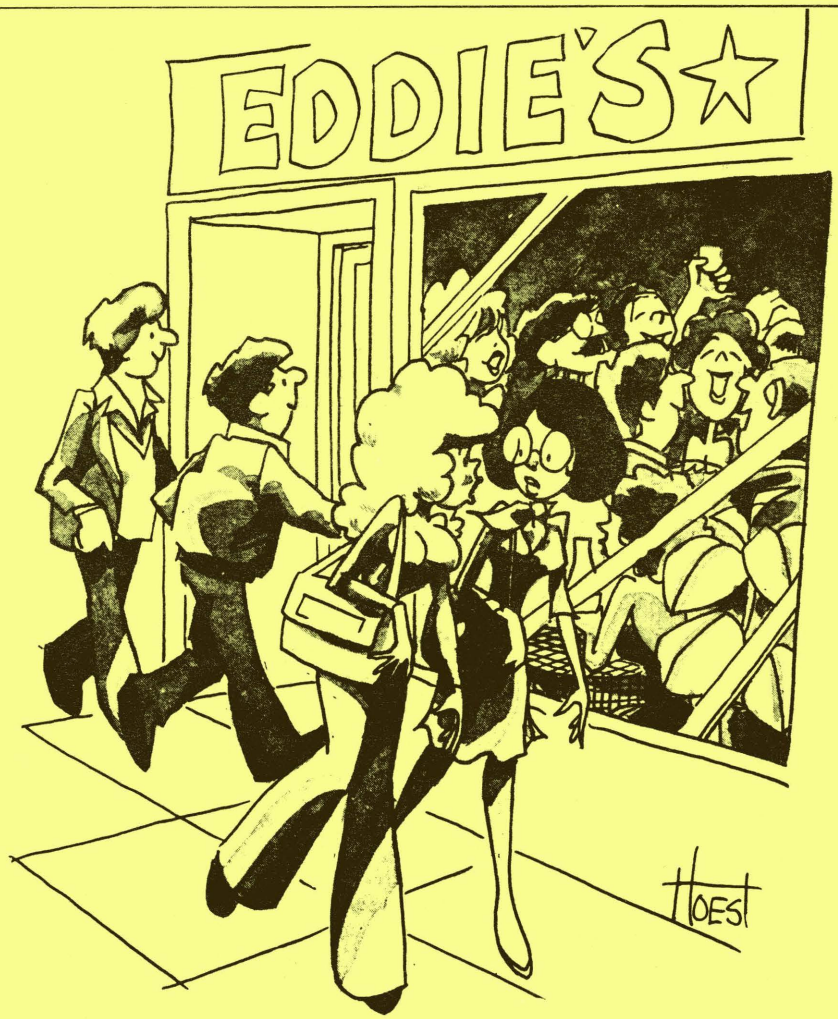
Femme mirror

Reflecting the Feminine

VOL. 3, NO. 4 AUGUST 1978 CAROL BEECROFT, Editor



Gosh! These Tri-Sigma girls REALLY have super meetings!

The FEMME MIRROR is published by the *SOCIETY FOR THE SECOND SELF*. **Correspondence and articles should be sent to Carol Beecroft, 256 S. Robertson, Beverly Hills, CA 90211.**

Just how real is reality?

by Virginia Prince

A schizophrenic individual is one who has split himself away from reality and lives in and experiences a sort of internal personal world. Many people, on hearing about the two personalities of a TV and who have a smattering of ignorance about psychiatry, immediately assume that we are schizos. Yet there are ways wherein we sometimes fail to keep a good hold on reality.

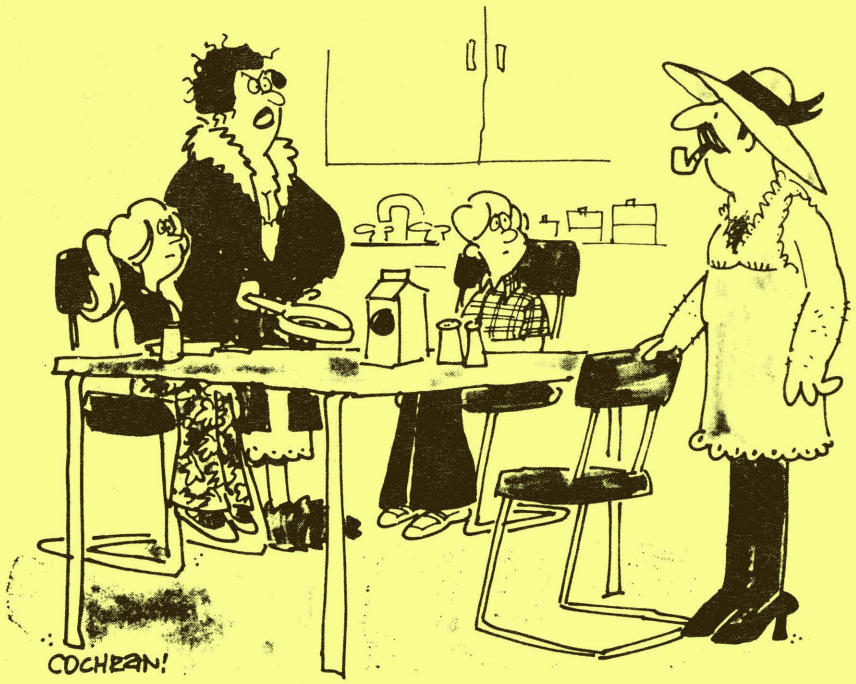
There is certainly nothing wrong with fantasy and imagniation — they are part of what separates us from dogs and cats and they brighten up our lives considerably. The trick is to indulge in these bits of unreality but to do so knowlingly . . . that is, to keep ones mental geography straight and know where one is. We can dream all right and no problem, but we have to be aware of where the reality stops and where the dreams begin. When that border begins to get hazy we, or anyone, is approaching a more dangerous area.

Specifically, I am thinking about our attitudes towards women. There is no question but what TV's idealize women and make them symbolize many things. To a greater degree than most non-TV's. Now this is certainly understandable and O.K., in itself, provided a good grip on actuality is maintained. How many G.G.'s think of themselves in the way that TV's tend to think of them? Do they think of themselves as being dainty, delicate, frilly, virtuous, wonderful, etc.? Do they care about dress to nearly the extent that TV's do? Do they revel in the constrictions of a firm girdle and enjoy the slithery feeling of a nylon slip? Can they hardly wait to get into high heels and do they just love the flop and flow of their breasts? Ask a few. It might be enlightening to us, particularly to the unmarried.

While most any woman likes to consider herself neat and clean and most of them like to get dressed up fancy once in a while, and since it is a biological characteristic of femaleness to have breasts — they don't want to be flat chested — very few women think of themselves as being anything like the picture some TV's have of them. They wear the clothes that custom dictates for them, enjoying the vagaries of fashion and the varieties of personal expression available to them, but they don't go into ecstacies over a pair of panties or slip. Did you ever stop to think how many pairs of simple unadorned briefs are sold to women compared to the number of lace-trimmed flare-legged pretty ones? I'll agree with you that it is a sad commentary on the disinterest women have in being glamorous dolls that we like to think of them as being. Ask any lingerie clerk and she'll tell you that black lacy underwear sells only at Christmas and to men, that women, of themselves, don't go in for it. A working woman can't wait to get home in the evening to take off her girdle and heels and slip into a pair of slacks and flats. She doesn't think of her bust as a source of wonder, joy and satisfaction. If her breasts are too small, she'll bow to fashion and make expectation and pad them out. If to her they seem just right, she'll tuck them into her bra with the same sense of practical necessity as a man puts on a jock strap. If they are too big, they are, quite frankly, a damn nuisance to her, being heavy, floppy and in the way.

