TWENTY MINUTES

JULY 1990 THE XX (Twenty) CLUB $2.00

Jennie's TS Corner

Let's look at the criteria for living full time as a female.

The first criteria is financial. One must first have money for food and shelter, the high on-going maintenance costs of making the change and other basic living expenses. This implies either having a full-time job with income to cover these expenses or enough savings to cover them for the period of time when you may be looking for work.

The second criteria is appearance. I believe that passing reasonably well is an absolute must. And if you have a prayer of making a change with an unknowing audience then you must always pass.

The third criteria is your behavior. Work on your behavior and body as discussed in earlier columns, but you will find that the real behavior progress comes while cross-living.

What about work? I see two approaches to this with variations in each. In the first, you would find a job as a female, presumably with an unknowing audience. This involves saving money on your male job, quitting your male job and begin living full time as you look for work.

The second approach is to make an on-the-job change. This may be an interim stage of your development. After you have cross-lived and worked as a female for several months, you are apt to have much more confidence in yourself and may be more successful in job hunting.

The viability of either of these approaches depends on the individual situation. For example, what are your lifestyle habits and with what lifestyle (independent of gender) will you be satisfied. What is your occupation? What type of people do you work with? What is the personality of the city in which you live? How well are you liked by your co-workers? What is your relationship to your own management? How well do you pass up close and personal? This includes both your behavior and appearance? How well have you smoothed your own documental, occupational and personal history?

Presumably, our ultimate goal is to become well-integrated females with happy, fulfilling lives and in a situation where most of the people with whom we deal are unknowing of our gender history. But different people will have very different opinions about what constitutes being happy and fulfilled. For example, you may be a professional, have a high income and own a really nice home. Now I really wonder how many people in this situation will be happy to sell the house, quit the job and accept a lower standard of living? A person in this circumstance might be better off seeking an on-the-job change.

However, suppose you are an auto mechanic or machinist. Yes, you say, there are some women in these jobs today, but many are not accepted well by their co-workers. Yes, there are women who will be in the forefront to break these barriers, but you have enough problems without adding this one. You may instead have to think in terms of retraining yourself in an occupation more open to women. You may have to save money, quit your job and begin cross-living while going to school. When you have finished your training, you will have had some months living full time as a woman and will be more comfortable seeking employment.

If you opt to quit your current job and seek employment as a woman, then you must smooth your history, develop your occupational or career goals, possibly get some training, seek out employers, obtain interviews, get hired. If you choose an on- the-job change, you must inform your management and possibly a human resources department and obtain their support. You will have to work out a way for your co-workers to be informed of your change and will have to work out bathroom arrangements. Even if you are self-employed, you may have to inform your clients of your change unless you can afford to turn over your clientele or you are fortunate enough to have the kind of business where your gender just does not matter. There are no easy choices, but a carefully thought-out plan, developed as early as possible, can be a big help in making your transition a success.

Let's assume you are now cross-living either as a new employee with an unknowing audience or you changed at your current job. What is your life like? I recommend that you work extra hard to perform well on your job. Your place of employment is not there as a vehicle to try out your new wardrobe. Beginning to live full-time as a woman is a major distraction. Reread that last sentence. What is your life like? I recommend filling your life with activities to help you improve and to meet people. I think it is really important to have a network of TS friends with whom you can share information. You will need information. There are a multitude of things that you need to know about from others' experiences with endocrinologists, plastic surgeons, electrologists, sex surgeons and the like.

Having said that, I am also a firm believer that you need to develop friends outside the gender community, particularly females. Biological female friends can give you lots and lots of support. And this can be just being girlfriends and doing things that women enjoy doing together. As you do this you get a sense of belonging;, you have left that other group.

(Reprinted from the *EDUCATIONAL TV CHANNEL NEWSLETTER*, Mar/Apr 1990 issue.)

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TWENTY MINUTES

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THE TRANSSEXUAL SUPPORT GROUP OF NEW ENGLAND AND NEW YORK

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JESUS said, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."

(From *The Gnostic Gospels* compiled by Elaine Pagels.)

Just when you think life can't possibly get any worse, it suddenly does.

All the news that's print to fit.

This newsletter is funded entirely through subscriptions and the sales of educational materials. All written contributions welcome. A backlog of material may prevent the immediate publishing of submitted articles. The XX Club, or its members are not responsible for the opinions expressed or accuracy of information provided by the writers of unsolicited or solicited materials. Parts of this newsletter may be reproduced if source credit is given.

CLUB CALENDAR

MEETING

Saturday, July 14

PICNIC

Saturday, July 28

MEETINGS

Saturday, Aug. 11

Saturday, Aug. 25

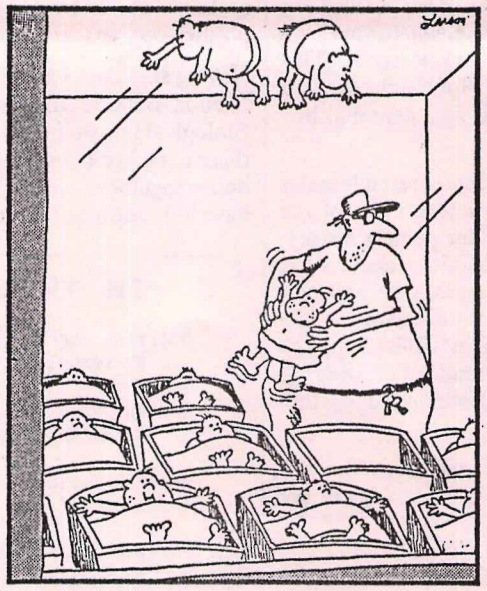
Regular meetings of the XX Club are held the second and fourth Saturdays of the month at 2 PM sharp to 5 PM.:

