Renaissance News™

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A trip to Morocco ... Dr. Richard Ekins, TransGender Archive

A note on the early history of "sex changing."

The *Proceedings of the Second Interdisciplinary Symposium on Gender Dysphoria Syndrome* (1973) edited by Donald Laub and Patrick Gandy includes a translation of a Dr. Burou's remarks on male to female transformation surgery [1]. It is prefaced with the tantalizing opening paragraph:

"Dr. Burou is a gynecologist from Morocco who had previous experience making a neo-vagina atresia. He treated a male patient who insisted upon sex reassignment and subsequently went into this field. When Dr. Burou created this operation, he was totally unaware of previous such work in the world. He thought at the time that the best thing to do was to utilize the live graft which can be made from the penile skin when properly dissected. This is what he is going to describe now. This is the first report of this new technique."

As related in the ensuing conversation, this report was a long time coming. Burou had been working on his technique possibly in the late 1940's, and had carried on his work more or less regardless of medical orthodoxy and academic protocol.

Now and again his more famous patients would mention him in their autobiographies [2&3], or a reporter might report something of his activities [4&5]. Eventually, supportive doctors came to send him patients more frequently, and a steadily growing number of grateful patients spoke about him, mostly in private.

The importance of this man in the early history of sex reassignment can hardly be over-rated and his life and work need proper documentation. If this brief note jogs a few memories or prods a few journalists, it will have succeeded.

I don't like formally prepared interviews. I prefer to chat first and reconstruct the interviews afterwards. I then get the correspondent to make deletions and additions if they so choose. What follows is just such a reconstructed conversation, a brief snippet from some three hours of conversation with a post op transsexual when she recently visited the TransGender Archive.

Dr. Ekins: The trip from Paris to Casablanca, Morocco, was quite a feature of the early days of "sex changing." I gather you were in on the beginnings of this. It would be fascinating if you could tell us something about these early days.

Transsexual: I left England when 14 to live in Paris. From the age of 16, I worked backstage, and in other capacities, at Madame Arthur's and the Carousel; eventually returning to England. While visiting Paris recently, I was gratified to find that I was still remembered by the modern generation of performers.

Dr. E: Not a lot is known about Dr. Burou and the early history of "sex changing." Perhaps we could have a look at that in this first talk?

TS: Dr. Burou was a French gynecologist (Algerian born - R.E.) who developed techniques of what would now be called male-to-female sex reassignment surgery. His Moroccan clinic avoided the administrative and legal problems caused by the illegality of such surgery in France. By the early 50's he began to perfect his technique, word got around, and patients made their way to him. Coccinelle was supposed to be his sixth "success."

Dr. E: I gather Burou worked pretty much on his own and in his own way.

TS: Yes, his interest was the actual surgical procedure, penectomy and the construction of an artificial vagina. Everything else had to be done separately from him. In France, at that time, patients would buy hormones, usually injections, from sympathetic doctors or on the black market. You paid your money and you got your shot. Psychological issues were neither here nor there. If you got to Burou with the money and were prepared to take the risks he would operate. What you did after was up to you.

Dr. E: Sex reassignment is not for the faint hearted, at the best of times; what if people got sick after the operation, developed complications, or whatever?

TS: You appreciate that while it was illegal to do what he was doing in France and in many countries, it being seen as mutilation, medical people could repair complications. It might be seen as unethical for them not to. Burou used to keep people for ten days, then put them on the street. If they collapsed, he took them back. If they didn't, they went on their way. Most patients saved desperately to afford the surgery and returned home as soon as Burou had finished with them. Coccinelle had an extended visit,

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Happy New Year!

Chapter news & notes

Louisanna

New Orleans Write Renaissance N.O., Box 58428, New Orleans, LA 70158 for details. Provisional chapter. Meetings are held in a Metropolitan Community Church.

New Jersey

South Jersey: Tina Louise, chapter leader. Write Renaissance SJ, c/o P. O. Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Regular meetings on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Meetings start at 9:00 p.m.

No smoking is permitted in the meeting rooms.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Meeting satrts at 9:00 p.m.

No smoking is permitted in the meeting rooms.

Phila. 1990 schedule: Jan. - An acting coach will show how to create a femme persona; Feb. - Dr. Richard Friend, local counselor and teacher; Mar. - The Magic of Aloe makeup.