Women are just people after all. Nature made two kinds of people and woman is one of them. The rights, duties, limitations and expectations put on both sexes are pretty well compensated for insofar as there are disadvantages and advantages to being either sex. The trick is to appreciate women, enjoy partaking of their world with a full awareness of the fact that it is a case of the grass looking greener from the other side of the street than it actually is when you get there.

Don't get me wrong, girls. I'm not in anyway agin' it — but feel from the letters and conversations that come my way that once in a while something should be said to kind of hold things down and keep a little persepctive going in this wonderful field we are in. Just keep a firm hold on what is really real in reality and then dream to your heart's content. The TV really has an edge on other since he can enjoy the best of both worlds and should. That is why those who dream of operations who don't realize that they are not only sacrificing their male genitals but with them the drive to enjoy the other side and the right to take the best of the male side too. They become enamoured with the idealized, wonderful, and beautiful side of womanhood that they forget there is ordinary, prosaic, day in, day out and difficult side too, and that they are going to acquire that as well. So girls, make the most you can of the femmeworld, but remember to keep it in focus. Explore it with one hand while the other has a firm grip on true reality.



"How many times have I told you to stay in the closet until I get the kids off to school?"

WIVES TALK BACK

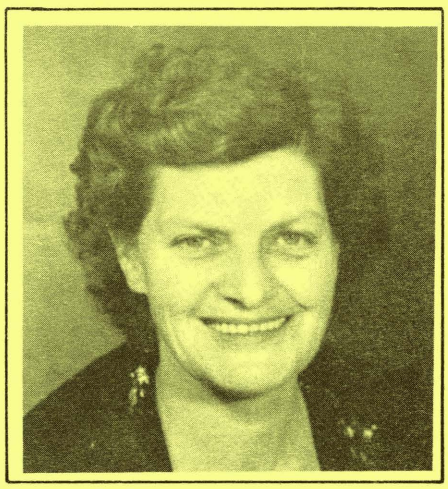
with Bernadine

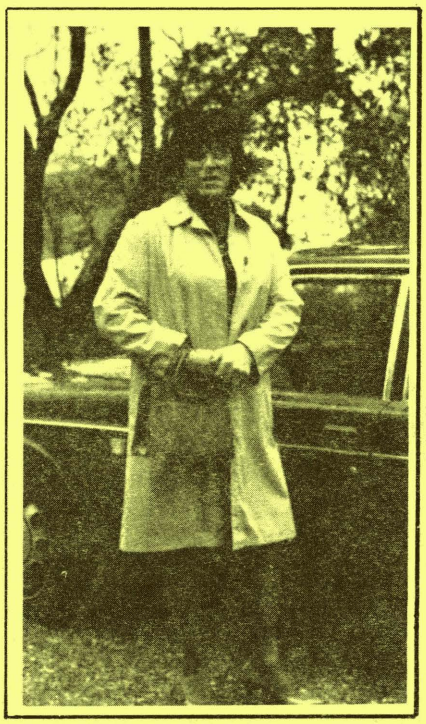
There are several things we should discuss this month. Your letters have been gratefully received so I have had some new ideas to think about. One wife mentioned that her biggest gripe is the fact that other people are not as understanding about the person who crossdresses as they could and should be. She compared the way a homosexual, who is employed where she also works, is treated to the manner in which her own dear husband would be treated if her fellow employees heard about his crossdressing. She said that everyone treats the homosexual with respect, but that they would laugh at the crossdresser's problem, and then fire him. Another wife expressed her loneliness in not having another woman in whom she can confide, and told me that her greatest help has come from the books written by Virginia Prince: *The Transvestite and His Wife* and *Understanding Crossdressing.* She is also looking forward to the time when she and her husband will be able to go for a trip to a city in which there is a Tri-Sig meeting that she can attend, so she can talk to other wives of crossdressers.

Another wife, this one from the Great Lakes region, mentioned that old bug-a-boo that we all know so well: the crossdresser is all wrapped up in his Second Self, which makes him inclined to be secretive, self-centered and selfish — the other side of the SSS coin. You, our dear husbands, have to work hard to overcome these traits — but, please remember that without your loyal wife, you, too would be a lonely guy or gal indeed. While you are praising your own mirror-image, give a few glances in the direction of that faithful lady who wears your wedding ring, rears your children, shields you from the world's scorn, and loves you with unbounded devotion. She is a real woman in every sense of the word, and therefore she is just plumb full of feminine traits. She is sensitive, vain, maternal, jealous, emotional, silly, timid, demanding, exhuberant, magnificent, cranky, foolish, and fun-loving — every inch of her, from the soles of her feet to the crown of her head is hundred percent femininity; so treat her kindly and with respect, and your crossdressing will be enriched in multiples; just like the ripples in a stream where you have dropped a pebble.

I also want to mention that my own dear Norman has had a session with Dollee Campbell, the Hypnotist, this evening. He came home a couple of hours ago, completely relaxed for the first time that I can remember. She is going to be the guest speaker at the October meeting of Alpha Chapter. Her fee is only $10, and her sessions are open-ended. Tonight Norman spent an hour and a half in a sort of dream-state, pleasantly drifting to the sound of a metronome and Dollee's soothing voice. He told me that she took all the knots out of his stomach, and he truly was happier and more relaxed than I have seen him in a very long time. Now he is sound asleep. She assured him that he will sleep better than he has ever slept before. God Bless Dollee Campbell. There is one woman who knows how to be kind and to understand a man who crossdresses.

Also, there are many more of us. All through the ages we have loved and protected our unusual husbands and lovers.

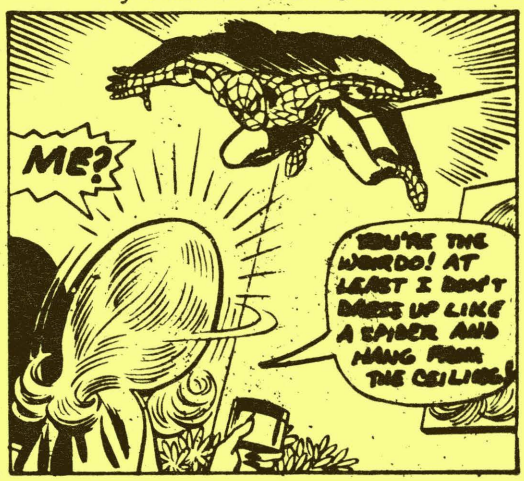




Alice FL-12-U

Femme Funnies *adapted by* KAREN CA-30-G

Spider Man — **by Stan Lee and John Romita**



sex roles in the nursery

by Laura Carper

Reprinted from Harper's — April, 1978

You should have seen what a fine-looking man he was before he had all those children.

—Arapesh tribesman, quoted by Margaret Mead, *Male and Female* (1949)

While supervising one of the playrooms in the nursery school where I work, I overheard this dialogue between two four-year-old children:

"You stay here with the mommies and the babies. I'm going fishing," Gerald said to Judy as he trotted off.

"I want to go, too," Judy called, running after him. Gerald turned and repeated, "No, you stay with the mommies and the babies!"

"But I want to go fishing!" Judy cried.

"No," Gerald insisted, "But when I come back I'll take you to a Chinese restaurant."

Judy was mollified. She turned back to the dolls.

I reported the incident to Gerald's mother, who now runs a business in downtown Detroit with several other women. That year she was at home full time, but she assured me that Gerald was not mimicking his parents' behavior; the only time her husband had gone fishing the rest of the family had gone too. Dramatic play is not necessarily a replication of direct experience. It is an early form of abstract thought, a young child's way of sorting out experiences and trying on opinions drawn from various sources.

Another play scene I observe now and then goes like this: three or four little boys seat themselves around the play table in the play kitchen. The boys start issuing orders such as "I'd like a cup of coffee" or "Bacon and eggs!" or "Some more toast!" and a girl runs back and forth between stove and table cooking and serving. In one such scene the boys got completely out of hand, demanding cups of coffee one after another while the girl, Mimi, was racing around in a frenzy. She finally gained control of the situation by announcing that there was no more coffee. Apparently it never occurred to her to sit down at the table herself and demand coffee from one of the boys.

