

TWENTY MINUTES

DECEMBER 1990 THE XX (Twenty) CLUB

\$2.00

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS SHOW?

by Andrea Rooney

Well, our favorite poor-excuse for a female-impersonator strikes again. On the November 2 episode of *Quantum Leap*, Sam goes back in time as a female entrant in a Southern Belle Beauty contest. Either Scott Bakula (Sam) or one of the writers of this show must be a closet-transvestite as this is not the first time Sam has taken on the persona of a female character. The premise of this show is that the other characters see Sam as the actual person he is filling in for (an image often seen only in the reflections in a mirror) while the TV audience must watch him stumble around looking like a man in drag. Don't you just suffer?

At least if they had him wear the wig as shown in the ad instead of his own hair it might help. Sam shaves his legs for the part, but not the hair in his armpits or on his chest. Did you ever notice how gross that is? And what about some makeup to cover that awful beard shadow? All Sam ever wears is lipstick. Do they really think that's enough? Maybe our friends at *WILDSIDE* could strike up a deal with the producers to show those bozos in charge how Sam should really look.

And if his non-feminine looks aren't enough of an insult to all of us women (genetic or cosmetic), Sam wins the beauty contest. Now I'm sure this had all the guys at your local CD club pumping their fists in the air while yelling "Yes! Yes!", but we think that unless the people in charge of this show make some kind of effort to have Sam actually look like a woman, they are better off just letting him portray male characters only.

Oh for the good old days of Tom Hanks and Peter Scolaro on *Bosom Buddies*. If they want to have a good show about time-travel, why not bring back *Time Tunnel*? Or better still, start a new series with those veterans of television series, Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd, two guys who know how to travel the time continuum. At least Michael J. Fox did a great job playing his "daughter" in *Back to the Future II*. Can anybody tell me just why this show is still on the air anyway?

'Potty parity' suspect acquitted

HOUSTON (AP) — A woman who said she was desperate when she went to the men's room at a

country-western concert was found innocent yesterday of illegally using the restroom. Jurors deliberated for 23 minutes before acquitting Denise Wells of violating a city ordinance that prohibits people from using restrooms intended for members of the opposite sex in a manner calculated to cause a disturbance. She faced a maximum \$200 fine if convicted. Wells, 33, and her lawyer and sister,



WELLS

Valorie Wells Davenport, hugged each other when the verdict was read. Testimony in the trial, which began Thursday, ended earlier in the day. Wells testified that she saw the line outside the women's room at the July 7 concert by George Strait was so long, "I felt I was in a situation where I had to be in a restroom. I took the only option I felt was available." The legal secretary said she covered her eyes and apologized to men already in the restroom at The Summit. Two police officers testified Wells left the stall in the men's room and announced: "There — I left the lid up just like y'all like it."

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by Michelle Hunt, RN

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There she is...

Clear the runway. Sam's a beauty queen!



QUANTUM LEAP



Transsexual Support





CLUB CALENDAR

MEETINGS

Saturday, Dec. 8
 Saturday, Dec. 22
 Saturday, Jan. 12
 Saturday, Jan. 26

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.


 CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday, Dec. 8

The annual XX Club Christmas Party will take place following the meeting to be held on 8 December at Christ Church Cathedral. The club will provide a meat, cheese and vegetable platter, rolls, soft drinks and various goodies. Club members may bring special treats of their own to share with others. As always - no alcoholic beverages are allowed in the Church Hall. All XX Club members, their families, friends, spouse or significant other as well as members of other TS oriented organizations are welcome to attend.

Sonia has prepared a special tape of funny moments from gender related movies and television programs to show before the party. So come and enjoy.

TWENTY MINUTES

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
 \$2 per single copy
 \$5 for 3 months
 \$20 for 12 months

THE XX (Twenty) CLUB, INC.
 PO Box 80690
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 Springfield, MA 01138

THE TRANSEXUAL SUPPORT
 GROUP OF NEW ENGLAND
 AND NEW YORK

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The toy companies have come out with a new line of dolls this year called the "Gender Bender Kids", because they're anatomically incorrect.

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 provided source credit is given. *Twenty Minutes* was founded by Veronica Jean Brown.

TREASURER'S \$

REPORT

Balance - from October \$1734.15

INCOME:

Collections - meetings	24.75
Newsletter subscriptions	182.00
Brochures & Reprints	44.00
GF sales	.00
Donations	10.00
Savings interest	8.57
Total Income	\$269.32

EXPENSES:

Refreshments	22.90
Newsletter & brochures	.00
Postage	50.00
Supplies	34.23
Bank Fee	.85
Total Expenses	\$107.98

Net Income for November \$161.34

Balance - end of November \$1895.49

PANASONIC KX-P1091i 9-pin dot matrix 4-font NLQ printer for IBM PC or compatibles FOR SALE. \$150 or best offer. Proceeds go to the XX Club treasury. See Becky at the meeting.

NATASHA DENNIS, 10, a star goalie on a girls soccer team in Denton, Texas, after two fathers from an opposing team thought she was a boy and asked for a panty check: "I think they should go somewhere and check and see if they have anything between their ears.

(Reprinted from *The Sporting News*.)

This month, it has been five years since Veronica and Becky were among the first Americans to get the SRS in Belgium after Michelle Hunt opened the *Brussels Connection*. Since then many Americans have ventured to Belgium for a European Vacation with a little surgery on the side. Beginning this month, *Twenty Minutes* will run a series of articles which were instrumental in making it all possible.

