

# Cross-Port Inner View

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## **Cross-Port Basics**

by Heather Peerson

At the May meeting there was only a small amount of business to attend to. Linda reminded those present about the "Be All Weekend" which begins June 9th. She also is putting together a make-up meeting for some time in the fall. She will have more information later this summer.

Heather reported on Gay/Lesbian Pride Week in Cincinnati which is June 10-19th. A schedule of events is enclosed.

Pride week in Columbus is the week of June 26th, with a March and rally at 11:00 AM at Goodale Park. For more information call Stonewall Union at 614-299-7764.

The Dayton Gay/Lesbian Pride Dinner was held June 4th. The featured speaker was Sue Hyde, Privacy Project Director, The National Gay/Lesbian Task Force. I did not receive this information in time to make the last news letter. I hope some of you knew of it and were able to attend.

Heather and Alice appeared on the Ira Joe Fischer Show, along with Dr. F. Jay Ach M.D., the morning of May 19th. We were on about 1/2 hour. Ira Joe seemed well prepared but was a little uneasy. He asked well informed questions and took the time to listen to the answers. The three of us all felt the show did much to help further the knowledge of the general public.

## **Lead On**

By Heather Peerson

It is John F. Kennedy who is remembered for the quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". We know he was able to do little for his country because of what his country did

for him. It killed him (one of its members did). If you replace the word country with gender community, and substitute "leaders of said community" for John Kennedy the scenario is about the same. The members of the gender community are killing its leaders.

Two weeks ago I received a phone call from Rupert Raj, today I received a letter confirming the content of that call; Metamorphosis is being dissolved due to chronic burnout. I feel it is important for every person in the gender community to read this letter so it is reprinted in this issue. The question which is left unstated and unanswered is Why? Why are we killing our leaders and there by assuring the entire community a slow and painful death.

I must admit that no one ask me to start a group like Cross-Port, in fact I found later others had tried in the area but with little success. I suspect this is true for a large number of the group leaders, so some might say we are in our positions by choice, but that would be like saying I am a TS by choice. In my case I had a need which could not be met in any other place (that I knew of at the time), so I made a place.

Not long after it became apparent that others had the same needs and the group grew quickly. It also became clear that everyone wanted the fun but nobody wanted the work. At the first meeting a steering committee was formed. Not only am I the sole member of the original four still on the committee, I am the only one who still comes to meetings or belongs to the group. I still handle much of the work, though I do receive help putting the newsletter together.

The worst part is that I have not truly received the kind of support I was really looking for and even less of the kind I need. Why do I continue? So that others after me will not have to suffer the mental and

emotional pain I have had to endure.

Why don't the people in the gender community work with and support their leaders? One reason I believe, is that for many cross-dressing is an occasional need. When the need is present, it can be overpowering, driving the person to seek any and all help. However, when the need recedes, the ability to be supportive and willingness to help and participate in a gender support group are at a minimum.

Another reason for the lack of support is that many people crossdress to escape the duties of their normal gender roles, they therefore do not wish to make crossdressing feel like work, which is one of the things they are escaping from.

The transsexuals, who would not have the first problem, have a different one. They are people who are usually only in the gender community a short time, and during that time they have big problems to overcome. Once they conquer these problems, which is the time they would normally be able to get involved, they disappear into normal society never to repay the debt they owe the gender community. Believe me, it is a debt.

So what can we the leaders do to first, avoid burnout and second, get you the community involved? If I had the answers I wouldn't need to be writing this. One thing that comes to mind is to hire people on a full time basis to handle the load like any other business. That is the approach that IFGE is taking. But that takes money and money we ain't got. That statement is not completely true, there is plenty of money in the gender community. Thousands of dollars are spent on clothes, makeup, and wigs each year, but ask for a donation to help get IFGE off the ground and it barely trickles in.

Another solution is "don't do more than the group wants done". For example I am often asked by individuals for places where they can go dressed, yet when places are offered, no one goes. The solution is to stop finding places. That takes less work.

Unfortunately, the only way we as leaders can avoid burnout is to do what Rupert is doing, only before the burnout occurs. We must be willing to do what it takes to protect ourselves even when it may not be the best thing for the group. If you can not get help with a newsletter, stop putting it out. If

people don't help and come to social functions, don't schedule any. And if putting out mailings becomes too great a task, only do it once a month.

The sad part is that even those things don't stop burnout, they only prolong it. And the group dies a long slow death.