Christ Church Cathedral
45 Church Street
Hartford, CT

(Located at the corner of Church and Main Streets in the downtown area across from G. Fox.) If you believe you are gender dysphoric, you are welcome to visit and find out more about our group and talk about yourself and your feelings. The XX Club is a transsexual support group, not a dating service. There is NO SMOKING allowed during the meetings, though we do allow smoking during breaks and after the meetings. We attempt to provide peer support and practical information about making the gender transition, as well as information about the Gender Identity Clinic of New England. Parents, siblings, spouses and significant others are also welcome to attend.

Special Thanks to Roger Peo, Ph.D. for being our guest speaker at the June 9 meeting.

So, What really does cause Transsexualism?



Late at night and without permission, Reuben would often enter the nursery and conduct experiments in static electricity.

TREASURER'$ REPORT

Balance - from May		$1737.93
INCOME:		
Collections - meetings		27.50
Newsletter subscriptions		95.00
Brochure sales		4.50
IFGE sales		.00
GF sales		.00
Donations		.00
Savings interest		8.21
Total Income	$135.21	
EXPENSES:		
PO Box Rental		36.00
Refreshments		32.06
Speaker's Fee		53.86
Newsletter & brochures		.00
Postage		35.82
Supplies		11.93
Bank Fee		5.70
Total Expenses	$175.36	
Net Loss for June		$ -40.15
Balance - end of June		$1697.78

XX CLUB PICNIC

This year's summer picnic will be held on Saturday, July 28 at Straton Brook Park in Simsbury, CT at or near the covered pavilion. All members, families, friends and significant others as well as members of *other TS/TV clubs* are invited to attend. Plan to arrive anytime after 11 a.m. and stay till dark. For the picnic, bring your own food, and if possible, bring a little extra to share with others. The XX Club will provide the ice and the soft drinks. Bring a hibachi and charcoal to cook hot dogs and hamburgers and such. Bring frisbees or other picnic games. There is a beach and a pond at the park, so bring those bikinis. So mark this date on your calendar and plan on having a good time.

(**NOTE**...There will be no meeting at Christ Church the day of the picnic.)

Please see the map to Straton Brook Park on page 9 of this newsletter.

STIRRING THE CHAMBERPOT

by Veronica Jean Brown

(Editor's note - This article was originally written for TransNews of Toronto, Ontario in response to an article by Rupert Raj that appeared in the December 1989 issue.)

Transsexuals, transvestites, transgenderists, crossdressers and other persons who may fall between the cracks of these not-so-well delineated categories represent indeed, a most misunderstood minority to the general public. In the states, recent passage by both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate of a bill to protect handicapped or disabled persons with mental or physical impairments which interfere with any of life's major activities, was a landmark in the annals of civil rights. However, tacked on to both versions was an amendment that specifically excluded persons in the following groups: homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, kleptomaniacs, compulsive gamblers (sorry about that, Pete Rose), and child molesters from the provisions of this bill. In the U.S. courts, transsexuals have a long history of habitually coming up with the short end of the civil rights stick.

The November 1988 issue of the Emerald City News, PO Box 31318, Seattle, WA., U.S.A., 98103 contained an editorial by Janice Van Cleve titled, Our Rights Attacked. In it, Van Cleve promoted the concept that under the city ordinance of the public accommodations act, TSs and TVs be given legal access to female washrooms. As the then editor of Twenty Minutes, PO Box 80690, Springfield, MA., U.S.A., 01138, I reprinted Van Cleve's article in the December 1988 issue of TM along with my article titled, Toilet Training - A Rebuttal. In that article, I stated something like that there should be no all encompassing laws legally allowing a pre-op M-F TS or a transvestite into female washrooms. If a pre-op (or post-op, for that matter), or transvestite is passable, let them take their own individual chances by using the female washroom.

In the December 1988 Emerald City News, Van Cleve reprinted the following: Charles Royer, the Mayor of the city of Seattle, Washington wrote a reply to Emerald City. The response was a carefully worded letter that ended with the following. - "The segregation of public restrooms on the basis of gender was not intended to constitute unlawful discrimination under the public accommodation ordinance. The right to use public restrooms is guaranteed to all persons but within the recognized the recognized proven constraints imposed by the segregation of such facilities based on gender. The manner in which one dresses does not alter one's gender, therefore a man dressed as a woman is not entitled under S.M.C. 14.08 to use the women's restroom." You can also interpret this as, "if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and walks like a duck, it must be a duck and therefore entitled to use the duck's room. But if it doesn't look like a duck, shoot it!"

For the rest of 1989, we had the late great toilet debate which raged on and on in various gender newsletters throughout the U.S. I was really happy to have started and to have made such a valid contribution to the gender controversy. It took the edge off of having to continually read about make-up, the clickety-click of high heels on the pavement and "first time out" personal TV experiences, which although for those persons to whom things like this are applicable and an important part of their experience, does wear thin for those gender people who have other more important (to them) life changing concerns on their mind. It took some newsletter editors nearly a full year full year to wake up and finally make a comment and the topic was even covered in an attempted humorous vein by the editor of Tapestry in a recent issue. But this was and is not something to laugh at.

