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THE TARTAN SKIRT

The Scottish Magazine for the Gender Community

Editor: Anne Forrester

New Series No. 11

July 1994

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Published and typeset by:
ADF Editorial Services


Tullochvenus House, Aberdeenshire AB31 4RN

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IF THE HAT FITS...

Reprinted from *NWGA Newsletter*, Vol 9, No.4. April 1994

The following item, from the Newsletter of the North West Gender Alliance (NWGA) in Portland, Oregon, while addressing some particular local problems, touches a chord that should strike home to every member of every gender support and/or social group everywhere. There is far too much back-biting and criticism amongst our community. For heavens sake, let us forget the bitching and just help one another.

Our sorority exists to provide a safe environment for our members, new and long-time, to meet in a safe atmosphere with people who share the same feelings and desires as our own, whether it is cross dressing or cross gendered. The sorority tries to provide social functions as well as instruction on dress, deportment and makeup. I believe we have provided these needs to our members for the most part.

Recently we have received some disagreement with what we are and are not providing. Those members who disagree state that:

(A) "We are a bunch of men dressed as women". Well, yes, we are ! We will, as cross dressers, always be men dressed as women. (I'm not speaking for the TS persons in our sorority; they do not fit this category). Yes, we sometimes act like men when dressed. I think we tend to let our guard down when we relax and let the male side come through. We have to remember that most of us live 95% of our lives as males. Most of our experiences in life occur while living the male role: conversations start and we get to discussing those experiences. I do not believe this is all bad. We can not get to know each other just by our *femme* experiences. The real person is much deeper than that.

(B) "Some of our members wear clothes no respectable woman would be caught dead in". While we do encourage our members to dress as not to attract undue attention to others, some can not afford to purchase the latest fashions. We need to be more supportive and offer constructive advice as to how to dress properly on a tight budget.

*"We need to be
more supportive"*

(C) If a member wants only to be with genetic women while dressed, or otherwise, that's fine. Do your own thing: we encourage that.

(D) "Our members are not going to plays, movies and other straight activities". We have always encouraged our members to do these things. We can not, however, force them to do something they don't want to do. Some members do not feel comfortable being that public, and we need to respect that.

*"Our sorority can not be
everything to everybody"*

Our sorority can not be everything to everybody. We provide limited social events which are relatively safe for the average person to attend and bring their spouse or partner, and not have to worry about exposure. If a member wants to do more public things they are free to make contacts with other members who like similar activities and make arrangements to go where they like.

NWGA encourages this. Each one of us is different. Let's respect each others feelings and needs, and not be too critical if someone does not agree with your level of exposure, dress, or activities. We will be a much stronger and loving organization if we work together.

Love in Sisterhood
Dana M.



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HOW TO USE (AND NOT ABUSE) A GENDER HELPLINE

If you are reading this the odds are that you have already come to terms with your gender feelings, and have made contact with others who have similar interests. However, some of you will be new to the gender scene and have picked up this magazine from a bookshop or acquired it through a friend, and will be anxious to contact someone else who will talk with you and be sympathetic about your interest in cross-dressing. In this case you may well be thinking of contacting a gender helpline. If you do there are a few basic points to keep in mind if you want to get the best out of your first contact with the gender community. Remember these points and you will help yourself as well as the person on the other end of the line.

DOs

- ▶ Do speak up on the phone. Although you may be nervous, if you speak quietly, or with the phone away from your face, the person at the other end may not be able to hear you - and that will only lead to frustration as you are constantly being asked to speak up.
- ▶ Do try to let the person who answers know how they can help you. (For example, do you want to know where to buy clothes; do you want to know where you can meet others like yourself; do you want help with problems with your family ?)
- ▶ Do let the person who answers know if you believe that you are a crossdresser or a transsexual - or if your problem is that you don't know *what* you are.

DON'Ts

- ◀ Don't hang up without speaking. This will get you nowhere. The person on a gender helpline is there to *help*, and you can be certain of a sympathetic hearing.
- ◀ Don't make an appointment to meet with someone from the helpline or a local support group and then fail to turn up. This is bad manners, costs the person involved valuable time (and money), and when it happens often enough may discourage the people concerned so that they eventually give up even trying to help others. If you decide to 'bottle out', give them a call to let them know.
- ◀ Don't worry if you don't know if you are a transvestite or a transsexual - or what is the difference (or even what either of these terms means - very few people do). You will need to talk with and meet others before you can begin to understand your feelings.
- ◀ Don't assume that because you like wearing female clothes you must be gay. The vast majority of those who cross-dress aren't.
- ◀ Don't assume that just because you like dressing in womens' clothes you need (or even want) "a sex change". Firstly, there's no such thing (it's gender reassignment, which is quite different), and secondly there are very few people indeed who really need gender reassignment - and they *know*, without having to ask.
- ◀ Don't try to quiz the helpline person about his/her own private lifestyle. They are there to offer you help, not to be psycho-analysed themselves - and in any case, how do they know you are not from 'the media', or even just a sensation seeker out for kicks ?
- ◀ Don't try to make sexual advances or appointments over the phone, or use it to describe in detail your own sexual

desires when dressed. This is not what helplines are for. Use a chat line instead.

◀ Don't be afraid to state your problem. If they don't know what your problem is, it is difficult for anybody to help you constructively.

AND FINALLY

Remember, helplines are there to offer you help. Nobody is going to breach your confidentiality, nor will anyone criticise or condemn your gender concerns. The person you speak with will almost certainly not be a trained counsellor nor a psychiatrist - but they will have been through all the problems and worries that you have, and will try to help. Meet them half-way and they will be able to help you even more.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Style and you !

"There is little point in striving to be a willowy sophisticate if your body refuses to be anything other than short and curvy. Just as it's hard to turn a tall, big-boned girl into a someone who looks good in lace-trimmed chintz"

In The Working Woman's Handbook
(Edited by Audrey Slaughter)

A HEALTH WARNING

- YES, IT'S TIME TO BE SERIOUS

We all know that there are a great many differences between men and women - and not only the obvious external anatomical ones, either. One of the differences in behaviour that you should really try to copy from the female lifestyle, however, could actually save your life.

