



News & views

Vision • Integrity • Quality

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Renaissance

MtF Transsexual Brain Is Different

NEW YORK (AP) — Men who want to become women may have key brain structures that are biologically female already, a small study of male-to-female transsexuals suggests.

“It might be an explanation for the fact that those people feel female although genetically they are male,” said researcher Dr. Dick F. Swaab.

The cause of transsexualism is a mystery that scientists have sought to attribute to psychology or biology. Experts say that the condition is rare but that there are no reliable figures on how common it is.

Swaab and his colleagues examined brain samples from dead people and reported that, on average, the size of a certain brain structure in six MtF transsexuals was about the same size as what they found in women, and smaller than what they found in gay or heterosexual men. Other scientists cautioned that the result may have been produced by the sex-change treatments.

Still, the study is “opening up a whole new area of questioning and it’s adding to all the studies that have come out in the past 10 years pointing to biological factors that influence human sexual behavior,” said Sandra Witelson, a professor of psychiatry and biomedical sciences at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Swaab is director of the Netherlands Institute of Brain Research in Amsterdam and a professor of neurobiology at the University of Amsterdam. He and Dutch colleagues present the work in an upcoming issue of the journal *Nature*.

Roger Gorski, a professor of neurobiology at the University of California at Los Angeles, said that going from the finding for one tiny brain structure to an explanation for a person’s sexual identity is “a big leap.” But the study is “a step in that direction, and I think an important one,” he said.

The study focused on a brain structure called the BSTc that plays an important part in rodent sexual behavior and may do the same in people.

Researchers found that on average, the structure was 31 percent smaller in 11 heterosexual women than in 12 heterosexual men. The BSTc in transsexuals was on average about the same size as it was in the women’s brains. Nine gay men had about the same average size as the heterosexual men.

Swaab said he doubts the BSTc itself is responsible for transsexualism. Instead, it appears to be part of a larger brain network that makes a man feel like a woman, he said.

Dr. Thomas Wise, director of research at the Sexual Behaviors unit at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, said he is not convinced that the study showed an innate difference in transsexuals. The reduced size of the BSTc might be due to the estrogen treatments [the transsexuals] took to expand their breasts and otherwise feminize their bodies, or from the drop in their testosterone due to sex-change surgery or medication, he said.

Swaab and colleagues argued against that, saying data from several of the brains in their study indi-

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TV-Dad Wins Custody Case For Son

by Lori Larkin

Anyone that has ever been involved in a child custody case will tell you it is probably the most emotional and highly charged issue they have ever been involved with. Other things being equal, most will agree that the mother generally enjoys an advantage, but should the father be a crossdresser his chances are even further reduced.

Time and time again I have heard stories from crossdressing fathers who were blackmailed into giving up their parental rights because of the threats

of exposure and ridicule. **I am here to tell you it doesn't have to be that way!**

I have recently been involved in just such a case, and won. My ex-wife and her attorney did their best to portray me as some sort of “crazed transvestite,” unfit to have the primary care, custody, and control of my six year old son, but we went in very well prepared and overcame. Here is how we did it.

Be comfortable and confident in yourself and your transgendered nature: The fact that

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Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

Wilmington, Delaware: meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808.

New Jersey

South Jersey/Shore Area: Write Renaissance South Jersey, Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ, 08330. Meets first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee City. Doors open 7PM. Call 609-641-3782 for details.

Pennsylvania

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

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122 Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (780-1578) for location and meeting times.

Affiliates

California

Orange County: Powder Puffs of California, PO Box 1088, Yorba Linda, CA92686, or email to <ppoc@aol.com>

Connecticut

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

Georgia

Atlanta: The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 404-939-0244, or email to <aegis@mindspring.com>. Information resources & referrals.

Atlanta: Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 404-939-2128.

Illinois

Chicago: The Chicago Gender Society, PO Box 578005, Chicago, IL 60657, 708-749-1202.

Louisiana

New Orleans: The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 870213, New Orleans, LA 70187-1300.

Maryland

An affiliate is forming in the Baltimore area. Write Tran°Quility, c/o Colleen N. Harper, 3044 Abell Ave., Baltimore, MD, 21218-3912.

New Jersey

N. Central Jersey: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701 or call 908-219-9094.

New York

Manhattan: Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), write 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, NY 10014, or call 201-794-1665, Ext. 332.

Long Island: New York GIRL & Partners, PO Box 456, Centereach, NY 11720, Call 516-732-5115 for info.

Long Island: Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE), PO Box 3015, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY 11779-0147.

Oklahoma

Central Oklahoma: Sooner Diversity, part of the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance (COTA). Contact, Rachel Rudnick, P.O. Box 575, Norman, OK 73070.

Pennsylvania

Lehigh Valley/Pocono area: Northeastern Pa. Transgender Alliance, NEPTGA, meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Allentown area. Call for directions and more information, 610-821-2955.

Renaissance News & Views

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Editor-in-Chief

Angela Gardner

Contributing Editors

Dina Amberle

JoAnn Roberts

Layout

Creative Design Services

Distribution

Rachel & Beth Marshall

Business Manager

Jessica Brandon

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Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the transgender community and the general public.

Local Calendar

December

- 2 Ren. LSV Xmas Party
- 9 NEPTGA, Allentown
- 9 Ren. South Jersey
- 9 Ren. Delaware
- 9 NYG&P, Long Island, NY
- 16 Ren. GPC Xmas Party

January

- 13 Ren. South Jersey
- 13 Ren. LSV meeting
- 13 Ren. Delaware
- 13 NEPTGA, Allentown
- 13 NYG&P, Long Island, NY
- 20 Ren. GPC
- 27 Balto. Affiliate

News Beat & Reminder



by Angela Gardner

Ho, ho, ho kiddies, what a whirlwind of activity came with the Fall. First it was walking the halls of Congress. (Nah, we didn't have a thing to do with the budget crisis.) Then I ran the **Transgender Alliance** exhibit at the National Association of Social Workers Convention in the middle of October. We spread the word about the transgender community, and the resources available through the major transgender organizations, to over 2000 social workers. Those folks are going to now be prepared to actually help some of their transgendered clients. After that concluded we were into planning the **1997 International Congress on Sex and Gender**, I had to get the **GPC Holiday Party** organized, make my costume for **Henry David's Halloween Ball** and then drop in on the Philippines as **Typhoon Angela** and wreak a little havoc. Boy, all that has got me worn out. So worn out that I have caught, and kept, the **Dreaded Change of Season Cold**. By carefully allowing myself to get worn down, not watching my diet and exceeding wind speeds of 170 MPH, I've managed to turn it into a real doozy. Don't mess with me, I'm on medication! Antibiotics, actually. (Sometimes I feel sorry for the poor biotics. There are so many drugs against them.) Now, I make the supreme sacrifice and stay up all night, just plain trashing my health, to write another witty and exciting column... just for you. Fortunately the fever causes the manifestation of something approximating creativity. And now...

we're cleared for takeoff. Here we go...

Howard, What Big Boobs You Have

Howard Stern, the King of Sleaze has a new book hot off the presses. It's called *Miss America* and SURPRISE! Howard's in drag on the cover. Not just drag but pretty well-done drag. So well-done that some of his fans have posted messages to the Howard newsgroup on the Net asking how could he do such a "homo" cover. But wait, the drag doesn't stop there. Inside the book are pictures of the "rejected" covers. (Great way to use up space, "Oh, I don't know, let's just put all these other cover shots inside and tell them the rejects are a bonus.") Those "covers" include shots of the whole Stern show crew in drag. Everyone is identified on page 164 so you have a chance to know what your favorite Sternoid looks like in a dress. (What about Robin Quivers? Did she dress as a drag king or drag queen?)

I remember Howard appearing in drag on his ill fated television show. He interviewed **Tula** and her sister dressed in drag. Of course, throughout the interview he claimed to be a transsexual and all of his sophomoric fans laughed and laughed about how Howard was making such a joke of Tula. I wonder... with all this cross-dressing; where there's smoke, could there be fire?

The folks who run the **Miss America Pageant** got a little upset too and prepared to file suit, so Stern's publisher fast forwarded the release

date to beat the injunction.

Ya know how Howie has his legions of fans call up talk shows and TV shows like *Real Personal*, pretending to be legitimate callers, and then they proclaim Howard as God when they get on the air? Well, how about if all of the crossdressers start calling in to Howard's show pretending to want to comment on some of his scintillating wit and then start asking him if he's wearing panties? Go on, ya know ya wanta.

Kitty Es Quatro

Statuesque drag beauty and Palm Springs mayoral candidate Kitty Cole, went down to defeat in the November election. Her mascara faced a tough test as the plucky glamour candidate heard the election results come in and she saw herself shaping up as only fourth place in the hearts and minds of Palm Springers. (She should have kissed more babies. Imagine the little tykes all smeared with Wet & Wild. It kind of gives a girl goosebumps.)

Miss Cole managed to garner (I love that election talk) 2.9% of the vote. That's a hefty three hundred and seventy one votes— from people with great fashion sense. Kitty was quoted in the L.A. Times (they were "shocked") as saying, "I can't believe that there are that many hundreds of people out there that would put their butt on the line for me." Too bad more of **our** crowd didn't turn out at the polls and carry her to victory but, hey, fourth isn't bad for a first time candidate with no record and a great pair of gams. Perhaps she should have started with City Council to kind of get in the political groove. Let's help her out next time she runs for office. When she announces her candidacy we'll all move out there and register to vote. If we all get together in one place we should be able to elect her by a landslide. Of course the impact on the local beauty supply houses would be incredible.

Temptress Tells All

Well, not all, but, imagine my surprise when I was Net surfing through Cindy Martin's Transgender Forum

continued next page

News Beat...

<<http://www.zoom.com/personal/cindym/indextg.html>> and saw Chuck (the founder and guitarist of Temptress, the crossdressing rock band) Garabedian's face and name listed as a "New Girl." And, in the Transgender Artists section I was told you could view the cover of the Temptress comic book. I quickly clicked on the proper icon and it opened before my amazed eyes: a painting of some hot babes in next to nothing but a few strategically placed leather straps and their instruments. Of course, they look nothing



like the boys in the band but, hey, what's wrong with a little wishful thinking?