The toilet topic was discussed one time at a Twenty Club meeting and the majority felt that they needed no all encompassing law for legal access to the female washrooms. Part of the real life test was to "pass and feel comfortable most of the time" and if you can't pass in a female washroom, perhaps you had better pee before you leave home or take up a different hobby. One of the female significant others pointed out that on some college campuses, unisex washrooms are very common and she did not see anything wrong in it. Someone else made the comment that the college atmosphere is not indicative of the real world and that many graduates get a rude awakening and a taste of how things really are when they venture out in and enter the work force.

In Rupert Raj-Gauthier's TEMPEST IN A CHAMBERPOT: A Social Science Perspective article in the December 1989 Trans News, he states that pre-op M-F TSs (and the TG and TV too) must be granted the right to use the female washroom. This is in itself a noble attitude but like the unisex toilets on the college campus, is not a valid concept in the real world. It is one thing to have protection under the law (if you can get it passed), but it is often quite another to have that law enforced. If our children were taught from an early age about the intricacies of gender and aberrant gender behavior, they might grow up to be understanding adults and we'd have no call for all encompassing protective laws. Perhaps too, if parts of the Bible could be rewritten to reflect changing social values, things might be a lot better for many minority groups. But of course that's not possible. Those in charge frown on even hinting about human reproduction in public schools, there's not a chance they'll get around to transsexualism. But then, transsexuals are such a weak closeted minority, we have no political consciousness on a national level, and even much less political clout with our legislators.

Most of us within the gender community quickly become aware of the subtle varied needs, differences and nuances of cross gender phenomena and behavior. Mainstream society puts all of us, the gays, the bisexuals, CDs, TVs, TGs and TSs into one neat category under the headings of perverted life-style slash abnormal behavior. Pervertedness carries a social stigma. Abnormal is actually not quite so bad, but many perceive it as such.

A friend of mine changed over on the job and the ladies in the office went to management and said that under no circumstances, did they want that person in the ladies restroom. My friend was forced to use the handicapped toilet even after her surgery. A change in unseen genitals had no bearing on the feelings of these women or the "rights" of my friend. Do you think a "law" by the management would have made any difference?

Another friend of mine also made the transition on her job. In this case, she had the full backing of management (in a very large company) and educational meetings were conducted for department heads explaining the nature of things. Any company employee suspected of nasty behavior towards her would be called on the carpet, presumably to do a hundred hours of social service work at the nearest local transsexual support group..

In the former case, my friend worked in a small company where management's moral fiber was weak and buckled under pressure from a few. Her job could have easily been done by a new employee, but they didn't want to fire her for fear of repercussions or a possible law suit. In the latter, the employee was an important, irreplaceable member of the team in a highly competitive field and management quickly saw the need to dictate a fair policy stand to retain this needed employee.

Transsexuals sometimes take the posture of being "transsexuals" and demand rights they will never get. And many transvestites attempt to rule the gender roost by including transsexuals in their policies. Some transsexuals often forget they are human beings and find power in being "different" when they could be working towards a goal of integrating and blending themselves into society. Unlike the ugly caterpillar that builds a chrysalis and later emerges as a beautiful butterfly, the transsexual has no place to hide during their transformation. Do you think a law will make it any easier? In spite of all the U.S. civil rights legislation, Afro-Americans are continually discri-

minated against today. Civil right laws don't always guarantee protection but at least it is a start.

And let's face it, most of us don't really become pretty women. We are tall, have husky voices, large Adam's apples, big hands, thinning hair and wear size 12 pumps. If we starve ourselves into a size twelve, we only emphasize our large, male frames. Cosmetic surgery can help some of us but it's expensive. A few of us have the added problems of alcoholism, drug addiction, personality and emotional problems which may or may not be gender related. The lucky ones start while they still retain the unmasculinized blush of boyhood. These natural beauty wonders, these soon to be gorgeous man made females never attend support meetings. They don't need to. They become the pretty ones who certainly don't need permission from city hall to use the ladies washroom. But there are some genetic women who exhibit some of these masculine qualities. They too have trouble finding large sizes in clothes and shoes. They too sometimes are mistaken for the wrong gender. Should we pass a law for their protection as well?

And speaking of the women in all of this, did we as (M-F transsexual) women ever ask their opinions on how they felt about us encroaching into their washrooms of birthright? Did we ask them if they minded 6 foot five inch tall nervous transvestites splashing his urine into a ladies' john? I think not. Instead we took it upon ourselves, by right of our gender dysphoria to claim the right to their privy peeing place?

We can sit back in our tiny minority and voice all kinds of opinions, stroke our egos and make grand statements but in the end, it's really out of our hands, unless of course we really want to stand together and do something. In spite of all the enlightening social science perspectives or well meaning gender do-gooders, it's us against city hall and society. The mayor of Seattle said it quite well I think, "The manner in which one dresses does not alter one's gender, therefore a man dressed as a woman is not entitled under S.M.C. 14.08 to use the women's restroom." There it is in black and white. Transsexuals have not fared well in the court system. We are a different minority and they don't know what to do with us. And speaking of the end, who's got the toilet paper around here?