Men generally have a life expectancy of some five years less than women, and this does seem to be related to the fact that they have a very cavalier attitude towards own their health. Whether this is because of the testosterone-induced 'macho' attitudes of most men is not clear, but women generally have no qualms about going to see their doctor if they feel that there is something wrong with their bodies; and this behaviour saves very many lives as a result of the consequent early detection of breast and cervical cancers. Men, on the other hand, will normally soldier on in the face of any kind of health problem, and will try to ignore early warning signs of what could be serious, and even life-threatening, illness.

Did you know that testicular cancer kills more than 1000 young men a year, and that cancer of the prostate affects three times more men than cancer of the cervix affects women ? And yet men are still reluctant to see their doctors if they detect a lump or swelling around the testicles, or suffer difficulty in urinating, or of controlling 'dribbling' when they do. But these are often symptoms of testicular or prostatic cancer (respectively), and if caught early can be treated.

Even if cancer of the prostate becomes established, once diagnosed it can usually be kept under control with

chemotherapy (anti-androgen hormones, would you believe - and not the 'hair falling out' stuff we tend to read about). Sometimes this is combined with orchidectomy (the operation to remove the testicles, that most transsexuals would give their eye teeth for - if they don't actually pay out good money to have it for reasons of their gender dysphoria, and as a preliminary to gender reassignment). This combined treatment actually offers the prospect of up to fifteen years survival in cases that, if left untreated, could give hope for maybe no more than that many months.

The message to all genetic males - and especially those of you who are trying to emulate a female lifestyle - is **DON'T BE SHY**. If you discover an unexplained lump - anywhere, whether painful or not - or if you have trouble with your external plumbing, then **SEE YOUR DOCTOR WITHOUT DELAY**. You will certainly not be wasting his time, you will not be casting doubts on your own manhood, and you may even be acting to save your life. ■

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SOME (OTHER) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SEXES

If you ever wondered how your male body differs from that of the average genetic woman (apart from the plumbing and the hormones, of course), the following Table may help to put it in context (and remember, these are only *average* figures).

Average Measurement	Women	Men
Body height	4'10"-5'6"	5'2"-5'10"
Length of spine	24"	28"
Body weight	128 lbs	160 lbs
Weight of brain	45 oz	49 oz
Weight of heart	8 oz	10 oz
Quantity of blood	7 pints	9 pints
Surface area of skin		
- square yards	1.93	2.21
Water - % of body weight	54 %	60 %
Muscle - % of body weight	36 %	42 %
Fat - % of body weight	28 %	18 %
Bone - % of body weight	18 %	18 %
Number of breaths per minute (at rest)	20-22	14-18

So now you have an idea of how far you have to go to make that change ! ■

♂ ♀ ♂ ♀ ♂ ♀ ♂ ♀ ♂ ♀ ♂ ♀

FUZZ-FREE LEGS

by Anne Forrester

Throughout recorded history women have never been considered desirable if their bodies and legs were hairy. Egyptian ladies rubbed themselves with papyrus leaves to remove body hair, while Greek women either shaved or singed their body hair. In ancient Rome they used gum-based preparations to remove the unwanted fuzz (an early version of sugaring ?), and in the middle east an ancient form of sugaring was in vogue using honey. Indeed, as late as the 16th century, in Europe body hair on a woman was considered to be a sign of the devil !

Today, it is still considered unattractive for a woman to have hairy legs, and there is a multitude of methods in use to remove the unwanted hair. Even though some 90% of women have hairy legs, and 40% have hairy thighs, it is estimated that 77% of women in Britain use one method or another to remove visible body hair. And if you want to 'pass' as a woman you must also consider the problem, even if you normally wear your skirts at mid-calf. So what are the options ?

Shaving

This is undoubtedly the simplest, cheapest and most common method of removing unwanted hair from your legs - indeed, some 70% of British women use a razor. Against this method, however, are the facts that re-growth is rapid, with most genetic males probably having to shave every day or two in order to prevent the second problem - the re-growth of the cut hairs as unsightly and uncomfortable blunt 'stubble'. Also, it is all too easy to 'nick' the skin, especially when working around the knee and up the shin.

(However, try the recently introduced Gillette *Sensor for Women* - see *Handy Hints*, elsewhere in this issue). Always use a shaving cream (preferably one intended 'for sensitive skin'), and you will probably be all right.

Depilatory creams

These are probably the second most popular method of removing leg hair. All of these creams (*e.g.* ImmacTM and NairTM) work by 'dissolving' hairs below the surface, so there is no stubbly re-growth and the skin should be left smooth and silky. The preparations are sold either as creams or as aerosol sprays, and are applied over the area with a cloth, left in place for about five minutes and then wiped off with a damp cloth. You should not then use soap or any other substance on the area for a while, but simply wash the skin with plain water. Also, all of these preparations contain thioglycollate, which may cause an allergic skin reaction with some people, and so they should be patch-tested on a small area of skin before general use. Unfortunately, they also smell quite horrible and the process is both messy and slow. Depilatory creams are also less than completely effective when used on a hairy male limb, and may only remove some of the hairs, requiring second and subsequent applications to complete the job. However, re-growth should not become apparent for about a week.

Waxing

This is a very popular method with the ladies. However, it is not always easy as a 'do-it-yourself' exercise, and is probably best placed in the hands of a beauty parlour - not all of which will necessarily welcome male clients. Basically, strips of special wax are heated and placed on the skin, where they 'grip' the hairs as they cool. The wax is then stripped off, taking the hairs with it. ('Cold wax' strips

are also available, but are difficult to use effectively and not as effective as using hot wax). However, the hair does need to be at least ¼cm long for the method to work, and the process can vary between uncomfortable and painful (if only briefly so), although it may well be worth it as re-growth should take up to six weeks, and with repeated waxing most hair growth is gradually weakened. And if waxing is done in a salon it can also be expensive.