Now, it was not so long ago that I heard Temptress on the *Joan Rivers Show* (OK, it was that long ago) swearing that they were **not** transvestites or crossdressers or any of that kind of thing, thank you very much. No indeed, they're just red blooded American boys who dress up as a gimmick to promote their musical careers. I even talked with Chuck on the phone one time and he reiterated the band's straightness. Now, at last, they've come out of the closet. (He still isn't using a femme name but I'll bet his main

squeeze doesn't call him Chuck when he's wearing his favorite teddy around the house.) While not actually issuing a release to the media or painting it on the side of buildings, by appearing in Transgender Forum, Temptress is telling everybody what we already knew. They walk around in drag cause they like it... and it's a good gimmick to promote their musical careers. Good luck girls. Keep on rockin'.

Speaking of Gimmicks

The popular eatery in New York, **Lucky Cheng's**, has flatterers in Merry Olde London Towne. It's the sincerest form of compliment they say, and it's also the quickest way to latch onto a good gimmick. According to a piece in the November issue of *Beaumont* magazine the owners of **Diva**, a new restaurant in London's Soho district, have decided to have an all drag wait staff. Giacomo Capizzano and Kevin Garrity found all ten of their waitresses by word of mouth and, "adver-tiss-ments" (must use that Brit accent, ya know) in *Boys* magazine. (Everyone knows... for a boy in girls clothes... put an ad in *Boys*.) The girls will all sport sophisticated London fashions as they sling the chow, and the chow, also like Lucky Cheng's, will be "pan-Asian food."

Mr. Capizzano said there is also a drag restaurant in Paris. (Where? I love Paris in drag in the Spring) The waitresses there are very drag queeny, with lots of feather boas and glitter. "We call that 'anti-appetite' drag," said Capizzano. The *Diva* girls will dish out the food as they delight the eye in outfits ranging from Sloane Ranger to Mary Quant in the Swinging '60s.

I simply must return to London this year. Perhaps they could use a Yank queen in the dining room. Hey chef, Adam and Eve on a raft. Wreck 'em. Youse want coffee wit dat, hon?

Views News

We must note our Business Manager, Barbara Schwarz, has decided to retire from that position as she concentrates her attention in other areas of her life. Thanks for the months of service Barbara and good luck.

Stepping in to fill the Business Manager position is our shopping reporter, Jessica Brandon. Jessica will be responsible for making sure we run the ads that people have paid for and drop the ones that haven't been paid for. She'll be generating bills, soliciting new ads and as they say in the biz, servicing the accounts. (What? What! I din't say nothin'.)

One of the first things she'll be telling our advertisers is... ad rates are going up. After holding the line on ad cost for many years, we finally broke down and raised the rates. It's still a bargain (at twice the price) for a year's worth of advertising targeted at our community. We recently raised the subscription rate of *News & Views* by four dollars. That increase along with greater ad revenue will let us better serve the transgender community.

One of the first exciting things we're going to do is set up a Renaissance web site. Right now those with access to the World Wide Web can find information on Renaissance and *News & Views* at the CDS home page <<http://www.cdspub.com/Ren.html>>. With this new site, Renaissance will be able to provide a lot more information, even back issues of *News & Views* directly to your computer. You'll also be able to subscribe to an electronic text-only version of *News & Views* that will appear in your email box every month before the snail-mail version gets to people's post office boxes. This will be a boon for folks who can't afford to have transgender information coming in the mail. After you've read the email version you can turn it into random electrons with the touch of a button.

The regular print version is getting some improvements in the form of more photos. GPC member Miranda Thomas has agreed to be the official *News & Views* photog. Of course, even the new rate increases won't let us pay Miss Thomas to fly around to events all over the place so, we want you to send us photos. If your Chapter or Affiliate holds an event, or if you give an award, or something else that's newsworthy, send us some information on it and a photo or two. Make sure you tell us who's who in the photo, where they're

at, and what they're doing. We would like to have a regular photo page for Chapter and Affiliate activities, but we can't do it without you. (Keep in mind we won't run photos of you in your favorite outfit in front of the hotel curtains, anything in bad taste, or photos that are out of focus, too dark to reproduce, and so on.) All photos and other info for publication should be sent to PO Box 530, Bensalem, PA 19020.

Last Minute Musings

Take heart girls, it's not only the poor TV who has to look hard for big shoes. *Mortal Kombat* star **Bridgette Wilson** has admitted to possessing a pair of size of 11½ feet. She told **Jay Leno** that the only place she can find shoes that fit is... you guessed, cross-dresser stores. All you girls in LA keep an eye open when you're in the shoe

department. You might find Bridgette there looking for a new pair of pumps.

Keep an eye peeled for a Hong Kong produced film that's not exactly a karate flick. It's a crossdressed comedy called *He's A Woman, She's A Man*. It's been playing in the 1995 Asian-American International Film Festival. It's the usual wacky plot where a guy dresses as a girl and a girl dresses as a guy and they get together, but it's all in Chinese with subtitles. That means you'll be so busy reading the bottom of the screen you won't be able to see that much of the crossdressing.

Stella Bamvil wrote in a while back about a "scientific" experiment she has conducted. Around the end of August she shaved her hands from the wrists to the finger tip. (Hairy fingertips?) That was all the skin she exposed when she attended the LSV Luau. After the

Luau she paid attention to how people reacted to her "line of demarcation" where the hirsute met the hairless.

She found, to her surprise, no one said anything. It took six weeks for the hair to grow out and still no comment, As Stella said, "Does that mean that no one noticed or that they were all too polite?" Unless you want to actually ask if they noticed anything funny, we'll never know. I say it's probably a mix of the two but whatever it is, at least they're not giving you any trouble so go ahead, shave 'em again kid.

And that friends and neighbors is the end of the show. Send me those pictures, tell us about the activities in your portion of the TG community and don't forget the **Swimsuit Issue** coming in February. I'll take your swimsuit pics up till the end of December.

Aloha honeys.



SPICE Comes To The East Coast For '96

by *Evelyn Kirkland*

The SPICE Board of Directors is proud to announce the 4th Annual SPICE will be held in the metropolitan Philadelphia area in July 1996. The site will be the Wilmington [Delaware] Hilton, located just across the Delaware state line and 11 miles south of the Philadelphia International Airport. The room cost is just \$70 per night for up to four people. Registration for the full conference is \$137 per person, which includes three days of programs and six meals (lunch and dinner on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday). Any two days with four meals costs only \$105 per person and a single day with two meals is \$83 per person.

SPICE is a spouses and partners gathering aimed at helping genetic females involved in relationships with transgendered men. It allows spouses and partners the space they need to deal with the many and varied issues involved in such relationships.

Professional presenters facilitate the spouse/partner programs as they explore and develop their own self-worth and well-being. Spouses/partners who are coping, and those who have gone beyond just coping, will be present to

share special moments of frustration and joy. Transgendered men are invited. **However, this is a no-cross-dressing event.**

SPICE's new Director, Peggy Rudd, Ed.D., is already lining up presenters and facilitators for the program. With Peggy's input, this SPICE promises new and different approaches to the topics and issues presented at this event. As in the past, a program will be set up for the men. Presenters will guide participants, both male and female, in their quest for confidence, the wholeness of being in a meaningful relationship, and the joy of living life to the fullest.

Excursions to both historic Philadelphia and the Brandywine area will be offered. A Wednesday night cruise aboard the river boat *Spirit of Philadelphia* is being arranged. There will be an extra charge for these events.

Delaware is a

sales-tax free state and outlet malls are located in nearby Christiana for those who would prefer shopping over sightseeing.

Mark July 24-28, 1996 on your calendar now. For brochures or further information, contact Evelyn or Jim Kirkland at P.O. Box 1242, Newtown, PA 18940, or call us at (215) 860-9271.

Ed. Note: Two of our favorite local counselors, Carol Cobb-Nettleton and Patty Klein, will be facilitating at SPICE '96, and Neila Miller (well-known for her work at Fantasia Fair) will also be there.



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TS Brain...

cated that varying sex hormone levels in adulthood don't affect BSTc size. They cited data from two post-menopausal women, two people with tumors that raised hormone levels, two transsexuals who had stopped taking estrogen before death and two men castrated because of prostate cancer. Wise said the hormonal explanation still can't be ruled out.

The Dutch further comment:

Under the supervision of brain-specialist Prof. D. Swaab, researchers studied the brains of 6 deceased transsexuals. According to Swaab, this research proves that transsexualism is not caused by psychological disorders.

In the late '80s, Swaab caused a fair amount of commotion by stating that research on the brains of homosexual men showed that their sexual orientation was biologically determined. His research was never duplicated.

Prof. Swaab and the endocrinologist/transsexualologist Prof. L. Gooren were interviewed on Dutch television a few hours after the announcement of their results. Gooren stressed that the researchers only examined the brains of MtF transsexuals: "One third of all the people that are treated in our clinic are FtM transsexuals. Until now, only a very few transsexuals have died. That's why we only had 6 brains to examine, and all came from MtF transsexuals."

The proof was found in the hypothalamus, Swaab explained. "On the top of this part in the brain is a small group of cells. In biological males, it's twice as big as in biological females. But in MtF transsexuals, it's about the same size as in biological women." Because human brain-patterns develop in the four years after birth, it is very probable that sexual differentiation also takes place in this period. According to Swaab, the first signs of transsexualism appear at an early age. "Professor Cohen, Utrecht University, has been observing possibly transsexual children for quite a number of years

now. Her findings seem to prove that the first signs become evident between the age of 5 and 8," said Swaab.

Gooren added that the research project was primarily meant to understand the phenomenon, *not* to find a cure. He is convinced that non-Dutch transsexuals can benefit from the research findings. "In the Netherlands, transsexualism is legally recognized. People can change their name and gender, and all treatment is paid by the National Health Care. But in other countries, transsexuals have to tear down a lot of walls to be accepted as the man or woman they really are. I sincerely hope that their troubles will diminish in the future. After all, you can't change nature, now can you?"

A group of British transsexuals have already asked permission to use the research findings in court. "They claim the right to change their name and gender in official records. And in my opinion, they have a very strong case now," Gooren concluded.



Custody...

you are a crossdresser doesn't mean you aren't a good father. It is just another part of the person you are. Most of the crossdressers I know are much more nurturing and caring than more traditional males. You must believe in yourself if you expect others to.

Find the right attorney: Start by looking for an attorney that is experienced and successful in representing fathers. Be honest and up-front about your crossdressing. He/she needs to know *all* the issues. If you sense he/she is at all uncomfortable representing you, keep looking. It is imperative that the attorney believe in you if they are to do their best. My attorney not only had the best record in the state at representing fathers, but quickly adopted the attitude that my crossdressing is a form of freedom of expression and did not make me a bad father. It was great to see him getting fired up when we started discussing the issues.

