

THE TRANSGENDERIST

MAY 1995

A Publication of Transgenderist's Independence Club, Albany, NY

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - Winnie [REDACTED]

It seems that one short paragraph in last month's newsletter almost caused a meltdown of transgender phone lines and clogged all the computer bulletin boards. JoAnn Roberts was besieged with anxious callers: "Say it isn't so, Jo!" Well, it isn't, even though she wears black stockings and kicks off her shoes at times. Readers apparently stopped short of the finale of Miss Take's column *Götterdämmerung*, and failed to notice the date of publication. At least, it's nice to know that people read this stuff.

Our apologies to JoAnn for any embarrassment and inconvenience. Miss Take explains it all in her column this month. The fat lady has sung. Question of the month: can you find Tobago on a map of Colorado?

By coincidence, we have two articles on labels for our "community" this month, by Callan and myself. Comments invited.

WIG SHOWING

Our last meeting of the month, on May 25, will feature a presentation on wigs by Kimberly Weber. So, if you need new hair and care, be there! Kim is the manager of *Revlon Inspirations* at Colonie Center, and may be reached at 482-9221.

DINNER PARTIES

Our April 15 dinner party drew six members to the *Northway Inn*. The next party is scheduled for May 13; sign up at the club room or call 436-4513 and leave a message for Joan by Thursday, May 11. **Leave your number** so we can call if there are any changes. Joan now has a telephone again, so you can call her at [REDACTED] for any last-minute sign-ups or cancellations.

OREGON TRAIL PARTY
At Melodie's place in Schenectady
Saturday, May 6

4 p.m. - 4 a.m. Outside & Inside
Food and gas grill for cooking
will be provided.

BYOB

Dress like in the Gold Rush days
if you can.

Otherwise, look nice.

Call Melodie Warner for reservations
by May 2

[REDACTED]
You're welcome if you have been to at
least three TGIC meetings

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Or call Warren [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]

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Why Transgender?

Callan ██████████ © 1995

One of the biggest movements in gender is a wide range of people all coalescing around the label transgender. Yet many people are still uncertain about the meaning of this label, or uncomfortable about applying it to who they are.

Many of us know that we are not simply a medical diagnosis (transsexual) or a behavior (crossdresser). We know that we are complex people with a special gift, one that lets us move outside of the conventional assigned system of gender. We have the need for a label for ourselves that is inclusive but not limiting, that is expressive but not exclusive.

The word transgender echoes many of these themes. In queer studies, to transgress gender roles and stereotypes is the heart of transgender, a statement of moving outside cultural customs, whatever they be, from sexual identity to dress. In spirit, transcending gender is to move beyond the worldly models to a place that is less gendered. For many, it seems clear that the higher power, whatever name you assign it, is not gendered like we are. Spirit contains both masculine and feminine, along with the range of all other dualities, all other continuums at the same time. To transcend gender is to move closer to spirit.

Virginia Prince coined the word transgenderist to describe people like her who live full time in another gender role without SRS. She believes that the word transgender was taken from her definition, though it may have been co-developed.

Does transgender imply a continuous journey, like transportation, a continuous movement that will never end until death, or does it simply imply being out of the bi-polar heterosexual gender structure, transcending it? For many, these are the same thing, knowing that all humans are on a journey of continuous redefinition, through aging, learning, environmental changes and other factors. They say that transgender is an end in itself, but that in this world, no end is final.

We are coming to an understanding that there is something special about those who are transgendered, who can see the world from both sides. Scholars are doing work on transgendered shamans, looking at the importance of them throughout history. They note the powerful role that TG people have played.

Some crossdressers **resist** the word transgender because they feel strongly tied to the gender system. They are a man who simply likes to dress up sometimes, not someone who transgresses gender. Of course, most of them know that there are a wide range of dress up options open to men, from lycra tanks to sequined dinner jackets to leather jeans. They could choose to wear flashy boy clothes, but they choose girls' clothes – choose to transgress gender.

Some transsexuals resist the word transgender because they are invested in keeping their place in the bi-polar gender system. They have worked hard to shift gender, made lots of sacrifices. They have taken humiliation, used hormones, had surgery, gone through adolescence again to be cooked in their

target gender. This is a long and difficult process, and if it does not lead to assimilation, why did they do it?