COMMON SENSE PREVAILS

by Veronica Jean Brown

In a recent Tapestry issue, the editor, Merissa S. Lynn attempt to speak out in sort of a humorous vein about what is a very serious issue of the use of toilets by crossdressed people. It's amazing sometimes how a sleeping giant can be stirred to motion if enough pressure is brought to bear. In the February 1990 issue of Rosebuds, the monthly newsletter of the Tiffany Club of New England proclaimed by Tiffany Chairperson of the Board of Directors Stephanie Chandler as the 'premier' newsletter within the community (premier in this case meaning first in importance according to the 1986 second edition of the Collins thumb indexed English Dictionary), contributor Karen Ann N. addresses the toilet issue in the article titled Programs notes.

Karen writes, "A Serious Issue For All of Us. The use of public restrooms is an important matter for all cross-dressers. It is not my intent here to initiate a great debate (Editor's note: where were you all of last year Karen?) on this subject, or to encourage a barrage of letters to the editor (or myself) with opposing points of view. The only purpose here is to restate the long standing of the Tiffany Club of New England on this matter.

As you know, any time the club holds an outside event in a public place, we take great care to make specific arrangements for the use of rest rooms. This is done not only to insure that no embarrassing situations occur, but also to comply with State Law and local ordinances. Regardless of your personal feelings on this matter, the fact is that it is a violation of State law in Massachusetts (and most other states), to enter a rest room designated for use by the opposite sex. That is the law!, and if you violate it, you may be subject to the appropriate penalties.

Having said all of this, let me once again state very clearly the following: It is not, nor has it ever been, the policy of this organization, or its individual officers or elected officials, to advocate the violation of any duly enacted laws or ordinances, whether they apply to rest rooms or any other individual acts or behavior.

If you are going out on your own, or in a group, there are ways to plan ahead, in order to avoid any problems or violations of any laws. If you need advice in this area, talk with some of our older members and they will be glad to help."

Here we have an ultra conservative common sense approach to the late great toilet debate in direct contrast to the Emerald City club yanking on the tail of Seattle City Hall. Keeping in line with the low key, common sense approach towards other crossdressing matters, the official policy of the Tiffany Club of New England is to tread softly and carefully. It's them against society and they know this.

Looking back over the previous year on what has been written about the toilet debate, one thing remains clear; it's absurd for a crossdressed male to be granted legal access to a female toilet. There are indeed many more important issues confronting the male crossdresser as well as the transsexual person. Public acceptance of cross-dressing (a compulsion, need or hobby - depending on your viewpoint or medical background/knowledge) and transsexual crossdressing (a medical need and social training ground necessity) may be a long time in coming, if at all.

Hitler may have been responsible for the extermination of millions of Jews, but few Americans have read Prussian and German histories of the late 1800's to understand what forces were in place then and after World War I to set the stage for such a strong nationalistic movement of Adolph's beer hall brawl. And no, having such an understanding won't make Anne Frank or the rest of them any less dead. The Christian Church was responsible for the wholesale slaughter of up to nine million men, women and children for the transgression of various heresies, witchcraft, and etc. all in the name of God. Does anyone ever bring that up (well, besides myself?) The Christian Church had to smarten up to allow for the advent of early commercialism. Business profits would always be in jeopardy as long as the Inquisition was free to accuse and execute men and then confiscate their property and the holdings of their relatives and offspring. Even in the 1800's, the Christian Church had to again change and turned to a variation of commercialization to survive.

A gay Episcopalian bishop on a recent (February 1990) talk show appeared with his lover, only to anger a number of lesbian callers who took offense at his apparent neutral and indifferent attitude towards gay women. Once again the ugly head of male supremacy pops up. Read the pertinent literature. Being a homosexual male is not the same as being a lesbian woman. Being a twenty-two year old post-op TS is also not the same as being a forty-five year old post-op. The former hasn't had twenty or so years of trying to make it in the world as a man with a wife, kids and mortgage payments. The latter has a different set of life experiences and may have too much of the old male life to 'become' a 'social woman' in the purest sense. Want an education? Go to your local lesbian center (as a passable post-op TS female) and announce to them you used to be a guy and see what happens. Watch closely for the various reactions you'll get. We've got eleven years left in this century to pick up the pieces of our nearly non-existent civil rights. It's time we got our heads out of the toilets and into reality.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PARENTS OF TRANSSEXUAL CHILDREN

Sheila Mengert, Esq.

You may be wondering why I am writing a letter to you even though I am a stranger. Probably the last thing that you want is to discuss the confusion, embarrassment and fear with someone you don't know. I understand. You wouldn't be reading this if someone you loved very much hadn't told you something you didn't want to hear, that your child is, was, and has been cross-gendered identified, that what you thought was true was not and never had been, that a silent agony was being played out for years and you just didn't know, maybe you didn't want to know, and now you do, and I'm presuming to talk to you about it.

I am banking on two things in presuming to talk to you: First, I am banking on a common human need for information when something new and confusing has entered their lives. Secondly, I am banking on your courage and on your love for your child which should be present now if it is present at all. If you are still reading then I know that you are who I took you for, people who love and who are ready to listen and to understand an experience that though rare is bone-deep real for those who experience it.

In order to grow through what you now know you must be willing to listen and learn. I'm sorry but there just is no other way. I am certain that the people before Columbus found it dismaying to learn that the world was not flat. I am equally certain that most of our society would like to believe that sexual minorities do not exist. The fact is that the earth is round and that transsexual people do exist. Your child is transsexual, and many things besides, but transsexual and because transsexual in greater pain and confusion that you would ever wish your child to be in.