T.G.N. of New Platz, NY celebrates 1st Anniversary on Fri. Dec. 14 at 7 PM at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Rectory, 161 Main St., New Platz, NY. Bring a covered dish to share. (914)658-8091

REDINITIVE DEFINITIONSby *Veronica Jean Bown*

Since many of us don't have the foggiest notion about what the heck is going on, much less even being able to intelligently discuss the whys, hows and wherefores of the multifaceted aspects of all inclusive and semi-permanent phenomenon known as gender dysphoria, and whereas other meaningful and meaningless groups, organizations, being forthwith semi-adjuncted to, after of course, ignoring the ultimate ramifications of undisconcertedness to and beyond various sub-groups deemed beneath their stations, it's high time those in the very know, those, who from within their very core of being, perchance to dream, aye there's the rub, shall come forth with a proper set of redinitive definitions, which shall be by their inherent nature, set the record straight once and for all and to also set forth a new incontinence under the shadow of that brave new world, shall give meaningful, yet undiminished perspective, where everyone gets an equal share of stir fry chicken glowing in every microwave, a Suzuki Swift GT in every closet and of course, a 40 GHZ microprocessor encased within nonreactionary capsules for every bioneural implant.

So sit back in your comfortable, old beanbag chair, pour yourself another diet RC Cola, toss another pillow on the fire and get an education with what follows here...ahem.

TWENTY MINUTES - The best, foremost and unabashed monthly transsexual only newsletter within 3.8 light years of this class G solar system.

SIXTY MINUTES - Three month subscription to Twenty Minutes.

TRANSAM - An American Motors car of pre 1964 vintage that undergoes extensive sheet metal re-working and interior cosmetic adjustments as to simulate one of General Motors Chevy or Pontiac poor man's Corvettes.

CROSSDRESSER - An angry transvestite. A woman who used to be a man.

TRANSVESTITE - A class three misdemeanor.

TRANSGENDERIST - A class two misdemeanor.

TRANSSEXUAL - A class one misdemeanor.

TRANSSEXUALLY INCLINED - A crossdresser who doesn't have the balls to commit a class one misdemeanor.

TV INCLINED TRANSSEXUAL - A transsexual who loves to watch television while leaning up against the wall. The transsexual who chooses to emulate the style, manner, speech patterns and dress of a transvestite, i.e., wigs, knit dresses, teetering in high heels, sitting with legs spread at an angle greater than 90 degrees, etc. Also, when a TV uses one or more (bored) stiff transsexuals at a TV party as a ramp to unload the beer kegs from the Buick.

SIGNIFICANT OTHER - Someone that a TS or TV exchanges clothes with.

INSIGNIFICANT OTHER - The significant other of a TS or TV who refuses to go along with the clothing exchange.

TV RAP GROUP - A herd of crossdressers milling around the club house on a Tuesday night showing off their recently purchased make-up that they transport in old K-MART tackle boxes. Same group showing each other how their mothers used to put make-up on back in the 40's and 50's.

TV PARTY - See TV support group.

TV SUPPORT GROUP - Another bastion of male bonding with proliferating class A personality types. See Elks lodge, Moose lodge, Beaver lodge, Gerbil lodge, Free Masons, Not So Free Masons, Eagle Scouts, Cub Scouts, Fraternity of the Spotted Tie, the guys over at the water cooler checking out the chicks and making rude sucking noises with their mouths, the same bunch down at the sports bar after work watching and cheering on another bunch of the same performing physical feats of masculine prowess on large plastic or grassy areas, etc. See also TV rap group.

TS RAP GROUP - See TS party.

TS PARTY - See TS support group.

TS SUPPORT GROUP - Anytime one or more transsexuals get together to share the bait.

BAIT - The sweet, sticky refreshments often used to attract transsexuals to a TS support group meeting. Used only as last resort when a bright light fails. See TS rap group.

PSYCHIATRIST - Someone to whom you pay an exorbitant hourly rental fee for a couch and then he stays there in the room with you so you won't steal it.

PSYCHOLOGIST - Someone who minored in art appreciation in college and has you draw self portraits of yourself after you've spent the last three hours putting little black pencil marks in between tiny parallel lines.

ENDOCRINOLOGIST - A physician specializing in the study and treatment of diseases of the ductless glands, and who to earn extra income, will often times prescribe hormones to transsexuals at such high dosages as to make real women wilt and impotent genetic men flee in terror.

ENDOSNIPOLOGIST - A physician who surgically removes all the ducts from the glands of adult humans at night while they are sleeping. A standard prerequisite for before seeing the endocrinologist. See above.

EROTIC - A nervous tic of your errogenous zones.

AUTOSEXUAL - Driving a car while having sex.

AUTOSEXUALEROTICISM - Exhibiting a nervous tic of your errogenous zones while driving a car and having sex.

BODYCAST - What you and your passenger get to wear for six months after the head on collision resulting from exhibiting a nervous tic of your errogenous zones while driving a car and having sex.

BREAST IMPLANTS - The scheme that two Beverly Hills cosmetic surgeons dreamed up to fill slack space and to help get rid of all that silicone that's been sitting around inert at Dow Corning warehouses since World War Two.

SURGERY - Misspelling of the word sugary.

PROFESSIONAL TRANSEXUAL - A transsexual collecting unemployment benefits, not looking for a job and who gets most of the bait at TS support group meetings.

SEMI-PROFESSIONAL TRANSEXUAL - A transsexual who has not been fired yet, who hasn't made it to the big time television circuit, and who must be content to impressing those at local TS support groups who don't know any better.

AMATEUR TRANSEXUAL - A person of either gender, though usually male, who goes through all the motions while making lots of noise about having a sex change, and who for one reason or another, always finds excuses not to do so. See wanna bee.

WANNA BEE - A despicable member of the fly family, highly skilled in the arts of camouflage, physical and social mimicry that has affected yellow and black stripes and an irritating buzz that fools most of the others into thinking it's a real bee.

VAGINAL STENT - A semi-rigid, hard, soft or pneumatic (blow up yourself) expensive prosthesis that the sex change surgeon tries to sell to a post-op M-F transsexual who shows early physical signs of suffering from penis envy.

VAGINA - What every M-F transsexual hopes she will get a long, deep and self lubricating one of.