We know that there is nothing magic about SRS. Dallas Denny has called it a "simple three-hour cosmetic procedure." If you forced it on a man against his will, it would not change who he was, except for the psychological ramifications to a penis-oriented definition of manhood. Our gender is between our ears, not our legs, and SRS is merely another kind of plastic surgery that can make us more comfortable and self assured. Deciding to have a vagina or a penis is a choice, not a spell.

Transgender is not about some arbitrary "third gender" or "third gender role" It seems clear that no one role can contain the breadth of choices and genders that we see in those who transgress traditional gender roles. Rather transgender is a word for those who choose to transgress gender, who identify themselves as outside of the gender system, for whatever reason, and in whatever way. Whoever chooses to define themselves as transgendered is.

Transgendered people are a wide lot. They may be well assimilated into a gender role, or they may be almost completely unassimilated, out and radical. They may express transgender only sometimes, or they may be out all the time. They may be transgendered in dress, in virtual gender (writing/computing as another gender) or only in thought.

The thing that they all share is an inner knowledge that they don't fit easily into our system of gender. They know that they are special, open, crossing the arbitrary walls of the gender system. We are always transgendered, always seeing things with our inner eyes, knowing that separations are not real. We are all human.

Some of us worry that expressing transgender may make us less of a man or less of a woman. Those who acknowledge their transgender acknowledge that it can make them more of a person, more open and wider seeing.

The reason that many people are acknowledging their own internal transgender is because they know that it does not separate them, but rather connects them with not only other transgendered people and with the world. They know that being outside of the system of gender is to be outside of barriers designed to keep men and women separate and breeding.

The word queer has come to mean anyone who defines themselves as out of the norm. If you know that you are not exactly typical, then you can be queer, and be proud about it. As more people come to understand this, they start to be more comfortable acknowledging their own uniqueness, their own queerness. And as they acknowledge their own queerness, they can more easily accept others diverse choices. We may get to a point where we are all queer, all able to know that we are unique, and in that world, queerness will not be something to fear, rather it will be something to celebrate. There is a queer in my house, and it's me!

Transgender can also be this inclusive. Transgender is not about what you wear, or how you live your life. It is about how you see the world, how you accept others. It is, at its heart, about sharing our essential continuous common humanity. And that is a good thing.

In common with many other groups who perceive themselves to be "disadvantaged victim minorities" partly because of prejudicial words used to describe them, the transgender community has been struggling to find new terms that accurately reflect our position and are "politically correct" (how I hate that phrase!) acceptable to all. If you have read our magazines and newsletters in the last few years, you will have seen many articles on the topic.

The scientific bent to coin new words from Greek and Latin roots produced the word *transvestite* (1910) to describe someone who dressed in the clothes of the opposite sex, and seemed reasonable until "for erotic reasons" or "fetishistic" got tacked onto the definition. So, the English equivalent *crossdresser* is now in favor. After Christine Jorgensen, *transsexual* was coined for those who chose the surgical path to one-way crossing, while Virginia Prince chose *transgenderist* for those like herself who crossed permanently without surgery.

Virginia also suggested *femmiphile* for those who met the criteria for joining FPE (now Tri-Ess), but this was quickly dropped because of possible confusion with vile-philis like pedophiles. Ari Kane's term *paraculturist* did not get far beyond its originator, being seemingly more appropriate for sky-divers, and went over like a lead balloon. Terms derived from the gay side of the community, like *drag queen* and *she-male*, are eschewed by those who do not have same-sex partner orientation.

There is now a broad consensus that the commonality of our issues is **gender** and not **sex**, though the two are usually linked in the public mind. For this reason, Virginia's recent proposal of *bigendered* is liable to misinterpretation as a euphemism for *bisexual*. Others object to the limitation to two genders implied by *bi-*, insisting there can be an unlimited spectrum. There are also objections to the prefix *trans-*, perhaps because it can be linked to *-gressor*.

In an attempt to satisfy everybody, wordsmiths fell back on the overly neutral term *gender community* to encompass all of us with *gender issues*. But, as Kymberleigh Richards points out in *Cross-Talk #65* (March 1995), everybody has a gender, so its unqualified use is meaningless in enlightening the public. Therefore, Kym has opted to employ *transgender community* in her magazine as the term that embraces all of us *transgendered* people. This, I believe, is a reasonable compromise. There remains some confusion in the use of *transgenderist* in the broad sense as an alternative to *transgendered person* (as in the name of our club TGIC and this newsletter) and in the narrow sense of its original definition.