Reading: Write Renaissance RDG, Box 14421, Reading, PA 19607 for the latest information.

The Reading chapter meets twice a month. There is a dinner-social held at THIS IS IT, 801 Walnut St., Reading, second Wednesday of the month.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, Box 7412, York, PA 17404.

This chapter has an irregular meeting schedule so please check with them for times and dates. They also offer a newsletter.

Are you interested in learning more about Renaissance? Contact the national office for complete information.

And, don't forget about...

• The last of the Benjamin books, *The Transsexual Phenomena* are back in stock. When these are gone, there are no more. The Deluxe Edition is $39.95 and the Regular Edition is $35.95.

• Background Papers are available for $1 each plus $.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 7-What Is Renaissance?, and 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics. A paper on transsexualism is in work.

• 3R addiction recovery support group meets at King of Prussia on third Sat. of the month.

• The Pen Pal Project. If you are willing to write letters to pen pals, please let Alison know. Write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

• Articles and opinion pieces for the newsletter are always welcomed. We want to hear what you have to say about what goes on in Renaissance and in the community at large.

Renaissance News

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For information about events call: 215-640-9449, 24 hours a day.

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

Events Calendar

January

6th	Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
11th	Ren. Reading Chapter
20th	Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter Create a femme persona
27th	Ren LSV

February

3rd	Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
8th	Ren. Reading Chapter
17th	Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter Dr. Richard Friend
24th	Ren LSV
22-25	Texas 'T' Party San Antonio, TX
25-28	Mardi Gras, New Orleans

March

3rd	Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
8th	Ren. Reading Chapter
17th	Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter Magic of Aloe makeup
24th	Ren LSV
27-1	IFGE 4th Annual Conv. Natick, Mass.

April

6th	Ren. So. Jersey Chapter
13th	Ren. Reading Chapter
20th	Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter
27th	Ren LSV

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FORUM
Opinion - Information

A year in a life...Vickie A., 3R Support Group

Eight years ago I walked out of a rehabilitation center for alcohol and drug abuse. Prior to my enrollment there, I was sober one time before but was unable to be honest with myself and "slipped back."

When I was finally discharged for my alcoholism I had hope, but for my crossdressing there was still the fear, guilt, self-hatred and the thoughts of ending my life, carried with me in and out of sobriety.

The feminine side of me had to stay in the closet; she wasn't able to go to AA meetings or talk about what was bothering her. For seven years I asked myself, "Why be sober if I can't be honest and be me?"

After I found Renaissance and began to meet others like myself, it occurred to me that there was a need for some of my sisters to meet and express their feminine side in a substance abuse support environment, much like AA or NA.

In January of 1988 several sisters in recovery met at the King of Prussia location to form the 3R Support Group. (Ed. note - the three R's stand for Renaissance, Recovery and Reflection.) The group is meant to be in addition to, not in place of, other 12 step programs.

For me, the 3R was first a thought, then a dream and for the past year a reality. That reality has erased the question I so often asked myself over that seven year period.

The 3R Support Group is proud to announce they will celebrate their first anniversary at the Jan. 20 meeting in King of Prussia. Please fell free to join us for cake and sit in at our next meeting.

(Ed. note - The 3R Support Group was honored at the Holiday Party as the "1989 Achievement of the Year. Certifactes were given to Vickie, who started the group and to Terri M., who chairs the meetings.)

Philadelphia Chapter elects new board...Dina Amberle

On November 18, 1989 the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Renaissance held elections for its 1990 board of directors. The results of the election were:

- Angela Gardner
  Managing Director
- Dina Amberle
  Secretary
- Gloria Ann Lange
  Treasurer
- Veronica Hammer
  Director of Outreach
- Michelle Lynn
  Director of Membership

The new board held its first meeting in December and is working on projects ranging from the mundane (refreshments for the meetings) to the extraordinary (such as a Spring Ball for all you Prom Queens out there.)

The board is making inquiries to arrange a monthly private dance social at a local disco, and, believe it or not, making plans for next year's Hallowe'en celebration and Holiday Party. We're also looking forward to some interesting meeting programs — not to mention some surprises on the food and goody table — and an active, successful outreach program.

The single most important contribution toward the success of the coming year will be participation by you, our members. We're encouraged by the growing turnouts for the meetings and the annual Holiday Party (122 this year) and hope that our new ventures will meet with as much acceptance.