Anniversaries should be happy. This month is Cross-Port's third anniversary. Cross-Port is young in terms of the gender community, but it is old in terms of the person who does the work, carries the weight and keeps it going. I made it known in January that I was approaching burnout. Some of the girls started helping with the newsletter. With the exception of the time it takes to write the articles, publication time has been cut from one week to one night. But as can be seen, I am once again writing almost everything.

I still basically handle the money, answer the phone, go to the PO Box, keep the mailing list up-to-date, send out new information, write letters, and go to GCG/LC meetings. All this while trying to put my life together, in order to live as a woman. Tomorrow, I will be fired from my job because I am trying to be the woman I need to be and while there will be plenty of people who express their concern, when the bills come due, Sunshine and I will have to face the creditors alone. Yes, once again she is standing behind my choice and her reward is more work, and less money to pay the bills.

So I am well on my way toward burnout; emotionally, mentally, financially, and physically. When that occurs Cross-Port may die, and another group and its leader will be put to rest. Five or six years will go by and some other person in need will try to start a group and begin the cycle again.

## CAN WE TALK!

By Heather Peerson

This will not be an easy column to write. It involves the second greatest fear I believe Transsexuals have (many TV's also fear it if discovered). That fear is the loss of ones' job. On June 3, 1988 I was fired from my position with the Buschman Conveyor Company. The best reason they could give is failure to follow their dress code.

Back in January, I decided that I had to tell my company of my plans to live full time as a woman by the end of the year. I was not well

received. I was told that if I chose to live as a woman outside of work that would not be a problem but they could not see me doing it on the job.

In February just before the IFGE Convention, I informed my supervisor. While he was dumbstruck, he also tried hard to understand. He knew my work was excellent and wanted to keep me. I decided to try to change the company's viewpoint. I hoped that if I broke them in slowly they would be able to accept me.

I began first by wearing small earrings and small amounts of eye make-up. I was told I could not wear dresses or skirts, so I began wearing women's dress slacks, and shirt type blouses. I received plenty of looks but in general things seemed to be going OK. However, it was apparent that to most of the people I was a male who "dressed funny". I was still called sir, mister and Steve, though my supervisor called me Stevie.

I began wearing more feminine blouses and that is when the trouble started. I began to look more female than male and they were embarrassed when they referred to me as "HE".

On Tuesday May 31, I was asked to go home and change my clothes. I was told if I again dressed in that feminine of a manner, I would be fired. I tried to explain that it was not the clothes that made me a woman. I could wear anything they asked if they would acknowledge me as a woman, but that as long as they considered me a male, I must continue to dress in a way that shows them wrong.

I told them they could take my job, but I would not allow them to take my pride or dignity. Dressing as they wanted would only help them to continue referring to me as a man and would not be in my best interest. The next two days I was home sick, I have been having some stomach problems.

On Friday, I did the only thing possible. I wore a woman's business suit with a skirt. I knew the minute I walked in the door I would be fired, but it was the only real choice to make. I was back home in less than one hour, out of a job, but the proudest woman in the world.

On the surface, it would seem that I am the only one who was hurt by this firing, however, I do not believe that either my boss, or the personnel director, really wanted to

fire me. They were told by the powers above, that this was the way it was to be. As I see it, they too were stripped of their dignity and their right to express their opinions in the performance of their jobs. They were told "We don't care what you think is best, you will do it this way." Out of fear of losing their jobs they bent to the wishes of the company. They both knew I was fired because of who I was and not the job I did. They chose not to do anything about it.

If they both had taken a stand and defended their opinions, the company may have thought twice about firing three good employees or they may have fired us all. At least they too would have been feeling as proud and as right as I.

How right the soviet leader was when he told Reagan concerning human rights, that we should get our own house in order before we try to tell them how to clean up theirs. Each of us can do the same.

*Heather*

## Publication Notice

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Cross-Port is a not-for-profit support group which meets solely for the support of crossdressers, transsexuals and their family and friends.

NOT 'QUITTING THE GAME' - JUST SWITCHING SIDES

by Rupert Rai, B.A., P.R., Director, "GENDER WORKER"

Just about the time of my last birthday (Feb. 10), I decided to give myself a long-overdue present - time, time just for me. For the first time in 10 years, I decided to put myself first - before it was too late and I died of overwork. We all reach the crossroads at sometime or other during the course of our lives, and this was mine.