The problem with all these terms is that, at worst, they have negative connotations to some people and, at best, are neutral. What we need is a concise term with positive connotations. After considerable thought, I am suggesting that we call ourselves **gendernauts**. No, not *gendernuts*, but *gendernauts*, as in *Argonauts*: those fabled ancient Greeks who sailed their ship, the *Argo*, with captain Jason across the Aegean and Black Seas in search of the Golden Fleece. The suffix *-naut* has come to denote other brave adventurers and explorers who boldly go where no ~~man~~ one has gone before: **we explore the world of gender!**

These *naut-y* people all need special equipment and clothing to do their thing, which includes meeting or discovering other beings: the *Argonauts* required a ship, wore foul-weather gear, and met foreign people; *aquanauts* need scuba gear, wear rubber wet suits, and meet fish; *aeronauts* need a balloon or flying machine, wear leather clothing for protection against the cold wind, and meet birds; *astronauts* need a spaceship, wear space-suits, and (maybe) discover extra-terrestrials. Likewise, *gendernauts* need padding, wear different clothing, meet their mirror image, and discover their inner selves.

If any partners have read this far, they are probably saying: "Hold on! There's nothing special about our clothing, we've lived in this mode all our lives, you haven't discovered us, and we certainly don't need exploring!" Which is what the ~~Indians~~ Native Americans told Columbus when he landed on their beach, planted a flag in the sand, waved his sword in the air, and announced that he had discovered a bunch of scantily clad savages. The point being, the other gender *is* somewhat strange and novel to those who haven't lived in it.

Interestingly, the first port o' call for the Argonauts was the Aegean island of Lemnos. The Lemnian women had recently risen against spousal abuse and murdered all the men on the island - except one, the King. The Queen dressed him in women's clothes and put him on a boat to the neighboring island of Lesbos, whose inhabitants were, of course, Lesbians! The Lemnian women soon realized the problems they faced as a result of their drastic action, and welcomed the sailors with open arms.

Well, what do you think? Are you a *gendernaut*? Write and let me know.

This article may be reprinted in any gendernautical publication, with credit.

This Book Needs to Be in A Library Near You!

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Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research

© 1994 by Dallas Denny
Hardbound, 650+ pages
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At long last, there is a major scientific work by a transgendered author. *Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research* is an annotated bibliography written by Dallas Denny and published by the respected Garland Publishers. At 650+ pages and printed on 240+ year acid-free paper, *Gender Dysphoria* is an annotated bibliography which lists thousands of books and articles about crossdressing, transgenderism, and transsexualism. Annotations are strongly anti-defamatory.

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Your Uncle Samantha wants you!

Yes, it's true. Your Uncle Sam wants you up on the Hill, deep in the bowels of our nation's capital, Washington DC for the first ever National Transgender Lobbying Day, Monday & Tuesday, Oct 2-3, 1995

Our past 2-day trip to DC was amazingly successful; 4 of us met with the staff of House and Senate leaders like Sen. Jim Jeffords (VT), Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (NY), Sen. Ted Kennedy (MA), Sen. Jay Rockefeller (WV), Sen. Carol Mosley-Braun (MI), Sen. Paul Wellstone (MN), Sen. Rod Grams (MN), Rep. Barney Frank (MA), Rep. Ken Bentson (TX), Rep. Gerry Studds (MA), Rep. Charles Rangel (NY), Rep. Mark Foley (FL), Rep. Jerry Nadler (NY), Rep. Gene Green (TX), Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson (TX), Rep. Bruce Vento (MN), Rep. Bill Luther (MN), Rep. Lloyd Doggett (TX), and Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (TX), among others.

What was our biggest hurdle? Most of them had never even met a transperson, never thought of us as constituents, never considered our rights and concerns. We've been invisible as citizens.

Now you have the chance to change that, once and for all!

Your Uncle Samantha wants you! Instead of 4 of us, National Transgender Lobbying Day is going to put 54 of us up on the Hill.

That's right: 5 dozen transpeople and friends, from every state and territory in the union, all lobbying for inclusion on issues critical to you and your loved ones like job discrimination (the ENDA bill), veteran's affairs, child custody rights, and national health care and insurance.

**But we can't do it without YOU:
We need YOU there!**

Seize this chance to make a little history!