Sugaring

Similar in principle to waxing, sugaring is less painful, especially for sensitive skins, and does not cause any allergic reactions. Instead of strips of wax the method uses a solution of sugar, lemon juice and oil in water. The mixture is pressed flat onto an area of skin and then 'flicked' off. Like waxing, hair needs to be at least ¼cm long and re-growth takes up to six weeks, and for most people sugaring is less painful. The process is a bit fiddly, however, and is best done (at least at first) by an expert. (However, *The Body Shop* sells an excellent Sugaring Solution if you want to try it out yourself).

Plucking

Take a pair of tweezers and pull the hairs out one at a time. Sounds simple, but the best advice here is **DON'T**. Although it is very much a do-it-yourself procedure, and re-growth may take up to six weeks, *it hurts* - you would need a *very* high pain threshold (and a lot of spare time) to get very far this way, and the plucked area can feel inflamed afterwards. (Of course, if you are a techno-masochist you can always buy one of the more-or-less expensive devices that pluck several hairs at a time with a series of rotating disks. They do a mass-production version of the same job with rather greater overall pain and at rather greater cost).

Electrolysis

As with facial fuzz, electrolysis is the only permanent method of removing leg and body hair, by destroying the roots of the hairs one at a time with an electric current. However, this method *must* be used by a properly trained professional and is not really suitable for large areas. It is also slow and painful and can be *very* expensive. Best forgotten if you simply want smooth legs to show off, either with bare legs in summer or through fine hosiery at other times.

And what about some lateral thinking ?

If you either don't want to face any of the methods outlined above, or simply can not remove your leg hair for family and/or social reasons, why not try hiding it rather than removing it ? There are four main ways of doing this.

1. If you are going to a party and dressing up a bit, why not try the effect of wearing patterned black hosiery ? Many of the all-over designs hide the fact that there is a conflicting pattern of leg hair underneath. However, it is *not* a good idea to try this when out and about in daytime. Most genetic women do not usually dress up in this manner in their daily lives, and legs encased in fancy patterned tights attract too much attention, which will probably lead to you being 'read' by workers on building sites, gangs of youths, and other groups of people who are unlikely to be sympathetic to a 'man in a dress'; and consequently you may be caused some considerable distress.

2. If you put on a pair of opaque white or flesh coloured tights (pantyhose to our American readers), and then put on your usual finer (and preferably slightly darker coloured) hosiery on top of them you will have effectively covered up the hairs while still getting the effect of finely clad legs, and while still appearing 'normal'. (I hate that word, but it

does seem appropriate here). Unfortunately, however, layering on your hosiery in this fashion can prove rather hot and sticky in summer.

3. Nowadays dark coloured opaque tights are common everyday wear for very many women - even in summer. (On a recent trip into east Europe I recently saw many women wearing black opaque tights under shortish skirts, in bright sunny weather with the temperatures around 18-20°C - and *very* attractive most of them looked, too). Of course, this approach will cover up your hairy legs most effectively while still looking good.

4. Finally, you could always wear slacks (or what seems to be for many transsexuals their 'uniform' of leggings). They may not feel as good as a skirt flowing around your legs, but they are so very much part of most womens daily wear that when worn about ankle length with a pair of feminine looking (and preferably low or flat heeled) shoes they do look perfectly natural - and often very attractive if combined with a colourful top.

And finally

It really is well worth the effort to remove (or cover up) that leg hair. Very little looks quite as bad as hairy legs showing through sheer hosiery, and if you want to appear realistic - and better still, to 'pass' convincingly in that great wide world out there - a little effort here is very well worth it. ■



EVERLASTING MAKEUP

One of the problems with makeup is that it takes such a long time to put on, and is such a bother to take off. (Even if you can live an openly female lifestyle and can wear makeup all the time you really don't want to have it smeared all over your bedclothes, do you ?). Well, never mind, help is at hand. Women who want to be at the forefront of fashion are said to be lining up for a new form of cosmetic surgery that implants pigments into the skin to simulate the lines you draw on your eyelids, eyebrows, and even on your lips. Just read the advertisements and think: "beautifully shaped eyebrows, eyeliner that never smudges, and sensuous lips". Want to join the queue ? Well, first you should be sure that you know what you are letting yourself in for.

The technique, known as micropigmentation (or in America as dermatopigmentation - American surgeons never use a short word when a long one will do !) is actually very similar in principle to tattooing. Sadly, however, as with tattooing, many of those who are practising this procedure are neither properly trained nor registered with any reputable professional body, and they are most often beauticians rather than cosmetic surgeons. Indeed, there are said to be more than 20 such individuals practising the 'art' in Britain at present, not all of whom are either properly trained or even insured against the risk of anything going wrong for the client - which it often does.

The 'treatment' is said to be perfectly safe when practised carefully and hygienically, and it is essential that patch tests are taken before proceeding in order to eliminate the risk of allergic reactions to the pigments. Most importantly, however, it is also very essential that both client and practitioner are agreed upon the colours and style to be implanted, as once it has been done you can't simply wipe

the effect off if you don't like it, as you can with conventional cosmetics. In fact, the 'treatment' is best done 'semi-permanently' in order to last from three to four years, rather than by using deeper and longer injection of the dyes in order for it to last longer. If it does not all work out as you wanted, living with a crooked smile, odd-slanting eyebrows or the wrong colour lips for years on end could be distinctly undesirable - and what if your skin colour changes during that time ?

Another 'hidden' problem with this procedure is that the pigment does tend to dissipate with time, so that lower eyelash liner or lip liner may well start to 'run'. Also the dyes used may slowly change colour with time, again leaving you with a problem. (Some women have had brown 'beauty spots' put on their faces and had them turn blue; and pink lip liner has been known to turn orange !).