Sexist behavior among the very young is hardly a new phenomenon; viewing it as a problem is. It obsesses the other teachers and school directors whom I meet at workshops on preschool education; and it plagues the parents of my charges, who are sincerely trying to raise their children free of sexual bias. They carefully screen out books in which mothers mostly tie shoelaces and bake cookies; they buy trucks as well as dolls for their daughters and dolls as well as trucks for their sons. But as soon as the children start to play together the girls pretend to be mommies, nurses, or schoolteachers, while the boys are busy perfecting a karate chop or flying around like Batman. The parents wring their hands and wonder what they are doing wrong.

In my view, this sort of role-playing is part of a normal and useful developmental stage. Its origin lies in the child's struggle to understand his sexual identity. One of the prime tasks facing the preschool child is the establishment of a sense of self, and a sense of one's sexual identity is part of selfhood. Banding together with other children of the same sex for games where there are "no boys allowed" or "no girls" appears to be reassuring for many preschoolers.

The roles boys and girls choose when they are involved in dramatic play are determined in part by the culture. As soon as children are old enough to observe, they begin making generalizations that may or may not be accurate. Timmy, for example, went with his mother for a checkup at a large medical clinic when he was two-and-a-half. As they were sitting in the waiting room a man in a white coat walked by. Timmy said, "Hi, doctor." A moment later another white-coated man came by, and again Timmy said, "Hi, doctor." Then a woman in a white coat walked past. "Hi, nurse," Timmy said.

"How do you know who is a nurse and who is a doctor?" his mother asked.

"Doctors are daddies and nurses are mommies" was Timmy's confident reply. Yet Timmy's own pediatrician, who has cared for him since birth, is a woman.

All preschool children are as confused about sexual distinctions as they are about the world in general. At two-and-a-half, boys and girls alike will wheel a doll carriage and announce "I'm the mommy" or "I'm the daddy," regardless of their own sex. But their play at this age is based largely on observations of their mothers. The boys are as fascinated with the play kitchen and the dolls as the girls are. Little girls are convinced they will grow up to be mommies, but in my opinion *so are little boys.*

That a young boy should aspire to be a woman is not so odd. There is a powerful drive in all of us to do unto others as has been done to us. The mother who nurtures a child in earliest infancy is his first love, and he identifies with her; perhaps the most difficult accommodation of his first few years is separating from her, and learning both to recognize himself and to act as an individual. Yet it is

(cont'd on next page)

"I DECIDED TO PLAY BOY FOR A CHANGE."

SEX ROLES IN THE NURSERY

(continued from previous page)

primarily through the mother that he perceives adult life and forms impressions of daily adult tasks; it is chiefly, though of course not exclusively, through her that he learns what it is to be human. It is very hard for him to draw clear distinctions between what she does and what he can ultimately accomplish.

One three-and-a-half-year-old boy I taught, whose mother was pregnant at the time, exasperated his older playmates by insisting that a baby was growing in *his* stomach. (The mother had told him, "We are going to have a baby.") A two-and-a-half-year-old betrayed deeper confusion about the idea of pregnancy: his mother, who also happened to be pregnant, told him he couldn't have the puppy he wanted unted until he was older. A few days later he came to her and said, "Is a puppy dog growing in my stomach?" A third mother told me how sadly her four-year-old son had said, "I can never have a baby," and then added wistfully, "can I?" Certainly a little girl has her problems, but at least she can mature with full confidence in her ability to follow in her mother's footsteps. A little boy cannot. He identifies with a woman, but he must become a man. He suffers from what, for want of a better name, I shall call uterine envy.

Margaret Mead, Brune Bettelheim, and others have provided strong arguments that womb envy occurs in many preliterate cultures. The couvade (from the French word *couver,* to hatch) was once a fairly wide-spread practive, described in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as

> *the custom of the father going to bed at the birth of his child, complaining of labor pains, observing dietary restrictions or otherwise acting like a woman in confinement. In its extreme form, the mother returns to work as soon as possible after giving birth, often the same day, and waits on the father; thus the roles of the sexes are reversed.*

The couvade was common to a variety of ancient, not so ancient, and primitive cultures, and was observed in the Baltic states and Holland as recently as the early years of th twentieth century.

Little boys do not seem to have a clear view of growing up to be daddies. The father's biological role in making babies is far less evident than the mother's. And in the oridinary household, the father's daily role in life is performed outside the home, away from the child's view. How is a young boy to imagine spending his days as an insurance agent, when he hasn't the vaguest notion of what that is? The best he can do is pick up a briefcase and say, "I'm going to the office," or pretend to get in a car and say "I'm going to the shop." The game stops there. Even if he pays the office or the shop an occasional visit, it cannot be as familiar to him as what mommy does at home or what Superman does on television. So he weaves a masculine image from television, where men run the world; from the supermarket, where a man runs the store; and from what he has been *told* his father does, which is to earn the money whereby the family lives. He must work very hard to play the man.

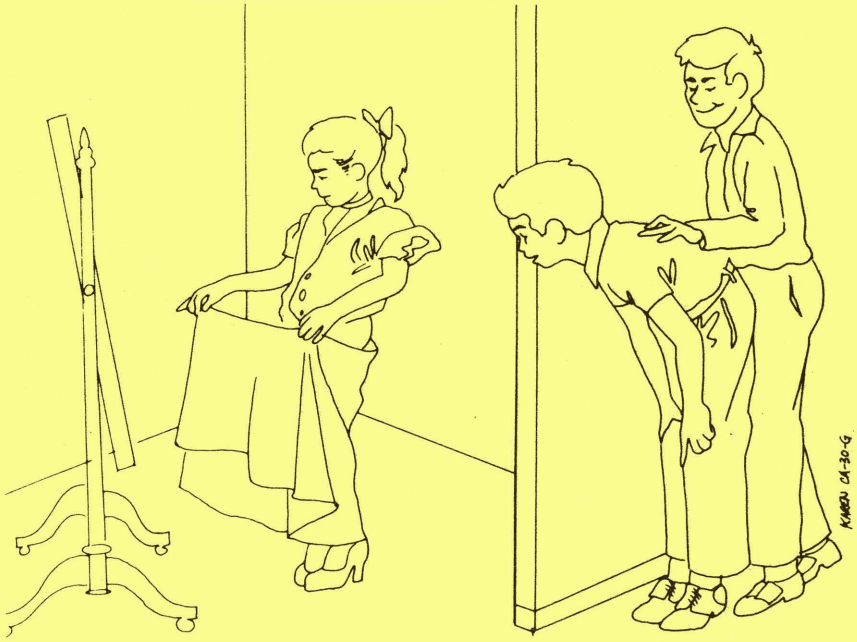
It has been argued that television gives children a false concept of masculinity that they strive to emulate; but when I was a child in the Thirties, boys were playing "cops and robbers" and "cowboys and Indians." That came from the movies. In the nineteenth century it was tin soldiers. The young boy grasps at an all-powerful male image to compensate himself for his terrible loss. Since he had previously assumed that he would grow up to be like his mother and has learned that he dare not, he builds a fortress of maleness lest his deepest inclination turn him into a woman.

Ideally, the little boy would like to have the best of both male and female worlds. He aspires to go out and prevail like Batman, but he also yearns to stay at home and nuture children. This conflict tears him apart and he tries to resolve it in his play and fantasy life. Maurice is a case in point. Shortly after the birth of his younger sister, Maurice picked up his lunch bag at lunchtime in school, stuck it under his polo shirt, and strutted around the room looking for all the world like a woman in her ninth month. Several other boys followed suit, and the game soon became a popular ritual. During this same period Maurice also became deeply involved in another game. The first thing he did upon entering the nursery was to go to one of our small building toys and construct imaginary guns. He would stick a gun in each of his pockets and carry a third. Yet his mother reported that he said "When I grow up, I'm gonna marry all the women in the world. I'm gonna have a lot of babies to take care of when all those women go out to work." Maurice's mother is home full time.