Stand up! Be proud! Be a United States citizen!

Info: Riki Anne Wilchins [redacted], RIKI@PIPELINE.COM, Karen [redacted] Phyllis Frye (713) 723-8368. Shared overnight rooms are @\$15 per night per person, right off the beautiful Univ. of Maryland campus. Subway is @\$5 per person per day. Some limited scholarships available for those of us who are students or un/underemployed.

Come for one or both days: Just be there!

I tend to think of homophobia as the irrational prejudice of individuals toward homosexuality and heterosexism as the institutional framework that produces that prejudice. For me, perhaps because I work in anthropology, I think of heterosexism as the ideology that there are only two sexes, hence only two genders, and therefore one sexuality, the attraction between these oppositions. This leads me to conclude that lesbian/gay liberation should be concerned with both attitudes toward homosexuality and with gender binarism.

Will Roscoe, author *The Zuni Man-Woman*, 4/5/95

Mother's Day 1994

or...

"Let It Be"

Dear Mom.

It's Mother's Day 1994. (God guide my fingers to write this letter, and please, God see that it gets delivered not only to my mother but to all parents present and past who love their children). Mom, I needed to drop this note to you to bring you up to date on how your child turned out.

Over the years, I've held some wonderful and miserable jobs, been married twice and given you five beautiful grandchildren, and, I am given to understand, one of them has herself now bore you a great grandchild. Please don't ask me to tell you about them, you see, none of them are a part of my life. To explain why, lets go back thirty years ago this summer.

Thirty years ago, something happened between us which has marked me for my whole life. That experience was the tip of an iceberg so incredibly huge, I didn't have the wisdom or maturity in my fourteen years to dare try to comprehend it; and you, well, let's just say that you didn't help thaw it any either. You maybe even forgot the event soon after, as the subject was never again raised, at least in my presence.

What happened? You caught me crossdressed with make up on. No doubt I looked horrible, was scared, ashamed, and trying to hide. It wasn't the first time I had crossdressed. I had been doing it for as long as I could remember, even by that early age. I desperately needed someone to talk to intelligently. I needed someone who I was sure would love me no matter what. I needed someone I could tell how afraid I was, how hurt and scared. I needed someone who would stand by me no matter how I turned out. You screamed and hollered, called me homosexual (only you used a stronger word as "gay" wasn't in common use then), assaulted my sexuality,

sensibilities, threatened to tell my father, and maybe have me institutionalized. In short, I was rejected by the one closest to me. The whole person I was, was sealed in a tomb of sorts, afraid of the light. The person I was "expected" to be was forced into reality with your demand to promise "never do it again". A promise not possible to keep; although made with good intentions, and in earnest.

I didn't know much about the way I am, then, nor did I know why I felt the way I do. In the shame you made me feel, I couldn't talk about my feelings. I learned that no one was particularly interested in trying to understand. That shame went a long way toward forcing me into the life I've had. That shame and fear made me try harder than most people I know to always do what was right and try to prove myself to be a "man". I bent over backwards to hide my feelings, be strong, meet perceived social responsibilities and roles for "men".

In high school, I worked harder than most and got good grades because I wanted you to be proud of me. I worked many hours for Dad on the farm sweating in the hot sun in uncomfortable, awkward, smelly waders, in the sloppy mud of the ponds, dealing day in and out with leeches, snapping turtles, snakes, crawfishes, and fetid rotting slop, fearing what each step would find in the knee deep mud, but fearing rejection and ostracization and humiliation if I didn't. Everything became a proof of my ability to "take it" proof of my "manhood", and a game. I learned the game well.

In college, I felt that I had to prove I knew what sex was - peer pressure and competition - I was a virgin leaving for college. I've never been very sexually driven, but in college to prove yourself you had to have a girlfriend. I never really cared for my first spouse - I didn't know what love was and she was a convenient "tool". I'm sorry to say that but that was the nature of the person I felt I had to become to be accepted as your son and fit

into our society as a "man"! What a sad, sorry sham. When she got pregnant, I felt I had no choice but to marry her. It was the only honorable action allowed by the code of ethics that you had given me. You didn't want me to marry and felt that she was the wrong woman. We now know, of course, that she was. I had to prove I could do what I thought was the right thing, no matter how much it hurt, no matter what the outcome.