Be prepared: Knowing my ex-wife and her attorney would try to portray me as some sort of psychological pervert, I went through a whole battery of psychological tests so we could show in court that nothing could be farther from the truth. Armed with the new *DSM-IV*, and having educated one of the best-known local psychological counselors, we took the issue head on and presented it exactly as it is.

Remain calm: The opposing attorney will definitely try to "get to you." Your confidence and belief in yourself needs to be very apparent, without being arrogant.

Looking back, it certainly wasn't a pleasant or easy experience, but it was very well worth it. If you find yourself in a similar situation, don't let them blackmail you. Stand up for yourself. If I can help, I can be reached via the Internet at <LoriLarkin@aol.com>.



Attention Chapters & Affiliates

News & Views wants your news and views. If you have an event, let us know about it before hand. (At least one month before.) After the event make sure we get a review and some photos. The important word in Renaissance News & Views is Renaissance. Let the other members of Renaissance know what your segment of the organization is up to.

Send your press releases, reviews and photos to:

Renaissance N&V

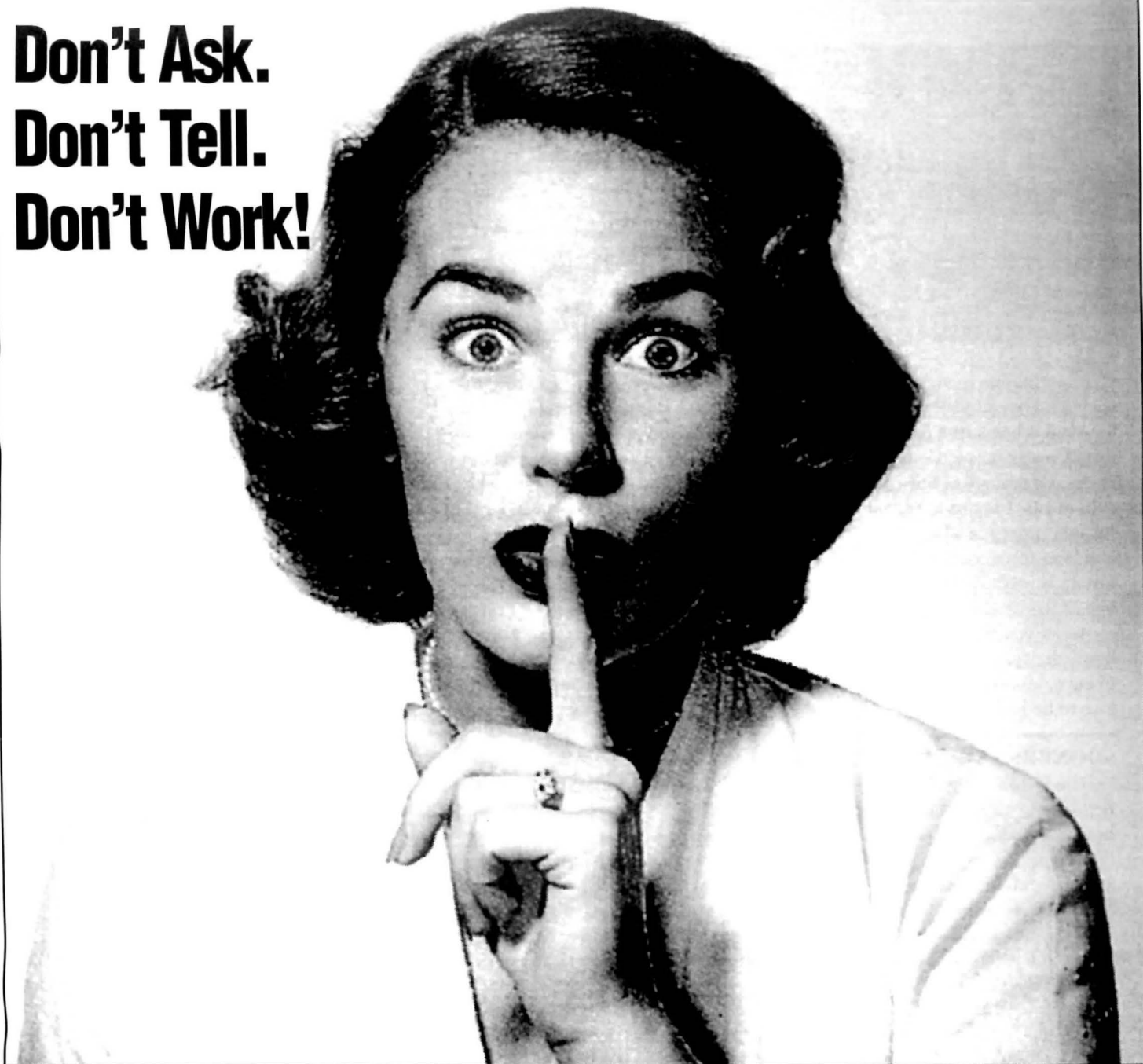
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I see that the management is raising your membership/subscription dues for 1996. I knew that free agency would wreak havoc on season ticket prices. Of course, as one of the regular columnists, I figure my agent will now be able negotiate a fat signing bonus and long-term contract for me. If not, I just go across the street and write for one of the Tri-Ess chapters.

And if you think I'm just playing hardball, well, believe me, they'd love to have me. And as I've always said, I'd love to be had.

SOONERS SAY 'LATER'

The October issue of the *Sooner Belle* newsletter of the **Central Oklahoma TG Alliance** carried the news that their Tri-Ess sorority had voted 'to annul our connection' with the national Tri-Ess group.

Some quick background on the Oklahoma ladies: The Central OK TG Alliance (COTA) is made up of three subgroups: **Sooner Diversity** is an open-membership Renaissance affiliate; **OK New Men & Women** is a transsexual support group and AEGIS affiliate; and **Sigma Beta** is (or was) a Tri-Ess sorority.

The Sigma Beta sorority covered their decision to decertify as a Tri-Ess affiliate in their chapter's section of the newsletter. The front page of the newsletter carried an essay by chapter leader Vanessa Kaye in which she told of her personal decision to leave Tri-Ess. The main reasons given by both the sorority and Vanessa were their belief that national Tri-Ess leadership does not live up to its stated non-discrimination policy and that it betrayed personal and confidential information.

While the sorority's group statement was written in brief generalities, Vanessa's complaints were more specific. She believes that the non-discrimination statement approved by the national Tri-Ess board has not changed the predominantly Christian, Caucasian, heterosexual bias of the group. Vanessa also points out that the membership of Tri-Ess does not have a say in the selection of national Board members. In her words it is 'self-serving and self-perpetuating.' She also insinuates there are financial improprieties and conflicts of interest with some of the national Board members.

Vanessa's harshest criticism is saved for Tri-Ess Chair, Jane Ellen Fairfax. She accuses Jane of being a narrow-minded fundamentalist Christian. She further claims that Jane betrayed personal information given in confidence and called for the national Board to ask for Jane Ellen's resignation.

Tsk, tsk, tsk! I thought we were finally turning the corner on controversies about Tri-Ess. There seemed to be movement in the right direction from the leadership and some past critics were beginning to give guarded support again. Of course, we've only heard one side of the Oklahoma saga.

Vanessa Kaye's accusations make for juicy reading, but I found it unfortunate that no concrete evidence was given for any of her claims. If one is going to make charges, one should be able to provide specific instances, quotes, or corroboration to back them up. Otherwise, it leaves the impression that there is a personal axe to grind against individuals (rather than the institution) and that emotion has gotten the best over factual information.

The way it stands right now, no one can say for sure who's right and who's wrong. I'll be interested to see if anything more comes of this. It's great fun to have raging controversies in print, but anyone who writes for newsletters — particularly the editors — should be very careful to substantiate claims and counterclaims with evidence. If we allow our community's news outlets to sink to unproven name-calling, we are in danger of being laughed off as just a bunch of whining queens.

STRICTLY BALLROOM

I've seen ballroom dance competitions broadcast on public television many times, but it's only recently that I've paid any attention to them. After watching a few recently, I wonder why I wasn't drawn to them earlier.

Imagine a large dance floor on which up to six elaborately dressed, dramatically made-up, incredibly fit, and gorgeously belegged women spin, slink and sway for our viewing pleasure. Oh, sure they have male dance partners, but I can't think of anything that would preserve one's anonymity more safely than being the male dance partner of some rail-thin glamour girl in a sequined dance dress slit right up to you-know-where.

Of course, the real attraction of the women participants is that they are not celebrities or professional showgirls but real people. Wives, mothers, and girlfriends who just happen to enjoy dancing and, yes, showing off the shapes and legs they've worked so hard to perfect. The competitions include such dramatic Latin dances as the Tango, the Rhumba, and the Cha-Cha, so it behooves the dancers to be dramatic in their appearance and movements. The makeup application of the female participants could inspire a roomful of crossdressers. No, they don't look like that when they're out shopping but it's nice to see some real women who aren't trying to 'pass' as housewives and are loving every moment of their time in the spotlight.

The other parallel between competitive ballroom dancing and cross-dressing is that it is a subculture all its own. A lot of people aren't aware that

it even exists; the training and talent level required is way beyond any general interest level; and there is something about it that seems a little weird, even to someone who's involved in a subculture much weirder by far than ballroom dancing. But in the same way that crossdressing is fascinating to some non-crossdressers with an open mind, the pageantry, glamour, and style of competitive ballroom dancing is equally fascinating.

WHOSE GROUP IS IT ANYWAY?

The *Chi Tribune* is the newsletter of the **Chi Chapter** of Tri-Ess in Chicago. Their new president, Deanna, wrote a long piece in the October issue outlining her intentions as the group's new leader.

One of the things she addressed was the need to make the chapter meetings safe and "...as comfortable as dressing at home," she added.

Deanna recognizes that some more experienced members of the group might scoff at this conservative approach to managing the group. To those members, Deanna is rather blunt. "I need to re-educate you of the main reason that [we] and Tri-Ess exist: we do not hold meetings for you, we hold meetings for those who do not have the confidence to go in public and make spectacles of themselves. We provide a meeting room... in a safe atmosphere, free of ridicule and shame." And if that's not direct enough, she finishes with this: "If you don't get this, then get your butts out."

