TCF?

A. The TCF is the Transgender
Community Forum, a very sizable
America Online forum area, consist-
ing of around three-thousand
resource files and graphics, discussion
boards, daily transgender news, and a
24-hour chat room called the Gazebo,

where we host the Sunday Gender
Chat. It can be accessed on AOL by
using either keyword "TCF" or key-
word "Transgender," and informa-
tion on it is out on the web, at [http://mem-
bers.aol.com/onqgwen](http://members.aol.com/onqgwen).

I suppose it would be wise to also
mention that keyword "Renaissance"
leads to some Renaissance-specific
information that we have included, as
well. The TCF is, by the way, visited
several-thousand times a day — so
much for "we're only a small commu-
nity!"

Q. Other services such as TG
Forum exist on the World Wide Web,
which is much more "open." How did
you convince a large proprietary ser-
vice that a gender area was needed?

A. Let me give just a touch of
background there. Back in 1993
when I joined America Online, you
were not allowed to use the words

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4th Congress...

Co-Chairs had not been appointed,
but the Steering Committee is con-
tacting candidates on a short list, and
the positions should be filled shortly.
Dina Amberle will be the Financial
Controller for the event and heads the
Finance Committee. The Program
Committee, responsible for picking
the papers to be presented and the
seminar topics, will be made up of Dr.
Sheila Kirk and Dr. Lee Etscovitz.

Christie Hutchins, of the Delaware

Chapter, heads up the Logistics
Committee, which is in charge of sup-
plying audiovisual equipment for the
presentations. The Exhibits
Committee, responsible for attracting
vendors, is composed of Alison Laing,
Gloria Vogel, and Diane Dale. Angela
Gardner and JoAnn Roberts are on
both the Media/PR Committee (along
with Terry McCorkell) and the Site
Selection Committee. At this point a
site for the 4th Congress has not been
firmed up, but it's most likely that the
event will be held in Center City
Philadelphia so attendees can enjoy

the history and culture of the city.

While the focus of the 4th
Congress is primarily academic, tenta-
tive plans call for the inclusion of
some social activities. Under consider-
ation at this time are a Friday night
river cruise or restaurant outing, and a
Saturday night banquet/ball. Keep
reading News & Views for more infor-
mation as it becomes available.

If you would be interested in
assisting any of the committees please
contact the Renaissance National
Office and leave your contact
information.



News & Views...

in membership. The Board also
approved an increase in the National
dues. Currently non-chapter members
of National pay \$36 per 12 months.
Those in a chapter pay \$24 for 12
months. Effective immediately non-
chapter members will pay \$40 for 12
issues and chapter members will see
an increase to \$29. The Board also

established a Seniors/Students rate of
\$20. The \$20 rate is also available to
organizations that wish to receive
New & Views, but do not publish a
newsletter and are unable to partici-
pate in our Newsletter Exchange
Program.

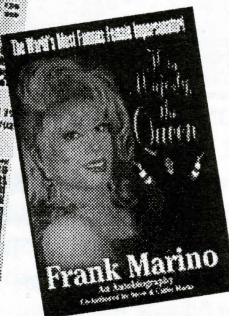
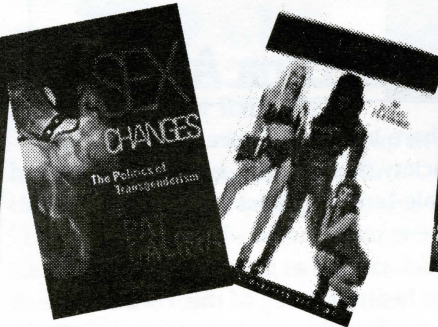
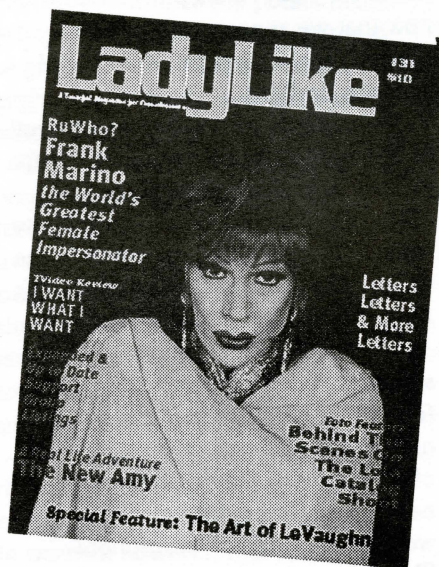
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A LONE VOICE OR MERELY THE FIRST VOICE?

The gay newspaper *The Washington Blade* printed an essay by Beren deMotier titled "Trans Issues Are Not What Gay Pride is All About." I saw the article reprinted in the August issue of the Carolina Trans-Sensual Alliance's voluminous newsletter, *All the Beautiful People*.

Beren deMotier is a lesbian who is uncomfortable with the alliance of transgenderism and gay rights. Increasingly, almost automatically, gay rights organizations are appending their credos to include transgender rights along with gay, bisexual and lesbian issues. Ms. deMotier does not begrudge transgenderists their legal protection under the law. She simply wishes that their issues (our issues?) were not included in with the gay and lesbian agendas. She states her position succinctly: "It's just that I don't think either transsexualism or being transgendered are what gay pride is all about. And I wish I didn't have to see it on every banner, T-shirt, and poster for the entire month of June [the gay pride month]."

Beren's emotions on the issue are somewhat complex, and not as easily pigeonholed as we transgenderists might like, in order to berate them. Firstly, she is a mother of two children and she writes, "I know in the very pit of my soul that gender is more than a social construct, despite my feminist education." In fact, Beren's uneasiness with the "third gender movement" is really at the heart of her objections to it being linked with the gay rights movement. As previously reported here, and else-

where in TG literature, the idea that society should move away from the male-female gender paradigm towards a new construct in which gender is as much chosen as decreed by birth is at the heart of much of the TG activism today. It is this parting with the traditional view of the opposite sexes that troubles Beren, vis a vis its pairing with gay rights.

As a lesbian, Beren and all other "out" members of the community have fought for the right to assert themselves as women who love women. The converse would be true on the gay male side of the coin: that they have fought to identify themselves as men who love men. Now here come the transgender activists who wish to muddy the waters by saying that men can be women, women can be men, or any mixture in between, to whatever degree the individual wishes to express it. Gay people don't want to break down gender roles, they want to keep them because it defines their identity within those genders.

I understand the logic of her argument. And she admits a few times in her essay that it seems odd for her to sound so conservative about gender roles. The increasing inclusion of and the growing political strength of the TG wing within the gay rights movement is a threat to some of the very things she holds dear as a lesbian. If Beren's viewpoint is shared by enough of the gay community, the logic of her argument may come to the fore and the TG activists may be told — someday: "Jump off our Pride Day float and get your own damn movement!"

REBUTTING THE REBUTTAL

As expected, Beren deMotier's essay about gay rights/TG rights did not sit well with some members of our community. It's been an uphill struggle for the TG community to gain some respect from the older, more established gay rights movement, and now that we appear to have a coalition, anyone tossing brickbats could expect a firefight.

Weighing in with a lengthy rebuttal of Ms. deMotier's position was Katrina C. Rose, whose opinion piece "Transphobia is not what Gay Pride is About - Freedom Is!" appeared in the GCTC *Transmission Line* newsletter's August issue.

Having already stated my understanding of deMotier's position, I found that Katrina's (and the other quoted TG leaders') objections to be off the point of the argument. It is too easy to use Beren deMotier's own words in a charge of "transphobia." She did say that the time and effort spent by hypothetical transgenderists in switching back and forth between genders at will and as the spirit moved them seemed to indicate the need for a more productive "hobby." But that was in response to the seeming preoccupation with the surface artifices of gender. In fact, what she was saying was that one shouldn't need to be "switching" at all if one is a complete being in the first place. It was an attack on shallowness and artifice, not on deep personal feelings.