We had three beautiful children. God I was proud of them, and loved them more than anything. My spouse found out about my crossdressing while I was at work one day when she found a suitcase full of clothes and wigs. She never forgave me for the "deception", never felt she could trust me. I don't blame her. She too screamed, name called, threatened, demanded promises I couldn't keep and rejected me for the complete "who" that I was. That marriage painfully ended.

My second spouse was the only person I ever loved. She was the only one I felt I could trust enough to be myself, in total, without a label. I could be sensitive and strong, and still be loved more for it. She knew my secret but didn't scream. She did demand promises but this time I really did want to try to keep them... I couldn't. Yet she wanted to marry me anyway. I loved her so much, and had so much respect for her for that decision. I was sure we could surmount any obstacle that life could throw at us. I couldn't conceive of life without her. Its ironic, because of her love, I began looking at the good things which I had accomplished. I began feeling good about myself for the first time in my life and began helping others.

My confidence and understanding grew, and soon I was helping people all over the world deal with their gender conflicts. Not only was I helping them, but helping myself as well. I wanted my spouse to know and understand as well, how beautiful a part of my life this had become. She couldn't, and we separated after having two beautiful children who may never know the person who was their father; or worse, they may,

through ignorance come to hate. I can't describe how painful that breakup was for me, and I have no idea how much it must have hurt not only her but my children as well.

Mom, it took a lot of years, tears and pain to learn to understand why this damnable sense of gender conflict has been such a theme in my life. Today, I'm pretty much the woman I feel I was always meant to be and am planning for eventual sexual reassignment. To say that it has been hell would be an understatement. No one who hasn't gone through this can possibly understand. Few even care to try. Our people are hampered by ignorance in all aspects of life from employment, to medicine to law. In spite of all this, I'm pretty proud of the person I've become, and although it may sound strange, I think you would be too. I have reams of letters from people all over the world who have written to thank me for helping them deal with their problems. Some have called me a saint or thanked me for saving their lives. I was even able to help a minister regain his lost faith. I've never broken a major law, committed a serious crime or intentionally hurt anyone. I've seriously tried to live up to all my commitments and responsibilities, and usually put the desires of others ahead of my own.

Yet, in spite of this, I'm miserable, lonely and scared. I'll never be the man that you expected me to become when I grew up. Nor will I ever be able to be the woman that a normal birth could have granted me the privilege to become. For the most part though, I like who I am, and am proud of who I've become.

I gave you a lot of credit for your wisdom when I was young. I particularly remember when I was very little, I asked you who won the second world war... you answered, "No one, no one wins a war". Do you have any idea what a war it is to be rejected for who you are not just once, but all your life - by those you love the most? Do you have any idea what it is not to be able to talk about your feelings with those in your family? Do you know how badly you want

to be normal, and the shame of your failure to live up to unrealistic expectations. You feel that you let others down, that you are in some way faulty. But then the worst thing happens, you start to believe it yourself.

I really could have used someone, that summer in 1964, who I knew loved me enough to say to me, "everyone HAS to be themselves, no matter what the cost... would you like to discuss your feelings?" Happy Mother's Day Mom, I love you.

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TGIC

PO Box 13604, Albany, NY 12212-3604
(518) 436-4513 (live Thurs. 8-10 pm)

Transgenderist's Independence Club (TGIC) is a nonprofit, educational, non-sexual social support group for persons wishing to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of gender, including crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends.

TGIC Officers

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| President | Winnie [REDACTED] |
| Vice President | Joan [REDACTED] |
| Secretary | Joyce [REDACTED] |
| Treasurer | Winnie [REDACTED] |
| Newsletter Editor | Winnie [REDACTED] |

The Transgenderist is the newsletter of TGIC, published monthly and mailed First Class to members, prospective members, friends, professionals, and exchange publications.

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TGIC General Membership Dues: \$40/yr

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The Transgenderist

NIGHT PEOPLE - Melodie [REDACTED]

Night people are the best!
While all the others are at rest,
A few put themselves to test.
Yes, night people are the best.

Most night people live alone.
They ignore the telephone.
That steady ring will ever drone
If you dial the night folks' phone.

In the silence of the night,
Imagination gleams a-bright,
And we marvel at the sight
Of our dreams held up to light,
While all the others snore away.
Yes, their night time is our day.