I am not going to give you all the facts about gender dysphoria, which is the scientific name for transsexualism here. After all, this is a letter and not a treatise. As a letter, it is meant to be friendly and reassuring, but I have to be challenging at the same time. Why? Because what lies ahead for you will require the same courage, effort, commitment, and love that is required when anyone is forced by circumstances to face facts that one would prefer to deny or to ignore. My task is easier because denial and ignorance have a price that is far higher than the choice I hope you will make. Denial of facts does not make them go away and willful ignorance in the face of facts—when knowledge and healing are available—is debilitating, futile, and when it touches the life of a loved one, culpable. I assure you that denial has already been practiced by your transsexual child for years. Your child did not ask or wish to be transsexual. Its costs have been born for years in the silent hope that the feelings would go away, but they haven't and the best research indicates that they never will.

By the time a transsexual child confides, takes the terrible risk of rejection that disclosure entails, the situation which is to say the pain has become undeniable. Your child is reaching out to you now not to hurt you but to show you the love and trust that is the only true sign of a good parent-child relationship, to tell the truth, the core fact of a life. If you haven't seen it that way then just pause and think a minute, would you really want your child to lie to you, would you enjoy living with a shadow of a person never really knowing who that person was? Don't be confused here with the question, "Would you rather that you never had to be told that your child was transsexual?" The answer to that one is obvious, of course, you would rather that the necessity to face transsexualism was not present. The transsexual condition is not easy to face, it is one of nature's true anomalies. It may never be completely understood.

No, the question here is far more simple, "Would you want to live in a relationship with someone you loved and force that person to know in every daily act that you as a parent didn't really know him or her? Can real love exist where knowledge is absent?" You may answer that this aspect of your child's life is private like what they do in bed. The answer to this is that transsexualism is not a minor aspect of life in that it involves how a person views herself or himself in body, social interactions, clothing, voice, gestures, friendship, and in intimacy, in fact in every aspect of life. A lie of this dimension would be a great lie indeed. In any case, the truth has been spoken—your child has admitted you to the care of her life. If you are still with me your next question, "What do I do now that I know my child is transsexual?" will be met with a few suggestions.

One brief personal note. I have asked myself for years how to make my life meaningful in the face of being transsexual. I realize that I am years behind in the normal maturation process, that whole continents of human experience have been denied to me because I am transsexual. I have tried to mourn the lighthearted joys of explorations that might have been mine in high school and college, the simple joy that would have come had the constant pain of exile in a body and social role that did not fit been eased for a moment.

I have so often wished that I might have been able to experience when it was possible what I am now trying to cram into the years that are quickly disappearing before my eyes, a girlhood and adolescence, known only in moments of fantasy and the vicarious experience of books. I have had to surrender much of my life to the brutality and incomprehension of societal ignorance surrounding the phenomenon of transsexualism. That ignorance and prejudice costs lives is no new discovery, it is the bane of every age whether it shows up in war or in civil violence or in silent hatred and misunderstanding. In this case though it was my own life that has been bled away year by year in my efforts to correspond to what body may have indicated but my soul knew to be an alien fabric out of which I could never hope to weave a complete or a happy life. The only comfort I have for those lost days and years during which I was a stranger to myself frantically seeking to garb my soul in the personalities and expectations of others, is that I might be the last generation to know such point- less suffering. That is why I am writing today, to spare others lost years, lost hopes, lost lives.

No other birth defect or developmental disability is treated with the snide and

brutal complacency of transsexualism. People would be ashamed at the thoughtless cruelty seen so often in talk shows when brave people have attempted to tell of their pain and to grope towards a solution both for themselves and for others. We are in many ways a barbaric society in spite of all our tech nology. It is time that such treatment cease and that compassion that is so rare in society find a home in the families of the oppressed.

I cannot tell you now to try and understand what is in its very nature an incomprehensible condition, nor can I tell you what specific measures to take to ease your child through the transition to her true life. Your own love, courage, and imagination must be your guides along this path. I can tell you this, that no act of love will be a cause of regret, that no one profits when lives burn on in futility and frustration simply to sustain society's bland comfort in illusion. You may be the means of deliverance to more than your transsexual child. In realizing the truth of her life, you may gain the courage to embrace your own with all of its sorrow, disappointment, and fleeing dreams. The path of love and acceptance is not trod alone, transsexual people, so familiar with pain, may love and aid you in return as you pursue your own journey. Their happiness is your laurel wreath, their completeness your crown. Having given them birth will you now give them life? Will you aid in their restoration to the human community? Will you welcome them home?

SOURCE: J2CP Information Services

TOP 10 REASONS...
TO HAVE A (M-F) SEX-CHANGE

by Sonia and company

10- Feel like a woman trapped in a man's body.
9- So you can get into an all-girls college.
8- Don't have to pay for dinner on dates.
7- Guys buy all your drinks.
6- Guys hold doors for you.
5- Reduced skating admission on "Ladies' Night".
4- Lounges in ladies' rooms.
3- Great way to avoid creditors.
2- Annoy and confuse friends, family, and neighbors.
1- Lower auto insurance rates.

RACHEL'S RAP

Greetings, girls and guys! I've finally gotten around to putting some words on paper for the newsletter. The focus of this article is what I learned during my last visit to my endocrinologist, Dr. Elliot Sternthal.