Our new managing director, Angela Gardner, has declared the theme of the chapter will be 'Communication.' So, let your voices be heard, and your dresses be shown. Let your presence make the meetings and events a success for us all.

Contributors wanted...JoAnn Roberts, Senior Editor

This issue begins our fourth year of publication. We've seen the newsletter grow from two pages of notes about our meetings to the twelve pages you have before you now. We've gone from local news coverage to national issues of importance relevant to everyone in the gender community. We've seen other newsletters copy our style of coverage. And, as we well know, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

We have one of the best, if not the best, newsletter in the country. Tens of hours are spent each month preparing and editing stories. Paula, and I, with a frequent assist from Alison, try to keep you amused, aware and informed each month.

But, it could be better. We're constantly tweaking the layout and designs to keep the newsletter fresh. Perhaps you noticed the new nameplates in our regular departments?

The one ingredient we can't create on our own is news. You, the members, have to help us there. I write about 60% of this newsletter. Paula contributes another 30%, and the remainder comes from other sources, meaning you. Help lighten the load. We want your opinions, your insights and your experiences. Tell us what's happening with you, your chapter, or your group. Make a contribution. Who knows, you could be the next newsletter editor. I'm not going to be doing this forever.

Let us hear from you soon.

with Alison Laing

ON THE TOWN

Pen Pal program produces plenty of postal power

In less than a year, members of Ren aissance have established Pen Pal correspondence with over a dozen new people. Some of our Pen Pals are from distant cities, while others are from right here in here Delaware Valley, but for some reason cannot attend our meetings.

The program has received praise from both the respondents (those who requested a Pen Pal) and the correspondents (our members who volunteer to be Pen Pals).

As the program appears to be growing lately, Maryann Kirkland has agreed to co-chair this activity with Alison Laing. Maryann will contact all new respondents to welcome them into thwe program as well as help match them up with our corresponding members.

Another project coming soon will be a Pen Pal Directory, where Pen Pals can list their personal interests along with their address. The directory will then be distributed to anyone interested in developing a correspondence relationship.

If you are interested in establishing a correspondence with someone of like interests, or if you did not get a satisfactory response the first time around, why not write to us at Renaissance Pen Pals, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, PA 19406

National board of directors for 1990

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LadyLike Magazine - $28 for 4 issues, $8 singles - the magazine that has set the new standard
Speaking As A Woman - $8 - the only book on developing a feminine voice
P.O.Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA 19406

THE NEWSQUEEN™ Paula Jordan Sinclair

A nightmare for some transvestites is being discovered in a woman's rest room. So imagine what it would be like to be discovered in a woman's *prison*? That's what happened recently to Carlos Torrez. But this feat of impersonation wasn't accomplished because Torrez was so beautiful, it was because police in Schenectady, N.Y. mistook him for a short, overweight "ugly girl."

Torrez was arrested on disorderly conduct and criminal impersonation charges. He was reportedly uncooperative while he was being held in custody. The fact that he is mute didn't help either. Before his arraignment he provided officers with a note saying his name was "Dianna Torres." Not being able to post bond, "she" was then ordered to the women's section of the county jail, strip searched and assigned to a cell. There, she wrote another note saying that she was in the wrong section. A nurse conducted a second strip search and confirmed his claim.

Before you decide to copy Torrez's technique of hiding his true gender, you ought to hear the rest of the story. The first search was extremely cursory, a guard later explained, because the female officers "took pity on this ugly girl who couldn't talk, and had her take off everything but her underwear."

♣ ♣ ♣

You can bet that police in Nashville, Tenn., were more careful when they searched David Osborne, 28, who was suspected of being "The Carrot Man."

Osborne was charged with several counts of indecent exposure for allegedly wearing a dress at local shopping centers. Well, there *is* more to the story. It seems that Carrot Man would lift his dress, bend over, and show passersby the vegetable he had stuck in his rear end.

♣ ♣ ♣

But vegetables aren't always bad. From St. Louis comes news that researchers at Washington University there recommend that breast implants be filled with vegetable oil, specifically peanut oil. This, they say, will prevent a problem commonly found with silicone implants: blockage of x-rays used to detect breast cancer.