And just how uncomfortable is this procedure, you may wonder ? Well, one British woman who had a permanent lip liner implanted says that despite the use of a local anaesthetic "It was absolute agony", and that she went home "in extreme pain". Finally, what does it cost ? Well, if you want permanent lip liner you could find yourself faced with a bill for as much as £2000 - although it should be only as 'little' as £400. And if you find that the operator has made a mess of the job, reputable surgeons will be very reluctant to try to remove the effect, as this may leave a scar even bigger than the original problem.

Overall, it seems that you and I will just have to keep on putting on our makeup each time we dress to go out, and put up with having to freshen it throughout the day and wipe it all off at night. Who knows, the cost of all that makeup may even prove to be cheaper than a permanent implantation job - and a lot safer and less risky into the bargain. ☺

WATCH THAT UNDERWIRED BRA

Security checks are all too common when entering public buildings these days - let alone trying to get onto an aircraft. So if you wear an underwired bra, be careful.

At the courthouse in Corpus Christ, Texas, a newly installed metal detector went berserk every time a female lawyer wearing an underwired bra entered the building. The lawyers then had to undergo a body search with a hand-held detector that beeped in embarrassing places and caused the (male) security officers a great deal of amusement. In this particular instance the female lawyers were able to purchase a security tag that allows them to by-pass the scanner - but you will not be so lucky, so if you like underwired bras, watch where you go !



A DRESS THAT DID *NOT* IMPRESS

Whether or not it was an example of true cross-gender behaviour, an incident reported recently in an Aberdeen newspaper shows that genderphobia and prejudice are alive and well in our schools.

Apparently Andrew, a male 16 year old pupil, turned up at school on a warm spring day wearing a flowery dress. Together with his long hair he certainly looked at least as presentable as many of today's schoolgirls - and even as many a confirmed crossdresser - and he claimed that the dress, which he had bought in a charity shop, was more comfortable than his male gear given the warm weather. Sadly, the school authorities did not agree and refused to allow him to attend his classes.

What makes this incident so very sad is that Andrew's parents knew that he was going to wear a dress to school, his fellow pupils were all behind him in this, and girls are allowed to wear trousers at the school - Mintlaw Academy, in rural Aberdeenshire. This example of blatant sex discrimination by school staff, who treated a male pupil in a way which they do not apply to female pupils who wear clothing conventionally associated with the opposite sex, would seem to be a breach of the *Equal Opportunities Act*, and therefore illegal as well as petty and bigoted.

What a pity that those whose duty it is to teach the younger generation seem to feel free to pass on their own ignorant prejudices, rather than teaching tolerance and the right of others to live their own lives in their own way as long as they are not hurting anyone else. This sad incident certainly helps to explain why the gender community continues to receive so little understanding and tolerance from the population at large. ▼

GREETINGS

Two men in the street,
Their handshake is firm.
Can this be a greeting,
Friendly and warm ?
A handshake's a challenge.
A handshake's a test.
Who here is stronger ?
Who here is best ?
Eyeball to eyeball,
They stand toe to toe.
Soon one looks away,
And now we know
Who here is stronger,
Who here is best.
Which of these men
Has stood up to the test.

A woman's greeting
Is tender and mild.
Two arms encircle,
Like a mother her child.
Heart to heart,
Beyond face to face,
There's no room for challenge
In a woman's embrace,
And she sees with her heart
What lies within.
Encircling arms
In the heart of a friend.

So make mine a greeting
Tender and mild.
Let's issue no challenge,
Let's offer no test.
Let's offer the greeting
I like the best.
Let's stand heart to heart,
Beyond face to face,
And offer a greeting,
A friendly embrace.

Sue

(reprinted from TV-TS Tapestry, No.62



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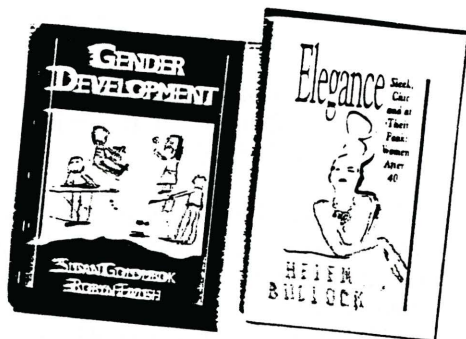
Gender Development by Susan Golombok and Robyn Fivush. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press. 1994. ISBN 0-521-40862-8. £ 10.95. pbk.

This is a serious book - so don't dive in unless you are ready for some fairly heavy stuff. (And even with my own background as a scientist I found it a bit stuffy in places). However, don't switch off at this point; the subject matter is fascinating, and if you are at all interested in the 'why' of gender diversity then this should go a long way towards helping you understand some of it. Unlike some other well-publicised books that have sought to explain gender diversity (and have not always sought to differentiate clearly between gender and sex), this one is written by eminent clinical psychologists - and if you are undergoing (or are likely to undergo) assessment for gender reassignment it may well help you on your way.

It is claimed that 'this is the first book to examine gender from a truly developmental perspective', examining the processes involved in the *development* of gender, as distinct from sex. Topics covered include gender stereotypes, prenatal influences (including the influences of hormones), moral development, the effects of social learning (including play, friendships, family involvement, school and work), and - importantly - gender roles and differences in relation to vulnerability to stress and in emotional socialisation.

Although aimed primarily at 'college and graduate students, parents, teachers, counsellors and researchers', a book such as this will be of immediate interest to the person usually

least considered when it comes to talking about the why and wherefore of gender diversity: the individual who is the subject of all these other peoples concerns - *YOU*.



Elegance by Helen Bullock. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 1992. ISBN 0-340-56903-4. £ 16.99. hdbk.