I began taking hormones in October 1989. Dr Sternthal started me out on a standard cycle of 5.0 mg of Premarin (a brand of natural conjugated estrogen) daily for days 1 - 25, plus 10 mg of Provera (a brand of projesterone) for days 16 - 25. I was not supposed to take anything for the remaining days of the month.

After about two months, I developed a problem. Three days into the "no hormones period", I began feeling rather sick. I had persistent headaches, aching joints, and chronic fatigue. I figured this was some form of withdrawal. By the fourth month, I found myself "cheating" by taking a few of next month's pills after three days of my "period".

The first question I had for Dr. Sternthal was if it were possible to lengthen my cycle. He found this acceptable. We agreed upon a 28 day cycle of Premarin plus Provera for the last 12 days. Dr. Sternthal did emphasize the need to include some sort of break from the hormones, stating that the liver needed a rest, and that the "hormone receptors" would get a chance to "recharge themselves".

I also asked the good Doctor for an increase in the dosage I was taking. He said that he felt that I should stay where I was at least until my next appointment (in 6 months). After a certain amount of arm twisting on my part, I did get Dr. Sternthal to agree to give me a prescription for an anti-androgen (testosterone inhibitor) called Spironolactone.

I have been taking 50 mg of Spironolactone daily for nearly a month, and at this point I have had few noticeable changes. Dr. Sternthal did inform me that estrogen and progesterone effectively blocked testosterone, making the anti-androgen largely unnecessary.

There have been two changes worth mentioning. First, there has been a small decrease in the rate at which my body and facial hair grows. The affect on my facial hair has actually turned out to be a problem, as my electrologist has been having difficulty with the shorter hairs. I plan to continue taking the Spironolactone, but with breaks a few days before electrolysis appointments. Second, Spironolactone is a diuretic, and I have been going to the bathroom more frequently and with more urgency. Dr. Sternthal said that this side affect may lessen with time.

I asked the Doctor his opinion on synthetic versus natural hormones. He said that the synthetics were possibly able to provide results more quickly, but that there was a greater risk of side affects. According to Sheila Kirk's lecture on hormones at the last IFGE convention, the incidence of side affects is low, but they tend to be serious if they do occur.

Anyone who has investigated knows that the price differential between generic and name-brand prescriptions can be rather large. I can currently get my generic prescriptions covered by my drug plan, less a three dollar co-payment. The same prescription filled with name-brand drugs would cost more than $30.00 per month! Many people shy away from generic drugs due to concern for quality and dosage control. When I asked Dr. Sternthal what he thought about generic drugs, he said that as far as he knew, the generics worked as well as the name-brands, and that he has not had any complaints from patients taking generics.

(Ed. note- Each state has its own laws regarding the substitution of generic drugs for name-brand. If you wish to change your prescription to generic, you may have to get your doctor's permission first.)

Finally, I asked the Doctor about the affects of vitamins, caffeine, smoking, aspirin, and other drugs on female hormones. He said that excessive drinking of alcohol, or any activity which places extra strain on the liver was bound to have a negative affect an the body's ability to metabolize the hormones. He went on to say that none of the other items should have an affect (positive or negative) on how the hormones worked.

ROGER'S NOTEBOOK

By Roger E. Peo, Ph.D.

Member, Tri-Ess Professional Staff

In my last two columns I wrote about differing needs of transvestites and transsexuals and then of the organizations that serve this complex community. In this column I look at the feelings some transsexuals have about these organizations.

Some transsexuals feel they are "second class citizens" in the larger transgender community. There appear to be several reasons for this situation. First, there are many fewer transsexuals than transvestites -- so they are in a minority if all else were equal. Secondly, and perhaps most important, many transsexuals are not in the best financial situation. They are often in therapy, paying for hormone treatments, undergoing electrolysis and maybe in the middle of a divorce. All of these are expensive.

If they are living and working as a woman they are probably making significantly less than they did as a man. Lastly, they are probably also saving as much as they can for genital surgery (since this is both expensive and not often covered by insurance). For these, and other reasons, they have much less disposable income than the cross-dresser.

As I wrote in the first column in this series, transsexuals and cross-dressers have different psychological and emotional needs. From the transsexual's viewpoint, the cross-dresser often seems more interested in clothing and the superficial aspects of femininity. Conventions are seen as the ultimate expression of this set of interests. So, in addition to being expensive, most conventions do not address the needs of the transsexual or if they do, it is only a small part of the program.

This differing focus is quite understandable from the convention organizer's viewpoint. Most of the persons who attend are cross-dressers. They pay for a program which meets their needs. Thus, the majority rules and the minority is angry and frustrated.

Perhaps the most difficult problem the transsexual community faces is long-term continuity in leadership. Many transsexuals simply can not afford to attend conventions. Without this visibility they are unable to influence the attitudes and actions of the larger community. Also, many transsexuals view the community as a transitory phase. They come to learn about themselves, determine the courses of action that are best for them and follow them. When they become successful members of the other gender they disappear into the larger world.

It is always difficult to meet the desires of a widely divergent group. Some organizations decided it could not be done and limit their membership to a sub-set of the community. Others have set no restrictions. In the latter case, unless care is taken, the majority (usually the cross-dressers) will define programs that are of little interest to the minority (usually transsexuals).

I wish I had a simple answer for this dilemma. I don't. This series of columns is my way of making everyone more aware of problems faced by transgender organizations and the larger community.