The rest of the rebuttal ran down the usual list of grievances we in the TG community usually complain of in presenting our case for rights protection. And deMotier was already on record as saying she didn't wish to deny any transgenderist the full protection of the law in the assertion of our rights. Simply stated, her objection was the appending of our agenda onto the gay rights agenda — and she simply doesn't see the same parallel in those agendas as do others in the TG and gay rights movements.

FREE ADVICE THAT'S WORTH WHAT YOU PAID FOR IT

The Alpha Omega Tri-Ess sorority in Sheffield Lake, Ohio publishes the *Silhouette* newsletter and their August issue carried a list of 57 shopping tips culled from Bonnie August's "Dress Thin System" book. Here are few of those tips that I thought would be particularly useful for my readers. And just to hammer the points home — perhaps even driving them right into the ground — I added my own insights for each of them. Let's start, shall we?

"If it's on sale, make sure it's also compatible for your body type. Otherwise, it's no bargain." And I have two crushed velvet miniskirts I bought for \$6 at a chain store closeout sale to prove this point. I thought they were compatible for my body type... but I also dropped two tabs of acid before I went shopping that day.

"Try to take with you on shopping trips whatever shoes and underwear you plan to wear with your purchase." Be warned, however, that some stores did not appreciate me first changing into my black lace merry widow and 6" padlocking ankle strap stilettos before trying on their dresses. A word to the wise, you know...

"Close your eyes and check whether anything feels tight anywhere. If the answer is yes, don't buy it." My adjunct to this rule is that if it doesn't feel tight, I won't buy it.

"Next time you decide to buy a bra, ask a good fitter for her advice." This is always a little dicey for us crossdressers. "Pardon me, ma'am, but would you mind coming in to my cubicle and measuring my falsies so I get just the right size WonderBra?"

"Unless your legs are flawless, don't wear your hemlines above your knees." This nugget of advice could wipe out crossdressing as we know it. Fortunately, all of us know that our legs are, in fact, flawless models of perfection that deserve to be shown with the shortest hemlines legally possible.

"If you are shortwaisted, busty or hippy, avoid patch or flap pockets. Look for inconspicuous pocket styling." The good news is that all the designers are showing inconspicuous pocket

styling this season. In fact, it's the buzzword on all the runways in Milan.

"If you plan to wear a suit under your coat, wear the suit when you shop for the coat." And if you plan to shoplift a suit, wear a coat when you shop for the suit. This only stands to reason. Helping people — that's why I write this column. The money means nothing. Enjoy the shopping, girls. *(Editor's note to Jessica: Your job is safe.)*

PUTTING IT IN REVERSE

The newsletter of the IXE group in Indianapolis, Indiana carried an article by Gianna Israel titled "Reversing Transition" in its July issue. The article — as aptly described by its title — dealt with the topic of gender transition reversal.

This is a little-covered topic, judging from my survey of non-academic support group literature. Ms. Israel says at the top of her essay that a person may decide to reverse their transition "for a variety of reasons, and must actually undo steps and go through a reorientation process so as to once again feel comfortable in their old gender identity."

In the body of her article, Gianna runs through some of the common problems associated with transitioning in the first place. Employment — finding a job and/or being able to assimilate on the job in the new gender role — is a major factor that causes most of the decisions to reverse a gender transition. Young (under 30) transgenderists encounter problems with employment and non-economic issues due in part to their lack of life experiences that may cause them to reverse their transitions. Older (over 50) transgenderists, according to Gianna, reverse "typically as a result of inflexibility." Having lived for so long as one gender, it is difficult for some to make the necessary changes to live in their new gender role. She notes, however, that in her practice she has seen many in the 50-70 age group and "the majority of these individuals have transitioned successfully."

For those deciding to reverse their transition, there are factors to be considered before simply discarding their

new life. "Those that do often have to counter the effects of hormone usage, new physical developments, voice training, and a restructured social system." Another interesting consideration is that, "After announcing intentions to change, and then reverse, they must also prepare themselves for the possibility others will view them as unstable. Once again, they may find their social support systems significantly altered, particularly within employment relationships."

Gianna concludes her insightful essay by saying that reversing "is no less important than [deciding] to begin a transition." She encourages anyone considering such a step to consult a gender counselor to gain information and inputs about the reversal process but offers this final message: "It is important to understand that reversing a transition is also a personal decision. While considering this option, it is best to not listen to the advice of anyone who is pushy, demanding, condescending, or portrays the reversal as an act of betrayal of the gender community."

HOW YOU GONNA KEEP EM' DOWN ON THE FARM?

The *Femme Forum* newsletter of the Tau Chi Tri-Ess chapter in Houston, Texas announced an interesting social outing in their July issue. It was a fashion show at the Dare Ware lingerie boutique, featuring some of their own members modeling the racy fashions.

The advertisement for the shop (reprinted on the cover of the chapter newsletter) showed a female model wearing a sexy harness-style bodysuit with garters, stockings and stiletto pumps. The copy of the ad listed some of the goodies available for sale. It included lingerie (of course), plus leather, paddles, PVC, restraints, whips, clamps and the latest rave in fetish fashion, Liquid Latex!

The interesting thing was that this event was being touted in a Tri-Ess newsletter. Tri-Ess has always had the image of a staid organization, devoted

continued on page 14



Gender Reflections

by *Barbara F. Anderson*
M.S.W., Ph.D.

To Diagnose Or Not To...

While the gender community has never been known for its passive, conciliatory stance when threatened, it has more than lived up to its reputation in the face of the most recent controversy, whether a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition is in the best interest of transgender consumers.

This manual, otherwise known as the DSM-IV, is the definitive book of diagnoses by which the behaviors/symptoms of all individuals seeking mental health services are classified. Insurance companies require that any patient seeking reimbursement for mental health treatment be diagnosed with a classifiable disorder. Those transgender individuals who seek counseling but who do not wish to be so classified, either because of their resentment of being considered mentally disordered or because of concerns about lack of confidentiality and its impact on their career, have the right to pay for their treatment out-of-pocket.

In addition to the commonly thought of mental disorders such as depression and schizophrenia, you will find listed and defined others such as learning disorders, substance abuse, panic attacks, bereavement and many other problems not usually associated with mental illness. The categories that might be of most interest to readers of Devil Woman are the following

two, but the current controversy seems to surround the second.

Transvestic Fetishism is described as the activity of cross-dressing accompanied by erotic arousal. Individuals with this behavior are usually heterosexual men whose interest in dressing ranges from occasional solitary activity to active involvement in the TV subculture. Some are focussed on specific pieces of female attire while others dress and makeup entirely. In some individuals the reason for crossdressing changes over time with erotic arousal becoming less important and feelings of comfort and contentment taking its place. For a few people, feelings of gender dysphoria may emerge, with individuals feeling increasingly dissatisfied and seeking to dress and live permanently as the opposite sex. They might, in time, be re-diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder.

Gender Identity Disorder occurs when individuals express strong cross-gender identification, feel inappropriate in the role of their assigned gender, and are significantly distressed or impaired in social, occupational and other areas of living. There is a preoccupation with the wish to live as a member of the opposite sex. This may be satisfied by crossdressing, by making cosmetic modifications to the body, by taking hormones which increase desired physical and emotional characteristics and/or by sex reassignment surgery.

Individuals in either of the above diagnostic categories may seek psychotherapy if they feel the need to deal with the emotional concerns aroused by their transgender feelings or behaviors or those concerns of their significant others, parents, children and friends. Please note, the treatment deals with negative attitudes, behaviors and emotions, not with the existence of transgenderism itself. Transgenderism is not amenable to change, although its expression may be modified in more appropriate and respectful directions.

