



BAGGAGE: IT CAN BE AN ASSET

By: Wendi Pierce

Since I am a member of the gender community, I am very interested in what is written by other members of this community. Most of what I read is very helpful and supportive, but from time to time I run across articles or editorials that I do not agree with. I can accept this and I firmly believe that we all have the right to speak our minds, but when publications in our community tend to be decidedly negative in nature, without presenting positive or constructive alternatives, I feel something should be said. Let me explain.

Over the past few years, I have been reading a publication that is geared toward the transsexual portion of the gender community. While the information presented, for the most part, generally is good and factual, the publication tends to stress the negative and at times becomes very caustic, if not aggressively hostile, to certain groups. All I can guess is that the editor is not a content individual.

My transition has not been easy, and I would not recommend my approach as the only or "right" way to do it.....

She complains about how hard it is to eek out a living as a second class citizen, i.e. a woman, and how the world does not give transsexuals a fair shake. I would say that this is true of women in general, but that's not the point I wish to make here. I empathize with her, and I to feel that it's a "man's world" where women have to work much harder to succeed. However, I do not feel as she eludes, that women are doomed to mediocrity. Sure, if a person is not strong and lets the world walk over them, they will be among the down trodden. Sure, When a person presents a defeatist attitude, they invite failure. Sure, when a person is not willing to take chances, they will never reap the rewards of success. Therefore, we in the gender community, and more specifically, the transsexual portion of the community have to realize these statements as facts and work on their converse.

Historical baggage sometimes hurts and it can be a tremendous burden to carry but it is our past.....

I am a pre-op transsexual. I have not openly stated this before but over the last few years I have been trying to understand my inner self, and am now comfortable saying that I am a transsexual. Anyway, I and a number of other transsexuals that I know personally, have not been trapped in the negative spiral that seems to have consumed many transsexuals. I started transitioning in my career over two years ago; have successfully made the transition; am accepted in my new feminine persona, and I can say that my approach has worked for me. I am a much happier person now; a much more outgoing individual, and I no longer feel that I am playing a role forced on me by society.

My transition has not been easy and I would not recommend my approach as the only or "right" way to do it, but in my case it worked. Over the last few years, I have made many sacrifices and given up many things, but I did not feel it necessary to throw away all the skills, work history, and career position that

I had worked hard much of my adult life to achieve. Sure, my position was very shaky for a time, but I am a strong individual, an individual with enough guts and determination to show the world that I am a woman, capable of succeeding at what ever I attempt.

I realize now, that what I have done is not historically within the norm for transsexuals. The typical story seems to be "I gave it all up, started anew with no history, no skills, and am destined to be at the bottom of the social structure". I feel that this philosophy is based of an assumption that the experiences prior to our transition and our eventual acceptance contradicts the image we have of ourselves, and therefore, these experiences and all that is associated with them should be abandoned. This is

Ideally, we should glean as much as possible from this past, using it to our advantage....

where I disagree. Historical baggage sometimes hurts and it can be a tremendous burden to carry but it is our past. We can never totally leave it behind. Nor can we completely hide it. There will always be times that we will be reminded of it, and from time to time, we will have to deal with isolated situations where we are "found out". Most secrets eventually are exposed and we are foolish to think that our past will never surface. Ideally, we should glean as much as possible from this past, using it to our advantage. Such things as close friends, our career skills, even business associates, and family ties thought to be non-transferable to our new persona, might well be salvaged.

(continued on page 2)

A STEP I SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER

By: Jennifer Nelson *

Today I took another step in my life. For the last 2 years I have been spending more and more time as Jennifer. Practicing and perfecting my ability to live in the world as a woman. This evening in New York City, Jennifer is out and will stay out until I return to Detroit tomorrow afternoon. Living as a woman is important to me and has been with me for years - since I was a teenager, although I didn't understand it at the time. I am looking forward to these two days, dining at the Marriot, and seeing a Broadway show ("Me and My Gal") Saturday I will arise, dress have breakfast and then leave for Laguardia. Jennifer has the ticket home. Some might say this is a risky endeavor and they are right, but life is full of risks and rewards. For me the reward is being able to be who I really am, if only for a brief period. The "brief" periods kill me!

I am proud of who I am, as I am proud of my male self and all he has accomplished. But he didn't do it all and can't be all. I, as Jennifer have a place in all this. Over the last several months, I have been working hard on all aspects of myself. I have gone from 180Lbs to 165Lbs and in spite of his reluctance, would like to loose another 10 lbs. I already fit in size 14 in most dresses.

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New Shoes

By: Norma Kay Rogers

My mind can't recall but I've some old photos
of my foot in it's first little shoe.