This is the age-old dilemma of TG support groups. We start out so members can feel comfortable about crossdressing in public or semi-public venues. Once they begin to mature, a tug of war begins between the need to keep the experienced members challenged and not alienating the newcomers who need the safer confines of the protective support group.

Group leaders must walk a fine line to keep both sides of the membership equation happy. If the emphasis tilts too much to the experienced members, with a lot of clique-ishness or social activities beyond the comfort level

of newcomers, the well of new members dries up. If the emphasis tilts too strongly to the interests of the less experienced or conservative members, there is the danger of losing the core group of knowledgeable members.

On an individual basis, many experienced crossdressers find themselves asking why they should continue to come to the predictable, safe, old monthly meetings. That's why there is a fair amount of turnover in groups that have been in existence for more than a few years. However, the danger is that prospective members who may be looking to take their baby steps at the group meetings may be turned off if the activity level of the group seems beyond their reach. It's easy to notice the turnover of old faces after a few years but it's deceiving to measure how many prospective members may have been scared off because the group seemed to ignore their needs.

LET'S PRETEND!

The **Elaine Barrie Project** from Victoria, Australia publishes *Nu-Scene International* whence this next nugget came. Alison McKinley wrote a rejoinder to a commentary by another Alison (Hill) in a prior issue of *Nu-Scene*. Ms. McKinley took exception to Ms. Hill's complaint about the 'double standard' that allows women to wear men's clothing without social stigma, while branding men who wear women's clothes as, well, you know... one of *those*.

McKinley correctly points out that one reason women can get away with a bit of transvestism while us guys cannot is that women wear male clothing without the pretense of being men. Male transvestites do not simply wear the clothes, they try to pretend that they are women and go to great lengths beyond simply changing wardrobe items to effect the change.

For a crossdresser herself, Alison McKinley has some very uncomplimentary things to say about our desire to crossdress. "Far too many of us step out in the world and try to fool everyone into believing that we are women. In fact, some of us even fool ourselves into believing it!" she writes. "If we seriously want social acceptance and the

freedom to wear female clothes, then surely the pretense must be put aside. And this means we are ready to crossdress openly and without any attempt to hide the fact that we are men."

Does wearing women's clothing do anything for you if you do not also change your hair, facial appearance, and figure alignment? I don't think any crossdressers are crossdressing simply because of the clothing itself. Alison has an interesting spin on an old topic, but I think it's flawed by the fact that hardly any crossdressers are searching for acceptance so they can wear a dress with their tassel loafers to the office.

But Alison's essay begs another question not raised by herself directly: If we are expressing our feminine personalities — a mental state of mind we share — why do we feel the need to bury it underneath wigs, pancake makeup and foundation garments? We may be using the accoutrements to hide our true selves as much as we are using them to enhance those feelings of femininity.

THE ESCALATOR OF LIFE

The October '95 *Femme Forum* of **Tau Chi Chapter** of Tri-Ess in Houston TX carried an interesting essay by Jane Ellen Fairfax titled *Dealing With Escalations*.

Jane Ellen takes on the common feeling among crossdressers that one must keep growing or developing, escalating the amount of time and effort expended on crossdressing. These escalations often produce stresses in relationships or in other areas of the crossdressers' lives.

Jane makes the point that women are content to enjoy *being* something while men are constantly striving to *become*, to advance faster than their peers. (I don't know if that's a sexist view of women, but it certainly seems true of typical male behavior.)

One interesting section deals with crossdressers who begin to transform their male appearance towards a more androgynous image 'and tell [us] no has noticed.' Jane reminds us that employers, family and friends do notice

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One Hell Of A Busy Week

by Jessica Brandon

Usually, I rarely have time to dress and go out as much as I'd like. More often than not, the only time I do is when the monthly [Renaissance GPC] meetings roll around. I had an opportunity to go out the week of October 8-15 and I was given more chances than I knew what to do with!

The week began on Sunday the 8th when I volunteered to (wo)man a table sponsored by a local transgendered group at **Outfest**. Outfest, for those unfamiliar with the event, is an event where gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people gather to raise funds for worthy causes, enjoy plenty of entertainment and be with their friends in a non-hostile environment.

This was the first time I've been to the event, so I didn't know what to expect. What I experienced was a great deal of fun and togetherness. Much to my surprise, Elaine Howard [Renaissance national Secretary] showed up, followed later by Terri Arnaldi, so I had someone familiar to talk to and we had a high old time while we "stood watch" at the table, passing out literature about Renaissance.

From our vantage point, we saw many interesting things and many fascinating people. The stage was only fifty yards away and we had a good view of all the acts that performed,

such as the three woman pop group **Betty**, who were great, and later on the crowd was treated to an electrifying performance by **Paris Dupree**.

When I arrived in town at one in the afternoon, I was planning to spend only a couple of hours there, since I'm a huge football fan and wanted to get home in time for the late games. But I ended up staying until seven when things finally wound down. I had so much fun, I didn't miss the football! Outfest was a tremendous experience.

Ah, but that was only Sunday. My Jessica-schedule got even busier later in the week. Having free time on my hands, I volunteered to help Angela Gardner at the three-day convention for the **National Association of Social Workers** which was held at the new Marriott hotel in Philadelphia. That too was a memorable experience.

Six organizations (Renaissance, Tri-Ess, IFGE, ITCLEP, Outreach Institute and AEGIS) together as the Transgender Alliance for Community, passed out literature, including issues of *Tapestry* and *Femme Mirror*, and, more importantly, spoke to the social workers about transgendered behavior.

Again, I was a babe in the woods. Having never participated in any convention, I was nervous at first, and not just because the hotel was only a half mile away from where I used to work

in the Navy. The people I worked with: Angela Gardner; Maryann Kirkland; Yvonne Cook-Riley (IFGE), Lynda Frank (Tri-Ess), Jane Peabody and Sharon Stewart (ICTLEP) made the convention rewarding.

We met and talked with many people who experienced lots of genuine interest in who and what we are, and saw us as people, not just "men in dresses." That feeling reached beyond the confines of the hotel. Everywhere I went, I was treated with respect and courtesy, especially when I went window shopping at Hecht's and was mobbed by the perfume ladies.

I volunteered my services for all three days, start to close, and had a fabulous time. I learned many things during that time (not the least of which is wear comfortable shoes for prolonged standing), both about people and myself. In the beginning, I was just a casual crossdresser out to have fun. Now, I see myself as a role model in the transgendered community.

So, after three consecutive days dressed and out in public, I was disappointed when the convention duty ended Saturday afternoon. But the memories of the people I met and the work I had done for our community will stay with me for a very long time.



Two Words From The Editor: Plan Ahead

I went to the *News & Views* mailbox on Oct. 23 and found a flyer from MOTG promoting their Halloween Ball on October 28. I couldn't do anything to promote the MOTG Halloween Ball in the newsletter. The October issue of *RN&V* was put together and sent to the printer on September 18th. Readers got it around the first week of October. That's the issue that should have contained something about the Halloween Ball. The time to send information on Halloween events is the beginning of September. Hence, the importance of planning ahead.

Since everyone (except me) went to Fantasia Fair in October, we had to put the November issue together even earlier — the first week of October.

If you want to promote something in a December issue, we need to have it no later than November 15th. A better rule of thumb is to have any flyer or press release to us by the first of the month **before** you want info to appear.

Planning ahead also applies to informing Chapters and Affiliates if you are having an event where everyone is welcome. Keep in mind when meetings are scheduled and let the leaders

know soon enough so they can mention it to their members. When promoting an event, it is best to allow three months for newsletter coverage. That will get you the most attention.

Yes, last minute stuff happens, and in those cases you have to rely on the grapevine spreading the word.

The national newsletter goes out to everyone and to get the newsletter to work for you, please plan ahead. That's the best way to utilize the resources Renaissance makes available.



The Transgender Trans-Agenda

By Susan Solomon

Once upon a time, a long, long ago, when the world was still green and young, before the time when large cities paved over the virgin landscape, there lived a beautiful maiden of royal descent. Her name was Lady Jen DerChange.

The Lady was born of lineage which could be traced back through the millennia to when men first separated themselves into social strata. Where her people came from no one knew. It was only known that she had an almost mystical beauty. Her laugh could soften hearts, and her voice was so sweet that her song could enchant even the enchanters.

As this tale begins, Lady Jen lived in a tower within a castle keep on the Great Plain in the Shire of the South. This was in the ancient land of Usa. Each day she would sit in the highest window of her tower and woo the breeze with her plaintive melodies. You see, she was imprisoned within the castle keep, and was guarded day and night by a wicked dragon. This creature — a large lounge lizard known in modern crossword parlance as a newt — had an ugly green head, eyes like live coals, and a breath which blew fire. The newt had designs on the fair Lady. It could almost taste her as a tender hors d'oeuvre. But as things were arranged, it could not get into the castle, and so the Lady was quite safe, at least as long as she did not dare to venture out.

So day after day, the maiden sat in the tall tower on the Plains of the South, spinning a golden thread, and singing her songs to the birds which flocked to her domain. She had lived in this way for many years, since she was taken by the Lords of the South, and condemned to this purgatory. Her crime? She was, and insisted on being free in spirit. She demanded to be always what she was, and this was a threat to the Lords of the South. Perhaps those autocrats viewed Lady Jen as a threat to the moral values of the young society which they were at-

tempting to build. Or perhaps they feared being seduced by her charms.

“What kind of person,” asked the sentencing judge, “would speak all day with the birds and run with the animals? She does not dress like us; she does not think as we do. She must be isolated lest others learn from her.”

And so she was taken and placed within the castle walls, under the ever watchful red eyes of the newt until such time as she could properly learn her lessons and conform to the demands of the Lords.

It should be noted that the newt cared less for the moral values of Southshire than did the Lady. The newt was concerned only with filling its own belly. The Lords were aware of this, but sometimes found it convenient to employ a necessary evil to contain an unnecessary evil. Which was just fine with the newt.

The Lady might have lived out her life, unremembered, in seclusion in that tower in Southshire, spinning and singing except for the intervention of destiny. One warm night when the breeze kissed her lips just right, her haunting melody was carried over the forest which bordered the Great Plain. It flew high into the crags of the mountains beyond where there lived a band of rebel knights.

These knights feared the new order of the South, and had, one by one, gathered in an enclave in the heart of the dark and threatening Misty Mountains. They called themselves the Heroes and they sought to protect their birthright from the acquisitive hands of the Lords. They would sally forth, their armor asplendor, from the mountain heights whenever the plains people were threatened.