NEO-VAGINA - A surgically created empty space positioned roughly in the general down side crotch area of a M-F transsexual, that is usually too shallow, too narrow and that doesn't have nearly the same feeling as the penis did which formerly hung and was erected from that same spot.

LESBIAN - a woman who wears comfortable shoes.

COMFORTABLE SHOES - What smart people, i.e., lesbians, most post-op M-F transsexuals and all F-M transsexuals are often seen wearing.

SNEAKERS - Alternate foot gear of 98% of all transsexuals.

HORMONES - Specific and highly specialized control substances secreted by the ductless glands that can bring about semi-reversible physical and emotional changes.

TESTOSTERONE - A male hormone secreted by the testicles in transvestites and transgenderists that is found to instigate male pattern baldness in genetic females. Also strengthens and improves muscle tone in females and grows hair on their bodies and faces.

ESTROGEN - A female hormone found to produce cancer in laboratory rats in the 40's, which also has the miraculous side effect of calming menopause females and fixing their hot flashes. Also known to have broad hallucinatory properties in M-F transsexuals.

HORMONE THERAPY - The act of administering estrogens to males and testosterone to females that brings about hallucinatory physical and emotional effects to fool their bodies and minds into believing they've become something they're not.

Americans with Disabilities Act: a perspective

This bill defines a disability as a physical or mental condition that "substantially limits" an individual in a "major life activity" such as working, walking, etc., and makes it illegal to discriminate against disabled persons.

It specifically excluded TS's and TV's among others because transvestism and transsexuality were not considered disabilities just by themselves. This may appear to be another stab against the transgendered community but in the long run may work to our benefit.

Why would transsexuality and transvestism be considered a "disability" at all? Here is what Senator Alan Cranston said on the subject in an address opposing an amendment to another bill on August 2, 1988.

"Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the pending amendment that would exclude from coverage under the Fair Housing Act a particular mental disorder, in this case, transvestism...Mr. President, in this case the Senator for North Carolina (Jesse Helms) has singled out for exclusion a disability that is considered by the American Psychiatric Association to be a mental disorder."

Cranston, while well-meaning, obviously is under the impression, thanks to the APA, that the transgendered are in need of discrimination laws to protect them because of a mental disability.

What we are not is mentally ill. We do what we do because of personal preference, not because of an illness. What we do hurts no one. It is bad enough that the APA has us listed incorrectly in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) but allowing Congress to assign us this designation would cause the "mental illness" designation to stick.

Like the supporters of the gay rights and feminist movements, we need to take affirmative action. We need to have removed from the DSM-III and other psychiatric books and journals the linkage between the terms transsexual, transvestite, crossdresser and the diagnosis of mental illness. Then, through our own gender movement, we need to make sure we are not discriminated against by either forcing enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or by getting other laws passed. Discrimination against our minority is the actual issue here. The issue is not whether we should be considered disabled.

Not long ago homosexuality was a "mental illness" but with the help of the gay rights movement psychiatry began to understand that their choice of sex partners was a matter of personal preference. Today, our aim, through a gender movement, must be to get psychiatry to understand that we do what we do because of personal preference also.

Cynthia Howard

Cynthia Howard is founder and coordinator of the Gender Alternatives League (GAL), an organization that seeks to promote freedom of gender expression.

(EDITOR'S NOTE...Reprinted from the Educational TV Channel Newsletter, Nov-Dec issue. ETVC, PO Box 6486, San Francisco, CA 94101.)

NEVER PUT OFF UNTIL
TOMORROW WHAT YOU
CAN GET OUT OF
DOING ALTOGETHER

GENDER ADVENTURE 2.3

Copyright 1990 by Lynda Breekenridge

C> GENDRVEN

WELCOME TO GENDER ADVENTURE 2.3. THE OBJECT OF THIS TEXT ADVENTURE GAME IS TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF A GENDER DYSPHORIC MALE, I.E., A MALE TO FEMALE TRANSEXUAL. YOU HAVE \$25,000 TO START THE GAME WITH. YOU MUST FIND YOUR WAY THROUGH THE MAZE OF THE ALL INCLUSIVE GENDER COMPLEX BUILDING TO REACH YOUR GOAL OF SEX REASSIGNMENT SURGERY. BUT WATCH OUT! THERE ARE MANY OBSTACLES IN YOUR WAY. ALL OF THE STANDARD ADVENTURE RULES ARE IN EFFECT. WATCH OUT AND GOOD LUCK!

PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE...

DO YOU WISH TO LOAD A PREVIOUSLY SAVED GAME?

>YES

ENTER NAME OF FILE - >GEND 1

OK.

YOU ARE STANDING IN A DINGY HOSPITAL HALLWAY THAT GOES NORTH AND SOUTH. A CUSTODIAN SHUFFLES BY PUSHING A DIRTY MOP. A PIECE OF PAPER FALLS FROM HIS POCKET.

>GET NOTE

OK.

>READ NOTE

THE NOTE SAYS, "SPECIAL TODAY ONLY! 50% DISCOUNT ON ELECTROLYSIS TREATMENTS. OUR TECHNIQUE NEED ONLY TREAT EACH FOLLICLE ONCE FOR COMPLETE REMOVAL! ABC ELECTROLOGISTS..." THE REST OF THE NOTE AND THE ADDRESS IS OBTURED BY A BROWN SLIMY STUFF, PROBABLY TOBACCO JUICE MIXED WITH SALIVA.

>LOOK

YOU ARE STANDING IN A DINGY HOSPITAL HALLWAY THAT GOES NORTH AND SOUTH.

>EXAMINE WALLET

THE WALLET CONTAINS \$24,000 IN CASH AND MALE I.D. AND A LIBRARY CARD.

>GO NORTH

OK.

>LOOK

THERE IS A DOOR TO THE WEST AND A DOOR TO THE EAST. THERE ARE SIGNS ON BOTH DOORS.