While there is no data on men who receive breast augmentation with implants, women who have the surgery face a one-in-10 risk of developing breast cancer. The dense silicone- or saline-filled implants obscure tumors in their early stages. But peanut oil allows x-rays to pass right through the implants and allow tumors to be seen. Dr. Judy M. Destouet, who developed the implants, say that they also reduce the health risk caused by leaking silicone which has been linked to other cancers or immune system disorders.

While other doctors are not convinced that the peanut oil implants are totally free from risk, Dr. Destouet said that if further tests confirm her findings so far, the new implants could be on the market in two years."

♣ ♣ ♣

If your plastic surgeon hasn't heard about peanut oil breast implants, perhaps you should get a second opinion. A new book—*The Sophisticated Shopper's Guide to Plastic Surgery* by Richard Jobe, M.D.—may help. Jobe defines many common surgical procedures, gives tips on selecting the right plastic surgeon, and outlines what changes are possible.

♣ ♣ ♣

Some of the people who had a consultation with Dr. Wafik Hanna, assistant clinical professor at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Lukes Hospital in Chicago should have read Jobe's book, especially the fashion victim who asked the plastic surgeon to make her earlobes bigger so she could wear the oversize earrings she loved.

"In the last five years, with cosmetic procedures becoming increasingly acceptable and successful, patient's expectations have risen to ridiculous proportions," Hanna said. "I deny about 25 percent of the requests I receive on the grounds that they're unrealistic or downright sick. And I only do facial surgery—imagine the pleas I'd get if I did body work."

Does that mean no peanut oil implants?

♣ ♣ ♣

Clearly, plastic surgery is serious business; its no game. But playing with gender symbols can be a game. In fact, there is a game just like that called "Gender Bender."

The *World Wide Games* catalog says that when playing Gender Bender, "men have to think as if they were women, and woman as if they were men. Role reversal fun leads to leaving both gender more tender! For three to 12 players."

Because the game only costs $24.95, we doubt that it include the clothes necessary for a true gender switch. Pity.

♣ ♣ ♣

The makers of Gender Bender aren't the only ones who play with gender roles to make a point. In November, eight men wearing dresses, floppy hats and (probably) sensible shoes taunted Pittsburgh Councilman Otis Lyons, Jr. for a statement he had made about incest and abortions.

The council had earlier voted on a motion condemning President Bush's veto of federal funds for abortions. Lyons voted against the measure saying incest had "not been found to be a whole sin." He quoted Bible passages to support his position and said that many of the great men in the Bible had engaged in incest by marrying their sisters.

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Mary Della-Massing, L.E.

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NewsQueen...from page 5

Michael Malincak, one of the crossdressed demonstrators, said the protest had been inspired by the "Church Lady" character on *Saturday Night Live*. In the council chamber, The men shook their gloved fingers at Lyons and scolded him with cries of "tsk, tsk, tsk." The group also sent a letter to Lyons which said, in part, "We, the Church Ladies for Choice, call upon you to immediately resign your seat ... publicly apologize to women, especially the victims of rape and incest, for your crazy and mean-spirited statements."

♣ ♣ ♣

Then, there are those for whom achieving their true gender is anything but a game; it is as real as life gets. Sayyed Mohamed Abdallah of Egypt is one of those people. He is the first man in the Islamic world to publicly acknowledge that he will have a sex change operation.

Egypt is the initial Muslim nation to allow such operations. But still, the process is not easy. Candidates face a rigorous examination to confirm that they were truly born in the wrong bodies. Public debate on the procedure has been intense, but so far has only addressed male-to-female transsexualism.

♣ ♣ ♣

It is always good news to hear that questions regarding gender are being asked where they were previously ignored. And it is equally good to learn that the same questions are being raised in a new way. Kate Bornstein, a transsexual who had lived in Philadelphia before moving to San Francisco many months ago, is doing just that in a play she wrote and starred in in the City by the Bay.

Hidden: A Gender puts three special characters together in a drama that crackles with wry commentary. The characters are Herman (a 20th century transsexual lesbian), Herculine Barbin (the famous 19th century French hermaphrodite who was raised as a girl but forced, at age 22, to live as a man) and Doc Grinder (a dual-gender emcee who also hawks his/her "Gender Defender" snake oil—"guaranteed to keep you straight"). Bornstein plays Grinder.