Although women come in all shapes and sizes, and present themselves in all styles from total grunge to supreme elegance, if you want to pass convincingly, and you are not fortunate enough to have the face and figure of a teenager, then whether you like it or not you will have to try to emulate the stereotypical woman of the fashion magazines. It simply will not do to put on a miniskirt and high heels - especially if you are no longer in the first flush of youth - and expect to go out into the high street and mix with women going about their everyday business, and not be 'read'. Let's face it, a tall person in a skirt - whether genetically male or female - is generally going to attract attention; and the best way to ensure that that attention will be admiring rather than critical is to appear elegant. Of course, the first requirement is that you should have confidence in your appearance and your deportment; but given that, the elegant woman is the one who will attract the most admiring and least critical attention.

Elegance is hard to define: style, attractiveness, charm and refinement are all other ways of referring to it. Either way it seems that you either have it or you don't - but this is a book that not only seeks to define elegance, but also to describe it in terms that should enable one to achieve it. Indeed, the book's sub-title - *Sleek, Chic and at their Peak: Women After 40* - sums up what they (and you) can hope to achieve if one sets ones mind to it. Some fourteen million women in Britain are aged over 40 - and in France it has long been recognised that women 'of a certain age' are generally the most elegant and attractive; so if you are in middle age (or beyond) then this book should be a valuable guide to help you 'pass' convincingly.

The author has taken six 'famous faces' from the 1960s - all women who were then in their youth and were well known models, and who in their more mature years 30 years later display a natural elegance - and has interviewed them to discover what it is that, following careers, motherhood, and the challenges of growing older, has left them still strikingly attractive. The result is a practical, informative and amusing guide on how women - and you, if you care to take the trouble - can achieve a similar elegance.

In seeking to cover outward, inward and total elegance, as well as chapters on diet, exercise and general health there is advice on hair and skin care, choice of clothes, and that magical but all-important matter of 'style'. The result is an overview on how any woman (and that includes you if you wish) can be elegant, and how that elegance can change and enhance ones life. The book is amusingly written and well illustrated with photographs of the six 'drop dead gorgeous' women whose personal elegance is a model well worth seeking to copy.



THE SEVENTH ANNUAL

Harmony Weekend

SCARBOROUGH

Friday 28th - Sunday 30th October 1994

A social weekend organised by Martine Rose for members of all TV/IS groups with the aim of fostering inter-group friendship and harmony.

We take over an hotel completely for the weekend (the same as used for previous 'Harmony Weekends') so there are no other guests to worry about if you are not used to 'dressing' in public. The friendly hotel staff are well used to us and indeed greatly look forward to welcoming us back again.

The Hotel is of an excellent standard with most rooms having private toilet and bath/shower facilities and all rooms having a tea/coffee making tray, telephone, radio and colour television with an in-house video system. The Hotel is situated within easy walking distance of the centre of Scarborough and is close to the South Cliff (with footpaths and funicular down to the beach).

The cost of the weekend is only £87 (sharing) which includes two nights bed and full English breakfast, a lavish buffet on the Friday evening, a four course dinner on the Saturday evening followed by a disco until late. Lunches are not included but snacks are available at the bar (which is fully licensed).

Through most of the weekend there will be trade stands including: *Vicky's Wig Boutique, Kentucky Woman, Kathy's Dress Agency, MB Footwear and Rose's Club & Repartee.* Other traders will probably be confirmed later.

A fashion show arranged by *Kathy's Dress Agency* is also being planned - anyone who would like to be a model girl should please let us know.

THIS WEEKEND FILLS UP FAST -

SEND AN SAE FOR A BOOKING FORM NOW

Martine Rose, Rose's, Roundel Street, Sheffield S9 3LE

AIDS		AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS	<i>When Problems</i>	AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS	<i>Are Ignored,</i>	AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS	<i>They Only</i>	AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS	<i>Get</i>	AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS	<i>Larger.</i>	AIDS
AIDS		AIDS
AIDS		AIDS

Transgendered persons are as susceptible to HIV and AIDS as anyone else.

A public service of AEGIS, The American Educational Gender Information Service, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033 Phone (404) 939-0244

BIGOTRY RULES, OK ?

by Anne Forrester

You can hardly have escaped noticing the debate and subsequent voting in the House of Commons in February on an amendment to the *Criminal Justice Act* that would have lowered the age of consent for homosexual acts between consenting males from 21 to 16 - the age of consent for *heterosexual* acts. A subsequent 'compromise' amendment actually reduced the age of consent to 18, still leaving a discrepancy with the way that the law treats heterosexuals, who may safely have sex at the age of 16.

Now I am well aware that transsexuals, and the vast majority of crossdressers, are *not* Gay (despite the muddled and inaccurate perceptions of so much of the tabloid press - and thus the general population). However, there are some highly disturbing points about the debate on the age of consent for Gays that do directly affect the rest of us.

First of all let us be clear that the present law, as well as the newly passed amendment, is grossly unjust in that it perpetuates legal inequalities, not just between heterosexual and homosexual males *but also between men and women*, for although homosexual males are still to be criminalised for recognising their sexual orientation before they are 18 years old, homosexual females are not - and never have been - criminalised for expressing a similar orientation at *any* age. (Strangely, although the former inequality was much discussed in the recent debate, the latter seems to have been totally ignored).

However, the aspect of the debate - and its aftermath - that should concern all of us is the extent of blind, ignorant, bigoted and totally irrational homophobia displayed, not only by so many of the Members of Parliament who

presume to legislate for our moral wellbeing, but also amongst the general public interviewed by 'the media' at the time of the debate. "Get rid of them all, throw them out of the country" was one of the mildest comments about Gays made in one televised street interview (but the person didn't say why !) - and many were much more hate-filled than that. Indeed, a poll taken the day before the vote suggested that around 50% of the general population were against *any* move to de-criminalise Gay sex for those under 21. (Of course, these people were not as bigoted as the MP who thought that the age of consent should actually be *raised* - to 75 !).