Like Maurice, many boys in my nursery are often involved in gun play. If they are shooting up a room reserved for quiet play and I tell them that no guns are allowed in that room, they will convert their imaginary pistols into fire hoses or flashlights, to play firemen or "going on the prawl." I have noticed, however, that on those rare occasions when a father is assisting me in the nursery the boys' play often changes. They seem to lose interest in these compensatory phallic symbols and are drawn easily into whatever activity the father initiates, whether it is playing kickball, walking a balance beam, or painting.

I have taught preschool children in the Head Start program, children from working-class, middle-class, and upper-class families, and children whose mothers have sophisticated, through often part-time, jobs. In all of these settings, I have often seen children assume stereotyped sex roles when they are acting out their fantasies or experimenting with adult roles. In all of these settings, too, it was the mother who had nurtured the child in infancy. If men were free to share equally in the raising of children, a different picture might emerge.

Laura Carper is director of the Mayflower Nursery Playcenter in Detroit.



You're right, Tom, Roger does look like a jerk, but in a couple of years he's gonna be a real fox.

TRI-SIGMA HAS NEW, PROFESSIONAL FORMAT FOR THE "FEMME MIRROR"

Your leaders at headquarters hope that you like the new format and style of your bi-monthly periodical. Your Editor was most pleased to have Karen (CA-30-G), a professional commercial artist, offer her services in order to make the *Femme Mirror* better looking and more up-to-date. And you can see the results of her work. We at headquarters feel very fortunate to have Karen help us and we know that the sisters will enjoy observing her talents. It might also interest our sisters to know that Karen has also up-dated the brochure which is sent to interested inquirers. Thanks so much, Karen!

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Ellen OR-8-S

Answers Letters

Dear Jo:

Since I am Regional Coordinator for our sorority, Society for the Second Self, your letter was passed on to me by our California organizational headquarters to answer.

Our sorority is a group of heterosexual Transvestites who have joined together to form a national organization. We have sisters in almost every state of the Union, Canada and several foreign countires. Our group shares a common interest in that we like to dress as women. Many sections of the country have local chapters which meet on a regular basis. We are trying at present to start a Northwest chapter for Washington and Oregon.

If you wish to join our group, the process is simple. Write to Society for the Second Self, P.O. Box 36091, Los Angeles, California and ask to join. Send with this letter a check or money order for $6.60. For your money you will receive Dr. Prince's book *Understanding Cross-dressing.* With the book you will receive further information on our group.

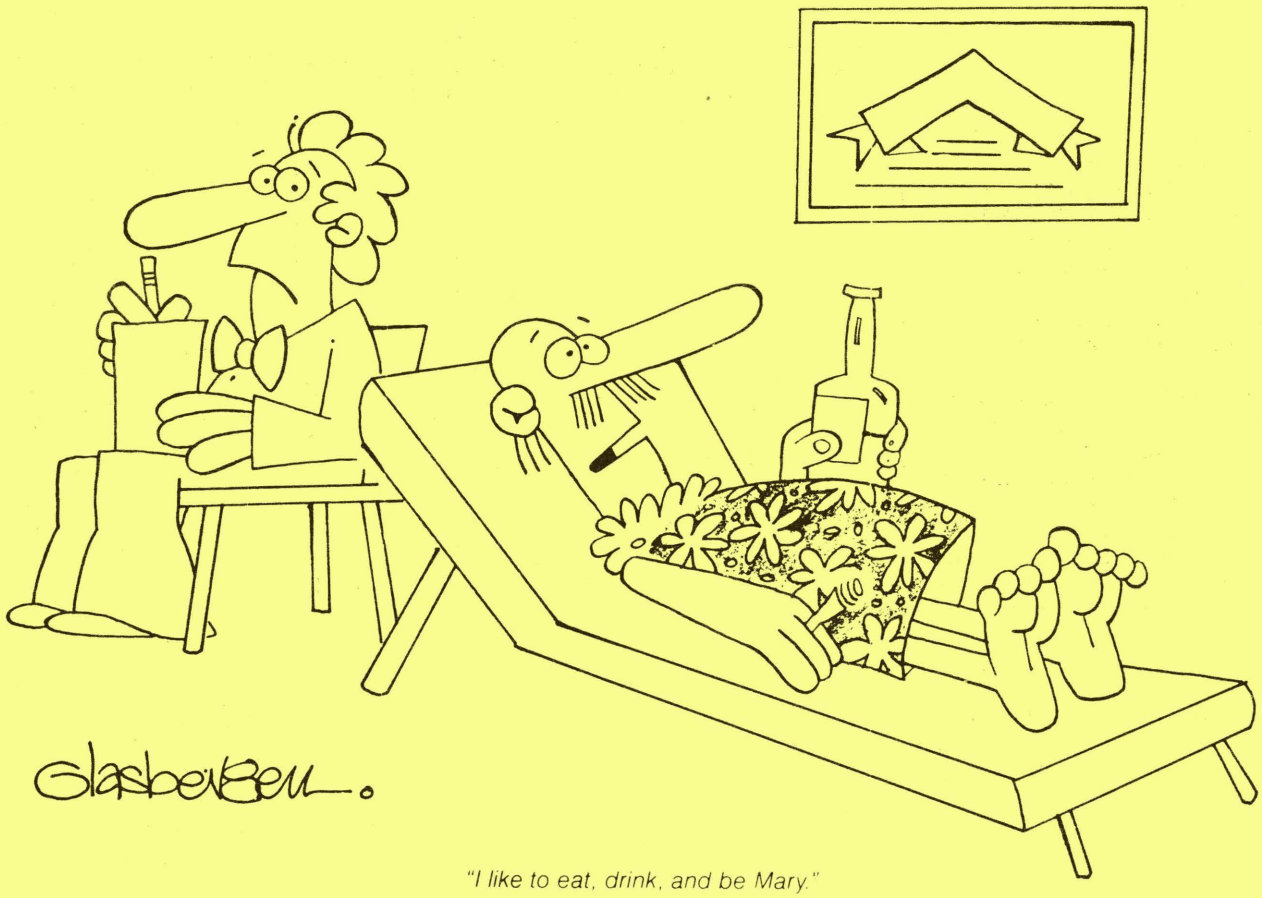
I also wish to assure you at this time that our group values your security above all. I myself hold a responsible position, and have a family which, with the exception of my wife, who approves, knows nothing of my femme self. All of our correspondence with you is designed to protect your male identity.

I hope you will decide to join us. I have only been out of the closet for two years, and my membership in our group has been quite rewarding. If I can be of any additional help please feel free to write me.

Ellen OR-8-S

SOME IMPORTANT HELP!

Many of our sisters are aware of "Fantasia Fair," which is an opportunity for TVs to visit a small New England town and be accepted as a girl by the members of the community. The "Fair" consists of nine days of being able to live en femme in the friendly community of Provincetown, Massachusetts. TVs from many states and countries attend this affair. However, many sisters do not realize that the whole affair has been produced and coordianted by Aridane Kane. Aridane is also the Director of the Outreach Foundation. So you can be assured that she knows her way around in the TV world. The Outreach Foundation offers programs and services to professional people and TVs. As part of the program a counseling service is offered and we are pleased to inform you that Aridane has been supplying referrals to our Regional Coordinator in the area – Carole Mayfield (MA-5-A). So we are grateful to Aridane for helping Tri-Sigma grow and to know that she has confidence in OUR organization to carry out the goals and objectives to help all hetero TVs. It might also be mentioned that Aridane gives seminars, provides counseling services, and helps develop, organize and implement conferences and workshops related to TVism. She is a well educated girl and spends enormous amounts of time to make "Fantasia Fair" a success. Thanks, Aridane, for helping Tri-Sigma grow.