>READ SIGNS

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

>READ WEST SIGN

THE WEST SIGN SAYS, "MEN'S TOILET"

>READ EAST SIGN

THE EAST SIGN SAYS, "WOMEN'S TOILET"

>GO EAST

OK.

>LOOK

YOU ARE STANDING IN THE WOMEN'S TOILET. THERE ARE TWO STALLS AND TWO SINKS. THE DECOR IS PINK AND WHITE FLOWERS. THE PLACE SMELLS FRESH AND CLEAN, LIKE SPRING FLOWERS. THERE IS A MIRROR HERE.

>LOOK MIRROR

YOU SEE IN THE MIRROR A MIDDLE AGED PERSON OF QUESTIONABLE GENDER WEARING ANDROGYNOUS CLOTHES AND EARRINGS. YOU REALLY HAVE TO PEE ALL OF A SUDDEN.

>GO STALL

AS YOU MOVE TOWARDS THE FIRST STALL, YOU SEE A NOTE ON THE WALL, THE HALL DOOR OPENS SUDDENLY AND THE BIG, BLONDE FEMALE NURSE COMES IN. SHE SEES YOU AND GRABS YOU BY THE BACK OF THE NECK AND THROWS YOU OUT INTO THE HALL. SHE SAYS, "MEN AREN'T ALLOWED IN WOMEN'S TOILETS!" SHE STANDS IN FRONT OF THE EAST DOOR WITH ARMS CROSSED.

>GO WEST

YOU ARE STANDING IN THE MEN'S TOILET. THERE ARE TWO STALLS, TWO URINALS, ONE SINK AND THE PLACE SMELLS LIKE A GOAT PEN. THERE IS TOBACCO JUICE IN THE SINK AND THE MIRROR IS BROKEN. YOU REALLY HAVE TO PEE.

>GO URINAL

YOU STEP UP TO THE FIRST URINAL AND RELIEVE YOURSELF. THE DOOR OPENS SUDDENLY AND TWO BIG, BURLY BEARDED MEN WALK IN. THEY SEE YOU AND ONE SAYS, "WHY, AREN'T YOU A PRETTY LASS. WHAT'CHER DOIN' IN HERE BABE?" THE OTHER MAN GRABS YOU IN A PRIVATE PLACE. HE SAYS, "HEY! THIS AIN'T NO WENCH! IT'S A GUY!" YOU SCUFFLE WITH THEM AND SLIP ON SOME SLIPPERY STUFF ON THE FLOOR. YOU HIT YOUR HEAD ON THE FLOOR AND PASS OUT.

YOU OPEN YOUR EYES AND FIND YOURSELF IN ANOTHER HOSPITAL BED. THERE IS A FRESH BANDAGE ON YOUR HEAD AND THE DOCTOR IS JUST LEAVING AFTER TAKING \$1000 FROM YOUR WALLET. "GOODBYE," HE SAYS. "YOU CAN LEAVE ANYTIME."

>EXIT BED

AS YOU LEAVE THE BED, THE BIG BLONDE FEMALE NURSE COMES IN. SHE SEES YOU AND GRUNTS APPROVINGLY. SHE MAKES UP THE BED AND LEAVES.

>LOOK

YOU ARE STANDING AT THE FOOT OF A SMALL HOSPITAL BED. THERE IS AN OPEN DOOR TO THE WEST.

>GO WEST

OK.

>LOOK

YOU ARE STANDING IN A HOSPITAL HALLWAY THAT GOES NORTH AND EAST. THE FLOOR HAS A LITTLE SHINE ON IT. YOU SEE AN ORDERLY WALKING NORTH TOWARDS YOU. HE STOPS.

>CTRL BREAK

SAVE GAME? >YES

FILE NAME? >GEND1

>C

ROOM WITH A VIEW

By Michelle Hunt, RN

As I begin this new chapter in my life I'm laying in a hospital bed in Brussels, Belgium. It is a short 4 days after my reassignment surgery and I'm feeling quite tired and sore. Today wasn't too bad as I was able to get up for a short time, but three days of enforced bed rest and not being able to even sit up has taken its toll and my back muscles are screaming for some activity.

Looking around the room I'm aware of my room mate, Joy, reading quietly in the bed to my left and I note how identical our pains seem to be. This should hardly be surprising as our surgeries were on the same day so our recoveries are similar.

The room is "Old Europe", charming and pleasant with a 12 foot ceiling and light blue walls complementing the pink and white curtains which frame our view of the quaint little court yard through the large french window. The curtains match the spreads on our beds. Although it is late November (1984) the window is open and we can hear birds singing a noisy chorale to the setting sun.

It is difficult to believe we are no longer transsexuals, at least strictly speaking, since the term indicates a pre-operative condition, and all the years of waiting and frustration are finally over. I can feel the emotions sweeping over me and I think, "It's over. Thank God! It's over." The reality of the situation is finally sinking in. We are now women - yes, at long last we are full-fledged, card carrying females.

What is it like to travel the "Yellow Brick Road" to its ultimate end? Is the journey truly worth the terrible price one must pay emotionally? Physically? Financially? Is there a proper way to prepare for such a trip?

Well, dear reader please follow along as I recount the final year of our travels as seen from both Joy's and my perspective. Decide if you prefer to be a voyager or an arm-chair traveler.

In December, 1983, while traveling in Europe as a fashion buyer I stopped at the Paris headquarters of a TS group of which I am a member. During the course of conversations the question as to when, if ever, I planned my surgery was raised. While I had to admit that three years of cross-living and hormones did seem a little much I pointed out that I found surgery just too expensive and I didn't have the money. At this point I was told of a surgeon in Belgium who did the surgery at "reasonable cost." To make matters even better he had an excellent reputation on the continent for performing a surgery which provides external natural appearing genitals and a fully functional vagina. And had an almost perfect record of no post-operative complications.

