

Gender Serbe Newsletter

Issue No. 4

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May, 1988

Burn Out and the Gender Worker

Fifty years ago, when I was in my mid-teens, I joined my school cadet force. Following my father's advice, I decided to qualify as a signaller, especially as he had himself been a regimental signaller. In the course of teaching me the Morse Code, he mentioned that signallers used to become "polarized". This expression came directly from the study of electricity and magnetism, so necessary to the operation of the old telegraph systems. A magnet will lose its magnetic properties after a time, especially if it is of soft iron and forms the core of an electro-magnet. My father was telling me that telegraph operators would become stale after a time and could no longer read Morse at their usual speed. Today we would say that they were burnt out.

Burn out occurs in many occupations, especially in the case of those who work in the fields of counselling and education. This is one reason why educational institutes have introduced the sabbatical - a year off in which to "recharge one's batteries".

It is too easy to overlook the wear and tear on those who work among the gender dysphoric. The concept of the sabbatical requires that a person take off one year in seven, but the need for this respite is not appreciated by those who demand the services of the gender counsellor.

In recent months it should have become obvious that certain voluntary workers in the gender field have become burnt out. The Founding Director of FACT and of MMRF has suffered two periods of burn out. The former Executive Director of FACT has suffered from burn out. Now it appears obvious that the Editor of TV/TS Tapestry is suffering from burn out. The gender community expects too much of those who try to serve it.

What is the solution? If people feel a real need for support (as they most certainly do) then they must be prepared to share the work load. Rupert Raj cannot be expected to carry Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation and its magazine for ever. Merissa Sherrill Lynn cannot be expected to carry the Tapestry for ever. Susan Huxford has made it clear that she will not carry FACT for ever. Associations and publications either fold, or they must be reorganized. From time to time new blood must be infused into every activity if it is not to become polarized - to become stale. The gender community is looking for such an infusion at present.

It is fully understood that many transsexuals are still trying desperately to establish themselves in their chosen gender role. This in itself is a colossal challenge and these people cannot be expected to

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FACT Reorganizes

Members of FACT and others seeking support from the association should note a change in the whole concept of the organization. On April 9, 1988 a meeting of the Interim Board of Directors was held in Toronto. Those present were Frankie Barbara Andresen, Vicky Bellefeuille, Patricia Fisher, Susan Huxford and Dawn Raby. The resignation of Micheline Johnson was received and accepted. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that FACT as at present constituted cease to pursue its application for incorporation in Ontario. In addition, both the new draft constitution and the original constitution are now scrapped, with no intention of replacing them at present. Those present agreed that the Board of Directors is dissolved, but the five members have constituted themselves as a Co-ordinating Committee and will be known as FACT Co-ordinators.

FACT will continue to exist, but its activities will no longer be centralized. There will be no membership fee and Gender Review will no longer be published. As already indicated to subscribers, those who have credit with FACT for Gender Review may transfer their credit to GenderServe Newsletter or may request a refund of the unexpired portion of their subscription. To date nobody has requested a refund, but contact has been lost with some people who have moved and failed to provide a forwarding address.

There will be no further attempt to organize FACT chapters, but the formation of

peer support groups will be encouraged wherever possible.

To assist in this, and to lend support to individuals who feel isolated, GenderServe will operate a clearing house on behalf of FACT to be known as the FACT Clearing House. Applicants will be required to sign a statement empowering GenderServe to reveal their name and address or telephone number to one other person living as closely as possible to them. If a support group exists in their locality they will, in addition, be put in touch with that group. Names and addresses will be computerized as will also details of support groups as they are provided to FACT or GenderServe. A small fee of \$2.00 will be charged for this service in order to cover mailing and operating costs.

FACT co-ordinators excluding Susan Huxford are prepared to offer peer counselling and support. Miss Huxford's services, for which a fee is required, are available only through GenderServe. The FACT Clearing House may be reached by writing to FACT, P.O. Box 291, Station 'A', Hamilton, Ontario, L8N 3C8. Other correspondence intended for FACT or for individual co-ordinators should be addressed to FACT, P.O. Box 1149, Station 'F', Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2T8, and should be marked Attention: (Co-ordinator's name) where appropriate with the following exception:

All mail intended for FACT Quebec must be addressed to Mrs. Patricia Fisher (FACT),

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TV-TS Tapestry

In the February issue of **GenderServe Newsletter** we reported that copies of Issue No.50 of **TV-TS Tapestry** had been ordered from Wayland. Our request was mailed January 13 and followed up by a further letter on March 7. No reply has been received to either letter.