"I like to eat, drink, and be Mary."

PHYLLIS'S OUTING HAS SOME 'ZIP'

Thursday was a hot day. I'd decided to wear a complete summer outfit: the first time this year. Sleeveless dress with light coat to match. Green and white horizontal stripes in polyester by Mr. Zee; white bag, shoes and gloves.

This day everything went wrong. I had started to dress 20 mintues late; at first I couldn't find my shoes. When I did find them, there was a nasty black smudge on one heel, which took a few minutes to remove. Eyebrows just wouldn't go on straight and I had trouble selecting the proper jewelry. With grim determination I refused to look at my watch.

Then came the last straw. The striped dress is a little tight, it has a long zip; an extender is necessary. Two inches from the top the zip stuck, and try as I might, I couldn't disengage the extender from the zip.

"By all the saints, what have I done to merit this?" I muttered. After five minutes of desperate struggle I gave up and dropped the whole caboodle down inside my dress. It wouldn't show with the coat on.

I was to meet my GG at a fashionable restaurant for a typical ladies' lunch in Chinatown. Even though I'd had parking trouble I arrived before my date. I guessed she'd had hard going too. So having taken a table and ordered a cocktail to steady my mildly jangled nerves, I turned my thought to getting my zip straightened out.

I approached the elegant and curvaceous Chinese hostess in well cut Cheong San and stylish hair cut.

"Would you please do me a favor, dear?"

"Of course, Madame, what's the problem?"

I explained my difficulty. She stretched up to my 5'11" plus three inch heels and after zipping me up the last two inches declared that all was in order.

"Odd," I thought, "I suppose the darned thing's dropped off and down inside my dress." A quick look behind assured me I was not training a tail, so I went back to my drink.

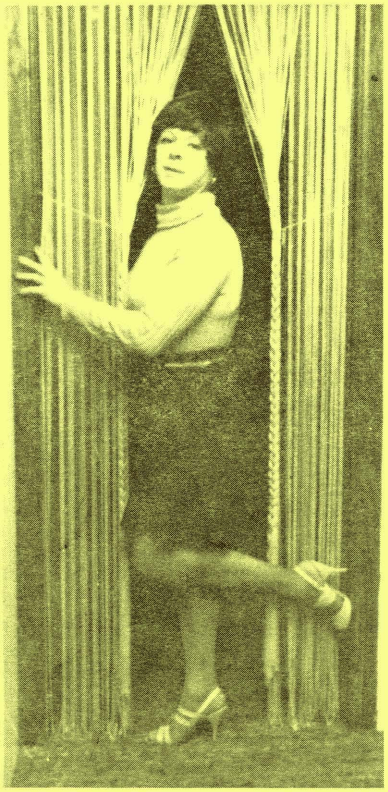
My GG arrived. After a delightful lunch I took off my coat in the ladies' retiring room. My girl friend zipped me down. There was the culprit caught in my slip. Well, well, much ado about nothing, but it gave me a feeling of accomplishment . . . "Comfortable in all feminine situations!'

Phyllis CA-19-M

TRI-SIG ALBUM

Connie NY-25-N

Helen TX-17-W



Vickie IL-48-M

Vickie IL-48-M

Please send your prettiest pictures to the FEMME MIRROR and share your loveliness with all of your sorority sisters in the TRI-SIG ALBUM.
—Your Editor

VIRGINIA'S VISIT TO TORONTO

by Erika FCO-3-L

Laurette and I picked up Virginia when the airport bus arrived in downtown Toronto on Sunday night, August 27, and drove to Laurette's house where Virginia stayed during the following week. Giselle FCO-7-C travelled 250 miles from Windsor to meet Virginia, and stayed overnight at Laurette's.

On Wednesday evening, August 30, we had a little gathering at Laurette's. Those present were: Virginia, Laurette, Erika FCO-3-L, and Barbara FCO-8-L with GG Sue, this being the first occasion on which Sue had been in the company of more than one TV. Sue turned out to be a person of classical charm and modern sophistication, completely at home in the company of four TVs. I have since sent her a formal letter of thanks for her contribution to the evening, which turned out to ge substantial. I might mention here that Virginia made a great hit with Sue, who has voiced a high opinion of Virginia's theoretical approach to TVism.

Before coming to the meeting, Barbara had a session at the wig shop, to have her hair prettied-up for the occassin. Whilst she was there, our girl from the lingerie shop two doors away came in for a hair-do, and Barbara invited her to the meeting. Too bad she wasn't able to make it, as she was scheduled to leave for Vancouver the next day. However, we'll get her to a meeting eventually.

We all found Virginia to be a very positive character who is certain to impress her mark upon whomever she meets. I gave her my personal appreciation of her achievements to date, and she left here in no doubt of my admiration of her colossal output in effort. This must not be taken as belittling the energies of all the other girls who have shouldered more than their share of the burden of organization, such as yourself and those in charge of local organizations. Though progress may be slow, we all have the satisfaction of belonging to a choice and exclusive clique, and speaking for myself I relish the flavour of it all. The few TVs I know personally are capable of contributing more to my own joie de vivre than all the rest of my acquaintance put together.

It reamins for me to tender thanks on behalf of all of us here to Laurette for making her home available as a rendezvous both on the occasion of Virginia's recent visit and for the benefit of a chapter we hope to get going in the future.

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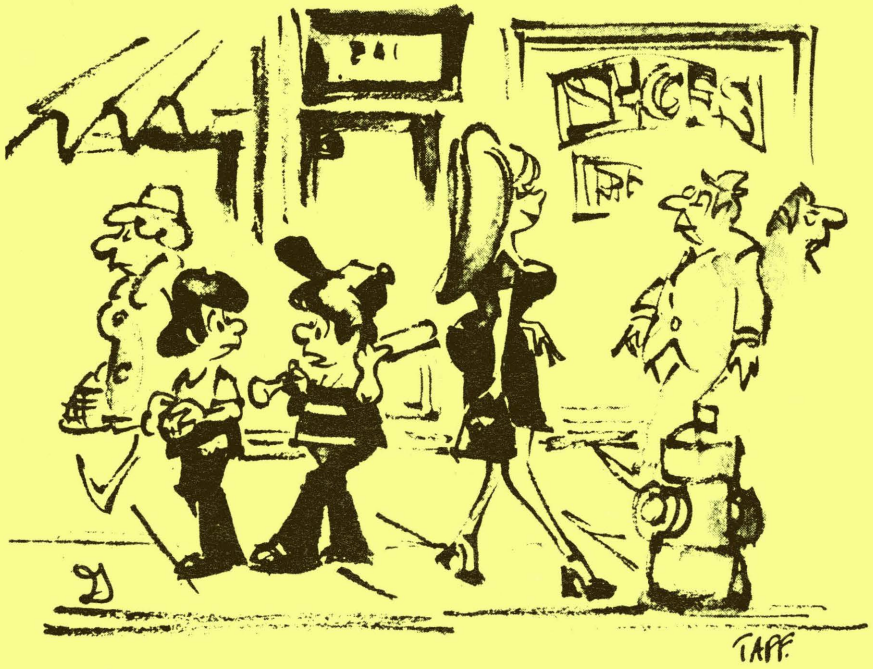
RHO CHAPTER PRESIDENT
Lucille OR–6-A



"That's my brother Sidney. Never did play boys' games."

A LETTER TO KAY

Dear Kay:

I read your story through the letters you exchanged with Carol in *Femme Mirror,* the Tri-Sigma publication, and I thought it might help you to hear from someone else who has "been there."