And so no matter how we pray
Our nightly penance is to stay
Attuned at last to that we sought:
The lunar magic of our thought -
The quiet mystique of the night
That so illuminates the right -
That lets us know that we are whole
When we open up our soul
To the silence of the night -
And let the darkness bring the light.

That may be why we're there,
Night folks, glowing in the mist,
To light the way for those who dare
To find out if their dreams exist -

And, if so, what to do and when?
And why to bother - and what then?
In the magic of the night
Are the answers and the light.

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THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY MAGAZINE!

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Hip, Hip, Hooray! Roberta [REDACTED]'s Hip Pad Technique

I've been making hips for many years now. I think they look pretty good head or back on, and from the side. They're made of foam, which is readily available and easy to work with.

First off, look at women to see what you want to reproduce. It might be helpful to go to the library and read a book on anatomy for artists. Pay attention to the differences between men and women in the hip region.

Basically, the widest part of women's hips are about at the level of the leg joint. They taper in toward the waist above that, and the thighs taper in below that. Some women's hips flair out some at the waist, other's tend to taper more gradually. The width is pretty close to the overall width across the shoulders. The backside is considerably larger than the male backside, but in about the same location. The waist line is higher than a man's waist.

Now, take a look at yourself in the mirror, sans clothes. Note the skinny little hips and pathetic backside. Poke around until you know where your pelvis is. Measure the width of your shoulders and hips. Note, width, not circumference. You'll need a big caliper for this. I improvised by using two framing squares: hold the long legs together and move the short legs further or closer to act as a caliper.

You want to add padding to your sides, to bring your hip width out to about the same width as your shoulders. You want the most padding at leg joint level, tapering down to nothing at the leg. At the top, you can also taper to nothing, or leave an inch or so for flaired hips. The top should come up over the top of your pelvis. I add about 2-1/2" on each side at the wide part.

You want to extend your back side backwards. Your current shape, though too small, is fine. You want a gradual taper to nothing a few inches below your waistline, and you want to taper to nothing at the legs. Pad the cheeks and legs separately, but have them joined near the top, about at the level where you no longer have cheeks. This gives some separation while ensuring that one side doesn't slip out of place. I add about 2-1/2" on the backside.

FOAM:

You can get foam at places that sell upholstery supplies, in a variety of thicknesses. You can also get mattress toppers, in a variety of thicknesses, from the Penney's catalog. Currently, I'm using 5" thick mattress toppers, sliced in half to make 2-1/2" thick pieces, thus the 2-1/2" measurements above. When I first started doing this, I used 1/2" thick foam, and I'd recommend starting with this. You just add layers until you get the shape you want, tapering is hardly necessary with this thin stuff. **Get the firmest foam you can find, it will last longer and hold its shape better.**

CUTTING:

By far, the best tool to cut the foam with is a band saw, but maybe not everybody has one. The next best tool is an electric carving knife. An ordinary knife is next to useless, but maybe you can develop some skill in using one. Scissors will work on the thin foam, but makes a funny cut on thick foam. See what tools you've got in your tool box, and try them on some scraps to see how they work.

If you use thin foam, you can glue layers together with contact cement. You don't need a lot, just a few dots to hold the pieces together. This dries very quickly on foam, so don't wait too long to put the pieces together.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER:

Now that you have some foam pieces sculpted, you need to hold them in place. I'm now using a long legged girdle with high waistband, zipper, and split crotch. Use your waist measurement as the size for buying a girdle. Long legs allow the padding to taper to the legs; you don't want padding longer than the legs of the girdle. The high waistband allows the padding to come up over my pelvis top, and raise my waistline. The zipper makes it easier to get this all on and off. The split crotch means I can leave it all on when going to the bathroom.

Almost anything elastic and snug fitting will work for this. For my first set of hips, I used a pair of panty hose with most of the legs cut away.

Now, start to cram the foam into whatever outer garment you're using. This may not be easy; foam does not slide readily on fabric. This is good, because it won't slip around. Wrestling the foam into a girdle isn't too hard; wrestling it into panty hose is much more difficult because the fabric is so flexible. It can be done, though.

Now, you need an inner liner. I've found long legged, very unsexy, women's underwear to work well for this. If you have a split crotch girdle, you will want to split the crotch of the underwear open to take advantage of this feature. You need this inner liner in order to get into this thing, without it, the foam will not slide over your skin easily. Slip the inner lining into the padded girdle; poke the legs down into the girdle legs.