I finally faced up to the fact (painful as it was) that if I did not give up my involvement with the Metamorphosis Medical Research Foundation (which I founded in December 1981, and ran its day-to-day affairs single-handedly for over six years, including the full production of 24 newsletter issues and seven magazine issues), that the chronic burn-out syndrome from which I had been suffering since May 1986, would ultimately turn me into a "zombie". Indeed, it had already taken a serious toll on my physical and emotional health and was now placing my very job in serious jeopardy. My family doctor had warned me about overdoing it and had urged me to cut some of my commitments at the start of 1986, and had given me an electrocardiogram the year before because I had complained of chronic pains in my chest and arms. As a matter of fact, I suffered a minor nervous and physical collapse in January of last year and its symptoms have persisted up till now.

If you do not know what "Burn-Out Syndrome" entails, please read the book "BURN-OUT" by the psychologist who coined the term, Dr Herbert Freudenberger. To give you a rough idea of what I and so many other resource providers to the transgender community have gone through, I'll quote from the book: "A Burn-Out is someone in a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward." And again: "Burn-Out: to deplete oneself, to exhaust one's physical and mental resources. To wear oneself out by excessively striving to reach some unrealistic expectation imposed by oneself or the values of society."

The catalyst, the "straw that broke the camel's back", was such a little thing, but to me, it signified the culmination of weeks, months and years of futility of trying to provide an educational resource and a communications medium to the transsexual world. I had always been such a fastidious perfectionist and wanted my newsletter or magazine (as the case may be) to be just perfect. Yet, when I went to pick up the latest (and final) issue of "Metamorphosis Magazine" (the first issue to appeal to a mixed readership of both men and women), the printer had produced it according to the wrong specifications: 5 1/2" instead of 7"! I was just devastated...crushed...beyond despair. At that moment I realized, with a flash of insight, that my long-term aspiration to one day have enough money to establish gender centers or clinics around the world would always be beyond my grasp. And that my short-term hope of acquiring sufficient funds (once we had managed to gain a charitable number) to guarantee me a full-time salary for my duties as Executive Director and Magazine Editor was equally unrealistic and unobtainable.

So, I decided it was high time to take a break, a sabbatical, as it were, a therapeutic leave of absence in order to restore my failing health and repair my shattered dreams. The only way that I could see clear to making this a reality, was to relinquish, in its entirety, my responsibilities to Metamorphosis. Too, I was tired, oh so tired, of playing a weary game of "cat-and-mouse" with the provincial ministry (regarding bullshit bureaucratic regulations for a new name and for registration as a charity), of endlessly trying to "pull teeth" from some of the "dead ducks" on my Board of Directors and from our Board of Professional Consultants, and, of constantly having to be a surrogate parent, counsellor and/or friend to many members of the TS community. Do you know that some of these TSs (many of whom were not members of Metamorphosis) would phone me two or three times a week, at all times of the day and night anytime they were lonely, depressed, bored, drunk, or in need of information or advice. They never called to invite me out to dinner or a show or just to ask how I was. (Of course, these were mostly the unstable TSs - the "together" ones were generally not guilty of this offence) And were you aware that two really "off-the-wall" so-called TSs harassed/threatened me several times over the phone by leaving hostile messages on my answering machine in the early hours of the morning?

[As a result, I tendered my resignation at our Mar. 26 Board meeting- at which time the 5 directors present voted to dissolve the corporation because they felt they did not have sufficient human resources to carry on in my absence. At our final Board meeting on May 21, we will make the necessary arrangements to legally "wind down" the organization and disburse its assets amongst the current, paid-up membership and the larger transgender community (by means of donations to similar organizations). Members and magazine subscribers who have remitted dues or subscription fees for 1988 will be refunded immediately after our May Board meeting.]

It is very hard giving up "my baby" (the organization I conceived and nurtured into its "adolescence") The group I lost so much sleep over, spent so much time and money on, expended so much physical and mental energy on, and which was never out of my mind for a single moment- which is why, of course, such intense burn-out occurred. So now, as a parent must let his teenage children leave home when the time comes, I must also let go of this entity that has been so much a part of my life. This is not an easy decision by any means, but I really see no other alternative if I am to maintain my sanity and my livelihood. I just need a chance to get away and spend some time by myself and with my lady friend without having to worry about legal and financial responsibilities, magazine deadlines, and various commitments to the membership. The organization that at one time had been the very purpose of my existence had by now become a millstone around my neck, crushing the life forces out of me.

So, I'm taking a breather - but I'm not quitting the game entirely. I'm still a 'player' in this business of "gender dysphoria", but I'm changing the rules and am switching sides. That is, I will no longer act in a peer-support role, <sup>but</sup> only in a professional capacity, as a counsellor, educator and researcher. To this end, I registered my own resource service, GENDER WORKER, with the Ontario government last fall. Yet, in my new business venture, I'll set my own deadlines, my own pace and standards of productivity, establish my own priorities in terms of activities and projects, and select only those people as clients with whom I wish to work.