As I sat there in a state of almost semi-shock a phone call was placed and an appointment hastily made for me to see the doctor the following afternoon. After all those years it was difficult to believe my dream was about to come true. The next morning I was on the first train heading north from Paris.

The appointment went flawlessly. There was the usual history and physical, but everything was matter-of-fact and quite low key. I was struck how I had gone through Hell to get to this point in my transition and now, it was being treated as no more important than having my tonsils removed. Nonetheless, I held my breath as "Decision Time" rolled around. Imagine my delight when I was told I had been accepted not only as a patient, but could have had my surgery within a few days had I been financially and physically prepared. Unfortunately I wasn't in a position to take advantage of this golden opportunity. Not only did I lack the financial resources, but I was committed to return to my duties as a medical missionary in Haiti. Oh well, the things dreams are made of, right? But, it was a beginning. Now I was in the System and would return in a year for my appointment with Destiny and surgery.

Joy, the person, first entered my life via a letter from her as I passed through the U.S. on my way to the Caribbean. I only had four days in the States so I took her letter with me to answer from Port-au-Prince. It seemed she had seen my listing in the GGA Correspondence Directory and, since we had common interest, in addition to being transsexuals, she'd decided to contact me.

We corresponded during my stay in Haiti, and after my return to the States but it wasn't until early May ('84) when I happened to mention I'd received a letter from my surgeon in Belgium. As sort of in passing I ask "would you care to join me?" Little did I know she would immediately reply with a resounding "Yes!" Joy later told me that when she'd replied yes, she had no idea whether she could get the money together or the time off from work. But, she was certain she would have the surgery. "I just placed my trust in God," she told me.

So, where do we go from here? The first thing was to get her accepted for surgery. She wrote a letter to the surgeon, and I also wrote explaining she was my friend and hoping the surgeon would respect my judgement on the basis of our single meeting. Fortunately he did and within a month Joy was tentatively accepted for surgery. Over the next few months other letters were exchanged and the necessary documents passed on.

Now, the worst part began. My contract wouldn't be completed until November. And, additionally, I was in the process of selling my house and most of my worldly possessions in anticipation of moving out of the U.S. permanently. On the West Coast Joy was settling her affairs. What a long, hot summer we had as the days passed agonizingly slowly.

Perhaps I should mention the final year before surgery is the time of the greatest change. One becomes extremely aware of the differences between the sexes and what changing to a different sexual role actually means. I don't care how long you cross-live there is a definite difference during the final year.

Just as living as a woman full-time creates many problems (little things like realizing you're a second class citizen and no longer a man's equal). You'll also find your ideas are merely tolerated and seldom encouraged by men, even the ones who so eagerly sought you out prior to role change.

Financially, you'll find being a woman is a little hard to take. And you'll see your earning power decrease while expenses for clothing, make-up and life's little necessities increase.

Good grooming is mandatory. In your male role you could have green teeth, a double chin, greasy hair and a red nose with a wart on the end and no one would comment (to you) about your appearance. But, as a woman if you have even one zit, you're treated like the Bride of Frankenstein - the answer is time consuming indeed. In fact, the good grooming required to live as a woman is, I think, the single biggest disadvantage of being female. It's a routine which constantly requiring one to be de-furred, polished, clipped, washed, dried, powdered, perfumed, shaved, plucked, oiled, greased or changed. A good beauty regimen will take at least 2 hours a day. Weekly time will be spent on a facial, de-burring heels and elbows and even some waxing. And don't forget electrolysis if you really want to chew up both time and money.

Of course, there are people who cross-live and let their appearance go to pot, just as some genetic females do but, if you are truly serious about being a woman you should also be willing to accept all the little things that go with the territory. To do otherwise is merely playing at being a girl/woman.

But, enough of this "insight" as to what it means to live full-time as a woman. This just proves to be a minor part of the total picture. Since both Joy and I continued on our same jobs during role change we had a lot of educating to do to/for our fellow workers. "No, transsexuals are not homosexual." and "think of it as a birth defect." became phrases used everyday. One tends to develop a very thick skin during this period and one stops wondering what people will do or think. At least you don't have to worry about being read because you honestly don't care.

To be sure, some of the problems in the work place are unavoidable, but they can be minimized. What we found worked best during this period was honesty, openness and a willingness to discuss our "problem" with anyone curious enough to ask. We found most people supportive after they had a basic understanding. There were even a few lighter moments such as when one of our burly security guards told me, "I don't know if this is the right way to put this, but I think it takes a lot of balls to do what you're doing." Or, the time Joy's supervisor asked her to pick out the uniform she wanted from a catalog and Joy selected a car-hop mini-skirted outfit. The supervisor sort of blinked and said, "Well, if that's what you want I'll order it."

And so it went as the long, hot summer slowly turned into autumn and the time for our departure drew closer. Waiting became unbearable and the mood would be that of a condemned person waiting on Death Row.

At about this point in the transition there were some body changes occurring primarily because of the higher doses of hormones we were on and, from other TSs I've talked to these seemed to be normal. Both Joy and I experienced the same changes, but in varying degrees.

Skin texture changed from dry to oily and vice versa. We found body hair changing in quantity, texture and patterns. Our fingernails became brittle and peeled like onions and growing nails became impossible. We both experienced mental changes which seemed primarily to come from cycling Provera and maternal feelings including the desire to become pregnant. At times these were as strong as the desire for surgery itself.

Perhaps the most frightening experience, since it was totally unexpected, was the occurrence of a pseudo-menstrual period. It manifests itself as pain and cramping in the same area as a genetic female would feel it. The sensation rarely lasted more than 24 hours and could be helped some by wearing a sanitary napkin. The pressure of the napkin seemed to help ease the pain and, at any rate, provided a tangible indication that we were indeed becoming female. I've been told, by some TSs, that their physicians prescribed anti-prostaglandins for relief of this syndrome, but I have no personal knowledge of this.