GETTING IT ON:

Soon comes the moment of truth. Sit down, and slip your legs into the girdle, and stand up. Leave the girdle below your knees and make any adjustments to the padding so the side pieces are really on the sides, and the back piece is centered in back. Now, holding the girdle and inner lining at the top, pull the girdle on. Take a look at yourself in the mirror. Not bad, right? A definite improvement over the male shape.

HINTS, ETC.:

This first attempt may or may not be what you wanted, but since you made it, you can re-do it until it is what you want. You can wear it a while and then will probably find things you can do to improve the look and shape.

The girdle will tend to round the edges of the foam, so even though the foam may have square cut edges, you won't see corners on your body. Over time, the foam will tend to crush some. This will make the padding easier to put on than it was the first time. After too long a time, the padding will need to be replaced because it gets too relaxed.

How much padding to use? Given the wide variation in hip size and shape, almost anything will do. If you put on a straight skirt and it is tight in the hips and loose in the waist, you may have too much. The hip circumference should be about 10-12" larger than the waist.

When I first started padding hips, I frequently hit things with my hip that I didn't hit as a male. A couple of extra inches of width really changes your body space. Putting on clothes is very different with the padding; you have to wiggle your hips into them.

Have fun with this. Everyone talks about breast forms, and hardly anyone talks about hip forms. That always seemed strange, since I think hips are a very strong sign of femininity. There are a lot of flat chested women with nicely shaped hips in the world.

Questions? Email to Roberta [REDACTED], [REDACTED] 11/9/94

Götterdämmerung

The Smallbany Experience, May 1995

By your pal, Miss Take

OK. I really balled up last month. There hasn't been a debacle like that since my infamous "Sniff The Drag Queen" contest, which no one will talk about. Phew!

The only true fact in my April column was an item about a "lantern-jawed peroxide blonde, under investigation, who finally has her money and the schedule for SRS," and Winnie even cut that "for space reasons."

It turns out that JoAnn Roberts got a bunch of nasty phone calls, asking "How could you do that to your wife?" (really!) when all she did planning was a vacation trip to Trinidad & Tobago. Wife was even going with. Sorry.

Apparently, there was never any plan for Lipsticks either. Smallbany is just too boring for a real dance club.

That wasn't a real Republican position paper, and the whole thing about transgender mud wrestling was wrong. Big changes coming at IFGE, the grapevine says.

Look, we all have bad months, and for me, April 1 was my day of reckoning. Dorothy says it's OK, that she never trusts anything she reads in gender newsletters anyway, after spending \$75 to do a computer search on a false lead from an IXE newsletter.

We have been going over all of this with the lawyers, and they say that if I issue a disclaimer, we should be OK. So here goes:

This column is for entertainment purposes only. Discretionary reader participation is required.

It's the same disclaimer they use for the WWF (wanna wear the belt?), although I'm not sure how many of their viewers actually use discretion. I certainly am not known for being discreet, and I have been reminded of that this month.

My apologies for the April column. Apparently it was all just another big ol' *mistake!*

The death of T.

The T Dance era is over. This Sunday night, all the well and beer you acre to drink for one price tradition, which survived *The Rage and Deceptions*, has been killed by Power Company, which has replaced it with a no cover 2-4-1 night that drew about 12 people at 10 PM on April 22. The T stories are legion, with many of us finding a convivial crowd rather than another cruise night. While T has been ailing recently, the concept will be missed.

So where do you go? You might try *Waterworks*, where George runs a fair and honest bar. The problem is that WW is a bit butch for all but the most macho of us.

I don't know what to tell you. Kelly likes to hang out at the *Clinton Street* in Schenectady, where Jay and Shampoo are talking about another drag show on May 20 for Armed Forces Day. Like Melodie, you can even go to

the strip club, and there's the *Oh Bar!* if you can find parking, and the coffee house at the center, and some meetings.

Face it. You're on your own.

LGBT, GLBT and/or Les-bi-gay-(te?)

Well kiddoes, it has happened. The official new PC acronym is LGBT, for Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender, and you can see evidence of our inclusion around the country, even here in Smallbany. The *Gaylaxians*, our local SF group, now includes "transgender" in their notices. Linda Newton includes us in a notice of a major new matching grant that the *Capital District Gay & Lesbian Community Council* has received: "I am proud to be part of this major effort to improve the quality of life for those of us in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities."