Besides mixing characters from two different centuries, Bornstein took another bold step; Herman is based on her own life. The gamble paid off, according to critics. One wrote, "Bornstein has accomplished the neatest trick of all — being self-relevatory, using the stage as a public confessional, and yet creating a real play with drama and human emotions."

But Bornstein didn't write the play simply to retell her own story. "I want the play to raise questions for people so the world I live in could be larger," she said.

♣ ♣ ♣

Not all theatrical crossdressing has such sublime motives. For some actors it is "kind of fun" and "a good excuse to wear a dress."

That was how Michael J. Fox characterized his role as his own daughter in *Back to the Future II* to David Letterman. The late night host responded, "A *real man* doesn't need an excuse to wear a dress."

In another interview, Fox said that he played the role "straight;" in other words, he acted as if he were actually a woman and not as a man in drag. It was hard, he said, not turning to the camera and giving a wink as if to say, "It's really me."

♣ ♣ ♣

Some actors would like to crossdress, but can't because of their image as macho men. Tom Selleck may be one. Recently, he told the *Los Angeles Times* that when he was starting his career...

"I did my share of Tennessee Williams plays, and I never had any fun doing any of his guys. I love his women. Though nobody would ever let me play any of his women."

♣ ♣ ♣

Actors in Palatine, Ill., faced different restrictions when they got into drag for a recent production of *La Cage aux Folles*. The Palatine Park District, owners of the suburban Chicago theater where the musical was presented, ordered the producers to advertise the play with an "R" rating—no one under 17 admitted without an adult.

Park District officials justified the unconventional use of the motion picture rating code because the two lead characters in the play are gay (one is also a transvestite) and the chorus line is composed of men in drag. They thought these elements were too risqué for young people.

But the play has been presented in other Chicago suburbs without incident. Dennis Conway, manager of the Candlelight Dinner Theater in Summit, said *La Cage* "was one of the best received plays we have done. We watched the audience reaction. For example, the big truck-driver types looked a little puzzled at first, but they were the first to stand up and applaud."

♣ ♣ ♣

And finally, here are some notes about "girls" who are used to getting applause: contestants on the beauty pageant circuit...

The 18th annual Miss Gay America pageant was held in Dallas in October, and Brandi Alexander took the crown for 1990. No, she is not the Brandy Alexander who spells her first name with a "y" instead of with an "i" and who was a headliner at Club 82, the Jewel Box Revue and Le Clique. (Does this mean that there is a serious national shortage of drag names?)

There is a second national contest coming up this spring—the Miss Gay U.S.A. pageant set for April 4-8 in Louisville, Ky. More that 80 of the top female impersonators from across the country will vie to become the successor to Netasha Edwards, Miss Gay U.S.A. 1989.

One of the contestants already stands out as very special; "she" is a

continued page 9

Discoveries: The Facts About Transgender Behavior — Conclusion

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Siblings

Brothers and sisters of transgender people react in much the same way that parents react and the issues are similar. Brothers and sisters have a mental image of a you as a person. They don't expect that image to change, so it is a shock when there is a revelation like transvestism or transsexualism. The values of your parents are handed down to your brothers and sisters (their sons and daughters), so what else can you expect?

Children

At an early age, children are very non-judgmental about behavior, (Hell, they're learning themselves), so it might be tempting to tell a young child about your transgender behavior. The chances are they will be very accepting, however, they may not be old enough to be discrete. One reason for being so accepting, is that children do not read heavy sexual overtones into crossdressing, nor do they realize that there are any.

No one seems to have a good answer about whether or not to tell children, and if "Yes", then at what age. It depends on the child and his/her state of emotional maturity. Will the child know enough to keep quiet with neighbors and other children? Will the child comprehend that this behavior is unusual and different, yet not "bad"? Probably the best age to tell a child is between 9 and 11. They have not yet had to deal with their own sexual issues and puberty. Revelations after the teen years will probably elicit reactions similar to siblings and parents. A child may even blame a transgendered parent for his/her own personal problems, and they could be right. Unusual, hidden behavior can have a negative effect on children.

Friends

Friends are difficult to read. People we think we know so well are really strangers. How many times have you seen the interview on the television with the neighbor of the "mass" murderer? It goes something like, "He was such a quiet man. Never said a word." Acquaintances may react like you are the mass murderer. These people are not your friends. True friends, especially long time friends, will still care about you, even if they think that you're behavior is "wrong" or that you are misguided. Patience and understanding in talking with them will get you patience and understanding in return.