A cute little crocheted bootie was spun
in traditional baby blue.

As I became older the shoes were of leather,
thick and heavy they trod on the ground.
And the color choices were sometimes mine,
as long as it was black or brown

There were loafers, boots, and wing-tips
and the army gave me their brogan style.
They've always picked something to put on my foot
but none ever made me smile.

The real me longs for something quite different,
for these feet, in color and design.

It's time to ignore those old social dictates
for the ultimate resolve is mine.

It's time for something with a cute little heel
with straps and an open toe,
in pink or white or beige or gray
might be much more apropos,

for what I am and appear to be
aren't even close to one-in-the-same!

The choice, it seems, was made long ago,
and no one's really to blame.

So, it's time to stand up proudly
and time to broadcast the news,

"The shoes I've worn never did fit these feet,
so I'm cutting these feet to fit my NEW shoes!"

Baggage Continued.....

In my situation, I was truly surprised at times to find out that people, some of whom I never thought could accept me in this new and honest role, have done just that and are now supportive. I attribute a lot of their support to the fact that I am a happier individual and I show my enthusiasm about this new life. I realized a few years back that I have only a limited time to do all I can and be all I can be. Therefore, I have set out to achieve a single goal for the remainder of my life. That goal is to be happy with myself first. A close friend of mine, another TS, is the person that I attribute my gaining this attitude. She said, "You have to be happy with yourself first before you can grow and make others happy". I took this to heart, now I share it with others, and it works. If you are a happy person, happy with where you are, and happy with where you are going, then others sense this and relate to you in a positive manner.

I am not saying that I expect life to be all roses from here on. We are dealt many hands in life and some are winners, some are losers. When a loser has been dealt, we just have to accept it, grit our teeth and weather the storm. The winning hands we should savor, congratulate ourselves on and reap our rewards. I remember a song that went something like: "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative.....". This is my approach and an approach I feel is worth emulating.

With that I'll get off this industrial strength soap box and close with my motto, GO FOR IT.

More on A Step....

Tonight I am dressed in my black outfit, a Pierre Carden suit, purse, shoes, errings and necklace. As I left my room, I stepped out at a medium confidence level. As I arrived in the lobby with many people milling around, I took several glances from a teenage girl. I am tall and attractive, and have to deal with people watchers. Looking them in the eye and giving them a great big smile is disarming. I don't think I was "read". I enjoyed an hour in the cocktail lounge with my favorite Bombay martini. At 5:30 I went next door into JW's for dinner. I am being well received and my voice is soft and "up" (my male self can't do my voice!). I am having a theater special, for about \$35, a salad, salmon and wine. It's too bad I am alone tonight but that's life. An elegant young couple was just seated at the next table. They are wrapped up in their own activities.

This is a special moment, writing these thoughts out. My long painted fingernails change the way I hold the pen. I can feel the soft fullness of my chest. When I cross my legs, they slide easily on one another. My hair is elegant and full and I can still smell my Opium perfume. Such is discovering myself.

** Editor's Note: Jennifer has been a newsletter subscriber since the inception of our group. She comes to Phoenix from time to time, and would love to meet more of the members of our group. If you would like to contact her and arrange an outing sometime when she is in the valley, contact her at A Rose; Po Box 4351; Scotts. Az. 85261; atten: Jennifer Nelson*

A Rose Update

By: Wendi Pierce

Our March meeting and gathering was held at the La Quinta Inn in Phoenix. Our Chilli feast came off as planned with four entries and some delicious other offerings. Chilli chefs included Diane I., Shelly S., Jackie M. and Wendi. We had corn bread, and jalapeno Bread was brought by Lynda and Jackie. To top it all off Dee brought an excellent desert, chocolate fondue.

It seemed that no one could agree on just who was the best chilli chef, they were all excellent, but this writer felt that Jackie's was definitely the hottest...Wheeeeew, we're lucky that the fire alarms didn't go off with that one. Can you imagine that what would people say to a headline in the morning paper that read, "**Crossdressers Chilli Causes Hotel Evacuation**". Anyway, the feast was excellent and all were very complimentary to our members culinary efforts.

As advertised, we held a brief meeting to get some items of group business taken care of. There was not a quorum present so we could not have a vote on our officers for the coming year, but we did have nominations. The vote will be conducted through the mail with new officers being announced at our April Gathering. Our nominees are:

Pres.: **Shelly Songer**, a member since last September and a very hard working individual who wants to help our group grow.