We were also aware of the loss of our former male strength. This is due to the hormones and leg muscles elongating and becoming more female in character and appearance. Another common occurrence is that body odor change from masculine to feminine. Believe it or not men and women have different body odors and, if you've been on hormones for some time and notice that people refer to you as female even though you are appearing as a male it's possibly body odor they're picking up on.

And so it went as we entered the last few weeks before leaving the States. It was a time of blurring activity what with making sure all our affairs were in order; confirming reservations, picking out a proper traveling wardrobe from our available clothes, packing, closing the sales of our houses, etc. There was the nagging fear in the back of our minds that something would happen and our surgeries would be denied at the last moment. But, somehow we survived and departure day arrived. I left from Chicago. Joy from San Francisco. Two moths flying away to become butterflies.

As I stood before the passport inspector at Heathrow Airport (London) going through the aggravating routine I'd been through so many times before while traveling as Michelle on Michael's passport I promised myself I'd have that passport changed as soon as possible after surgery. Joy, bless her heart, had taken my advice to have a passport issued in her new name and sex so, she didn't have the same problem. Maybe one of these days I'll learn to take my own advice. [Ed's. Note: If a pre-op is traveling overseas for surgery the State Department will issue a passport, valid for 1 year, in the desired name and with the planned post-op sex designation.]

Anyway, I didn't have much time to think about it as Joy arrived shortly after I did. We were soon linked up with a friend of mine and on our way north out of London to her home which provided the last staging area for our final assault on "The Summit". A mere 10 days and it would be over - the waiting takes on a life of its own.

The following week was a flurry of sight-seeing in London, visiting friends and shopping. Monday arrived (at long last) and we were on our way to Brussels.

Tuesday we saw the doctor for our pre-surgical examination.

Wednesday was spent in madcap sight-seeing.

Thursday, four p.m. we checked into the hospital. By five we were putting our things away in our room.

Preparing for reassignment surgery is no different than preparing for any other surgery and less complex than some I know of. Preparation includes shaving - which in our cases was limited since we'd done it in our morning showers. And, of course, there is the ever faithful and ever present enema for which hospitals are so justly famous. Nail polish had to be removed. And we shampooed our hair since it would be four days before we'd be able to do that again. The night before surgery a visit from the anesthesiologist not only adds to the excitement but proves quite useful for answering any questions and/or seeing your worries aside.

My alarm went off at 6 a.m. Friday and the sound was followed almost immediately by a nurse bringing in the gown and other accessories I'd be wearing in surgery. I washed and dressed. Joy watched the process with interest as she would soon be following me to the operating theater.

Finished with my "toilet" I returned to my bed just in time to receive a pre-surgical injection. After all these years I was finally on my way.

At about 7:15 an orderly arrived with the gurney. I transferred from my bed to it and, after a short elevator ride, passed through the O.R. doors and was moved onto the operating table. To my left the anesthesiologist smiled her warm smile and made small talk as she started the IV. The surgeon came into view (although he seemed miles away). "Good morning," he said.

"Good morning," I replied.

"How do you feel? Did you sleep well?"

"Yes, I slept well and I feel great. Just great!"

"Want to change your mind?"

"Absolutely not. I don't think I could even if I wanted to."

The anesthesiologist interrupted and I shifted my eyes to the left. "You're sure this is what you want then?"

"Yes definitely."

"Okay then. Good night."

And good night it was. I was told later that the operation lasted 3 1/2 hours, but the next thing I remember was waking up in my hospital bed, a wad of bandages in my crotch with a catheter tube snaking out of me and down the side of the bed and pain, the equal of which I have never known, coming from somewhere behind the gauze padding. The IV was still in my left hand and the last unit of blood was

transferring. Although I didn't know it at the time Joy went to the OR just as they were finishing me. Her ordeal was about to begin and she would soon be joining me. Oh well, misery loves company.

So, just what does it feel like to finally achieve that elusive goal all transsexuals and some TVs dream of? Well, I can only answer for myself and Joy as everyone experiences the post-operative period differently, but here are some of my impressions:

First, we found the pain the worst part of the surgery. The first night the pain was so bad even the maximum dosage of morphine wouldn't ease it. The pain continued for a week and medication was required at times to ease it. After a week the pain continued to the extent that medication was, at times, required to ease it. I found the pain remained about three months when it became a mild discomfort and more or less disappears six months to a year after surgery.

Secondly, there is definitely a phantom genitalia syndrome and it seems strange to have something hurt which isn't there anymore.

Thirdly, we both experienced post-op depression. Joy, while we were still in the hospital and I about three weeks after surgery.

Fourthly, we both experienced hot flashes and night sweats. These were obviously of a hormonal nature and disappeared shortly after resuming estrogens about a week after surgery.

Physical needs change immediately after surgery. Once the catheter is removed it's necessary to learn the hows of urination. If you've heard any of the cute little stories about what happens at this point believe them. They are probably true. In fact, the stream seems to have a mind of its own and, like lightning, never seems to strike the same place twice.

Last, but by no means least, there is the pleasure of having a "period" for about three weeks after surgery. This requires the same care any genetic woman would have to give the same problem. And you find yourself adjusting your life to caring for this event.

Incidentally, I found that wearing a skirt for the first month after surgery preferable to wearing pants despite the cold. The skirt was not only more comfortable, but the circulating air tended to keep the problem to a minimum.

We were fortunate in that neither of us experienced any complications. However, problems do occasionally arise. The four most common are:

- 1). Partial to complete closure of the urinary outlet which can make passing urine difficult to impossible.
- 2). Prolapse of the vaginal lining where part or all of the lining slips out.
- 3). Hemorrhage.
- 4). The vagina may shrink or close up.