Now what?

Counselling

Where do you go for help and understanding? If the problems and issues are such that daily life is totally disrupted and nothing useful seems to ever get accomplished, then a professional counselor or therapist should be consulted. Check, first, that the counselor selected has had experience in dealing with gender issues. Otherwise, as so many TVs and TSs have discovered, you'll be paying to give someone an education.

Select a counsellor from the phone book; it's as good a place to start as any. Call and ask if they have had experience and are they comfortable working with gender issues. Even if the selected person is not experienced or uncomfortable, they may be able to refer you to another counsellor who is. You have nothing to lose by asking.

TV/TS Support Groups

The other option is to seek out a transgender support grouplike Renaissance. These are usually organizations created by peers as a means of self-help. They are a safe way to meet others who share similar feelings and needs. They will understand the problems because they have experienced them also, and they can share their solutions. Many support groups also have an auxiliary group for spouses and family members. These have been shown to be of great utility in helping families to understand the transgender behavior and work out accommodations. Support groups also help people to develop socially. Here, finally, is a place where one can have friends who will not be judgmental. And, support groups usually develop a network with local counsellors, so here is another avenue to find help.

While many organizations have been in continued existence for over 10 years or more, a list of groups here is not practical. For current information about a support group near you, check any issue of *The TV/TS Tapestry* [P. O. Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778], *LadyLike Magazine* [P. O. Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA 19406], or write/call the Renaissance Education Association, Box 0552, King of Prussia, PA 19406, (215)-640-9449.

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Private Communications with Wm. R. Stayton, Th.D.; John Money, Ph.D.; Richard F. Docter. Ph.D.; Ari Kane, M.Ed.; Carol Cobb-Nettleton, Ph.D.; Leah Shaeffer, Ed.D.; and hundreds of TVs and TSs.

Morocco ... from page 1

and walking along the beach one day, struck up a conversation with someone regarded as Burou's "second success".

Dr. E: Can you tell us a little about the clinic in those early days?

TS: The fame of his Casablanca clinic led people to think of it as a big place. In fact, there were only about a dozen beds and a small staff.

Dr. E: The stars of Madame Arthur and the Carousel must have been bubbling with stories about their visits to Dr. Burou. Do you have a favorite?

TS: Yes. The last words he would say before the anesthetic took its effect were, "Au revoir, Monsieur." Then, coming round after the operation, the patient would be greeted with the words, "Bonjour, Mademoiselle."

Dr. E: And what about a favorite horror story?

TS: All sorts of rumors did the rounds, as you might expect, especially about his "failures" who were rumored to be buried in a basement.

Dr. E: Did the French authorities do anything about all this, after all, Morocco was a French colony at the time?

TS: They did try to stop it, in a way. Burou only accepted cash in advance, French francs in the early days. The authorities soon got in the habit of putting their border people on the lookout for "suspect" looking effeminate young men. They would search them thoroughly and if they found the large amount of cash necessary to pay Burou, they would confiscate it, and send the poor girl back. You can imagine how heart breaking that was.

With a little ingenuity, however, Burou and his patients got around that. A system was set up whereby the would-be "sex change" would pay in France and the money would be paid to Burou in Morocco. As long as he got his money in advance he was happy. The girls were happy, too, because the system worked smoothly enough and they could avoid the border hassles and the risk of a terrible disappointment.

Dr. E: Practitioners are realists and Burou clearly had to get paid, but all this sounds a bit rough and ready to the refined ear of today.

TS: At the time he was unique in providing a desperately sought service. A steady stream of patients were more than satisfied with what they got from him. Not only was he a pioneer in the field, his surgical technique is still thought to be second to none, despite all the subsequent experience and resources available in modern hospitals.

By the mid 70's he had performed over 700 operations, the longest known series by a single surgeon. Today, he no longer operates, but still retains control of his clinic.

Dr. E: Yes, I'd heard the growing "gender dysphoria" establishment, particularly in the United States, tried many times to persuade him to share all his secrets with them. He keeps his secrets by all accounts.