* * * * * *

If you have subjects you would like me to write about or wish to write a rebuttal, send them to P.O. Box 4887, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602 or call (914) 462-7455. All communications are confidential. [February 4, 1990]

SELF EMPLOYED TRANSSEXUAL

by Paula W.

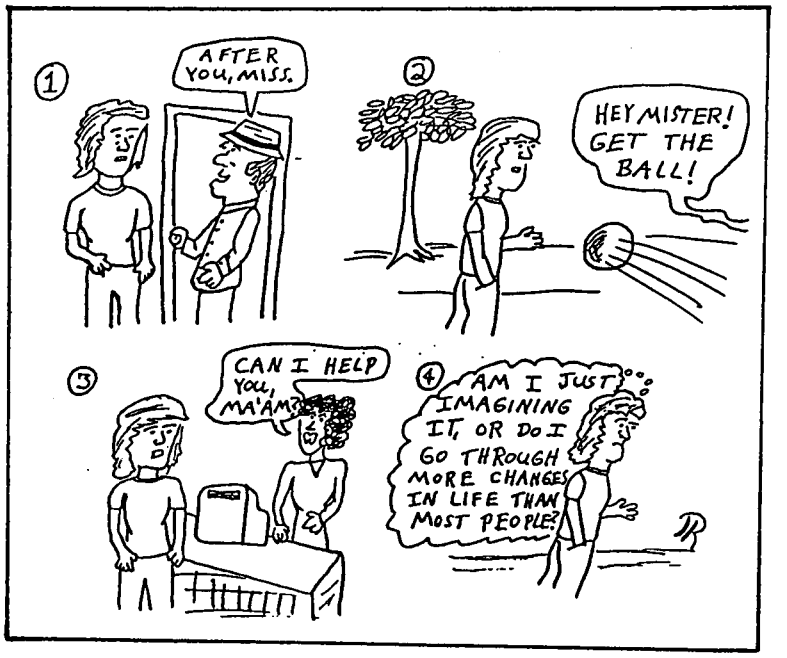
I am an electrical contractor from Derry, NH, and just recently I gave notice to the state board of electricians regarding my pending name change. I did this just in case one of the state investigators spot checks me on the job, I will be able to identify myself as Paula. From what one of the secretaries for the state board of electricians told me over the phone, I am not the first one to go through this! She would not give me any details, but she confirmed that there is at least one other T.S. electrician in NH.

In 1986 I "came out of the closet." The thought of going to work as Paula and dealing with customers was a little scary at first. I thought I would have to give up my career if I wanted to live full time as a woman. After all, I do all kinds of electrical work from simple repairs to climbing down those awful "manholes" and climbing 40 foot poles in parking lots. What would my customers think?

I anticipated loosing customers, but not so. I work some jobs where i'm exposed to the general public, and even working with publicly funded projects. Many of my clients are repeat customers, and they now know me as Paula. I'm a woman 24 hours a day, and they accept me this way.

I'm deeply devoted to my work, and strive to perfect it because I feel I have to make a good example in the construction industry. When future electricians look at my work, I want them to find a good product. When I depart from the trade, Paula will not be leaving any loose ends. Up here in Southern NH., electricians work cheap, and for the most part, I don't believe that they care about their work. So if I bid on a job that takes $1000 materials and labor to do right, my competition can cut corners (using cheap materials, and shoddy workmanship) can do the job for half that amount. I stand behind my work and my 20 years of experience.

So that's the way it is, in spite of what's happening, my work will go on. The near future does not look good due to the economy, but I know I can do better than my competition, and I'll do it as a woman.



The Rules

(The following was originally printed in *Camping Women Trails*.)

1. The female ALWAYS makes the rules.
2. THE RULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME without prior notification.
3. NO MALE CAN POSSIBLY KNOW THE RULES.
4. If the female suspects that the Male knows all the rules she must IMMEDIATELY change some of the RULES.
5. THE FEMALE IS NEVER WRONG.
6. If the female is wrong, it is because of a FLAGRANT MISUNDERSTANDING which was a DIRECT RESULT of something the male did or said wrong.
7. If rule six (6) applies, the Male must apologize immediately for causing the MISUNDERSTANDING.
8. The female can change her mind at any given point in time.
9. THE MALE MUST NEVER CHANGE HIS MIND WITHOUT EXPRESS WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE FEMALE.
10. The female has every right to be ANGRY or UPSET at any time.
11. The male must remain CALM at ALL times, unless the female wants him to be angry or upset.
12. The female must UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES let the male know if she wants him to be angry or upset.

TYING UP LOOSE ENDS

by Sonia

As I come closer to going full time, I am finding more and more "loose ends" that I never thought were there. I thought that I would put into writing some advice on "tying up these loose ends".

First, you have to tell family members and friends who do not yet know about your condition. Please realize that you will probably loose some friends, but the way you have to look at it is that if someone won't accept you for who and what you are, then they probably were never really your friend anyway. There is a lot of information out there on telling friends and family, so I won't get into the sticky details. Just remember that you don't have to rent out a billboard and announce your gender dysphoria to the whole world; just tell those people who you feel need to know, or have a right to know.