However, some individuals with Gender Identity Disorder, who are seeking referral for hormonal therapy or sex reassignment surgery, will be required to have a certain period of psychotherapy, whether or not they experience such need. If they seek reimbursement from their health insurance company, they will have to be diagnosed. Therein lies the rub.

Some members of the TG community are seeking ways to have insurance companies cover the cost of medical and psychiatric treatment while avoiding being stigmatized with a psychiatric diagnosis. The best solution I have heard promoted is the reclassification of Gender Identity Disorder as a physical condition. Since the most appropriate treatment is modification of one's physiology, it makes sense to think of transsexualism as a birth defect, similar to an intersex condition. This would not eliminate the requirement that a transsexual seeking psychological treatment be diagnosed, however, some would find a label of "depression" more comfortable than one alluding to a gender disorder. It would resolve both the issue of stigmatization as well as remove the justification of mental health practitioners to pursue the futile search for a cure of transsexualism.



Mona Reminder:



**Don't forget to set
your clocks back one
hour this month!**

"One of The Most Memorable Evenings of My Life"

by Deborah Jean Oakley

As with so many of my gender sisters, I lived for decades in the closet, never telling a soul about my cross-dressing and always fearful of discovery of my secret. Also like so many others, I would "sanitize" the house whenever guests (most notably my parents) would come for an overnight visit, ensuring that not a trace of female anything could be seen. But by the time I was in my late 30s, I simply could no longer tolerate the secrecy of it all. My insides were crawling to get out into the fresh air and I began to attend meetings where others of like mind could be found. I began to feel comfortable that this was just who I was and what I did. I was proud of myself and my accomplishments over the years and if someone didn't like my "other side" that was their problem and not mine.

It was at this point that I began to tell people about my secret life. At first I told just a handful of friends I felt I could trust, no longer for a sense of need to share this secret, but far more to say to myself that I was okay enough with this that I just plain didn't care whether I was accepted or rejected for it. And it was also in this time of coming out that I took what for me was an extremely radical step: I told my parents. Never in my wildest dreams would I have considered this even a few years earlier. But I did, and not only was I not rejected but, to the contrary, warmly embraced. "Why didn't you tell us sooner?" they asked. Their response took me by complete surprise, especially in light of so many sad stories I had heard from friends in similar situations.

Over the next year or so, my internal struggles with issues of gender identity began to grow increasingly intense and persistent, and I began to

question (and am still questioning) whether or not I might not really be TS. My first mental encounter with that possibility struck terror at my soul. All the time and expense and possibilities of medical complications ... and socially, what if I were rejected by my friends and family, as I had sadly heard so often. Still, if the inexorable pull toward this life cannot be resisted, how can one not follow? So far more than simply crossdressing, I was very fearful of how my parents would react. As an only child and with only distant contact with relatives, my parents were the main core of my emotional support in a family structure (my then wife having already fled for the hills unable to deal with me as a crossdresser, despite having known for 8 years prior). Not only did I not want to lose that, but I also did not want to hurt them in any way.

But the need to speak the truth outweighed the pain of keeping the secret and in a four page single spaced letter I outlined the facts to them and sent along many references and some readings to help them deal with what I imagined would be a major issue. Well, once again amazement struck with their acceptance of my lifestyle and possible future life. "You're our child, and we love you no matter what," is essentially what they said. How could I have hoped for more? Still, nothing amazed me more than when my mother asked if she could attend a Renaissance meeting.

I expected that it would be okay if they attended, but I was a little leery at the thought, as it is not common for most people to encounter 50 generally tall and large women with very deep voices. I kept on asking "Are you sure you want to go?" and my folks both intoned "Yes!" So it was with a little trepidation that I brought them when they visited from Atlanta last August,

somewhat uncertain what the reception might be. Would they be looked at as outsiders somehow? I really didn't know. But a calendar quote from Benjamin Franklin rang true: "Be cheerful the problems that worry us most are those that never arrive."

Not only were my folks comfortable with everyone at the meeting, but everyone was wonderfully welcoming to them. I decided that the newcomers meeting might be a good starting place for them, and after their introduction Angela Gardner began a round of applause. All through that evening, nothing but positive and warm comments were given to my parents about how wonderful they were in being so supportive. I had always known that my friends at Renaissance were really great people, but perhaps I never really appreciated how great. Everyone without exception who spoke with them echoed the same sentiment, lauding their support. My father, normally reticent, engaged in many conversations and said several times how he could sense the friendliness and openness of all attending. Though we didn't go to the Ship Inn afterward, we did close down the Woods and would have stayed even longer could we have.

The struggle with gender identity can at times be stressful to the extreme, yet sometimes really wonderful moments can take place which balance things out. This was most certainly one of them. As we drove home from the meeting that night, I asked my parents how they had enjoyed the evening. My mother said she was going to get a big head from all of the compliments she had been receiving that night. My father put it more simply still: "It was one of the most memorable evenings of my life." I guess it was for me as well.



Hot • Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



"Nothing is as terrible to see as ignorance in action." — Goethe

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The **American Psychological Association (APA)** has finally passed a resolution that opposes portrayals of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and adults as **mentally ill** due to their **sexual orientation**. The organization also supports the dissemination of accurate information about sexual orientation, and mental health, and appropriate interventions in order to counteract bias that is based in ignorance or unfounded beliefs about sexual orientation. The resolution was passed in response to critics' claim that the APA was somehow responsible for therapists who misuse APA diagnostic codes to label gbt and questioning youth. While the resolution is a positive step in the right direction, it probably won't stop the labeling practice.

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I saw a report on the net that **Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)** members voted at their annual meeting to be **transgender inclusive**. Details were sketchy, but the report said the vote was nearly unanimous, with one dissenter, and that person wasn't all that unhappy with the decision. That's another notch in our handle. It's only a matter of time before we wear down the **Human Rights Campaign** and get them to be transgender inclusive as well.

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It's not all rosy out there. **Diane Torrance** was scheduled to make a presentation to **GABLE**, the GLB group at **Procter & Gamble**. Her presentation was canceled due to lack of interest by the membership. It seems GABLE is unaware of *any* transgendered people working at P&G anywhere in the world (100,000 employees). The GABLE leadership team is interested in being trans-inclusive but is having a difficult time selling the concept. If you are a P&G employee reading this, please contact Diane <dtorrance@mindspring.com>.

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Dr. Ray Blanchard of the **Clarke Institute**, Toronto, Canada, has a novel idea about what motivates some MtF cross-dressers to have genital reassignment surgery. Such males, he says, are sexually attracted to the idea of themselves as women. He calls his concept "**autogynephilia**," an extreme form of heterosexual crossdressing. Instead of being sexually aroused simply by the thought of wearing feminine clothing, an autogynophile is aroused by the thought of wearing a feminine body. It is, Blanchard thinks, a kind of fetishism — a projection of the libido onto an atypical object or idea. There is some research done by t-physician **Anne Lawrence** that supports this idea. The theory goes a long way to explain the startling large number of t-people who present for surgery and seems to nicely dovetail with **Dr. Richard Docter's** notion of the "secondary transsexual."

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Maybe Blanchard's theory has something to do with this next story by **Natalie Angier** appearing in the August 31 *New York Times*. Recent scientific research has found that the popularity of some male icons, like Leonardo DiCaprio, has more to do with their femininity than their masculinity. Women are more attracted to men with feminized faces than to men with more stereotypically rugged, manly faces. The

scientists had predicted that women would be most attracted to "traditional hallmarks of male dominance and maturity," such as a large jaw, squared-off face, heavy brow. Instead, they found women to be attracted to men with "a touch of girlishness," as in a slender nose, lightened brow, etc. One of the researchers said when they first encountered the "feminine preference" no one believed it so they kept doing their surveys over and over with the same result.