The first three problems may require further surgery to correct. In the case of a shrinking vagina the daily use of a dilator may be sufficient to prevent it from becoming a problem.

For anyone contemplating reassignment surgery, or any other major surgery for that matter, I'd like to add some additional advice you might find useful for preventing post-op complications:

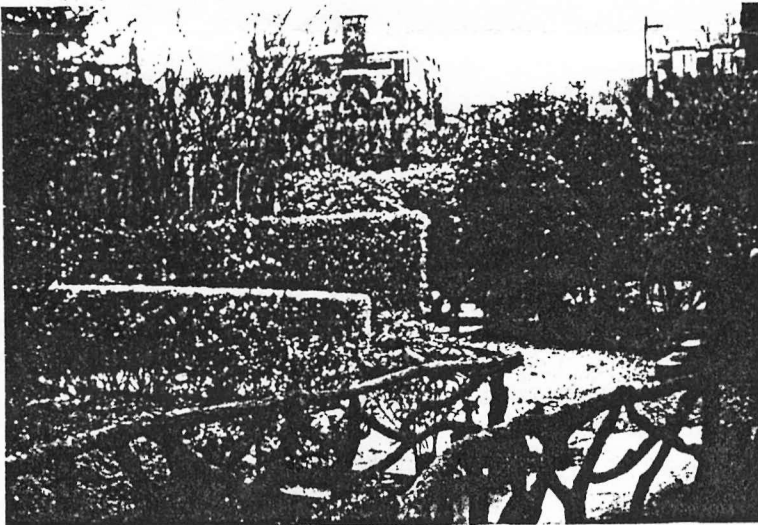
- 1). If you smoke - quit.
- 2). Walking 2 to 3 miles a day will strengthen the pelvic muscles.
- 3). If you are to stop estrogens do so 2 to 3 weeks prior to surgery. If you stop before it will just place additional stress on your body.
- 4). Try to be about 15 pounds over your ideal weight as the normal weight loss during the post-op period is 8 to 12 pounds.

Finally, just what constitutes The Recovery Period? We were discharged from the hospital after seven days, but eight is more common. Sometime between 5 and 14 days the final packing is removed. Neither Joy nor I experienced pain when this final procedure was done. But, I have heard others complain. At about two weeks the last of the sutures will be removed and a lot of the pain goes with them.

About one month post-op we were more or less back to normal activities. In fact, most people tend to return to work about this time. While most of the pain is gone after 2 to 3 months to a year.

So, there you have it. The Ultimate Transsexual Experience. Surprisingly, as we had lived out our final year as though we'd already had surgery we found very little changed. Perhaps the important things that happened were a sense of increased self confidence and improved body image and the blending, finally, of mind and body, of gender and sex and, most important of all, free access to the lady's restroom.

(EDITOR'S NOTE...This article originally appeared in the GGA Phoenix Monthly - International, no longer published.)



Above is the view from the room of the hospital courtyard.



**Top 10 Worst things to Say...
To Your Shrink** by Sonia

- 10- I'm not telling you my name... You might tell everyone!
- 9- I can't get a job
- 8- I'm a schizophrenic, and so am I
- 7- I'm from Mars
- 6- My name is Zeus
- 5- I hated My mother!
- 4- I like to stay home and do mean things to my dog with a fork
- 3- I'm not crazy... REALLY Y!!
- 2- I can actually hold a conversation for 5 minutes without mentioning hormones, electrolysis, or passing
- 1- I have NO money

LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Editor(s)

Wanted: Data on TS BBS's

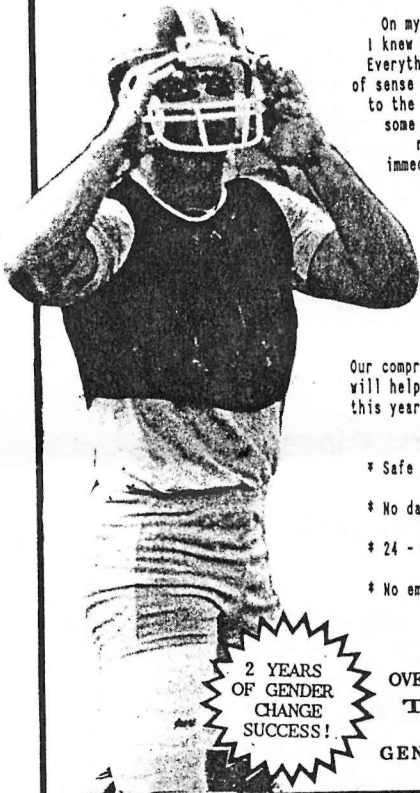
I am trying to write a short article on Computer Bulletin Boards (BBS's) devoted entirely or partially to information for TS's. The article will not include those intended for TV's, or the kinky crowd etc., but rather those that will help TS's take the right route through their transition. It will hopefully be published in TS newsletters such as Twenty Minutes. If anyone has information useful for such an article, and wishes to contribute to it, please send the data to:

Ms. Micheline Johnson
PO Box 9155, Stn. T
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1G 3T9

In describing the BBS, if possible, give its name, its location, the log-on parameters and available Baud rates, the first-time procedure, the BBS phone number, subscription/fee rates, mailing address for further information, the section of the BBS dealing with TS information, a description of the type of information it specializes in, and even a short (3-10 line) review.

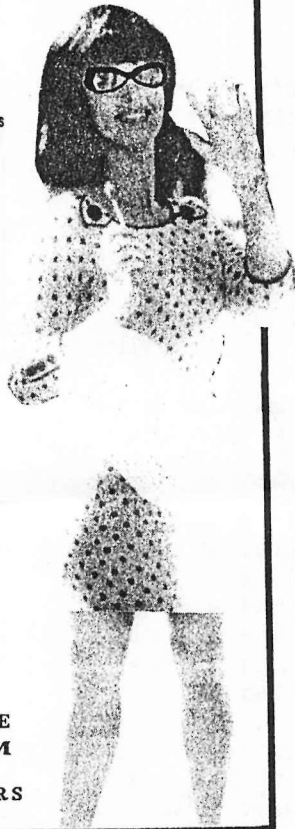
Thanks - Micheline Johnson

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- Biff Love



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INCOMPATIBILITY

by CAROL NEUMAN

I want to delete you from my hard drive.