The Heroes' lives were hard. They slept among the mountain's rocks, and foraged for their food. As a result they were like tempered steel. Firm and unbending in their resolve. Their leader, the greatest Hero among these knights was Sir Sanity de La Paix.

Where Are The Heroes? A Fable.

On the magic evening when the song of Lady Jen wafted its way through the Misty Mountains, it filled the ears and the imagination of Sir Sanity. For two days he heard the voice of Lady Jen DerChange echoing through the mountains. It seemed to fill his heart with a longing for all he had left behind. So bewitched was he by this sound that he could not sleep and he could not eat; he could not plan the Heroes' next excursion. In all this time de La Paix could find no peace. At last, in the middle of a sleepless night, Sanity surrendered to the Lady's call. He donned his armor, mounted his steed and set off to find the source of this enchantment.

He rode through that night and the next, ever watchful to avoid the armies of the South. He allowed his ear, his imagination, and finally his heart, to lead him towards his fate. Down from the clouds of the Misty Mountains, across the great meandering River Dawn, through the density of the Northwoods, he rode with determination until at last he broke from the edge of the forest onto the Great Plain. There the sun glowed from the white stones of the tower. He was blinded by this light, but his heart heard the Lady's song ever clearer and closer. He knew he had found his grail.

It was then, as Sir Sanity was gathering his senses, that the ground began to rumble and the sky to darken. What looked like storm clouds covered the sun. For a moment he saw the Lady sitting in her window, seemingly singing only to him. He reined his war horse and turned its head towards the maiden's prison.

Then the earth quaked harder with a thunder which, like an invisible hand, threw the knight from his mount. Around the edge of the castle keep slithered the newt. It appeared in its vastness suddenly and, just as suddenly, determined that Sir Sanity and his steed were to be that evenings din-

continued on page 14

Hot Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



"Telling the future by looking at the past assumes that conditions remain constant. This is like driving a car by looking in the rear view mirror."

— Herb Brody

I'm back from my extended vacation and I need to work to get some rest. I'm gettin' too old to party hearty.

But, I'll never be too old to help make a point and that's just what we did at the Fall Harvest in St. Louis. **Riki Wilchins** made one of her "surprise" appearances on Saturday at lunch and whipped up the crowd with a review of transgender activism for the year. Then Lynn Walker (NYC) and I did a one-two plea for support to **GenderPAC**. People kept putting money in our hands all night long. We raised over \$300 in a few hours. If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to GenderPAC, send your check to GenderPAC, c/o IFGE, 123 Moody St., Waltham, MA 02154.

By the time you read this, the community alliance will have participated in another professional conference (this time in Chicago) and the **Creating Change Conference** in Detroit sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Ya know, this community building stuff really works.

So, what do you think of the new name

for the former *TV-TS Tapestry*? In case you haven't seen it yet, the magazine is now called **Transgender Tapestry**, although "Tapestry" is in small letters. Personally, I feel it is a welcome change and is likely to draw new subscribers for IFGE. Others, however, were not of that opinion. One pundit quipped, "It looks like a tabloid. It's going to hurt [IFGE]." It remains to be seen how subscribers react to the new design and new editor, Jean Marie Stine.

I'll make this an equal-opportunity and ask how people like the new *LadyLike* as well. I'd really like some feedback.

Henri David's Hallowe'en party in Philadelphia was another huge success. Well over 1000 people were in attendance. Yours truly was asked to be a judge again. Last year I ended up sitting next to the mayor of Philadelphia, Ed Rendell. This year, I had **Pierre Robert**, a local radio celebrity from WMMR, on one side and **Jim Bailey** (yes, *that* Jim Bailey) on the other. Mr. Bailey is such a nice man and we had a ball judging over 200 contestants. Afterwards, I mentioned that I was coming to see his show. He said, "Great! We'll hang out afterwards." We'll see!

As we head into the holiday season, there's not much cookin' in the transgender pot, so I'll get onto the fashion scene... The latest word in makeup is from Revlon. **ColorStay** makeup is oil-free, sets in 60 seconds and won't rub off on your clothes. Now, that's a great selling point for us. I'm going to check it out and give a report in a future column.

Makeup products by makeup artists have been hot ever since **M•A•C** started selling their own stuff. But you usually have to get **M•A•C** or Bobbi Brown or any of a host of other lines in specialty stores. That's about to change with the introduction of a new line called **Professionals**, from a division of the clothing -

luggage company, Wathne. (Never heard of them? Neither have I.) Professionals combines products gathered by consultation with several professional makeup artists with a more generic name designed to attract consumers. Look for the line in department stores.

In regard to companies you never heard of, anybody ever hear of **Warnaco**? Maybe not, but I'll bet you've worn their products. See, they make almost 50% of the lingerie in this country and produce some of the most well-known names, like Victoria's Secret for one.

While I was away, my mailbox filled with Vicky's catalogs but the catalog that stole my heart was the new **Newport News** Holiday catalog. I found six items that I just had to have, including a sequined mini-skirt I've been looking for over two years. The best part was the price: \$29.99. I also found a copy of the dress I'm wearing in the photo atop this column. I paid \$90 from Bloomies By Mail for that dress. I bought the Newport News version in a (ahem) slightly larger size for less than half that price. Almost all the fashions in the Newport catalog go up to size 20 and that's pretty large these days. So check it out.

Tidbit - "Straight men who like to cross-dress and pass as real women are fond of calling themselves 'girls,' and they are almost as afraid of being mistaken for lesbians as they are of being read as cross-dressing men:" **Sallie Tisdale** in her book *Talk Dirty To Me*. I wonder who Tisdale interviewed for her book?

Here's a twist. Jean Paul **Gauthier's** Eau de Toilette comes in that fascinating bottle shaped like a female torso encased in a corset, but the twist is in the container, a tin can. Well, it looks like a tin can, but the can unscrews to become three bangle bracelets. Kew! \$58.

While East Coasters are still into

HOT•BUZZ

Chanel's **Vamp** and vampire-black/red nails, Left Coasters are opting for pastels and candy colors. The rage is so hot, there's a new line of polish called **Hard Candy**. The colors look disturbingly like Liquid Paper with a gloss finish. \$12 ea.

There's another new trend, the **American Manicure**. If you always thought a French Manicure looks très sophisticated, you'll love the American Manicure. Rather than just white tips over nude nails, the AM puts just hint of red over the entire nail. Your nails look finished yet natural. I did an AM while in Provincetown for FanFair and on those days that I didn't crossdress, I didn't have to take off my nail polish and then redo it later that night. Very chic.

One of my fantasies is to go gambling in Las Vegas as JoAnn and I may get my wish in January when I visit the Consumer Electronics Show there. If I do get to go out as JoAnn, one of the places I'm going to visit is the new **Estée Lauder Boutique** inside Caesar's Palace. The new shop is getting a reputation for having the best lipsticks in town and for sales staff that rival the best Vegas showgirls in looks. I wanna makeover!

Crossdressing and drag remain hot entertainment staples. **Julie Andrews** is cashing in on the current drag-fest with a Broadway revival of *Victor/Victoria*. Off Broadway, **Charles Busch** has a new show and in Philadelphia we have a comedy-play called *High Heel Feelings* about... 3 drag queens! Hey, this is getting boring. How about the next play is about 2 FtMs or 3 TVs and a TS.

If the play's the thing, then movies are another altogether. Some of my favorite movies are now featured on the World Wide Web. Film distributor Miramax has posted film clips of all its movies, but the ones I'm interested are: *Paris Is Burning* <<http://www.miramax.com/dlpages/parisidl.html>> *The Crying Game* <<http://www.miramax.com/dlpages/cryingdl.html>> and *High Heels* <<http://www.miramax.com/dlpages/>

[highhedl.html](#)>. These clips can be downloaded to your computer and played with a video viewer.

While perusing the net I also found a kewl site with a list of just about every mail order catalog in the world (well, almost). It's at <<http://www.eskimo.com/~bloo/mailmall.html>> along with a breast form FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) at <<http://www.eskimo.com/~bloo/bformfaq/index.html>>. Check it out.

The eye design for the Winter is smoky and smouldering. Here's how to get the look... Use a light foundation over lids and a concealer under if you need it. Line both upper and lower lids with black. Liquid liner is best, although cake liner works well, too. Make the line a little thicker at the outer edges. Soften the line by adding brown just above and over the black or smudge it a tad with a Q-tip... Using an small angled shadow brush, apply a rich brown shadow (I like a Cinammon color) over the entire lid and extend it about a quarter-inch above the lid crease. Lightly brush the same shadow along the lower lash line right over the black/brown liner... Now follow with a smoky grey shadow exactly the same way you did the brown... Apply loose translucent powder with a big fluffy brush over the entire eye area. (Close your eyes first!)... The final step takes us back to the 60's — line the lower inner rim of the lid in black pencil... Add jet black mascara and you're done. You look AbFab dahling! Ah, but you're going to need industrial strength makeup remover to get all that goo off before you hit the sack. Stock up *before* trying this.

Well, they're at it again. The women, the real women, are borrowing menswear right out of the men's department. It's so unfair. Hey, I got an idea. Next time you want to buy a new dress, go to the women's department in your favorite store and tell them you're starring in a new movie about 3 drag queens.

The HOT BUZZ about color this Winter is Brown in almost any dark shade from coffee, to mocha, to java to camel.

Stuck with lipsticks that are out of fashion? Makeup artist **Trish McEvoy** has an answer — the Transformer Kit for \$35. (Doncha just love the name!) The kit includes four sheer shades to blend over existing colors resulting in new colors. White brightens reds to pinks. Yellow warms reds to corals. Blue make reds berries. Black makes reds deep plums.

Guess who's back in the December issue of *Playboy*? **Tula**, that's who. The magazine printed a single page from the famous pictorial Tula did a few years ago. If you missed that, here's your chance to see Tula in her altogether and taken altogether, she's simply beautiful.

Two well-known vendors in the transgender community, **Vernon's Specialties** in Waltham, Mass., and **NS Products** in Glendale, Calif., are in serious financial trouble according to very informed sources. Both firms are said to be filing for bankruptcy, although both firms continue to do business. If you decide to order something from either of these companies, use a credit card. That way, if your order is not filled, you can cancel the payment and get your money back. Caveat emptor.