Overall, the two things which came over most vividly during the passage of this amendment through Parliament were 1) the irrational "hate them all" attitude (with no reason given) displayed by so many MPs and members of the public, and 2) the almost universal ignorance that assumed that homosexuality necessarily equals penetrative sex; and those of us who have Gay friends will know that this is *not* necessarily true, but that "love thy neighbour" (regardless of whether he or she is or is not of the same sex as yourself) is a much more important factor.

So why does this all concern those who cross-dress but are not Gay ? Well, I guess it is all summed up by the words of one Scottish member of parliament, Bill Walker, MP for Tayside North, who said "It is neither natural nor normal to carry out homosexual activity". So there it is, all contained in those two words "natural" and "normal".

My dictionary defines "natural" as "of or produced by nature; not seeming artificial or affected". It also defines "Normal" as "conforming to what is standard or usual; free from mental or emotional disorders". So apparently this MP - and all those who think like him - regard homosexuality as an "artificial or affected" behaviour that is not part of a person's nature (and therefore must be a perverse affectation), while they also regard anyone who

does not conform to "what is usual" as being outside the pale of legal tolerance, and as suffering from some sort of "mental or emotional disorders". Well, for my part I would regard Members of Parliament like him, who target taxation and punitive social security cuts at the least well off and most vulnerable members of society (while at the same time granting themselves annual pay increases well in advance of the levels they permit to others in the country) as not "conforming to what is standard or usual" in our society - at least, as far as decent human behaviour is concerned.

Surely, if Members of Parliament and men and women on the street can express such ignorant, bigoted and prejudiced views about the gay community, who are so much more numerous than members of our own community and who have such a high profile these days, then what chance do we think we have ever to get acceptance for our own much less high profile, much less well understood - and much less well organised - community? If Parliament can walk so rough-shod over its own legislation on equality on grounds of sex, how can we ever hope to introduce the concept of equality on grounds of gender? And if prejudice and bigotry against anyone who is not "normal" (as these moral bigots understand the word) are as widespread as they patently are, how can we ever hope to persuade anyone that "normal" means "free from mental or emotional disorders" (and not just 'thinking and acting exactly like me') - and that in that respect the gender community is every bit as "normal" as anyone else?

No, I'm afraid that recent events have effectively put an end to any hope that the gender community in Britain will be accepted by society at large - let alone given recognition and equality under the law - for a very long time indeed. Certainly (and sadly) I have no expectation that this will ever come about in my own lifetime. ■

THOSE HORMONES AGAIN

CAROLYN'S CORNER*

Many people know that I take sex hormones. Male hormones, that is.

I take synthetic testosterone, the male sex hormone, because a few years ago I lost most of the function of my pituitary gland. The pituitary, at the base of the brain, is often called the "master gland". It puts out several hormones that stimulate other glands to produce hormones that govern bodily functions.

A large tumor (about 1½ inches across) had overwhelmed my pituitary gland, which normally is about the size of a large pea. As a result, most of my pituitary hormones were at very low levels by the time the tumor was discovered. The tests showed that I had very low levels of cortisone, thyroid, and testosterone.

After diagnosis I was given replacement hormones. A little later I had surgery to remove the tumor, which also removed what was left of the pituitary gland. Since pituitary tumors are usually very slow growing it is likely to be a long time before the tumor might bother me again.

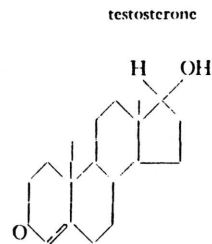
When my problem was first diagnosed the tests showed that my testosterone level was only 5% of normal. This was not a big surprise to me, for I had suspected for quite a while that something was wrong. I had lost a lot of body hair. I needed to shave my face only twice a week. I had no sex

*Reprinted from NWGA Newsletter, April 1994

drive. I was tired all the time. I had no strength and did not feel like doing sports or heavy chores. I looked much older than my age. These are classic signs of testosterone deficiency.

Curiously, I had also lost my desire to cross-dress. Despite experiencing some things that crossdressers would find desirable, like less facial and body hair, I simply did not have the urge. Carolyn's box in the closet stayed unopened for almost two years.

The standard therapy for testosterone deficiency is an injection every two weeks. Soon after getting my first shot I noticed a change. I began to feel stronger. Women started to look startlingly more attractive. I became interested in sex again.



Also, I soon found myself wanting to dress again. The box came out of the closet. On two occasions since then, in order to run some tests the doctor wanted, I have gone off testosterone replacement for anywhere from six to ten weeks. Sure enough, the desire to dress dropped right off, along with my sex drive.

This is certainly a paradox. It is the *male* sex hormone that stimulates my interest in dressing as a female. How can this be ?

For me, the urge to cross-dress is not a desire to achieve a female identity (although I do get in touch with the female side of myself when I dress). My portrayal of a female is a

masquerade. I am very much aware of my maleness when I dress, and I do not want to become female. But I love cross-dressing; it fulfils a fantasy that I have had since I was a small child. I really can not perceive directly where the urge comes from to cross-dress. Because the fantasy itself is so compelling for me in the present, it is very difficult to explore its origins in my inner self.

Some psychologists think the origins of cross dressing for many men lie in the development of sexuality at an early age. As children we start to develop a sexual 'script' in a way that functions uniquely for each of us. If it is true that our male sexuality develops through our relationships with our mothers, then cross-dressing may originate in some aspect of this relationship.

Some psychologists think they have observed that many crossdressers had difficult relationships with their mothers that made the normal bonding between mother and son painful. If the boy can not safely bond with his mother he may take an alternate course in developing his sexuality, such as bonding with some aspect of her like her clothes or appearance. This way, the boy's developing sexuality may become inextricably linked with cross-dressing.

I think it is likely that my cross-dressing did originate with my developing male sexuality. This explanation seems true for me, because the chemical switch (testosterone) that makes sexuality happen in my body also stimulates my desire to cross dress. For other crossdressers, clearly some other mechanism may be at work, for they feel most fulfilled by taking female hormones (which suppress the male hormones). Therefore it seems there may be several different causes for men wanting to cross-dress.