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Lawrence presented her research at the **Second International Congress on Sex and Gender** in 1997. **Third Congress** is getting under way in **Manchester, England**, as I write this, the **Renaissance Transgender Assoc., Inc.**, has announced its intention to produce the **Fourth International Congress on Sex and Gender**. The event has the "blessing" of the **Center for Sex Research** at the California State University at Northridge and **Dr. James Elias**, the Center's Executive Director. Dr. Elias along with **Dr. Vern Bullough** were responsible for the First Congress in 1995. Renaissance was the sponsor of the Second Congress. By the way, congratulations go out to Dr. Bullough on his recent remarriage. His first wife, Dr. Bonnie Bullough, passed away in 1996.

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From **Judy Osborne** we heard that **Patti Summers**, the wife of **Ellen Summers**, passed away from lung cancer in early September. Ellen was a well-respected figure in the northwest transgender community during the late 80's and early 90's.

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I've been talking about the **Millennium March** for the past few months and I received this note from my good friend and sister Renaissance board member **Phyllis Frye**: "I personally endorse this event. Further, the Transgender Law Conference (ICTLEP) is an official co-sponsor of this event. I personally know most of the peo-

ple listed below, and I trust them *to insure a truly transgender inclusive event*. [emphasis hers] I've had past quarrels with some of the people [on the MM board], but am willing to give them the benefit of the doubt for this event due to the intensive TG-inclusive education they have been subjected to since our quarrels began. The only reason that there are no other national TG folks on the Board, other than Ms Ramierz-Murray, is that the several I know who were invited to be on the Board reluctantly had to decline from overwork or from lack of funds. We need some additional national TG folks to step up to the task, especially FTM. I will be at the March, and I hope that you will be there too!" The Millennium March on Washington for Equality will be held on April 30, 2000. Current board members for the March include Elizabeth Birch (Ex. Dir., Human Rights Campaign, Washington, DC); Beverly Biddle (Ex. Dir., National Lesbian & Gay Health Assoc., Washington, DC); Rea Carey (Ex. Dir., National Youth Advocacy Coalition, Washington, DC); Duane Cramer (Board Member, Names Project Foundation, San Francisco, CA); Ann DeGroot (Ex. Dir., Out Front Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN); Dianne Hardy-Garcia (Ex. Dir., Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, Austin, TX); Kerry Lobel (Ex. Dir., National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, Washington, DC); Rev. Troy Perry (Moderator, UFMCC, West Hollywood, CA); Nicole Ramierz-Murray (Co-Chair, National Latina/o LGBT Org., San Diego, CA). Additional information on the March on Washington for Equality is available by e-mail at MMOW2000@aol.com.

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Hey, I made it all the way over here without mentioning the **International Foundation for Gender Education** (IFGE). I'll bet you thought I forgot! Nope, they're still newsworthy even if the organization has been uncharacteristically silent of late. Virtually nothing of interest has been posted at the IFGE web site in nearly a month other than the **conference cancellation** notice mentioned last month. Several board members are fuming over that announcement since the BoD had not

actually made a formal decision to call off the 1999 convention when the cancellation was posted on the IFGE web site by outgoing Executive Director, **Nancy Nangeroni**. Meanwhile, a new controversy is brewing surrounding nominations for the **Virginia Prince** (VP) Award. Some think that the VP and **Trinity** awards are "tilted" toward the IFGE "faithful," thus diluting the importance of the awards. **Joan Goodnight** of the **Powder Puffs of California** reports she was asked to withdraw a nomination she'd made for the VP award. You may remember that I mentioned the great job **Linda and Cynthia Phillips** had done at the joint Cal Dreamin'/IFGE convention in Long Beach in 1997. Well, the Phillips have volunteered at *all* of the Cal Dreamin' events and Goodnight nominated them for both the Virginia Prince award and a Trinity. Goodnight later received a letter from **Winnie Brant** (IFGE Nominations/Awards Chair) asking her to withdraw the Phillips from consideration for the VP award. Brant's exact words were, "When I receive nominations of the same people for both awards, I usually ask the nominator(s) to reconsider; especially if the nominee has not previously received a Trinity award, I suggest that the VP nomination be withdrawn." Goodnight has not withdrawn either nomination. I did not know that you had to get a Trinity before getting the VP. Goodnight thinks the message is clear — outsiders need not apply, the [IFGE] minds are already made up. I agree with her. The whole IFGE award process is upside down. Anyone can nominate anyone for a VP or Trinity, but only the IFGE "**academy**" can vote on who gets the award, and the member list of the academy is closely held.

• • • •

Here's the perfect product for crossdressers too scared to venture out of the house to go shopping. **ModaCAD** (www.fashion-trip.com or 1-800-757-7707) has announced the release of the **FashionTrip** CD-ROM. Here's a description from their web site: "This interactive CD-ROM is the first of its kind — a revolutionary, interactive, personalized fashion consultant. It's jam-packed with fun features like a **virtual**

dressing room, personal fashion profile, and an Internet Phone Book that links you to other fashion web sites. It also includes the latest in music videos, movie trailers and fashion shows. Try on clothes, chat with friends or shop on-line!" Someone who actually saw the software demonstrated says that you can scan or import a picture of yourself into the computer, and it will dress you in your choice of the latest of designer fashions. When new collections are introduced, you will be able to update your software via the internet. Sounds pretty cool to me. I went to their web site and signed up for a free demo CD. **Seventeen** magazine plans to bind the CD right onto the cover of a Fall issue (I don't know which one). I have also seen ads for the software in the October issue of *Mademoiselle*. I've also heard there is a new version of **Cosmopolitan Virtual Makeover** (same idea as FashionTrip for hair and makeup), and that an **Essence Virtual Makeover** will be available soon for African American girls.

• • • •

Here's the latest in fashion from the **Washington, D.C.**, scene; a 100% all cotton navy blue t-shirt lets everybody know where you stand on the issue of **sex in The White House**. With "**Summer Intern, The White House**" printed on the left breast, and the alleged mark (aka "the stain") of the President on the right shoulder, you may very well be mistaken for one of Bill's handpicked interns! The novelty t-shirts are being hawked by DLF Authentics 8325 N Michigan Road, Box 326 Indianapolis, IN 46268-3635, 317-592-1319 (voice mail) and leave order and credit card information. Shirts are \$20 (U.S. Funds) for the first shirt and \$15 for each additional shirt thereafter, which includes shipping and handling (\$20 for 1, \$35 for 2, \$50 for 3, etc.) Orders will be processed within 3 to 5 business days and shipped within the United States via USPS Priority Mail.

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So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? I thought the blue dress was his. Comments? Write me care of this publication or send email to the <CyberQueen@cds.pub.com>.

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Vis A Vis...

to the serious principles of heterosexual crossdressing. I guess this event proves that they may be staid and heterosexual... but they ain't dead. Perhaps it's a new approach in marketing as we near the millennium.

The event was also sponsored and attended by members of Houston's other support group, the Gulf Coast Transgender Community (GCTC). In

the August issue of their *Transmission Line* newsletter, their President, Vanessa Edwards Foster, wrote a review of the festivities at the Dare Ware event. Included in her report were descriptions of a couple of the fashions modeled by the crossdressers on the runway: "Desiree Walton donned a show stopping vinyl Spandex snake-print with skin tight leggings [and] Jenifer Rene modeled a crop top over camouflage-print mini hot pants!" In my August column, I complimented the above-mentioned

Jenifer Rene as an outstanding looker. I can only imagine how she might have looked in camo-print mini hot pants.

It didn't say how many pairs of nipple clamps the Tri-Ess girls purchased, nor the number of times the register rang up a sale for whips or paddles. Spiked dog collars, however, were moving briskly. And I understand that the Tri-Ess Board has recently announced that wearing Liquid Latex at the next Holiday En Femme will be strongly discouraged.