On a much sadder note, two well-known community activists are very ill. **Jennifer Richards** of the St. Louis Gender Foundation is responsible for pulling together the first community coalition, Mid-America Gender Group Information Exchange (MAGGIE). Richards has AIDS related complications and while she attended the recent Fall Harvest, she seems to be fading fast. Likewise, **Anne Forrester**, editor and publisher of *The Tartan Skirt*, a transgender publication from Scotland, is extremely ill from bone cancer. The last issue of the Skirt announced that Forrester will no longer accept subscriptions. She will continue publishing the Skirt, but one issue at a time.

So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? I think *Talk Dirty To Me* should be confined to the bedroom, not the bookshelf. Comments? Email them to <CyberQueen@cdspub.com>.

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Trans-Agenda...

ner. It turned its head towards the knight, who was struggling valiantly under the weight of his armor to get to his feet. The newt gave a mighty roar, and the fire of its breath shot forth, enveloping brave knight and steed.

The horse died under the fiery onslaught on the Plain in Southshire, and so might have the knight were it not for his magic armor. As the newt made its way towards its kill, the shaken knight rose to his feet and lumbered, locked within his armor, at a speed barely greater than the newt's, into the depth of the forest.

The newt moved as if to follow Sanity. "If I can catch this mere mortal," it reasoned, "who besides the Lady Jen would ever know that I'd left my post. She dare not leave the protection of her tower for fear of me, so she will tell no one."



But the monster halted, as if held

back by a chain, just before it entered the woods. It appeared that Sanity would be denied to the newt for yet a while. While the newt was free to forage, it was required to remain within sight of the castle keep. You see, even more than it feared its own hunger, the newt feared the wrath of the Lords of the South. So it satiated itself with the remains of the freshly barbecued horse, and returned to its duty.



Through the rest of the day Sir Sanity hid at the edge of the forest, desperately planning the means by which he could free the maiden who had taken possession of his soul. The newt, with a keen sense of smell which was capable of reaching beyond its own odor, knew that the knight was near, and remained alert. Sir Sanity removed his armor and deftly made his way from east to west. Each time he moved the newt mirrored his motion, its huge slithering body and slapping tail made the ground to shake again and again.

Time after time the Hero made his way from east to west and back again

to the east. Time after time the newt, teased by the nearness of this morsel, rumbled after him from a distance. This game continued for three days under the watchful eye of Lady Jen. All the while the newt dared not sleep and, the threat of the approach of the knight being ever present, it dared not forage for food.

At last, as the third day turned into evening the newt could stand it no longer. Its baseness and natural greed, its hunger for what was being denied it, was so great that all thought of the anger of the Southshire Lords was forgotten. The vicious lizard slithered after the knight.

Sir Sanity was alert to this change in the newt's manner and began to wend his way deeper into the forest. He moved first one way and then another, doubling back, then moving further into the darkness until the newt, being much larger than Sanity, became momentarily tangled in the vines which grew deep inside the woods.

The mistake the monster made was

continued next page

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Trans-Agenda...

in believing that it could move with the speed and agility of the knight. This was understandable, since the newt had only seen Sir Sanity, from a distance, clad in his armor, and was incapable of imagining the knight's ability to shed this steel skin and, thus unencumbered, to move with the swiftness of the wind. Then again, perhaps the newt had enough imagination to consider the knight's ability, but allowed itself to become so entangled in its own gluttony that all sense of its own limitations was lost.

Regardless, Sir Sanity found the odorous beast trapped amidst the vines, drew his broad sword and, with one mighty swipe, separated the newt's head from its hideous body. Having won the battle of his life, the knight broke from the woods, and dashed to the wall of the castle. With concern in her expression, Lady Jen looked down at the knight from her perch.

"Run Sir Knight," she cried, "for the newt will return momentarily and you will be lost."

"But my Lady", the gallant knight replied, "the newt is no more. I have slain him in the woods. Quickly now, open the castle gate so that I may take you from this place."

"No, valiant sir, it is not possible that the newt is dead. He is a monster and unstoppable. If I leave the protection of the castle it will return and devour me."

The argument continued for an

hour and more, with Sir Sanity begging the fair Lady Jen to unlatch the castle gate and flee with him, and the maiden fearful of the newt, just as vehemently refusing to abandon the known safety of her castle sanctuary.

Then, just as morning was breaking, there was another rumble of the ground and a troop of mounted soldiers from the army of the South suddenly filled the Great Plain. Because the Lords of Southshire had no trust in the character of the newt, the route of the soldiers' patrol took them regularly past Lady Jen's prison.

Sir Sanity saw the patrol and turned to flee. But he was horseless and could not match the speed of the mounted soldiers. He was quickly surrounded and, with his broadsword still deeply embedded in the rotting body of the newt, he had no protection and was quickly slain.

The Lords of the South soon heard of the attempt to free the maiden, and they forever thereafter redoubled the guard at the castle keep. They never knew who it was that their soldiers had slain, and so continued to fear Sir Sanity of the Heroes of the Misty Mountains. But they had little to fear from that day. Without the guidance of Sir Sanity, the Heroes quickly dissolved as a force and made their individual ways back to the Southern society, where they learned to fit within the constricts of its rules. To this day Lady Jen remains a prisoner in her tower. But she is old now; her song is no longer a thing of enchantment. Still, sometimes when the wind blows just right, if you

are very, very quiet, you might hear the faint echo of the melody which once was, a long, long time ago.



The moral of this tale is clear: If Jen DerChange refuses to help herself, how can one dare to hope that sanity could ever prevail.

There is a reason that I have told this story. At the last Gay Pride Parade in Manhattan, I looked around but could find relatively few of the Transgendered Community. Later as I asked friends why they had stayed locked in their castle keeps, I learned that these transsexuals were busy woodworking, and fearful of being outed from their towers. The transvestites were similarly fearful of being outed by their presence at this community event.

It seems that they all are willing members of the Gender Community, as long as the community is at its play. However, when things get serious they are nowhere to be found. They will speak of the danger to themselves and what should be done for their protection, but their words lack purpose. They don't have the force of the newt's fiery breath.

I understand their fears. My public admission of what I am has cost me family, friends and income. Still I persist because I fear more the loss of what I still have. There is danger in admitting that one is different. Yes, society fears and despises us for our difference. So we practice our diversity in secret, praying that one day things will be different. That somehow someone

continued on page 17

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An Open Letter to FtMs

Dear Gentlemen & Brothers:

Please earnestly consider my request. I am the Program Coordinator for Southern Comfort '96, and am putting together a comprehensive presentation for the '96 Southern Comfort Conference in Atlanta, Georgia on **Understanding FtM's**.

It is my hope to encourage the female population (MtF & CD) to attend this seminar to gain a better understanding of who we are and what we go through. I wish to dispel the many myths and misconceptions that exist about us. Too often it has been stated that we either don't exist or because we have it so easy, we can just disappear. It is time that we make ourselves known. We do exist and we don't always have it easy. In general, we are usually the poorest, financially, in the transgender community and our surgeries very often leave us scarred, mutilated, or deformed. Of course, there are good results as well.

The presentation I wish to present will consist of a panel of FtM's, first-hand accounts of various experiences, and a slide presentation of our bodies.

I am asking for your input. I know that this will be hard for some who have had very bad results from their surgeries. What I would like are photographs of your surgery, top and bottom, as well as photos of other areas of the body which may have been used for skin grafts and such.

I want pictures whether you are scarred or not. Pictures that show results, whether favorable or not. I also want pictures of those who have noticed changes in their bodies but as of

yet, have not had any surgery.

I do not want faces, just body parts. No names are needed. I would like the photograph, the surgeon's name, city, and state (full address if you have it), how long ago the surgery was performed, and date the photo was taken.

The only one who will know who the picture belongs to will be me. In fact, you do not have to even let me know who you are, just leave off a return name and address. I assure complete anonymity.

This is a legitimate request. Newly transitioning FtM's will be able to see actual results from those who truly know what their bodies look like. The women in the community will hopefully gain a better insight into who we are, what we do, and what we have to go through in our journeys.

Please take the photograph. The benefits will greatly outweigh the moment of anxiety you may be feeling about exposing yourself. I am asking as a brother to help all of us gain the respect we deserve and to take our rightful place along side our sisters. Remember no faces, just the body. Top and bottom surgeries or no surgery at all. Please mail the photograph along with the doctor's name, when the procedure was performed, and how recent is the photo to:

Maxwell Anderson P.O. Box 1692,
Pompano Beach, FL 33061-1692,
Phone: 954/784-9316 E-Mail address:
<badmadmax@aol.com>

Thank you in advance for your courage and prompt response.

In Brotherhood, with respect,
Maxwell



It's Time Texas!

Press Release

November 4, 1995

It's Time, Texas! is pleased to announce that it will work in cooperation with the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL) to sponsor a series of educational programs in San Antonio, Austin, Houston and Dallas. The exact dates and times have yet to be finalized, but the series is scheduled to begin in February 1996 and run through April 1996. The series will focus on the personal experiences and histories of transgendered individuals in Texas.

This agreement came about after Dianne Hardy Garcia, Executive Director of the LGRL, met with Dee McKellar of the Transgender Law Conference and Ms. DePalma, chair of It's Time, Texas! in late October.

In addition to the educational series, it was agreed that the board of the LGRL and the board of It's Time, Texas! will hold an informal joint meeting December 10, in Austin. This will mark the first time that members of the two boards will have met one another face to face.

While this does not end the hostilities between the two organizations, It's Time, Texas! considers this a good first step toward achieving that goal and looks forward to further cooperation in the future.



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Classified Ads are \$3.00 for 3 lines for 3 months.

Furniture, Appliances, Household goods, Records, Antiques, Toy trains and other goodies - Bought and Sold - Beth Marshall: 610-259-4945 - Leave a message

Crossdressing blues band forming in the Philadelphia area. Need drummer with a nice frock. For information call Terri at 215-763-3240.

Overstock - UV and Air Dry Acrylic nail supplies, instructions for nominal fee. Call Lynda, Cdtips, at 609-384-6269, x6100.

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Looking for amateur crossdressers with interest in modeling. Please send letter of introduction along with photo to: Christy Cage, 4807 Cedar Ave., Suite 3F, Philadelphia, PA 19143

Tired of nightclubs? CD(45) & wife looking for others in KOP, Pottstown, Reading area interested in a WINTER BRIDGE CLUB. Email 72162,1367@compuserve.com

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Trans-Agenda...

will make the country change its attitudes. Hoping that we will be able to walk in the daylight, displaying all of our beautiful colors and that society will have been taught to accept us.

The problem is that hoping and praying is not enough. Because we are unwilling, or unable to unlock our castle gates, we are incapable of helping ourselves.