Of course, I am also a transvestite and have been one since my earliest memories. Like you, I would take advantage of almost any opportunity to get my "girl clothes" and I can vividly remember wearing my mother's panties — taken from the dirty clothes hamper — to school when I was in the third grade.

Also like you, I got caught by my parents several times before and during my teen years. Their reaction was not as violent nor the accusations as harsh as you've experienced, but the shame and humiliation I felt each time was, nonetheless, enormous.

In a way, though, you're luckier than I was. At least you knew, at a relatively early age, that you're not alone. I was 20 years old before I discovered that I was not the only boy in the entire world who enjoyed wearing female clothing. Even then, the case I read about (in a "man's magazine," while waiting in a barber shop) was that of a transexual and I knew that I was not one of those!

I was 30 years old before I found out, through *Transvestia,* that there were real, honest-to-God, heterosexual men who were transvestites. By then, I was married, had children, and had already learned to live with my desires to swap genders occasionally. My wife knew of my transvestism, but by no means approved of it. I'm still married after 15 years and we've both compromised enough to maintain a workable degree of stability in the relationship.

What I'm getting at is this: you have the advantage of knowing you're not alone and you're not a freak! There are, in fact, many of us and, if you take the time to closely examine the personal information submitted by the members of Tri-Sigma, you will discover that, as a group, we are a cut above the average. Our sorority includes a much higher percentage of college graduates than you'll find in the general population, for example. There are doctors, lawyers, and professional people from nearly all walks of life represented in our membership.

You have the advantage, too, of knowing that your desires to "dress up" will not go away over the years. You can, therefore, save yourself the mental and emotional pressures most of us have endured in trying to "break the habit." I was over 35 when I finally decided, after many purgings and guilt ridden sessions with my conscience, I was forevermore a transvestite. You don't have to go through that. You *do,* however, have to organize and order your life to accommodate your transvestism, because it is going to be one of the major parts of your existence.

You hinted in one of your letters that you were looking for a girl friend — one who would help you to "dress" better. I think your motives are good and you *should* find a girl friend. The process of selection, however, will be hampered by the fact of your transvestism. Don't be fooled into thinking that the average woman will overlook, or even tolerate, your dressing in feminine garb. Most women, like my own wife, will feel threatened and a little guilty that you'd want to look like a female. It flies in the face of their own femininty, and makes them feel less than adequate. However, many of us have "A" grade wives or girl friends — ones who not only tolerate but actually enjoy being with a transvestite. A marriage between a transvestite and such a woman will probably be long and happy, especially so if the transvestite husband shows the appreciation of his wife that she deserves.

When you have found a girl to whom you wish to confide your transvestism, go armed with as much factual information concerning the condition as you can get. She will almost certainly have many fears and apprehensions derived from "hearsay" and folklore, equating transvestism and homosexuality. You will have to convince her that you not only possess a feminine side, but can provide as much masculinity and protection as the relationship demands. If you decide to let her see you "dressed up," don't make her think you're trying to be a sex kitten. Don't go half way, either. After all, she will have a hard enough time trying to sort you out anyway. Dress conservatively and tastefully. Don't be garish and don't overly exaggerate feminine mannerisms — you certainly don't want to do an impersonation of a "sreaming faggot" — you're not one, let her see that you're not. It may take some time, but a girl can be found who will accept you and love you for what you are — totally.

No dear, I'm not daddy in a dress, I'm the tooth fairy.

Most places of employment will be much less than understanding if you're discovered to be a transvestite. So, don't get caught! Don't shave your arms, for example, if they must be exposed. Don't pluck your eyebrows into ultra-feminine brows — people notice things like that. Don't leave traces of nail polish around your curicles nor a hint of lipstick on your lips. You will, in short, have to exercise care and caution. I've gotten away undetected for 15 years now and have risen to a position of some importance in a very conservative corporation. I could not have done so if my transvestism was suspected.

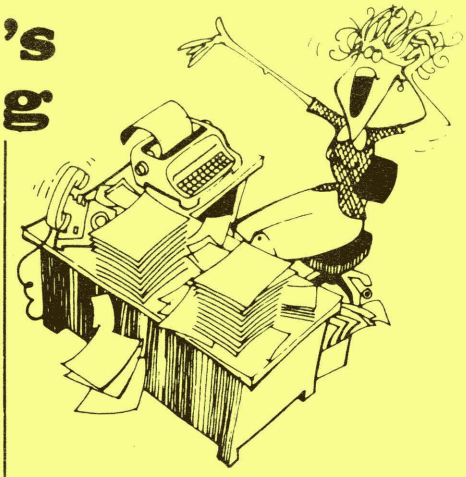
Don't neglect your masculine side, either. You are, after all, fortunate enough to be able to enjoy the best of both worlds, so take advantage of it. I count among the most pleasurable things in the world the art, science and agony of duck hunting — there is *nothing* more demanding and macho-masculine as that! But, I can sit half frozen in 20° weather with icy rain falling on my in an unprotected duck blind and know that night I can slip on a slinky, silky gown and negligee and — voila! — there is Karen! Your masculine side, provided you give it a chance, adds meaning and poignancy to your feminine side. The two are complementary and should — *must,* in fact — live together, harmoniously in your personalty. The sensuousness of nylons, against smoothly shaved legs and the rasp of rought twill hunting pants — the potential for appreciation of both is within us — enjoy it!

Know, too, that there are many of us willing to help with advice and encouragement. I strongly urge you to join and maintain membership in Tri-Sigma for this reason. Be extremely careful, however, with any other group — security is very important and you may well find it violated if you join or correspond indiscriminantly with just any organization offering its "services" to transvestites. Many of them, perhaps most, play upon the loneliness you feel to obtain names. Then you'll find yourself receiving publications and advertisements meant for everything from homosexuals to masochists! The danger in this, apart from the violation of your security, is that this sort of things you'll see promoted and advertised may well cause you to doubt your own motives and place in the scheme of things.

At any rate, I wish you the very best luck and happiness. I hope I've helped a little.

Karen SC-1-A

The Editor's Mailbag



Dear Carol,

I ran across your address while I was at the library. I am 21 years old and have been a transvestite for some time. I was at the library looking for reading material on that subject to get some help. Many times I have tried to stop "dressing" and have failed. Especially now that I am married, I've tried but the more I try the harder it gets. My wife would divorce me if she caught me and I live in fear of discovery. For many years now I have wanted to talk to someone about it. As of this moment I do not want to stop "dressing" though I feel obliged to.

My first experience with women's clothing was when I was nine years old. I was always an emotional person and was easily brought to tears. One day as dad left to the store without me the tears started. Mom yelled, insisting that if I was going to cry like a little girl she would dress me like one. At that she snatched me up, took me into my sister's room, and forced me to wear a pink dress for about an hour. Something happened that day — to my surprise came excitement coupled with embarrassment.

After that incident I became curious and over the years would experiment with my sister's underwear.

One day when I was 16 my father had left for the weekend and mom was out shopping, while my sister and I sat and watched T.V. She was two years older than I. Soon she began to remark how long and pretty my shoulder length hair was. Her compliments then became pleas for me to allow her to "fix up my hair." At first I pretended I did not want to and said no, but after several minutes I conceded. She led me into the bathroom where she immediately went to work. The curling iron quickened the job and within 20 minutes my hair was curled and hairsprayed and tied with a pink ribbon.

One thing led to another and she soon began begging me to let her dress me in her clothes, insisting I would make a pretty girl. Naturally, I eventually gave in. With her electric razor she removed the small amount of hair on my legs. She painted my toenails red and then started to make-up my face. First came a light foundation cream and then blue eye shadow, mascara, blush, lipstick, and mom's false eyelashes. My sister was so enthusiastic that I wasn't embarrassed and I pretended to be doing it as a joke.