## BABY FACE



How many times have you looked into the mirror and wished you didn't see all that hair on your face.

With the "Be All" weekend just two weeks away, I thought I would see if I could tweeze the hair off my face. I knew this would be long and painful, but if done, I would enjoy its rewards. I had been told that whatever hair I should pull, it should be 3-4 weeks before it regenerates.

To start, I decided I would wax as much as I could, and pull the remaining one at a time. If any of you have ever tried waxing, you know it can be quite painful. The only pleasure, is looking into that mirror and seeing that little bald spot on your face. Even then, it takes alot to do the second spot. After all you are pulling 50-100 hairs out all at one time, and it feels like you just ripped off part of your skin.

Well I worked at it for 3-4 hours before my face was pretty clean. I did about 1/2 my neck, but many were hard to see and pull. As a few days went by, I saw other hairs starting to surface. Hairs as you may know, grow at different times, so even though I pulled all that I could, there were many still under the skin I could see, but not reach.

One week later..... I havn't had to shave now for over 7 days. I do pluck a few now and then, but the over all is still smooth to the touch. I was also told, the more I would pull these hairs, the finer they get when they return, and they would be easier as time goes on. This of course is yet to be seen. But than again, I have been plucking my eyebrows for a couple of years, and it seems to hold true. I have plans to continue this throughout the summer. It sure is great not to wear all of that extra makeup when its hot out. Not one person I have met has given any notice to it at all. Even my wife has not noticed, and she usually picks up on everything.

This article may seem stupid to some of you, but this is something I have always wanted to try. I might regret this, if all my hairs come back ingrown. But at least I tried.

Chris, the bartender from our meeting place, said he lived as a woman for 7 years while he performed drag around the country. He said that all the performers used a cream called Neer, which just washed the hair off your face for weeks at a time. He also said he hasn't seen it around for a good many years and doesn't believe it's still made.

Speaking of Chris, he's always at the back bar during the meeting, and is always willing to help out when ever he can. He will be giving makeup, wig, and dressing advice to the whole group in the fall (when his arm heals) at one of our meetings. But for now he will give you some personal pointers just for the asking. He's a very nice person. Everyone should at least say Hi if you get the chance.

## TV Prejudice

For some reason I always thought that a crossdresser would be more tolerant of other people who don't fit the norm. Since we would like others to accept us for what we do, we might not be so quick to criticize others. I suppose I'm wrong.

In the past few years, I have met hundreds of crossdressers from all over the US. Most are very nice in everyway. But some just make me puke. Here are some examples for things I hear the most.

- Many crossdressers can't stand gay people. (This goes both ways)
- Many are still very prejudice against others because of race or creed.
- Many TS's don't like TV's.
- Even though everyone is dressed in the wrong clothing of their sex, if someone comes in with colthing other than what most are wearing, they talk about them behind their back.
- I listen to the "Hetro" crossdressers bad mouth things the bi-gendered ones do, when they themselves would also probably do it if given the opportunity.
- I get tired of hearing about those other TV publications that supposably degrade our cause, because one doesn't agree with what is published.

I think everyone should try to help others to except themselves for what they are.

I think Crossport is one the best when it comes to helping each other out. Some groups get so big their members seem to form smaller groups within themselves who keep to themselves. Our group seems much more open to everyone. More accepting, and friendly to a new face. We should be proud to be part of Crossport. New people are always welcome, and we want you to feel like this is your home.

When preparing to go to the "Be All" weekend, I called to reserve my room. When they found out I was bringing my wife and children, I was told I would have to stay elsewhere. They did not want my kids to be around the other TV's. Not coming to the functions mind you, just staying in the same area. "Be All" to me ment this was an opportunity to share some of this weekend as Linda, with my family. I always thought a Significant Other was just what it sounds like. Am I wrong?

Perhaps I just talked to the wrong person. I'm not saying these outings should or shouldn't include all SO's I was just suprised to hear this from a group who does encourage you to bring your wife. Apparently Be All means, be all they want you to be.

Well, as you read this I am up here at the "Be All" with my kids at the other end of the motel. I'll let you know what all happens in my report next month.

I just wonder how we will ever get the outside world to accept us if we can not learn to accept things ourself.



## Linda's Corner

# TV NIGHTMARE

By Linda