One To One...

"transsexual" or "crossdresser" on their system — it was a violation of their Terms of Service agreement! A small group of us, who called ourselves the "America Online Gender Group," or AOLGG, started to lobby and educate AOL, and in May 1994 they relented, changing their Terms of Service.

It was around that time that we started to work with the Gay and Lesbian Community Forum (GLCF, now known as "onQ") which already was hosting the Sunday Gender Chat, to help us open a trans-specific area. By January of 1995, all the groundwork was laid, and with the support and encouragement of the GLCF, we were able to open our doors.

Q. Your Web site mentions the "Missing Colors." Could you explain what that means?

A. The "Missing Colors" is an idea I started work on in June, to address the issue of trans-inclusion in Gay &

Lesbian pride parades. In many cases we are viewed as a new addition to their struggle, a "poor cousin" back in the fold.

The idea revolves around not only our historical place at the table, but also the history of the Rainbow flag, which was designed in 1978 by Gilbert Baker. In the original flag, Baker used a total of eight stripes: hot pink, red, orange, yellow, green, turquoise, blue, and violet. Within a year, the hot pink and turquoise were removed, due mainly to the lack of commercial availability for the ink, and to allow the colors to be evenly distributed. The six-stripe version has been recognized as the symbol of the GLBT community ever since.

How does this apply to us? Well, in the early years of the gay movement, those of us who are now known as "transgender" were included as a part of the movement, and played a part at Stonewall and other early fights for queer rights. As the gay movement gained momentum through the 1970s, we too were dis-

carded as something "old fashioned" and "too different."

For many in the gay, lesbian, bi community and many in the trans community, the pride flag has always been six colors, and transfolks have always been an adjunct to the gay movement, giving a symbol to address our true interconnectedness to the larger movement.

Of course, I doubt the fact that gender-specific meanings of the missing colors — hot pink and turquoise blue — will be missed by folks, either. Oh — and if one has a web browser, the concept can be found on the web at <http://members.aol.com/onqgen/colors>.

Q. Why work with the gay and lesbian community?

A. As I alluded to earlier, I've been involved with a Gay/Lesbian organization for many years, and am in a lesbian relationship. The one thing that has always stuck me is the similarities in our struggles.

continued on next page

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One To One...

For one thing, one of the main reasons that gay and lesbian folks face discrimination is for gender nonconformity. Heck, at the heart of almost every "fag" or "dyke" joke is a gendered comment, the "nellie queen" and the "diesel-dyke" are the images that face the biggest oppression within their community. We too face the same thing, when we speak of "passing," knowing that to "be read" is to face discrimination for being gender-non-conforming.

Besides, for many of us, the whole argument of orientation can be one that we struggle with. Is a pre-op male-to-female who dates men participating in homosexual behavior? Is a transman? The lines can get so very blurred sometimes. Maybe the best thing is to not worry about the lines altogether.

There are, of course, political reasons to ally with the gay and lesbian community as well — and some of

those reasons could easily apply to allying with other communities. We can use as much support in the political arena as possible, if we ever hope to see equal rights extended to all of us. Heck, without working with the gay and lesbian community, the TCF would never have existed, and the Gay and Lesbian Community Forum would not have enjoyed the benefits of having us as a part of their overall area.

Q. What can each of us do to "restore" the colors?

A. What I am proposing is symbolically showing that we are this forgotten part of the queer movement — the missing colors in the flag, if you will. I would think that the more trans organizations and individuals who begin to use the eight-color pride flag as a symbol, and the more it is seen by others, the more consciousness might be raised. The original thought was to simply do this as part of pride parade activities — on our floats and such — but it truly could be extended into all sorts of trans-

pride and trans-awareness-related activities.

Q. What does the future hold for TCF?

A. Many, many things. Over the winter months, I typically will have a number of special guests come on and join in our Sunday Gender Chat, including Kate Bornstein, Les Feinberg, Gianna Israel, and others. I'm also working on increasing our already popular news and features area with a couple new writers, and looking at some other ways to improve the quality of all our existing and enjoyed features.

Of course, being on America Online allows us to also explore new technologies that AOL may provide as well, and some of those are certainly in the long-term plans!

Q. What does the future hold for Gwen Smith?

A. The last four years have been a time of very large change for me. I've still got a lot of work to do until then,

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Ms. Lynda

On Christianity And Being Different

by Jessica Brandon

(The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and not of The Renaissance Transgender Association)

Angela Gardner's piece on the 60 Minutes segment regarding Exodus, the Christian method of "curing" homosexuality prompted me to write this article. Admittedly, I have no use for religion. While I fully respect a person's belief in God, I have none myself. I'm a cynic and only believe in things I can see, hear and touch. When I was young though, I used to attend Sunday school quite religiously (pardon the pun), but that quickly went by the wayside when I hit my teens and G-O-D was replaced on Sundays by N-F-L. Religion hasn't mattered to me since. However, I've developed a huge taste for documentary shows on cable of late, and one of my favorites is, ironically enough, A & E's *Mysteries of the Bible*. Go figure.

Nowadays, the only time I bother to step in a church is when someone I know is either getting married or being eulogized after passing away. Unfortunately, over the last five years, I've done more of the latter than the former, including my own mother, uncle and my next door neighbor. Without fail, I can't help but feel uncomfortable in churches because it's a place I clearly don't want to be. But I digress. From what I see on television, or the Internet, and read in the newspapers, religion, most prominently Christianity, seems to be giving

people a license to hate. And that hatred is squarely aimed at anyone who doesn't fit the strict and narrow guidelines laid out in the Bible, namely gays, lesbians, and us — the transgendered.

Right here in Philadelphia, where I live, a law regarding benefits to partners (including gays and lesbians) is being vociferously challenged by local Christian groups, claiming it seriously threatens the longstanding tradition of marriage and the nuclear family. Never mind the fact that marriage and families are endangered more by heterosexual couples than anyone else, something those holy rollers never saw fit to consider. Then there's Reggie White, star defensive lineman for the Green Bay Packers, (and once a hero of mine) who made a royal ass of himself during a long winded speech to the Wisconsin State Assembly in which he insulted every ethnic minority in the book and railed against homosexuals — all in the name of religion.

And, of course, the holy rollers are backed up (almost uniformly) by most of the agenda-laden politicians from the Republican Party who are in bed with the bible thumpers and want to ram morals and decency down everyone's throats, whether we want them or not. I for one don't need them. I already know enough not to steal, cheat, hate, or kill things I learned at home from my mother before I ever set foot in a church. The one thing that amazes me about the nutcases and firebrands who belong to the

Moral Majority and the Christian Right is that the Bible preaches to "Love Thy Neighbor," yet these people, through their almost rabid condemnation of gays and lesbians (and us) are, instead, practicing hatred and bigotry.

The hypocrisy of it all staggers the imagination, and, to quote Harrison Ford from Star Wars, "I can imagine quite a lot." Whatever happened to tolerance? Understanding? The ability to accept people as they are, regardless of if they happen to be different from you or I? Have those values been shunted aside for the sake of this revolting crusade to save the world from the so-called evils of being different? Those lessons were something my mother impressed upon me long before I heard my first sermon as a kid, and they've really sunk in since I became part of a minority of people who are different from the rest of society because I, as a biological male choose to wear a dress and exhibit my personal brand of femininity.