We proceded into her room where she handed me a pair of lacy pink nylon panties. I put them on along with a matching bra that we carefully padded. Next came a pink full slip and then she picked out one of her prettiest dresses. It was light blue, tight waisted with ruffles at the hem and it fit me perfectly. By the time I had the dress on she handed me a pair of sheer borwn pantyhose which I immediately slid into. I sad down as she strapped her low open toed platform shoes on me. She could not get over how pretty I looked.

The two of us went into the living room and she began to show me how to sit, act, and walk in a feminine way. As I was practicing, the door suddenly opened and in walked mom. She laughed at first and then reassured me I was very cute. She ordered me not to change and had me keep practicing my graceful moves. Mom took many pictures and often had me changing dresses, shoes or pantyhose. I spent the entire weekend as a girl. Mom and my sister loved it and thought I pretended to be indifferent, so did I.

Nobody knows of my hobby and Mom and sis would never imagine I enjoyed that weekend. I have a compulsion to show myself to someone while I'm dressed. Am I wrong for dressing? Am I mentally sick? For me dressing is not so much of a sexual turn-on as it is a time of relaxation where I can be myself — my second self.

(No femme name given)

Dear Carol,

Our chapter is doing quite well in the Nation's Capitol. We have 13 sisters (four of them pledges, who have sent in their applications, I have been told.

Karen, Rosalind, Rita, Jan, Monica, Arlene, Sally Ann, Nancy Jean, Michelle B, Michelle W, Sandy and Lynn.

The June meeting was at the Gaslight, a key-type supper club, as a treat for our lovely wives/girl friends; who have been so kind to their "sisters" during this first year of Delta Chi. It was a lovely night. The July meeting was at my home.

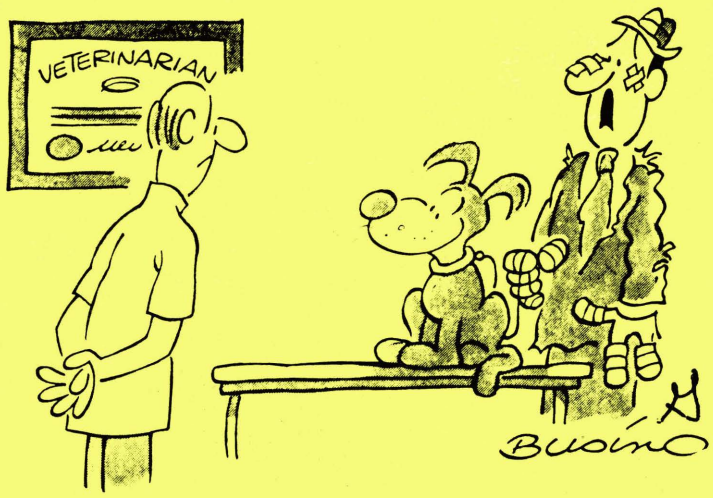
Since our lovely Rita is delighting in new-found love, I have been serving as chairperson. The letters you desired have been written to potential members. The two cards enclosed are people who have indicated that their inquiry must have been sent in as a practical joke.

I am sending two pictures of myself as you requested.

I must return to my housework and such. So do forgive the shortness of this note.

Betty Ann VA-10-L

Now when Carol, Virginia and their friends arrive, treat them all like ladies.



I came home "en femme" and he didn't recognize me!

Greetings,

My name is Greg and I live in Dallas, Texas. Ever since I can remember I have never felt like a boy and now I can say I'd rather be a transvestite. I love to put on women's clothing. When I do, I feel this certain ease in who I am, or what I am. I feel right looking as a woman whenever I can. I have tried on every dress my mother has, every bra, panty, shoe, and skirt she owns. I am still in high school and plan to go to college at Texas Tech.

Neither my parents or my brother knows of my secret desire to be effeminate. I participate in sports and I am even pretty muscular but it is all a front, even though I do like sports.

I want to be surrounded by soft things, wear pink lacy frilly clothes. I want that look because I feel it is me. If you return this letter don't put anything on the cover which would lead my parents to suspect me of such a thing. Say it is from NASA, because I am doing a term paper on them and it won't look so bad.

I own a tube top, a pair of false bosoms, two girls skirts, one bra, an eyeliner pencil, and a ruffled top. Plus this growing urge to be feminine. I am digging in the library constantly, reading about transvestites and transexuals. I want to see pictures of transvestites and transexuals but the only ones I can find are of such people as Christine Jorgenson, Arlene Lafferty, Jan Morris, to name a few. I don't so much want to be castrated to be a girl but I want to look good enough to let a guy's eyes follow my moves from head to toe. I am 17 and have only gone with two girls. I don't think I am a honosexual. I just want to look like a girl and to be pleasing to another male. If, like I said before, there is one thing I don't want my parents to know is about this. Later I will tell them but not until I get a good foundation on which to build my womanhood. Send me what you can.

Gina

Dear Carol:

Just a note to tell you how things are in Florida. I had the opportunity to entertain Susan and her wife, Shirley, (Susan is going to join Tri-Sigma soon) as well as Donna (FL-7-F) and her wife, Helen. They arrived about 1 in the afternoon and we had a good old fashioned charcoal cookout in the backyard. Everyone brought their own meat to cook on the grill, as well as some other goodies, such as potato salad, cakes, punch, etc. We had a wonderful time! It will be great to have a repeat of the occasion! We made plans to meet south of Tampa at Susan's house on Labor Day. Susan and Shirley left about 7 p.m., as they had a two hour drive ahead of them. But Donna and Helen stayed, as they only live 37 miles away. Around 9:30 we went to the Parliament House, where they have a good female impersonator. We stayed for both shows and arrived home at 1:30 a.m. to have a sandwich snack prior to their leaving for home. We can't wait for a repeat performance.

Gypsie (FL-1-L)

Dear Carol:

I have just received my first issue of the *Femme Mirror* and I must say, I'm delighted and impressed with both the form and content. I would like some of those "throwaways" so that I can do some advertising here. Genevieve is to be commended for her idea and her dedication to the cause. All the sisters who are contributing to the *Femme Mirror* have my heart-felt thanks for elevating my awareness of the girl within me because my mental state is now euphoric. As a new member of the sorority I would like to say "hello" to all the sisters, especially my Canadian sisters.

Stephanie

Dear Carol:

Well, I journyed to Washington, D.C. this past Saturday to visit Betty Ann. I arrived in mid-afernoon and there was Betty Ann — all dressed and looking pretty. She also had a friend, Sandy, who lived nearby so I needed no urging to get dressed and made up. Then we just sat around with lots of girl talk. I'd bought some ham and roast beef sandwiches so we ate those later on *(and your Editor is on a diet — this is killing me!)* Sandy is quite young and has pretty eyes. We turned back into pumpkins about 12 midnight and I was invited to stay overnight with Sandy at her apartment — which certainly beat driving back home in the wee small hours. Oh, I almost forgot. I also met another girl, Arlene, who came in that evening. She was very genteel and was a real lady. All nice people! What nice people Tvs are. There should be more love and understanding and consideration like Tvs show for others and this world would be much better. Well, Sandy and I went out for breakfast about 1 a.m. and then to her apartment. It was beautifully furnished. We yakked 'til after 3 a.m. and then hit the feathers. I slept on the couch, which was quite comfortable. We woke rather late in the morning and I was treated to a delicious brunch by Sandy. She's very talented — made some beautiful macrame plant holders — does embroidery and several other art things. She also writes poetry, which I consider quite good. After our meal we just talked some more and, naturally, I dressed — whenever Monica can, she does! Forgot to tell you that when I was over to Betty Ann's, she gave me a two-piece red and white dress that did not fit her and she wouldn't take a thing for it. Well, all good things must come to an end, so I finally tore myself away and left about 2 in the afternoon. Got home about 5 p.m. It was a beautiful drive all the way. Monica doesn't push it like she used to — it isn't worth it. Is this a sign, finally, of old age — or just maturity?