Wendi Pierce, our current president and a founder of A Rose

Vice Pres. **Lynda W.**, one of our charter members, a great supporter of our group and a person who can be depended on to get things done

Michelle F., a charter member and a hard worker who would like to do more to help A Rose

Sec/Treas. **Terri J.**, a caring individual who wants to help out and do her part

Jackie Michaels our current secretary / treasurer, a hard working person who also is a founding member of A Rose

In other business, our "New Times" ad was discussed and we agreed to alternate with Alpha Zeta three weeks on and three weeks off after the current run of eight weeks is over. The costs of our phone line were discussed and it was decided that A Rose would start paying the phone bill, previously being paid by Wendi, starting in April. We are receiving about 2 valid calls a day requesting information on this line, which someday might translate into a group at least double our current size at some point in the future.

In addition, dues were mentioned and it was reiterated that they are current and payable in the month that members join. If you notice that your newsletter has stopped, your dues have expired and you'll need to become current before you will again receive a newsletter or any other mailings. Our secretary / treasurer can be contacted to inquire what your expiration date is in case you don't know.

A Rose Treasury Report

Balance as of 1/31/89	454.76
Paid Out	241.00
Income	183.00
Interest.*	0.00
Balance as of 3/2/89 **	395.76

* Due to a bank policy, interest is only posted quarterly.

A Rose Events

Our April gathering will be a little unusual in that it will be at a new location. The theme will be a social gathering to introduce a number of new people to our group. The location will be up in the Cave Creek area north of Phoenix. Our hosts who have so graciously offered their home for this event are Lee & Jan. Although they are not members of our group or the cross-dressing community in general, they are a very friendly couple, and have indicated many times that they would love to meet the members of our group. Their home is a huge house on over 6 acres in one of the choicest locations in the Phoenix area. It boasts a beautiful Spanish architecture complete with a cantina off the great room. The house alone is worth the trip, but meeting Lee and Jan is definitely a pleasure.

Also, we might have at least one, if not more, of the helping professionals in the local "gender counseling" field present. JoAnn Richi and possibly Jackie Davison have indicated that they would like to get to know our group a little better, and are planning to try and attend. If you know of any other helping professionals in the area who you think might like to attend, contact them and let them know of this very special evening.

A map of to Lee & Jan's will be available and can either be picked up at Wendi's on the way out that evening, or can be sent to you if you desire. Contact us on the rsvp line for directions or a map. As usual, an early **RSVP at 860-9056** will be greatly appreciated. Also, the **\$3 per person or \$5 per couple** event charge will be collected. Oh yes, as usual It's BYOB, but mixers and munchies will be provided by our hosts.

In addition, here's the current schedule for future gatherings:

Date	Location	Theme/Activity
4/1	Lee & Jan's	Social Evening with Lee & Jan
5/6	Jackie's	A Garden Party & Barbecue
6/3	Charlotte's	Roman Toga party
7/1	open	2nd Annual Ice Cream Social
8/5	open	"Happy Days" Party
9/2	open	Summer's Over? Party

If you would like to host an open date, please contact us.

Naomi's Cultural Quiz Continued

At the last Fantasia Fair Naomi Owen gave the audience a quiz during one of the evening programs. This quiz is designed to test your "gender IQ". First we'll give you last month's questions again along with the answers.

8. This very famous old time actress wrote and starred in a play about "drag" which caused a sensation in New York when it was closed down by the authorities after two performances. The actress was: Mae West and the play was The Drag.

9. It was recently revealed that this famous party animal was a she: Spuds Mackenzie.

10. A movie made into a Broadway musical about the owners of a transvestite night club in France was: La Cage Aux Folles

11. This very famous old time comedian appeared as a woman in a movie called "The Masquerade" and another called "A Woman". He was Charlie Chaplin.

12. A play currently on Broadway based on a true story about a French diplomat who falls in love with a Chinese actress who turns out to be a man was: Mdm. Butterfly.

13. A French aristocrat whose name is sometimes used as a synonym for crossdressing was Chevalier D'Eon and the word taken from his name is Eonist or Eonism.

14. A traditional Japanese theater where all the female roles are played by men is: Kabuki or Noh.

15. An award winning Canadian film featuring Craig Russell as a hair dresser who becomes a professional female impersonator was: Outrageous.

16. Dustin Hoffman was nominated for an academy award for his portrayal of an out of work actor who obtains a job as an actress on a soap opera was: Tootsie

17. Young male Italian opera singers who were trained to play woman's roles and sing i soprano of contralto were called Castrati.

This month we are continuing a test of our readers to see what our local "Gender IQ" is. Here's the rest of the quiz.

18. Irving Berlin wrote the music for this Broadway soldier show in which he also appeared. It was also made into a movie starring Ronald Reagan. In the stage version and in the movie camp show within the show, the women's roles are portrayed by soldiers. _____

19. Helmut Berger stunned the critics with his realistic portrayal of Marline Dietrich as the Blue Angel in this movie:
_____.