I remember Pat Robertson commenting on Disney World's practice of setting aside a day for gay and lesbian employees at the park as being tantamount to the end of the world, or words to that effect. What lunacy! That man and the rest of his addle-brained ilk desperately need to join the 20th century! In my mind, the world has more to worry about, from the war against drugs that society's all but lost, despoils like Suddam

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THE FUTURE IS OURS

By Dr. Sheila Kirk

The title of this article was inspired by a statement sent to me by a person who was kind enough to express their support of the opening of my new Trans Surgical center. It is one of hundreds of positive remarks and encouragement I have received from community members, Trans and non-Trans healthcare professionals, and others since forming the Transgender Surgical & Medical Care Center (TSMC) in May. These encouraging remarks have been most gratifying, and it reinforces my reasons for building the center. "Thank you, Dr. Kirk, your courageous step has helped to insure that the future of our medical & surgical care can at last, be ours."

This statement so struck me because it succinctly expresses what my intentions were when I began pulling all the many complex pieces together to formulate TSMC. It was my intention then, as is now, as it will always be, to provide the highest standards of care, concern and management throughout all stages of your surgical and medical needs. But

equally as important to all of us in our community, TSMC was founded with another purpose in mind. It is my firm belief that in order to achieve complete healthcare empowerment we must not only be surgical/medical consumers, but we must also be afforded the right to be our own surgical/medical providers. This is not to say that we should not recognize or support many of those non-T professionals who have worked so hard to educate themselves on healthcare circumstances unique to us, and who provide us with sound, compassionate care and management. But what it does mean is that we should have an opportunity to select Trans professionals to manage and care for our entire healthcare needs through all stages of our gender journey.

Unfortunately, we all know that at present that is not the case. Although some important headway has been made by our sisters and brothers in the psychological fields, many of us are aware of the difficulties encountered by medical physicians who have been forced or asked to leave their hospitals, their residencies or their medical partnerships when they come out or when they transition. Some have been able to continue caring for us in solo office settings, some have opened clinics that offer out-patient cosmetic surgical services, but very few have been able to maintain their hospital privileges and work within the system in the discipline in which they were trained. And until the start of TSMC no Trans surgeon has performed GRS and related surgical procedures for members of our community.

Yes, it is rewarding to me to be the first surgeon who was able to break the

barrier that permeates the medical profession, but that accomplishment has bittersweetness about it. Trans-medical professionals treating our community at all levels should be the norm, not the exception. How can this be accomplished? It won't be an easy task. But if we want empowerment and the ability to make important decisions in our healthcare needs, it needs to be done. We must all unite together, support each other and work together to help those who wish to work within the healthcare system. And support them when they do. Statistics show that when given the choice, genetic women (GW) prefer to have GW physicians and psychologists treat them. We can go a long way to empowering ourselves just as GW's have empowered themselves: by enlisting Trans-professionals to administer our care. I am not suggesting, however, that we should go to T professionals simply because they are members of our community. That would be foolhardy and potentially hazardous to our health. Select your Trans professional with the same concern and guidelines you would any other healthcare provider.

Another way we can help one another is by mentoring one another. Those of us who are physicians and mental healthcare providers can help those who are considering working in the medical field, or who wish to enter it, by sharing their expertise and life experience. Many of my colleagues, as well as myself, do this already in an informal manner but a more united effort could prove to be much more helpful and effective.

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Making Sense of It All

by Lee Etscovitz, Ed.D.

The Inner Book

Books have always had an important place in my life, perhaps because I grew up in a household where they were highly valued and made readily available. I guess it is no wonder that I find myself serving as National Librarian for the Renaissance Transgender Association. In any case, the fact is that, even in a world of movies, television, videos, and the Internet, as well as cassettes and compact disks, I continue to value books highly.

It is always with a mixture of excitement and relaxation that I browse among the bookshelves at a bookstore, like a beachcomber searching for hidden treasure in the sand along the water's edge, perhaps finding an attractive and intriguing shell. And then when, out of the possibilities before me, in this case books, I find something of interest to read, something that somehow reaches, or promises to reach, into my very being, I obtain it and take it home.

Home is any place, usually a quiet place, where I can begin an inner conversation or dialogue with a person — a writer in this instance — to whom I am willing to listen. And if that writer speaks to my own concerns, feelings, and thoughts, then I feel he or she is somehow listening to me. I may pause in my reading from time to time, putting the book aside for a while, even for days or weeks, to absorb what I have been reading, to reflect on it, and perhaps to consider what I, whether as a writer or not, would say in response.

It is out of this experience with books that I have written the following

poem, entitled simply, "Books:"

Books
await me
on the shelves of my desire.
Oh I shall never tire
of sitting in the quiet
in the presence of these friends
as I open to their voices
reaching out from choices
that I make beyond
all temporary trends.

Sitting in my reading chair
in a world I call my own,
I contemplate the centuries
and pick clean the written bone.
I yearn for special wisdom
to guide my mortal days,
to show me those connections
beyond the general gaze.

And then perhaps
I too will write
my version of the word
and place myself
upon the shelf
that I too
may be heard.

It never occurred to me during my many years with books that what I was reading, as well as writing, pertained to my hidden but ever-present transgender feelings and struggles. Yet my own bookshelves — which have grown over time — reveal in general an implicit interest in this area. In fact, as might be expected, I now have a growing shelf of books explicitly dealing with the transgender experience.

Most books on the transgender experience deal with its outer aspects, such as the medical area (hormone therapy and surgery), electrolysis, and the legal, political, social, marital, family, and vocational issues and problems. All of these aspects are most assuredly important, but, aside from a few responsible urgings to be true to oneself, there is a dearth of written material on the inner struggle which usually seeks expression on hot lines and in support groups and counseling sessions. Some individuals,

like myself, keep a personal journal and even publish their reflections, such as those represented here. But as a subject for book-length treatment, the inner struggle tends to remain hidden and untouched, as if somehow what is inside should not or can not be part of what is outside. The fact is, however, that unless what is inside is faced, and faced constructively, it can easily become destructive, both inside and out.

How then, we may ask, can we each deal with what is inside and invisible and thus very difficult to grasp and handle? My answer is: with difficulty, with courage, and with patience. If what is inside were instead easy to handle, safe to face, and quickly resolved, there would be little for me, or anyone else, to write about, at least from a psychological perspective. The fact is that we each possess an inner book which is continually being written, and which no one but each of us can ultimately write. I myself am continually writing my own inner book. Whatever happens to find its way into actual print can only serve for others as a pointer to possibilities as each person, in this case each transgendered person, plumbs the depths of his or her soul for the ability, the courage, and the patience with which to give shape and form to the inner journey.

Yes, when we, as transgendered persons, read books (as well as pursue the other media), we may not only be seeking entertainment but also, as the poem says, be yearning "for special wisdom." It takes such wisdom, usually hard-earned, to write the inner book and to place it upon one's own inner shelf for ongoing reference. If we do not listen to our own words and refer to ourselves, if we do not hear the beat of our own hearts, we will simply be joining the walking dead, the transgendered zombies among us (such as I was for too much of my life) whom not even the Internet can truly awaken. It is not easy to be an inner writer, but the result — the inner book — is each transgendered person's "version of the word:" that person's life and truth, both inside and out.



Christianity...

Hussein, bomb toting terrorists, crazed messiahs like Jim Jones and David Koresh who entice the weak minded to mass suicide, and maniacs like that sect in Japan (a religious one by the way, gee, what a shock!) who released poison gas in a Tokyo subway tunnel, than it does from gays, lesbians and the transgendered.

Yet, the holy rollers never say much of anything about the true threats to peace and security in our world. In their eyes, homosexuals and the transgendered are more dangerous than nuclear war. Every time right thinking politicians (of which there are precious few out there) attempt to enact laws that give gays, lesbians and us the same rights as the rest of society, these knuckleheads from the Christian Corner roar in on their white steeds to raise hell against it. By doing so, they actively and purposely seek to deny people the same sort of rights they themselves probably take for granted. Why? Because we're dif-

ferent! Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think the Constitution is supposed to guard against that sort of thing.