TS: There's an interesting anecdote which gives the flavor of the man and his work. When the first university affiliated gender identity clinic was set up at Johns Hopkins in the 60's, every effort was made to get Burou over to the states. He had a sort of standing invitation to attend and speak at the various international conferences that began to get off the ground in those times. After many declined invitations, eventually he came to one in the 70's. He soon scotched any fanciful notions that a wide-eyed press had been peddling for years about the sex-change doctor creating beautiful women. No doubt, he too was none too interested in all this modern talk of gender identity—not gender dysphoria—and the like. Certainly he didn't think he was creating women. He was constructing—putting the finishing touches on—facsimiles of women. How his patients and other doctors working in the field chose to interpret what they were doing was up to them.

Dr. E: In a way, that's very refreshing. I've long thought that the history of changing conceptualizations and formulations—man trapped in a woman's body, transsexual, female gender identity in male body, and the rest—say more about wishes, conscience, power and politics than anything else.

TS: You may well be right.

Dr. E: It's been fascinating talking with you; informative, interesting and enjoyable. I hope you will be able to visit the Archive again.

TS: I hope so, too. You're doing important work here.

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father. As we reported several months ago, Rick Amburgy, who performs under the name of Latina Garrett, is the father of 10-year-old daughter named Vanessa. Last year, Latina competed as Miss Indiana U.S.A. This year she will compete for the national crown as both Miss Gay Fantasy U.S.A and as first runner-up to Miss Gay North U.S.A.

While she entertains un-puzzled "big truck-driver types" who show their appreciation by applauding or other appropriate gestures, Miss Sinclair may overlook one or two of the several newspapers she reads daily. If, like Joanne White and Joyce Connors, you see an item of transgendered interest kindly clip it and send it to her in care of the *Renaissance News*. Kindly also note the name of the publication and date.

From around the TV/TS community

NATIONAL GENDER NEWS™

PORTLAND, ORE. — A member of the **Northwest Gender Alliance** has taken **Dr. Richard Docter** to task for his analysis of transvestism in his recent book, *Transvestites and Transsexuals: Toward a theory of cross-gender behavior.*

Based on a serialized synopsis that ran in the NWGA newsletter **Dominique Davis** disputes several of Dr. Docter's conclusions because she assumes Docter is a Freudian analyst. She also assumes that he only worked with people in treatment.

We suggest that Davis get a copy of Docter's book and read it for herself before disputing his conclusions. For example, Davis says, "I'm not sure if it's a limitation of space in the newsletter or a lack of sufficient longitudinal research in Docter's book..." Davis' chief dispute is with Docter's confirmation of erotic, sexual content associated with crossdressing. Davis believes that self-expression and self-exploration are "more compelling" aspects of crossdressing.

We'd have to strongly disagree with Davis on that as almost one hundred per cent of the transvestites that we've spoken with confirm that sexual pleasure had a lot to do with their early crossdressing and still does.

By the way Dominique, Dr. Docter's data was collected from 110 heterosexual transvestites who are mostly members of TV support groups in the U.S. and Canada.

NGN

CHICAGO —Suburban Chicagoans have been informed by their local Ma Bell of a change in their area code. The city of Chicago will keep the 312 area code while the outskirts will use 708.

The reason we even mention this is so our readers may update their files for the **Chi Chapter Tri-Ess** telephone (708) 364-9514. The phone is irregularly manned (womanned?) two or three evenings a week from 7:00 to 10:00, with an answering system at other times.

NGN

CHICAGO —Inquiring minds want to know...

Did the **Chicago Gender Society** have their area code changed as well? We may never know, since they print their phone numbers without area codes.

They did, however, give the area code and number for a new, transsexual oriented computer bulletin board system.

The new system, US TOO, was implemented by the **Sunday Society**, an offshoot of CGS. "US TOO" stands for the United Sisterhood of Transsexual Outreach Organizations, and the system is currently available for several hours each day at (312) 486-3125.

Eventually the system will become a 24-hour nationwide TS information service.

NGN

NEW YORK CITY —A pair of firsts: **Renaissance** was contacted by *for women First* magazine recently, a publication sold at just about every supermarket check out stand and drug store in the country. The editors were responding to a reader's letter about crossdressing, and wanted to include our name and address in their reply as an information resource.

We've seen crossdressing addressed in other women's magazines before but we don't recall a support group being mentioned in any of

continued next page

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From around the TV/TS community

NATIONAL GENDER NEWS™

them. Does anyone know if this is a *first* for *First*?