20. The "Bard of Avon" frequently wrote plays featuring mistaken identities and cross-gendered roles. He was:
_____.

21. Many American colleges and universities have or had all-male clubs that put on variety shows. At Harvard it was called the _____ Club show, and at Princeton, the _____ Club show.

22. The late artist Andy Warhol made several movies featuring this transvestite: _____.

23. This classic American play has been made into several movies and a Broadway musical. Jack Benny, Sidney Chaplin, Ray Bolger and others have been featured as the mysterious female chaperone from Brazil: _____.

24. Name two current movies with cross-dressing in them: _____ and _____.

25. This famous American musical and current "cult" film featured a transvestite from Transylvania. It was: _____ or _____.

The answers to these final questions will appear in next month's newsletter, so stay tuned. In case you're in a hurry and would like to know if you're right sooner, send a self addressed stamped envelope to this newsletter, and a check for \$20.00. We'll send you the answers to the entire quiz, a paid up 1 year membership to A Rose and your 1989 membership card. Now isn't that a sneaky way to tell you that we are starting to come up on our one year anniversary and dues for 1989 are due. Remember, your dues are due and payable in the month you joined and Jackie can tell you when if you forgotten. No dues also means no newsletter, and there is no grace period, so you better pay up or be left out.

NATIONAL EVENTS

S F '89

The I.F.G.E wishes to announce it's Third annual "Come Together" convention. This event will be held **April 4th to the 9th, 1989 in San Francisco.** The registration fee for the entire convention is \$205.00 per person, \$350.00 per couple. also, an abbreviated 3 day registration is available for \$175.00 per person, \$275.00 per couple.

Accommodations will be at the San Franciscan Hotel, an excellent facility at 8th and Market, convenient to shopping and restaurants. A discount rate of \$50 per single or \$60 per double will be honored if you mention this convention. For larger groups suites are also available. The hotel can be reached at (800) 227-4747.

United Airlines has been designated the official carrier and special discounts are available. Their number is (800) 521-4041.

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Convention Chairman

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or

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San Francisco, Ca.

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Night of 1000 Gowns

This event is a charity debutante ball for the Gay and Cross-dressing communities It will be held this year on **April 29th** in New York City. For more information contact:

1000 Gowns

106 1/4 Lexington Ave

New York, New York 10016

(212) 222-2999

Fantastic Adventure

On **May 12-14** this event will be sponsored by GCTC and Tau Chi in Houston, Texas. For more information contact:

Thorne & Associates

Po Box 441754

Houston, Tx. 77244

Paradise in the Poconos

This event will be held **May 18th to the 21th, 1989.** It is a complete weekend package including receptions, parties, meals, lodging and workshops. For more information contact:

Creative Design Services

Po Box 1263

King of Prussia, Pa. 19406

(215) 640-9449

Tiffany Club P-Town Outing

The 1989 Tiffany Club Spring Outing will be held **May 30th to June 9th, 1989 in Provincetown.,** and over 100 participants attend each year. The primary purpose of this event is to have fun in P-Town. For more information contact:

Tiffany Club of New England

Po Box 2283

Woburn Mass 01888

(508) 358-2305

Be All You Want to Be

The 1989 "Be All" will be held **June 7th to June 11th** in Chicago. With over 200 participants anticipated, this is the largest event of it's kind. For more information contact:

Be All You Want To Be

c/o Chi Chapter

Po Box 40

Wood Dale, Il. 60191-0040

(312) 364-9514

Tiffany Club WSG Outing

The 1989 Tiffany Club wives support group outing will be held **October 20-22 in Provincetown.** For more information contact:

TC-WSG

Po Box 2283

Woburn Mass 01888

(508) 358-2305

Fantasia Fair XV

In October, the 15th annual "Fantasia Fair" will be a high point. This gathering promises to be a repeat of years past and from personal experience I would say is well worth the trip. Look for more information in newsletters to come but in the meantime, the dates are October 20th through the 29th and the mailing address is:

Fantasia Fair

Lincolnia Station, POB 11254

Alexandria, Va 22312

Atten: Eve Goodwin

Holiday En Femme

The 1989 Tri-Ess "Holiday En Femme" will be held sometime in November in Chicago. This event is a closed event open only to Tri-Ess members. Exact dates and a location have not been announced as on this time. For more information contact:

Tri-Ess/ Holiday En Femme
c/o Chi Chapter
Po Box 40
Wood Dale, Il. 60191-0040
(312) 364-9514

Roommate Wanted: Deena is looking for a roommate to share her 4 bdrm. house in Mesa. Contact Wendi for more info.

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