Now, I don't mean to paint everyone who practices Christianity or any other religion with so broad a brush. Of course there are plenty of God fearing folks out there who practice nothing but love, tolerance, and understanding towards people who are different. But the good works these people perform are overshadowed by the zealots who, following doctrines from thousands of years ago (which never imagined the eventual diversity of the human race), preach a gospel of scathing prejudice. And it's because of the negative messages the holy rollers spew out that closeted souls are, in some cases, deathly afraid to come out and take their rightful place in society, free to live their lives as they see fit.

I happen to love being transgendered, being different, because that makes me special and unique. But to the Bible thumpers in our midst I'm a notch below child molesters, serial killers, and drug pushers — menaces

they don't seem to even want to talk about, much less fight. Perhaps because we (and that includes gays and lesbians) are an easier target to fight and keep oppressed. Sort of like the rampaging New York Yankees choosing to pad their history making won-loss records by playing only Little League teams. Puff out your chest and fatten your ego by crushing the enemy you can beat, not the one you can't. For that reason alone, we have to fight for whatever rights we can get, because the Christian Corner will fight us every step of the way.

All I want from life is to the ability to come and go as I please, and live my life as I see fit when I'm Jessica, nothing more, nothing less. But the scripture spouting nutcases out there would sooner lock me, and all others like me, people who are different, back in our closets - and throw away the key. Out of sight, out of mind... out of society. Hmmm, I wonder if the Bible teaches to shun and destroy thy brother? I'd buy one and find out, but I don't care to.



One To One...

of course, and some personal issues — such as a little “corrective surgery” — to attend to. I'm also right now looking at some new career options, including a possible advocacy role within a major gay and lesbian organization.

In spite of all of that, life continues. I have a wonderful spouse who

knew some of my aspirations prior to marriage, and we've now celebrated our sixth year together, two as husband and wife, four as wife and wife.

Our thanks to Gwen for sharing her thoughts with News & Views. We'll be interviewing other folks in the TG community in upcoming issues.



Why does Angela look so peeved? She knows the whole summer went by and she failed to get a great shot for the February Swimsuit Issue! Hope you did! Send it to the National Office, mark: Swimsuits



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Counseling for individuals and couples

Dr. Kirk...

TSMC is committed to going a step further. We are dedicated to improve upon the informal mentoring that surgeons performing GRS surgeries worldwide now provide one another. Many of you may be surprised to learn that GRS surgeons learn from one another through observation, by assisting in each other's surgeries, by sharing their techniques with each other, and by reporting to the medical literature and at meetings. Currently there is no formal training program in Trans-surgery; informal mentoring and exchange with other surgeons is the method that is used by all who work in this surgical discipline. We at TSMC feel that our community would be better served by instituting a formalized program. Therefore, as we grow, we will formally teach the intricate techniques of trans surgeries, our pioneered techniques and our methods to improve sensation and functionality, to talented and dedicated residents wanting to make this important discipline

their career choice in the future. We intend to do our part in empowering our community not only by providing the best and most innovative care and surgical technique but also by training Trans (and non-T) individuals interested in making Transsurgery and medicine their professional future.

This step is a first step for our community - a small step - when compared to the others steps that should and will follow in this relatively new discipline I like to refer to as Trans Care. So much needs to be done and it will take the commitment and support of all of us. Yet, it is a much-needed step towards our empowerment, and one that is far overdue. Where are we to go from here? It's up to us to decide.

Empowerment on the medical and surgical level isn't the only task at hand toward our independence and self-reliance. Take a moment to think about how you might be able to help our community help ourselves. Each of us has a special gift, a unique ability, a much-needed skill that can go a long way in helping us strengthen ourselves and to

insure that there truly is a "unity within our community."

Yes... the future is ours. And it can be a bright, promising one if we all work together to make it happen.

Sheila Kirk, MD recently made Trans-history by forming the first Transgender Surgical & Medical Center (TSMC Center) developed and directed by a Trans surgeon. In addition, Dr Kirk is the first Trans-surgeon performing MTF GRS surgeries, breast augmentation and related surgeries. Together with her partners she also performs rib removals, male pattern baldness correction, craino-facial feminization, body and facial contouring and corrective procedures. You can receive more information about the TSMC Center or ask Dr. Kirk questions on your treatment and care, by contacting her at TSMC@aol.com, by phone (412) 781-1092, fax (412) 781-1096 or snail mail: TSMC P.O. Box 38366, Blawnox, PA 15238.



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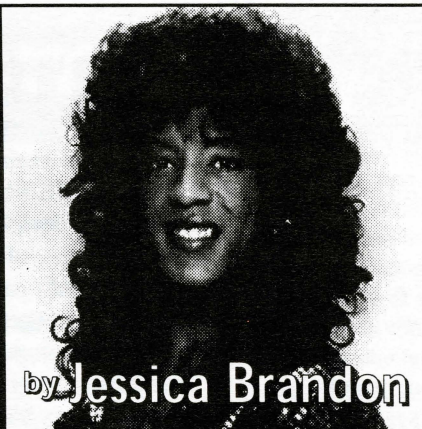
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Shopping With Jessica



Greetings, girlfriends! The leaves are turning brown and the air is slowly growing crisp and cooler. That means fall is right around the corner! If you haven't gone to the stores to buy your winter coat, rush right out now and correct that oversight while the selection is good and the prices are still reasonable. I'll wait until you return.

Back so soon? Cool! Ever since I took over the newsletter's shopping column, exactly three years ago this month (my, how time flies when you're having fun!), I've talked ad nauseum about what to shop for, how to shop, even how to act when you go shopping. But I've never discussed what to do with everything you've bought once you get it all home. Well, girls, this month, I'm gonna tell you just how to do that in a feature I call "Where Do I Put It All?"

Let's start with clothes, which belong in closets. If you live alone like I do, or have an understanding spouse, you've got it made. A good idea would be to keep your male and female clothes in separate closets. Just as there's separation of church and state, so too should there be separation of the genders when it comes to clothing stowage. If you don't have an abundance of closet space, invest in a garment rack. Some come with wheels and extend to widths up to 84 inches.

For shoes, you can store them in cabinets that open out to reveal them, on racks that hang on the door of your closet, in sectioned bags that do the same, or sectioned, floor standing chests. The cabinets can store anywhere from 12 to 36 pairs, and some are even stackable, so you can add

storage space when needed. As for prices, cabinets can run up to \$80.00, racks and bags about \$24.00, and chests at \$60.00 for the model that holds 36 pairs. Me? I'm cheap. I keep my shoes in the boxes they came in.

Lingerie: Again, for the sake of organization, your femme underwear should be kept separate from your male boxers, unless you're like me and panties are all you wear. Makeup should be kept in a sturdy container, away from cold, damp, musty, or humid areas. Jewelry needs to be kept in a box or case and not in the bottom of a dresser drawer where tiny items like earrings can be easily misplaced. As for handbags, I've never seen any dedicated storage container for them, so put them wherever you like.

An ideal situation would be to have a room set aside just for your femme self which includes the following: large, roomy closets or garment racks, a chest or dresser, a vanity table, a jewelry case and plenty of space to store your wigs (such as a foot wide bookcase) and shoes. Some of you are fortunate enough to have such an arrangement, others aren't. The key thing is to determine just how much space you have and utilize it with the utmost efficiency.

Next we come to one other thing we need to properly stow away, but this item is something we have to hide while dressed. That's right, I'm talking about Mr. Johnson. There's nothing worse than being out in public, dressed to the nines and looking your best, only to have your perfectly crafted illusion of femininity ruined by that unsightly bulge downstairs in the

boiler room. I myself have had this happen in my early years out of the closet and it wasn't a pretty sight.