"My God," I have been told, "if I march with the gay community and my boss sees me, he'll think I'm one of them. I'll never be able to explain. I'll lose my job. I'll lose my family. I'll lose my friends. It's better for us all if we just stay closeted." As if the closet can do anything save simply confine our true selves to oblivion.

There is no safety in such a philosophy. This kind of approach leaves us in danger of the loss of sanity, both in our own lives and in the country as a whole. And with the loss of sanity

comes the probability of extinction. Mass insanity grows from a lack of public understanding. From ignorance comes fear, from fear hatred, and from hatred the loss of everything we find beautiful.

Read your history people. It has happened before. It can happen again. It can happen here.

The forces of the South are already rampant in this land. The laws exclude us. Insurance? Nope. Not for the evil we are perpetrating. Are we like the Heroes of Old? Are we leaderless? Have we surrendered our very natures so that we might sneak back and find acceptance in the mainstream? Certainly change will not come from fearing to venture out of our sanctuaries.

We have a right to exist in all of our wondrous colors. We must make our statement. It does not need to be a statement filled with the same violence which is leveled against us. But we must stand up for ourselves. You see, the Heroes are no more. No one will champion our cause if we will not stand up and be counted. If we can't

bring ourselves to participate simply because it is right to, then we can lie about why we are a part of the effort. Regardless, we each must play our part. If we fail there will be no tomorrow. If we refuse to help ourselves we will be like Lady Jen, in old age, singing our songs to an empty plain.

Or we might remember Sir Sanity. Was his death in Southshire for nothing? The choice belongs to each of us.

Where are the Heroes?



Ed. Note: You can help keep the "heroes" alive and working through GenderPAC and transgender educational activism, like the Transgender Lobby Days action.

GenderPAC needs your donations to keep these projects going. Send your tax-deductible donation to IFGE-GenderPAC, 123 Moody St., Waltham, MA 02154. Be sure to clearly mark the donation for GenderPAC. Any amount helps.



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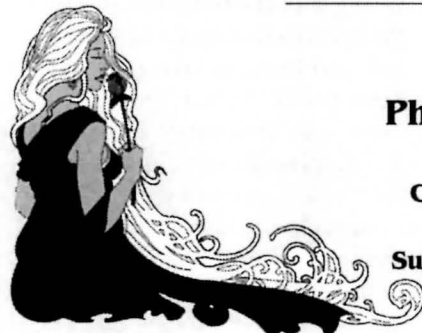
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Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

I am replying to *Bigendered in NYC*, in RN&V Vol.9, #10 by Lynda Frank. The term "bigendered" is clearly a personal choice of Ms. Frank. Although the term has Tri-Ess roots (attributed to Virginia Prince), it is not endorsed by Tri-Ess National. Jane Ellen Fairfax, Chair of Tri-Ess, has pledged her group to the Transgender Alliance for Community or T.A.C.

Despite community acceptance of the generic and broad term "transgender," Ms. Frank was heard by myself, and others using "bigendered" at the recent NASW conference display sponsored by the alliance.

Ms. Frank incorrectly connects the term "transgender" with transsexual issues. In reality, "transgender" was intended to show inclusiveness of all crossgender behavior. Phyllis Frye has repeatedly said that TG rights lobbying would be all inclusive of part-time cross-dressers like Lynda and to closeted Jane Doe's who we will never meet.

Is there really transphobia present in

Tri-Ess circles that a new word has to be coined? Lynda's apparent resolution of meeting gays and defusing the homophobia issue has left her "estranged" with the trans-population. How many other people are actually trans-phobic behind the mask of homophobia? Neither practice against our sisters and brothers can be sanctioned any longer. It is 1995 not 1975. We no longer need a "second self" to protect our fragile male ego from "her." As explained by Lynda, the Bigendered person still maintains two mental boxes — to keep masculinity intact. This "Virginia Prince" model from the '70s offers stagnation which reinforces personal shame and the need to hide. Integration of all personas, of all the people you are, has been taught by Carl Jung and his followers for the last 40 years. Dr. Richard Docter in his 1991 landmark five stage theory of cross-gender behavior restated the Jungian concept of integration of personas. Doesn't anyone read books anymore?

Contrary to the Webster argument by Ms. Frank, transgendered people cross the gender gap once very slowly until they find a comfortable home. It is the "bigendered" persons that hop back and forth and do all the "transing." Actually there is no net movement across the gender scale as the bigendered person holds onto the masculine signpost with two hands and cannot move.

Although one's right to an opinion is still sacred, we need to adopt inclusive positions to educate other minorities and the general public. How can we present ourselves to the bewildered masses of society when one voice chirps "...but we're different." In my opinion, Lynda, your boxer shorts are showing.

Maryann Kirkland
Director of Renaissance & IFGE

Angela Gardner Replies:

It's all about finding your own comfort level. If Lynda is happy being bigender (include the dash – otherwise it reads "big ender") that is her choice. I also agree, no one in the community who is engaged in community outreach should present their personal gender identity choice as the official "party line." To do so does a disservice to the rest of the community. I am comfortable with the term "bi-gendered," since I present two gender faces to the world. I have a male side and a female persona that I am comfortable with. I interact socially in both genders and my persona have each benefited from the expression of the other. I am not holding "onto the masculine signpost with two hands" and afraid of my femininity. Both genders are a part of my mental makeup, making me bi-gendered.

As far as how we are to educate the

continued on page 21

Vis a Vis

some changes. The fact that they do not say anything directly doesn't mean the changes are going undetected. In fact, the silent re-evaluations of people who mean something in our lives may be more significant than those who address the topic in the open.

Jane Ellen suggests that in order to keep a perspective on our crossdressing escalations we should remember life's major priorities. Chances are, the crossdressing persona will be far down on the list behind being a father, husband, employee, etc. Viewed in that light, the need to push the limits of crossdressing will pale and the escalator will leave you off at the right floor.

DEFINE THIS!

The November issue of the *Renaissance News & Views* (an interesting little rag... on occasion) carried a piece by Rachel Rudnick titled *A PC & Un-PC Guide to Genderland* in which Ms. Rudnick attempted to define all the terms and euphemisms for transgendered behavior in a lighthearted mode.

I don't know what it is about transvestites, but we seem to have this burning need to define and categorize all the many bumps on the transgender spectrum. If I had a nickel for every time I saw an article of definitions of crossdressing behavior, I'd have, well, I'd have about a dollar fifteen. But my point is: Why are so many looking for a dictionary definition of what we do?

One motivation seems to be to separate 'crossdressing' from all the nasty stereotypes of transvestites, drag queens and she-males toward whom many feel superior. 'Whatever floats your boat,' I guess, but it all seems rather pointless to me.

And while we're at it... what is wrong with the term 'transvestite'? Sounds kinda dirty, huh? I'll join Angela and Joann in saying that I don't mind it a bit. In fact, I prefer it just because it's a little more shocking, similar to homosexuals who refer to themselves as 'queer' rather than 'gay.'

But please, no more definitions. It's hard enough to choose what to wear without worrying about what word to use for self-description.



A Request For Help

by Leslie, a member of the Tau-Chi Chapter of Tri-Ess. Hayden Solomon, Leslie's 7 months old grandson was diagnosed last month with Cystic Fibrosis. After last month's meeting when chapter members rallied to assist her family with expenses, Leslie wrote Tri-Ess the following letter:

"Dear Jane,

Today Judy and I opened up a trust fund in my grandson's name. We would like to have the account number and address published in the chapter newsletter and elsewhere. There have been so many sisters who have helped us already and we are so grateful. However, Hayden and Krystal have no source of income except for my help, and now Krystal will be unable to work outside the home for at least the next three years. Hayden needs extensive home treatment and cannot be exposed to the public. Any extra help would ease the

strain on our family.

Please find the needed information below. The bank has agreed to deposit all donations sent there. I thank God I have a family of caring sisters.

Thank You,
Leslie"

There you have it ladies. Please consider donating whatever you can to help this family. Those of you who attended the Luau in August at Leslie's home in Conroe may remember meeting young Hayden. When tragedy strikes it is easy enough to respond out of the emotion of the moment, but this situation requires commitment over the long haul as well. While medical advances have greatly improved the length and quality of life for Cystic Fibrosis patients, this means Hayden will continue to need care for a very long time to come. Let's all do what we can. No gift is too small.

Every gift will be greatly appreciated. Thanks once again, on behalf of Leslie and her family.

Send contributions directly to the bank officer, and be sure to designate the name and account number on your check or money order:

Hayden Solomon Trust Fund
ACCT # 31730-17835
c/o Jane Tharp
Guaranty Federal Bank
1110 Loop 336 West
Conroe, TX 77301

Reprinted from the October 1995 issue of The Femme Forum, the official publication of Tau-Chi Tri-Ess.

PS: I know that many of you do not know Leslie, but then a lot of you know me. And I ask all of you to please do what you can for the wonderful lady's grandson.

Thank you,
Brenda Thomas
brenda@firstnethou.com



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Shopping With Jessica

by Jessica Brandon



Ho, ho, ho, girlfriends! Merry Christmas to one and all! May your holiday be joyous and your pantyhose free of runs!

Before I begin, I thought I'd give you, my loyal readers, an early Christmas gift; namely my lovely face on the banner of the column. I thought it only fair you know what your friendly shopping guru looks like. Feel free to write and tell me how gorgeous I am ;-)

With the season in full swing, you're going to need fancy dresses for all the parties you'll be attending. Being the thrifty (read: dirt cheap) shopper I am, I have several options for you to consider, none of which requires taking out a second mortgage.

We start with **T.J. Maxx**, where lots of stylish clothes can be found at reasonable prices. I've bought a few things there and, come holiday time, they stock some pretty nice outfits in price ranges of \$50 to \$90. You might have to search a bit to find your size, but hey, that's half the fun.

Then there's **Marshall's** which also

packs snazzy and glitzy dresses in the same price range. At last year's **Renaissance GPC Holiday Party**, I was sporting a sleek, black beaded dress with a multi-colored bodice that netted me some nice compliments. I bought it at Marshall's for only \$60. Not bad!

Stores similar to T.J. Maxx and Marshall's are **Sears, Nordstrom Rack, Fashion Bug, Ross, Filene's Basement** and **Lane Bryant**. I've made the rounds to all these stores since I took over this column in October and found the prices on their apparel to be consistently affordable and of good quality.