GenderServe received a letter from the new Chairman of the Board of the International Foundation for Gender Education (I.F.G.E.) on March 16 in which she states that "(TV-TS Tapestry) is recognized as the 'world class' journal of our culture and its timely publication is at the top of my list of priorities". It is regretted that subscribers will have to await developments or request the cancellation of their subscriptions and refund from **GenderServe**.

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FACT Clearing House

Correspondent Required A 27 year-old Polish gay seeks correspondence with a Canadian transsexual. He expresses interests in theatre, opera, cinema, music, tourism and writes good English, but does not state his interest in transsexualism. Address will be provided by the **FACT Clearing House**, P.O. Box 291, Station 'A', Hamilton, Ontario, L8N 3C8 on receipt of S.A.E., quoting G29.001.

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FACT... (Cont. from p.2)
C.P. 293, Succursale Cote des Neiges, Montreal, Quebec.
H3S 2S6.

CONVENTIONS AND WORKSHOPS**Transsexual Issues - 1988**

A special programme for transsexually-inclined persons is to be presented at the Ramada Inn-Airport on Saturday, June 11. Although this is to be presented in conjunction with Be All You Want to Be '88 the programme appears to be of real value to TSs. A very important session will be held on Fantasy v. Reality, an essential aspect of the TS phenomenon. Dr. Virginia Prince is the featured lunchtime speaker. Further information is included wherever possible with this newsletter. If you have not received such information, please write to Crossroads Club, c/o Milesa Phar, P.O. Box196, Garden City, MI 48135 should you consider registering.

Fantasia Fair

The 14th Annual **Fantasia Fair** will be held in Provincetown, Massachusetts, October 14-23, 1988. This cross-dressers' attraction is a TV-oriented activity, but is open to TSs. A brochure and registration form may be obtained by writing to **Fantasia Fair**, Lincolnia Station, P.O.Box 11254, Alexandria, VA 22312, attention: Eve Goodwin.

Lifestyles '88

The **Lifestyles Organization** announces its 14th. Annual Convention on **Lifestyles and Sexuality** at the Hacienda Resort and Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, August 19-21, 1988. A Call for Presenters has been circulated and proposals must
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Lifestyles '88 (Cont. from p.3) be returned no later than June 22 to Lifestyles Program Committee, 2331 W. Sequoia Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801, from whom further information may be obtained.

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Fighting AIDS: AL-271

SPIN reports that, as a result of an article by Celia Farber published in the December issue, the Los Angeles based Ethigen Corporation, the licensed U.S. distributor of AL-271, a patented lipid compound supposedly efficacious in the treatment of AIDS, is to be marketed as a food substance in pharmacies and other outlets. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved the substance as a drug, even though it asserts that it could be authorized immediately as a food. (See GenderServe Newsletter, March issue, p.3)

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Burn Out and the Gender Worker

(Continued from p.1) further fragment their lives in order to help others. Lasting help must come from those who have already solved their identity problems or from those who do not have such problems, but are prepared to serve those who do. If this is not done, these organizations must fold.

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Recent Publications

McGraw-Hill Ryerson Series in Canadian Sociology has recently published Deviance: Tolerable Differences by Robert A. Stebbins of the Department of Sociology, University of Calgary. A chapter is devoted to sex identities (more commonly called gender identities) which was revised after Susan Huxford had read the manuscript. A review of this book will be included in our next issue.

Synergy Book Service, 210 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 publishes a number of books and audio-visual aids that may enhance sexual experience. For further details write, or phone (201)782-7101.

Pocket Books, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, announce the publication of THE QUILT: Stories from The NAMES Project, text by Cindy Ruskin, photographs by Matt Heron, designed by Deborah Zemke. Hardcover, \$22.95 U.S. Profits from the sale of this book will be devoted to support groups serving AIDS victims.

Plenum Publishing Corporation announces the forthcoming publication of Transvestites and Transsexuals, by Richard F. Docter, California State University at Northridge. Dr. Docter is well known to the cross-dressing community, but may well be found to have most experience with the TV community and its hangers-on.

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