There is a lot of paperwork which needs to be changed over. (I've already changed my name & social security, but I have not yet gotten my licence updated.) Another important consideration is calling all of your past employers (and schools) and asking them to change your name and sex on their records. If you will be keeping your present job, it goes without saying that you will need to tell your present employer. Other items which need to be addressed are car insurance, car titles, bank loans, business cards, prescriptions, credit cards, bank accounts and any other records of your name which are necessary in your day-to-day life. With all of the paperwork and notifications out of the way, it's time to go out and go SHOPPING! (My personal favorite.)

When we (transsexuals) finally go full time, we will often find that our female wardrobes leave a lot to be desired. (i.e. not enough pants or shoes, too formal, etc...) We must therefore dip into our closely guarded purses and balance out the closets. Keep in mind that your wardrobe is NEVER really complete, so concentrate on the necessities. (This looks like it has the makings of a column for next month.) As far as your now useless male wardrobe, my advice is to pack it all in a truck and sink it in the closest river! (Editor's note...or donate that old wardrobe to the Salvation Army, Goodwill or to the homeless.)

LETTER

To the Twenty Club and newsletter staff,

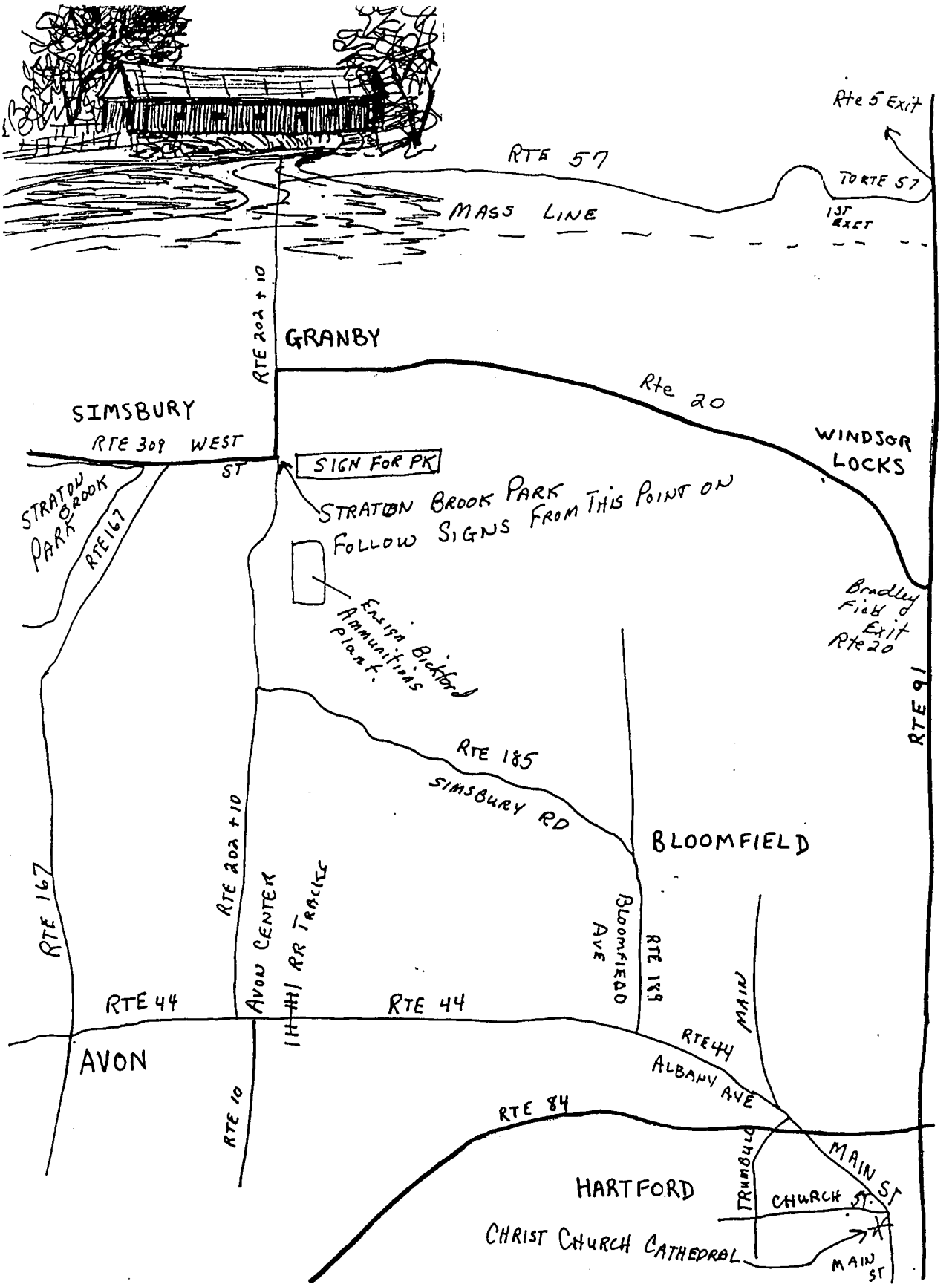
I find the newsletter very informative, tasteful and well printed. I've been with the Twenty Club since June of last year. I am very thankful for the group's support and new found friends. I very much respect the group and what it stands for. I fully intend to continue attending the meetings, even long after I've had the surgery. Your group has helped me a lot and I would someday like to return the favor.

Thank you, and God Bless,
Lisa, RI

NANCY

MAP TO STRATON BROOK PARK

Enter Straton Brook Park and park your car in the second lot. Walk down the gravel path, cross the wooden footbridge and proceed along the dirt path by the lake to the covered pavilion where the picnic tables are located. Be there!



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