The bottom line is, which I can't stress enough, you don't have to spend yourself into the poorhouse just to look good for a few hours when less expensive alternatives abound. For members of the "Skyscraper Sally" set (meaning us tall girls), check out **Penney's** Christmas catalog for seasonal clothes.

Of course, you'll want nice shoes to go with your outfit, and again, you have many choices (provided you're under size 12, but that's a column for

another month). The most well known store is, to no surprise, **Payless**. With a Payless in every city, large, small and in between, you're never far from an excellent selection of shoes in a wide range of sizes. Plus, they also carry dyeable shoes (and bags) that you can have matched to your dress.

In the hosiery department, try what I call special occasion pantyhose. That is pantyhose in shimmering, metallic shades that add real flash to a dazzling holiday dress. Look for brands like **Hanes Ultra Sheer** in silver and gold.

Now, unless you live on the West Coast or Hawaii, you're going to need a coat to wear to and from your party. In some stores I've mentioned, I've found leather coats retailing for \$300 to \$800 slashed nearly in half, and, in some cases, less than that. Case in point: **Chadwick's of Boston** has really nice leather coats starting at \$100, lots of wool coats in different styles and colors, plus a to-die-for white faux fur coat for \$149. To get a Chadwick's catalog, call 1-800-525-4420.

Finally, jewelry. I wear the gold-plated variety over the real thing, and I don't happen to think that's a sin. Sure, I know the fake stuff doesn't have the luster or durability of real gold, but it doesn't have the high prices either. And, unless you tell someone you're wearing gold plate, who's to know?

That's it for this month. I have to get ready for the GPC Holiday Party. I've seen the menu and it made my mouth water, so I might decide to buy something less than form fitting. Until next year, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping!



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Pennsylvania Allegedly Cuts Transgender Care

Kristine Holt has reported to *News & Views* that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will deny Medicaid benefits to transgendered people. Not only is the Pa. Department of Public Welfare denying current services, they are seeking reimbursement from service providers for past services rendered. This may have the effect of making doctors reluctant to provide any services (including psychiatric/counseling services related to depression, alcoholism, etc.) to anyone identifying as transsexual or transgendered.

According to Holt, the policy is a decision made by PaDPW director John F. Ferrara of the Division of Provider Assessment because, "the constituents shouldn't have to pay for this kind of thing." Transsexuals have previously been denied surgical benefits under DPW policy. Mr. Ferrara is basing his denial of benefits of 55 Pa.

Code section 1141.59(11), and alternatively, 55 Pa. Code, Sec. 1126.54(a)(7). Both of these regulations have been in effect since at least 1989. However, they have only been selectively enforced until now.

Says Holt, "Any doctor who has been providing care to transgendered people is in real danger of having a big liability assessed against her/him. These DPW regulations violate federal Medicaid statutes and regulations, which prohibit denial of benefits on the basis of diagnosis alone.

"Doctors are being coerced into settling accounts for past services, and being threatened by this director with negative publicity and revocation of all Medicaid and Medicare payments if they challenge what's going on."

Ms. Holt is attempting to generate a response from the transgender community to fight the Commonwealth on

this policy. In a statement published on the Internet she wrote, "This is something we, as a community, must do together. It cannot be carried out by one, two, or even five people alone. I certainly will not do it! As with everything in life, it's necessary for us to take whatever action necessary to minimize the effect adversity has on each of us personally. This situation is no exception; I intend to act accordingly, as should we all."

Attempts by *RN&V* staff to get a comment from Mr. Ferrara's office were met with, "He's in a meeting." When asked they knew anything about the new policy, we were told, "I don't think I can comment on that."

You can contact Mr. Ferrara's office at 717-772-5308. You may send messages for Kristine Holt to *News & Views* and we will pass them on to her.



Letter...

public about the transgender community while voices cry out their difference, that's what the term "inclusion" is all about and that's why whenever I talk to the public I give the transgender

"party line" and why I also make it know that we are a spectrum of gender identities. We don't all fit in neatly labeled boxes.

JoAnn Roberts Replies:

I'm with Maryann on this one. Why do we need yet another term for the

same old behavior – crossdressing. It's just more whitewash to cover up the reality that some of us get erotic satisfaction from crossdressing. I don't need to fool myself into self-acceptance. The term transvestite fits me just fine. If a gay man can be proud to be "queer," I can be proud to be a TV.

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Men In Skirts Revisited

Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that people have different levels of comfort with crossdressing. Many people who attend support group meetings seem to feel there is a mystical progression you go through; from fetishistic TV to crossdresser, to transgenderist— ending up with gender reassignment surgery. Some folks actually worry they will be so drawn in that gender reassignment surgery will be their only option. (If you are worried about it, you most likely are not a candidate for it.)

The following article was taken from the "alt.fashion" newsgroup on the Internet and expresses feelings about the issue of men who want to wear women's clothing, but not necessarily develop a femme persona. The need to dress up can be scary for someone who is just coming to grips with his desires and the idea of "the woman within" may not appeal to everyone. Here's what Geoff has to say about it.

I am a man. I enjoy wearing skirts. My interest in woman's clothes led me to join a crossdressing club where I attended monthly meetings in full drag. I enjoyed being all dressed-up, but I did not feel honest or "right" about developing a "second self," as this particular organization was designed to help a person do. I decided I preferred to keep all my attributes to one persona, one name one wardrobe, one set of friends, etc. My wife felt better about this, also. Mind you, this

realization occurred over many, many months (several years, in fact) and we're both still working hard at finding the point where my desire to wear feminine attire is satisfied without disturbing my wife. The bottom line involves compromise and communication. It is not easy. The more I expose myself to friends and to the public, the more acceptance I feel, the better my wife feels, and the less I need to solicit support and validation for my efforts.

On the subject of "What to do with our wives?," I can offer advice based on my personal experience. I hope it helps. After much tribulation, trial and error, I say that the main things to remember are: Be completely honest; do not hide or leave out anything. Your wife is supposed to be your best friend. Treat her that way. Be willing to compromise. If your wife is uncomfortable with what you're wearing, try to determine if the problem is that you're wearing a skirt, period, or if the particular style of skirt is the problem. Find out if she feels a different style would make her feel more comfortable. The first skirts I bought for use in my regular wardrobe, to be worn instead of pants, were very plain non-feminine, longish (mid to low calf), not too straight, not too full, but obviously a skirt. This style satisfied my wife. Since then she has grown more accustomed to my skirts, although the issue still upsets her sometimes. I find the best way to get your wife's input is to

shop together. Start at the thrift stores — worn skirts are less obtrusive and look more lived-in. I let my wife choose most of my "women's" clothes, and I feel more fashion conscious as a result, and she feels she has some input and control in the process. I now own more skirts than most women, and though they are of similar style and length, the variety of colors and prints cover my wardrobe needs well.

On the subject of men who wear skirts labeled as "crossdressers," this may be literally and technically correct, but I feel a distinction should be made when discussing a man who is trying hard to pass as a female (wig, false breasts, heels, make-up, mannerisms, feminine name, altered voice) and a man who, though clad in a skirt, is making no attempt to appear as something other than what he is: a guy wearing a skirt. (Consider a kid at the shopping center, "Look Mom, that guy's wearing a dress!" versus "Hey Mom, is that a man or a woman?")

Well, end of sermon. Remember, communicate with your spouse or SO, try to determine the root of the tension, talk about it, find a solution that helps both parties feel better. Involve your wife in the whole process.

Geoff — "It takes balls to wear a skirt."



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L.I.F.E. Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Applies for Affiliate Status

by Alison Laing

On Saturday, November 11, 1995, Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE) celebrated their tenth Anniversary with a formal Dinner Dance at the Plainview Plaza Hotel, L. I., New York. Over 50 guests were in attendance.

Highlights of the evening included two special awards and a special 10th anniversary "birthday" cake. The Founders Award went to Monica Pedone and the Outreach Award to Brenda Viola, both well deserved.

Renaissance board member and IFGE Executive Director Alison Laing and her lovely spouse Dottie made a surprise appearance. Mistress of Ceremonies, Susan Solomon spoke briefly, as did Alison, and after the candles on the cake were blown out and the cake served, the celebration continued until the wee hours.

At the event, LIFE announced it had declared itself an "open group" and is applying for Affiliate status with Renaissance. It is expected that there are no issues to prevent this from being official before the end of the year.

LIFE may be contacted by writing to PO Box 3015, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY 11779-0147. Congratulations and welcome to the Renaissance family.

A Tip For TGs And Current Air Travel In The USA

by Lonnie Lawson

In response to terrorist threats, air travel in the domestic U.S.A. has come under renewed enforcement of old FAA rules. If you do not resemble the "state issued" photo identification in your possession, you will not be able to use a ticket issued to that name. This is a problem that I have been able to solve with the help of Senator Madigan's office and Penn D.O.T.

Penn D.O.T. will issue for \$9 a Pennsylvania Identification card to a person requesting it for photo identification purposes. The card seems to be designed to fill the need of Pa. drivers who have had their driver's license revoked. All you need to do is take a check or money order (not cash) for \$9 to a state driver license center. When there, simply explain that you need a photo ID for when you are cross-dressed. I have been assured that they are obligated to take your picture as you present yourself and cannot restrict you for wearing makeup, wig, dress etc. The card will be processed showing things such as birthdate, height, sex, address, and so forth. They will not mark the card with "F" or "M" based upon your attire. If you are "crossdressed" as a woman, your ID will be marked "M." This is an official ID, not a toy or fraudulent in any way. This ID will function as legal ID for any one requesting it, i.e., policemen, airline attendants, bouncers, etc.

This ID could be helpful to anyone in an official position in assessing a situation involving us in crossdressed attire. This ID will clearly demonstrate that an official agency is aware of our "hobby" and that we are not "dressing" in a disguise to attempt fraud for illegal gains. A policeman's first concern when facing anyone who is in a disguise, as they view it is, "Why are they in disguise?" To defuse a potential problem quickly, simply present them with the truth that you are an "active" crossdresser. The presentation of a matching ID will only help.

As a closing note, there are several regional photo license centers capable of processing a request for photo ID on the spot. Pleasant Gap, Pa., Rockview Center on route 64, east of State College, Pa. is one such center.

Good luck and happy dressing!

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Photos by Barbara Foster

Your editors hard at play at Henri David's Hallowe'en Ball 1996. From left to right: JoAnn Roberts is introduced as a judge by Henri David; Angela Gardner trolls for compliments; Dina Amberle gets growls of approval.

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