Monica (PA-7-P)

Carol,

I want to tell you — congratulate you — on the subject of your last *Femme Mirror;* it was the best.

The writing, the composition, the general production.

I'd also like Virginia to know that was one of her best editorials.

Actually, though I have never had a friend who was a homosexual — we just can't seem to have enough in common — it is true that they, with their money and numbers, have done a lot for us. And it was well for her to make the point.

I also note — and this please me — that my good friend, Shirley, in Oregon, is extending her activities in our behalf.

So — this is a lingual mish-mash, I know, but — simply put: WELL DONE!

Enid NV-10-S

Dear Carol:

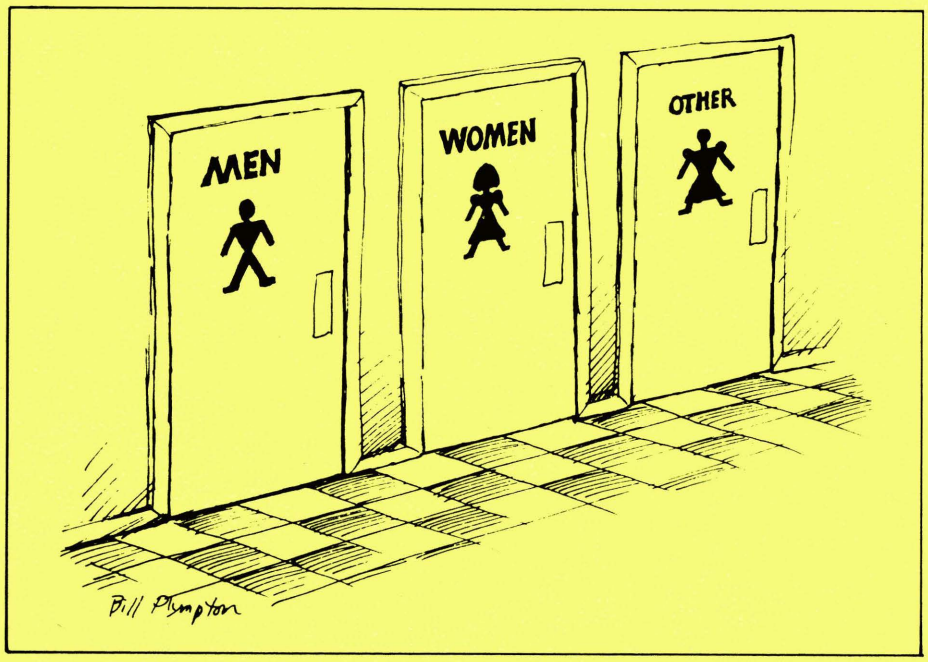
I have to write and let you know that through Ellen (OR-8-S) I have meet Jennifer (OR-3-W) and her wife from Selma, Oregon. I had them to my home last Sunday. Jennifer is a very brilliant person and her wife, Jan, is an unbelievably level, loving, understanding woman. They will make an exceptionally valuable addition to our sorority. Jennifer has her own business and is exploring ideas to provide some sort of industry for those Tvs who would like to live full time as a woman. She is most interested in the vitality and growth of our organization. I feel certain that in the not too distant future Selma and Medford, Oregon will be well-known for the contribution being made toward the advancement of the Tv lifestyle. Last Sunday I really lived, and I think it was because I was accepted as a woman by Jan – with no reservations. So the afternoon was spent in lengthy discussion on many subjects. We were, simply, four women talking about things from a woman's viewpoint. My wife has had many of her reservations removed concerning Tvism and her resistance to my Tvism has considerably lessened. To further illustrate Jan's complete acceptance, she asked "What's so wrong that I see no wrong with Jennifer or Lucille expressing themselves?" She said that she felt we had strong feminine inclinations, so what is wrong with our doing and being what suits us best. There are now three known Tri-Sig members in this area and each of us is sure we have seen others. Jennifer and I plan, this fall, to be workers to help discover other Tvs. Please send us a new supply of library cards and the new flyer. I now feel that I am readlly a fona-fide Femaphyle and I want to help thse Tvs still hiding in the closet to gain their freedom. I am also interested in helping wives become more understanding. My wife has made wonderful progress and I feel that I have gained much knowledge that will help other members to have the same success. Thanks again, Carol, for all the help you and others have given me. As a result of my freedom I am a very happy person now with much greater compassion for people.

Lucille (OR-6-A)

Dear Carol:

It is with pleasure that I'm returning the completed questionnaire. It is what we, as a group of cross-dressers, need more of. I think that this kind of research will do much to get the "facts of life" before the general public. Also, I'm enclosing money for two more issues of *Transvestia.* I think that it is the best text for those of us who are continually seeking more knowledge about ourselves. I guess that I'm biased in favor of such a magazine – Lord knows that I have a bias that is built in from about 55 years of Tvism. There is no manner of avoiding that. Like a disease, if you have it, you've got it. I kinda like it! I'm glad that you are helping Virginia with Chevalier Publications. I don't know much about the situation but I do know that Virginia has done a world of good for all of us. I do wish that I had a class "A" wife so I could devote more time to others. I may be a bit selfish, as it seems most Tvs are, but I do wish that I could be free to do more as I think I could help a lot if I had the freedom. I'm sitting here in a pink tweed double knit sport dress. I do hope that I'm prim and held as appealing as I feel. I have been able to dress a little more of late and enjoy it! I wonder what I would have been like if I had not been a Tv. Probably an old stick in the mud, eh what?

Marge (MS-1-H)



Dear Carol,

I have received my membership in Tri-Sigma and the S.S.S. and by the societies assistance have come in contact with Connie NY-25-N. I don't know when I have been so excited and happy, as to some degree now I have been let out of the closet in spite of the fact that I have a "D" wife whom I love very much. Now, at least I can talk with someone about Lois and unburden myself and appear before someone as Lois. I find it very difficult to discribe my wonderful feeling and I owe it all to you, Virginia and all those who have made the effort and development of Tri-Sigma possible.

I am not wealthy or super intelligent, but as I get used to the new life that you have helped me find, I may be able to contribute to the organization. In the near future I am going to acquire a P.O. Box but until I notify you of this change, please continue to send correspondence to the same address.

I am enclosing a cartoon idea I had. Use it if you wish, or have it redrawn.

Again, thanks to Virginia, Carol and everyone who have helped to give me new happiness.

Lois NY-6-W

Dear Carol:

Recently I visited a large shopping mall quite some distance from where I live, so no one knew me. Since I adore high heels, I headed for some shoe stores and finally located a nice pair of spike heels, with ankle straps (sandles), black patent with gold trim. I was in male attire at the time but I was certainly interested in those shoes. Upon entering the store I was approached by a nice looking young sales girl. I asked if she had the particular style in size 8½B and she went to get them. Upon returning I remarked that I hoped they would fit. She said that if they didn't fit, my wife could exchange them. Whereupon I told her that they weren't for my wife – they were for me, and that I was a female impersonator. Well, she blinked a couple of times, but said nothing. Not wanting to leave her hanging I asked if I could try them on in the back room – out of sight of the regular customers. She defensively said, "Oh, golly, I'll have to ask the manager." So off she went to find him and both returned in less than 30 seconds. Evidently he wasn't too shook up because he told me, "Sure, why not?" With that, the three of us paraded to the back room where I removed one shoe and sock, revealing my right foot complete with painted toenails and panty hose. I slipped on one of the spikes with both of them looking on. The manager remarked that it looked nice and she agreed. After completing the sale, I gave the girl a small photo of myself, dressed in a blonde wig, brown sweater and skirt. Since she didn't sell to Tvs on a regular basis, the episode should have given her something to think about! I'm sure that she discussed it with some of her friends over the weekend. Later on I intend to go back and make another purchase. Hope they remember me.

Vikki (IL-48-M)