The word transgendered is out in the vernacular. We have achieved acknowledgment in the queer community.

So what do we do next? The answer is simple. We pitch in and participate. Make it a real lesbianate!

If you want to take a shot at this, note that the CDG&LCC is having a big party to celebrate diversity on May 12. If you are diverse, (and most of my readers are,) you should plan to attend. Call the events line at 462-6138, extension 10 for voice mail details.

If you're waiting for a written invitation for T* people to join in, then stop waiting! Now is the time!

Big Apple Barbie

Barbara is bored. "People in Albany like their limits. They don't want to be challenged, find something new. NYC on the other hand is quite different. People want to talk to the new people. In Albany everyone has one favorite restaurant, but in New York there's a great new restaurant around every corner, and there are lots of interesting new corners to turn. Albany is boring, full of bored people."

That's why Babs has been traveling to the city, down to Webster Hall, Paddles and other wild and wacky venues.

"As a newcomer you don't see much, but show up a few times and pretty soon people come over to chat, and to invite you to other fun events happening all the time."

Barb has opened up her horizons. Shouldn't you?

The Big Finale.

Needed: Obnoxious, mouthy queen who enjoys offending everyone. Low pay, long hours, but you get the joy of your own column in The Transgenderist!

Yes, after the long winter of my discontent, it's time for Miss Take to stop her monthlies & pass the rut to another cranky misanthrope, some new painted bitch to chronicle the daily life of the dammed here in Smallbany, U.S.A.

This column started as an attempt to be very local, talking about the local scene and people, not a national fashion and culture thing like the queen bitch goddess divas from Renaissance. I dove into the shallow end.

You may have more insights and trivia that you can share with all of us. Go for it girl!

This is Miss Take saying: "Time for me to Take Off!"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRI-ESS MEETINGS IN SCHENECTADY

The Lambda Chi Lambda Chapter of Tri-Ess meets in Schenectady once a month on Saturdays at 7 pm; interested TGIC members may attend as guests, call us for more information: May 20, June 17

CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Harvard Educational Review* is planning a special issue on Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgendered People, and Education. Deadline for papers is September 1, 1995. For more information, contact TGIC or:

Harvard Educational Review
Gutman Library Suite 349
6 Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138
Tel: (617) 495-3432
Fax: (617) 496-3584

IFGE MEMBERSHIP

The International Foundation for Gender Education is now a membership 501(c)3 non-profit organization. For details, write to:

IFGE
PO Box 229
Waltham, MA 02154-0229

ANONYMOUS HIV ANTIBODY TESTING

Your regional HIV Counseling and Testing Program provides free HIV counseling and antibody testing, support and referral.

No names will be asked.

(NYS Health Department) *Albany Area:*
(518) 486-1595 or 1-800-962-5065.



CALENDAR

Regular Meetings are held every Thursday at the TGIC Club Room on Central Avenue in Albany, 7:30 - 10 pm. Some come earlier and stay later, but it is wise to call if you are not a Keyholder or if it is your first visit. Come dressed either way, meet and talk with friends. Many continue to socialize at one of the Central Ave. night spots after the meetings.

MAY 1995

May 4 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
May 6 ***Oregon Trail Party at Melodie's***
May 11 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
May 13 ***Saturday Dinner, 8:00 pm***
Northway Inn
May 18 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
May 25 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
Revlon Wig Demonstration

JUNE 1995

Jun 1 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
Jun 8 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
Jun 10 ***Saturday Dinner, 8:00 pm***
Northway Inn
Jun 15 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
Jun 22 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
Jun 29 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

MAJOR COMING EVENTS

- Contact TGIC for more information.

May 17-21 *Esprit '95*, Port Angeles, WA
May 26-29 *Sunshine Club Weekend in Vermont*, Warren, VT
5/30 -6/6 *Tiffany Spring Fling*, Provincetown, MA
Jun 7-11 *Be-All '95*, Cincinnati, OH
Jun 14-18 ***TRANSGEN'95 (4th Annual Transgender Law & Policy Conference)***, Houston, TX
Jul 26-30 *Spouse/Partner International Conference for Education (SPICE)*, Memphis, TN
9/28 -10/1 *Southern Comfort*, Atlanta, GA
Oct 15-22 *Fantasia Fair*, Provincetown, MA
Oct 26-29 *Fall Harvest*, St. Louis, MO