If you're, shall we say, small in stature, Mr. J can be easy to hide under loose fitting clothing. But if you're - and please forgive me for sounding crude, or worse, like a man - hung like a gorilla, that can be quite a problem. It's not an unsolvable one, though. One of the more well-known ways to keep Mr. J. in place is with a gaff. However, that's not the ultimate solution to the problem since a gaff doesn't work for everyone. And I happen to fall in that category.

When I first tried a gaff, I found it much to tight and painfully constricting, despite having closely read the directions. To make a long story short, when I wore the darn thing, it felt like the family jewels were being held for ransom. So I ditched the gaff in favor of a waist cinching brief which I've found to work well for tucking. The brief serves to both conform my figure into a more believable female one, and it keeps Mr. J in place. I think it can work for you as well.

What you want to do is buy a brief one size smaller than your waist size. These garments average around \$28.00 to \$32.00 apiece and come usually in white (which you should avoid), beige, champagne and black, which is the color I prefer. Now, I don't mean to knock the gaff, I'm sure some of you reading this use it and it works well for you. Hey, that's great! I just want to make an alternative choice available for tucking Mr. J.

Well, girls, that's it for this month. Before I go, be sure to snap up *LadyLike* #35 when it comes your way as the Profile Girl in that issue is none other than yours truly! As always, my mailbox is open for your comments, tips and opinions at <tree-top@voicenet.com>, or by snail mail to the Renaissance National office address on page two. Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping, sisters!



Organization Listing

• **Transgender Health Action Coalition (T-HAC):** The Transgender Information and Peer Counseling Hotline is now helping to serve the needs of the greater Philadelphia Transgender community. The hotline operates every Monday and Thursday from 6 to 10 p.m. Call: (215) 732-1207. Organizational meetings of the are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month from 8 to 9:30 p.m. on the fourth floor of the Washington West Offices, 1201 Locust St. Phila. PA. All are welcome to attend.

• **ActionAIDS:** Support groups and information for HIV+ people in the Philadelphia area. 215-981-0088 for general information. Sponsor Passages, a support group for gender variant people. Call 215-981-3349 for Passages information.

• **William Way Lesbian, Gay, Bi, TG Community Center:** Many programs and diversions for the LGBT community in Philadelphia. For info on upcoming events call 215-732-2220.

• **Community Alliance of Transsexuals (CATS):** TS support group that meets in Burlington County, New Jersey. 215-536-1209

• **The Attic:** Center for gay, lesbian, bisexual and TG youth ages 12 to 23 in Philadelphia. 215-545-4331.

• **Phila. TS Support Group:** 4 p. m. the first Saturday every month at 1201 Locust Street 215-483-7647.

• **Intersexed Issues:** Raven Kaldera, Amboyz Intersexed Liason, Cauldron Farm, 12 Simond Hill Road, Hubbardston, MA, 01452, 978-928-4198, cauldron@net1plus.com

• **FTM and SOFFA Issues (including Intersex):** Gary Bowen, Coordinator-in-chief, P O Box 1118, Elkton, MD, 21922-1118, 410-392-3640, transman@netgsi.com, URL:<http://www.netgsi.com/~listwrangler>

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TG Community Calendar

LOCAL RENAISSANCE CHAPTERS/AFFILIATES- OCTOBER

4: Lower Susquehanna Valley, New Jersey Support
11: Lehigh Valley, Delaware
18: Greater Philadelphia (Halloween Party)
25: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender

OCTOBER 1998

3: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)
15-17: Lavender Law Conference, Park Plaza Hotel, Boston, MA. Contact <LAVLAW98@aol.com>.
16-18: Colorado Gold Rush, GIC of Colorado, 1455 Ammons St., Ste. 100, Lakewood, CO 80215-4993, 303-202-6466, <GICofColo@aol.com>
18-25: Fantasia Fair, Provincetown, MA. Contact Alison Laing, P.O. Box 473, Portsmouth, RI 02871-0473, phone: 401-624-4317.

24: 4th Annual Transgender/Transsexual health Empowerment Conference, Audre Lorde Project Inc., 85 South Oxford Street, Brooklyn NY 11217. For more info or input, please contact: Rosalyne Blumenstein Director GIP, 212-620-7310, E-mail: <rb Blumenstein@gaycenter.org> or Nguru, 718-596-0342, <alpinfo@alp.org>

NOVEMBER 1998

5-8: Paradise in the Poconos. Fantasy

getaway weekend. Contact CDS, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia, PA 19406, call 610-640-9449, or email to <poco@cDSPub.com>.

5-8: Fall Harvest 1998. Sponsored by City of Lakes Crossgendered Community in Minneapolis, MN at the Sheraton Metro Dome. For info, contact CLCC, P.O. Box 14844, Minneapolis, MN 55414. Call 612-229-3613 or email to <CLCC@topcity.net>.

7: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)
8-13: Dignity Cruise X and Holiday at Sea II. Miami to Key West and the Bahamas. Contact Cruises Inc.: Barbara Arendt at (800) 621-6699 or Mike Sinn at (800)818-7830.

11-15: Joint Meeting, The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality and American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Sex Therapists, "Sexuality and the Media: Hooray for Hollywood?", Westin Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles, CA write Joint AASECT/SSSS Meeting P.O. Box 240, Mount Vernon, IA 52314-0240, 319-895-6407, fax: 319-895-6203

19: Diabolique Fetish Masquerade Ball, call 215-829-4986

20-22: Riverside Gala Weekend at The Inn at Franklin on Liberty Street, Franklin, PA. For info, write to Erie Sisters, 1903 West 8th Street, Suite 261, Erie, PA 16505. Email: <rgw98@usachoice.net> or <esc@csonline.net, fax: 814-437-5996.

DECEMBER 1998

No events scheduled

JANUARY 1999

2: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)

FEBRUARY 1999

6: A.G.E. meeting (Ren. affiliate)

MARCH 1999

3-16: Dignity Cruise XI on the Marco Polo from Sydney, Australia to Cairns. Contact Cruises Inc.: Barbara Arendt at 800-621-6699 or Mike Sinn at 800-818-7830.

APRIL 1999

8-10: Pride and prejudice: The 5th Annual Symposium on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues, University of Rhode Island. Inquiries can be made by phone at 401-874-2101, or email at <silvadel@aol.com.

AUGUST 1999

17-22: Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., London, England. Contact: Bean Robinson, 1300 South 2nd Street, Sst, Suite 180, Minneapolis, MN 55454. Phone: 612-625-1500 (receptionist), 612-624-8078 (voice mail), 612-626-8311 (fax) or email to <robin009@gold.tc.umn.edu>



Philly's GALAEI Launches TG Safe Sex Kit

GALAEI's Midnight Cowboy Project has launched a safer-sex kit specifically designed to meet the needs of Philadelphia's transgender community.

The kit, called "Trans Protection," was developed by the GALAEI Project in consultation with Ben Singer of the Transgender Health Action Coalition, and with the input of other members of Philadelphia's transgender community including the San Francisco based Transgender Community Health Project.

David Acosta, executive director of the Project says, "The development of a safer-

sex kit specifically designed to address the informational needs of transgender communities, fills a current void in services targeting this community in Philadelphia, and seeks to address the informational needs of a complex community around safer-sex and safer injection use."

The kit consists of a small informational insert which discusses safer sex issues for male to female and female to male individuals. The latter are often ignored by programs seeking to work with transgender populations. The brochure discusses safer-sex issues for both pre-operation and post-

operation individuals, as well as providing guidelines for safely injecting hormones and/or injection drug use.

The information was compiled largely in response to requests GALAEI received while doing street outreach. Other information included came from trans resource guides from New York and San Francisco. For more information, contact the Midnight Cowboy project at 215-985-3382.

From FASTFAX #190, August 16, 1998
published by We The People Living with AIDS/HIV of the Delaware Valley, Inc.



Jay Ann

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