WORDS

"When *I* use a word" said Humpty Dumpty "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less" - and some of the words we use in the gender community are like this, and can be confusing if you happen to use a computer with a thesaurus in its software, that suggests alternatives for words that you have typed in. Of course, these programs are not only fallible, nor are they very clever, and you may care to see what my computer's thesaurus thinks of some of the words that we all use from time to time, and some of the alternatives it offers.

Alternatives words suggested for:

- Boobs** = Books (*but who reads them ?*)
- Blouse** = Harpy (*only if it shows too much cleavage, perhaps ?*)
- Breasts** = Udder (*if you are a cow, that is !*)
- Corset** = Lash (*for the S&M people ?*)
- Female** = Mistress, Squaw (*depending on whether or not you are sexist*)
- Hormone** = Dutch oven (*work that one out for yourself*)
- Legs** = Appendage (*true enough !*)
- Male** = Creature, Casanova, Macho (*none of them nice, you notice*)
- Pantyhose** = Yankee (*for our American sisters ?*)
- Psychiatrist** = Satan (*but don't tell him !*)
- Sex** = Fooling around (*as if we didn't know*)
- Tights** = Looped (*well, only if you get them into a tangle !*)
- Transvestite** = Machiavellian (*and could anyone doubt it ?*)

Perhaps we should all take a lesson from this, and only use words whose meanings are absolutely clear to everyone. But are there any such words left ?

THE TS VERSUS THE TV*

by Stacy Novak

I meet so many people from all walks of life and listen to the strangest of stories - some sad, some comical and some pure fabrication !

What amuses me (forgive me if I am wrong) are comments such as the following. A guy I was talking to told me he was a TS: he is pretty butch and rides a motorcycle. OK, lots start off this way, and as they have no-one to help them I suggested he came along to the (TransEssex) parties. "Oh no" he said, "I don't get on with men". (Shouldn't a woman - *i.e.* a TS - be seeking men's company ?). He then proceeded to tell me he didn't like TVs. I hear lots of TSs say this. I can appreciate them wanting to steer clear of the scene, to lead a 'normal' life and to put behind them the fact that they were once a TV. (This cannot be denied in most cases, as many discover Transvestism first and Transsexuality much later).

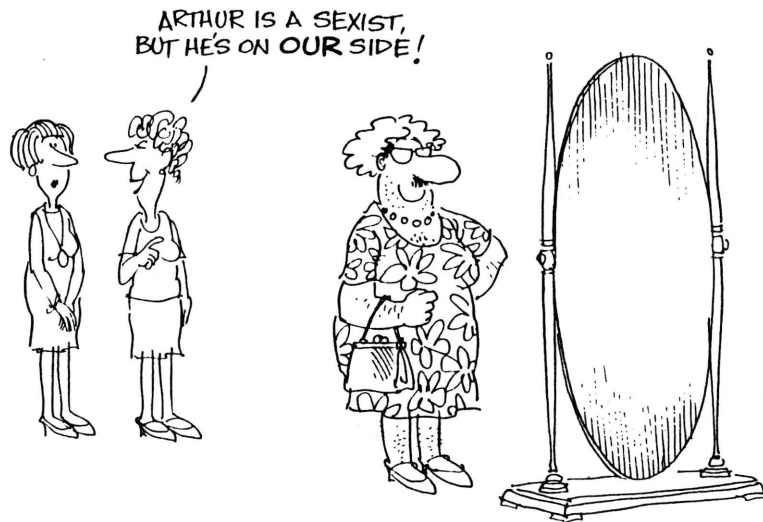
A TV has much to offer a new-on-the-scene TS; he probably knows more about makeup and clothing. Many TVs are willing, as their male selves, to escort a TS to a night club or take her to the pub. Even after her operation, for a good choice of partner for her first few dates, and indeed her first sexual encounter, a better choice could not be made than a TV: he knows what you are and accepts it. He would prove a gentle, caring lover as he knows some facts about your operation and realizes the care that needs to be taken.

*. Reprinted from *Reflections*, issue 3. Stacy Novak is a genetic woman who is the Coordinator of the TransEssex gender group.

To continue my conversation with the TS who hates TVs. She went on to tell me "I think like a woman". "Oh," I ask, "How does a woman think?". "Oh, I feel like a woman" - "How does a woman feel?". He replied "I've always known I'm a woman" - and I did not bother to ask *how* he knew.

Sad, really, isn't it? He's lonely, has no friends, has never mixed with other TSs. In fact, he has done nothing to start his journey to the world of a woman (*i.e.* a TS!).

I do wish Transsexuals would start to realise that if any one person will accept them for what they are and treat them as a lady, offer them kindness and support and friendship, it definitely would be a TV. ■



WHAT'S THAT WORD ?

- a wander through the alphabet

D is for **Dress sense**. Something that is essential for the crossdresser or transsexual who intends going out in public in female attire. Real women do *not* go out shopping in the daytime wearing miniskirts and six-inch heels, nor do they wear cocktail dresses to the Supermarket. Just watch what genetic women wear in given circumstances, and "go and do thou likewise".

E is for **Estrogen**. (OK, that's the American spelling: Americans dislike diphthongs - *oe* and *ae* - so they don't use the British spelling 'Oestrogen'). Anyway, it's the main, but not the only, female sex hormone. And if you are a male-to-female transsexual and receiving hormone therapy you may well be taking tablets of the most popular version, which also begins with 'E' - Ethanyloestradiol.