The letter will appear in the April issue which should be on newsstands at the beginning of March.

NGN

LOS ANGELES —The November '89 issue of the *CHIC Diary* contained this brief notice, "This came directly from a computer and is not to be doubted or disbelieved."

Unfortunately, this issue contained little *new* material other than the note. This is a trend we've noticed since **Linda McKim** handed over the editor's pen.

NGN

SAN ANTONIO, TEX —On the other hand, *Gender Euphoria*, the publication of the **Boulton & Park Society**, keeps getting better and better as time goes on.

The November issue announced that Hollywood makeup artist **Jim Bridges** will be a featured presenter at the 1990 Texas 'T' Party.

We had a private session with Bridges at Fantasia Fair and can report that not only does he know how to create a realistic, feminine image on a male, but that he also has a charming and wonderfully warm personality. We highly recommend a visit with Jim.

NGN

TORONTO —We are always glad to see serious discussions by transsexuals about the process of sex reassignment. We feel that all too often, reassignment is portrayed as commonplace and simple.

Well, **Sharlene Watkinson** for one, doesn't seem to think so as she writes about setting priorities in the November issue of *Trans News*.

Watkinson says she made the decision to go "full-time" without making any preparations and soon found herself becoming paranoid about being "discovered." She suggests making up a list of priorities and goals to be achieved along with their costs. Sounds like good advice to us. Watkinson gives a full list of goals along with some dos and don'ts for the fledgling transsexuals out there.

If you'd like a copy of the article, write to Transition Support, c/o 519 Church St., Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2C9, and ask for Vol. 1, Issue 11. Enclose a $4 (Canadian) money order to cover copy and mailing costs.

NGN

CINCINNATI —While reading a Hallowe'en article in the November **Cross Port** *Inner View*, we were struck by a similarity of events.

Cathy writes about going to "straight" bars on Hallowe'en and recounts some of her favorite lines from the evening. The one that struck a bell was, "Are those real?"

Three ladies from **Renaissance** decided to hit a local straight bar that same night. During the evening, at least six young GG's approached the fearless trio asking, "How'd ya get such great cleavage?"

Is this country breast conscious?

NGN

LONG ISLAND, N.Y. —We are *very* pleased to see that *Lifelines*, from the **Long Island Freedom of Expression** group has gotten back on track with cut 'n paste process. Readers will recall that last month the editor apologized for including original material in the October newsletter.

Seriously, this newsletter is a lot of fun and has many great features like *Solid State TV*. Check out a copy. Write to LIFE, Box 121, Ozone Park, NY 11416.

NGN

HOLLYWOOD, FLA. —The loss of a very special person in your life can be devastating. Even more so, when that someone is also a key figure in a special organization.

We are glad to note that our sisters at **Serenity** have weathered the loss of their founder **Nikki Bee** and are keeping up her traditions. Bee died this year after a brief battle with cancer.

The latest Serenity project is a Big Sister Program. A Big Sister can help a new member get acquainted and comfortable. Similar programs are used in business (mentoring) and recovery programs (sponsors) so why not here?

Sounds good to us. Keep us posted on your progress, girls.

NGN

WOODLAND HILLS, CALIF. —Some people don't know when to quit...

We received word through *Cross-Talk*, from the **Valley Girls** (you know, those renegades from Tri-Ess) that the "open" vs. "closed" group debate still rages on in the pages of various Tri-Ess publications. We queried our own **JoAnn Roberts** who was at the center of the debate and she says, "I don't know who they're writing to or about, but I haven't received any personal mail on it. It's not like they don't know where to write.

"I've been told verbally that someone has demanded I apologize to Tri-Ess. I don't see that I have to apologize for having an opinion. It's a dead issue with me, but some people obviously want to keep fannig the flames for their own ends."

NGN

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.—She didn't disappoint us...

We reported here that **Veronica Brown** would be resigning as the editor of *Twenty Minutes*, the publication of **The XX (Twenty) Club**, a support group for transsexuals.

We wondered what Brown would write as her parting shot. Three pages, six columns later, we're still reeling from the all encompassing swipe of Brown's pen. She left few stones unturned. In her own words, "I've insulted just about everybody I can think of. So, I'll say good night. Thanks for being a good audience."

Ronnie, you did a great job and **Becky Ann**, you have very large shoes to fill. All our love to you both.

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