There is too much static and half the time the board is down.

Everything is blocked, compressed and backed up. We will never connect; it cannot be saved.

I run at 2400 you at 1200 So our options are orphans we cannot merge.

I know you despite aliases and coded messages. You thrill me still

But old defaults echo painfully in line noise and are lost.

reprinted from October 1990 TORONTO COMPUTES!

INDECISION is the basis of FLEXIBILITY

Toni

ASKS: "CAN YOU SPOT THE TRANSEXUAL?"....

ANGEL

THE LINE...

HEY, BABY. WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?



RESPONSE A:

HUH? OH, UH... WHADUYA CALL IT... THE FISH... A FECE



ANSWER: GENETIC

RESPONSE B:

VIRGO



ANSWER: GIGI

RESPONSE C:

UNDER CONSTRUCTION



ANSWER: YATZEE!

YATZEE

Support Group Forms in Boston

by Dale Hamilton

A transsexual support group has been formed by a local gender-issues project, and meets at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center in Boston.

Since July pre-op and post-op M to F and F to M transsexuals, drag queens, transgenderists, transvestites, an intersex, an androgyne, and sympathizers have been meeting every Saturday at the Center to explore common interests, concerns, and goals. The first outcome has been the formation of a transsexual support group.

The Reassignment group will provide peer support, information, and social contact in a safe, comfortable environment. They anticipate being very much like the XX Club, only in Boston. As there is already a therapy group for transsexuals in Boston, this group puts a greater emphasis on how-to matters (name changes, electrolysis options, voice therapy, et cetera.).

A gender clinic without walls is planned: a list of hard-to-find resources for transsexuals, including electrologists, therapists and doctors familiar with the subject; distribution of the list to those professionals transsexuals are apt to approach for information; quarterly gatherings of area professionals, and a library. Also planned are seminars on surgical, medical, legal, relationship and passing topics, a notebook of collected experiences and advice, and a transition house.

Attendance is limited to those who have made or are working at a permanent reassignment in identity (post-op and pre-op transsexuals, true transgenderists, and congenital intersexes). A private meeting room is available for post-ops or F-to-M's.

Meetings are from 4 to 6 pm on the first Sunday of each month to avoid conflict with XX Club meeting weekends. A subgroup just for post-ops also meets the first Sunday of odd months.

Sex Reassignment Support Group

4:00 to 6:00 pm, first Sunday of each month
 Lesbian and Gay Community Center
 338 Newbury Street, 2nd floor, Boston

(617) 332-4576

BUMPER STICKERS YOU WOULD NEVER PUT ON YOUR CAR

by Patti

TWENTY SOMETHING

"sounds catchy"

YOU HAVEN'T LIVED
TILL U PASS THE RLT

CAUTION! NEW WOMAN
DRIVER ON BOARD

"I know its dumb
and inaccurate"

HAVE U BEEN 2 THE
20 CLUB LATELY

HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR
ELECTROLOGIST LATELY

"ouch. ouch"

GOING THROUGH 2ND CHILDHOOD. PUBERTY. ETC...

THINGS ARE BETTER
THE 2ND TIME AROUND

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL
TS SUPPORT GROUP

TAKE TWENTY MINUTES
TO HEART

"now is that good
or what"

BEAT THE DRAFT
JOIN THE 20 CLUB

IF IT DOSEN'T FEEL RIGHT
OPERATE

TWENTY BUCKS
WILL GET YOU
TWENTY MINUTES

"no. I think this
one might be mis-
interpereted"

from Genderline (See file STICKR) for credits:

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A VISIT TO A ROOM WITH A VIEW
 in the next issue of *Twenty Minutes*.



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 Brochure contains initial contact and general information about the gender clinic.

THE BRUSSELS CONNECTION \$3.00
 Brochure contains initial contact and general information about the lower cost male-to-female sex reassignment surgery option available in Brussels, Belgium with places to stay, and passport information.

TWENTY MINUTES ARTICLES INDEX \$1.00
 The complete index of all major articles, editorials, reviews and other useful information that has ever appeared in *Twenty Minutes*. Use the index to order copies of these past articles.

Make check or M.O. payable to:

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 PO BOX 80690
 FOREST PARK STATION
 SPRINGFIELD, MA 01138

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

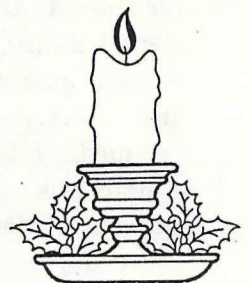
After 15 years of midnight showings in cineplexes across the country, the "RHPS" makes its videocassette debut on (CBS/Fox, \$89.98, R). "Rocky Horror" is the ultimate group experience. Available now at your favorite video stores!



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J2CP INFORMATION SERVICES provides information/referral services formerly provided by the JANUS Information Facility and its predecessor, the Erickson Educational Foundation, and Renaissance: Gender Identity Services.

J2CP INFORMATION SERVICES provides an information package consisting of pamphlets concerning gender dysphoria syndrome, in particular transsexualism. This package is available for a donation of \$30.00, to cover research, printing, first class postage, and secretarial services.

Additionally, J2CP INFORMATION SERVICES will attempt to provide referrals to reputable counselors, psychotherapists, or gender programs, and peer groups near your home.

Certified checks or Money Orders should be made payable to:
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J2CP INFORMATION SERVICES is operated as a nonprofit community outreach ministry and is dependent on your donations for its continued existence.