F is for **Femme**. Just why we use a French word when describing our feminine selves is not clear. Actually, *femme* means 'a woman', but we do tend to use it as an adjective and refer (for example) to our *femme* name. Why don't we simply say 'female'? Frankly, I just don't know. ☺

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"It's never too late to be what you might have been"

George Elliot

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

Sooner or later pretty well everyone in the gender community picks themselves a *femme* name. However, you should be careful when you do, as names can give all sorts of (not always favourable) impressions to others. They can 'date' you if you pick a name associated with a particular era (for example, Shirley puts you in the 1940s, when Shirley Temple was the little girl that all parents wanted their daughters to be). And again, some names carry unfortunate impressions: Sharon and Tracy always seem to imply the archetypical bimbo.

On the other hand, girls' names can also give an impression of an individual's personality. Names derived from boys' names (such as Norma or Jamesina) imply a somewhat 'butch' personality, whereas more typically feminine names like Susan, Sophie or Lucy imply something more feminine. (Perhaps this all stems from parents choosing names to reflect their own values: if they really wanted a boy they may choose a name implying a male character).

Of course, you will probably do well to choose a name for yourself that reflects the initials of your own (male) *persona*. John Brown may well become Jane Brown (or even Jane Black if you want your *femme* person to be known as someone quite different). Do be careful, however, that you don't pick initials that spell out something unfortunate. (I once knew a Dorothy Agnes Fiona Templeton, for example, and she *hated* her initials; and who could blame her?). Strange names also abound, but they usually serve only to attract attention - and often ridicule. For example, would you ever choose for yourself a name like *Poppy Higgins*, or *Mafeking Pretoria Jones*, or *Serious Boonjug*, or *Mona Liza Gooseberry* - or even *Another Smith*? But these are all examples of real women, believe it or not!

You will probably be best advised to choose a name that reflects either your own idea of what is an attractively feminine name, or something that reflects the period of your own childhood. If you want a guide as to what is popular today, the following is a list of the 'top ten' names of 1993, together with their meanings:

1. Rebecca (*One having domestic virtue*)
2. Charlotte (*The feminine form of Charles, meaning 'a man'*)
3. Laura (*A person from the Italian town of Laurentium*)
4. Amy (*Beloved*)
5. Emma (*Royal born*)
6. Jessica (*Esteemed*)
7. Lauren (*An invented name, derived from Laura*)
8. Sarah (*A princess*)
9. Rachel (*A shepherdess*)
10. Catherine (*Pure*)

So whether you want to be seen as having domestic virtues, or as a princess, or as being pure, you have a wide choice. From Abigail and Aphrodite to Zen and Zoe, there are plenty of names to pick from. But be advised: when you have picked a *femme* name, stick with it. It will become the way that you are known within the gender community, and chopping and changing from month to month, as some of our sisters do, only causes confusion. (I know one crossdresser who is currently on her fourth name within two years). And this may not only confuse others: you may even come to wonder yourself who you really are! ■



CASTRATION FOR RAPISTS ?

Under new legislation approved by a Senate committee in Florida, twice-convicted rapists may face chemical castration - in other words, treatment with synthetic female hormones intended to decrease the male sex drive, and leading to a degree of feminisation. Many people would feel that such a tough stand against such a despicable crime would not be out of order, but civil libertarians have strongly objected on the grounds that this would constitute "cruel and unusual punishment" - just as though the crime itself is not even more "cruel and unusual punishment" of the victim. (Under the same proposed law, rapists convicted for a third time would be executed !).

What would some members of the gender community pay to get their hands on such treatment voluntarily ? However, I guess that given our deep caring for women and the feminine lifestyle, none would be likely to turn to multiple rape. What a pity that it takes the commission of a horrible crime against women to get what so many want simply in order to *enjoy* a feminine lifestyle, as distinct from destroying one. And how many of us, if offered the chance of chemical feminisation, would regard such treatment as either "cruel" or "unusual" - or even as "punishment" ?



THREE WEEKS IN AMERICA

A 12,000 MILE HOLIDAY *EN FEMME*

by Anne Forrester

The annual week-long meetings of the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) are always great events - and fun as well as work - and this year's gathering in Portland, Oregon, was no exception. In fact it was probably the best IFGE meeting yet, thanks to some marvellous preparation and on-site work by the two host organisations in the far north west of America, the Northwest Gender Alliance of Portland and the Emerald City group from Seattle in Washington State. Being a sucker for trips to the States, and also anxious for a holiday with my dear sister Bonnie, who lives in Pennsylvania, I made this a full three week trip, involving some 12,300 miles of travel from door to door - all of which I once more did without a stitch of male clothing with me and despite still having a passport in my male identity. (Indeed, I have had more trouble with traffic wardens when parking my car in Aberdeen than I had with the various customs and immigration officials on both sides of the Atlantic). A degree of confidence and a suitable clutch of supplementary I.D. papers works wonders. The most comment I received was an occasional question as to whether I had handed over my husband's passport by mistake. Explanations and production of my additional I.D. lead every time to a comment of the "Oh, that's OK then" type.

The journey from home to Portland *via* Glasgow was a long one - it actually took me 26 hours door to door, backwards across eight time zones (although I was not the only long distance traveller - one couple flew in from Tokyo). However, I was fairly bushed when I finally flopped into

my hotel. This time I had opted not to stay at the Hilton that was being used by the convention, but on grounds of cost I had booked into the Portland Inn, a few blocks up the road, and thereby saved myself around \$500 for the week, while having a larger room and a better restaurant than the Hilton. I was also the only convention attendee staying there, and was treated entirely normally during my entire stay, just as any other lady guest. In any case, the 10 minute walk each day was a pleasant chance to breath the clear air and see something more of the city than those who never left the one hotel for the entire week.

The convention itself was the usual mixture of business meetings to do with the gender community, instructional workshops and seminars on some of the practicalities of gender diversity (feminine speech, hormone therapy, *etc*), and a number of pleasant social gatherings, both very formal (ball gowns were *de rigueur* for some events) and informal (chat into the small hours in someone's room, over wine and nibbles). As Communications Coordinator for the convention I was also somewhat taken up with working breakfast meetings. (Just try waking up after a late night, getting up, getting made up and dressed for the day, and then travelling to the meeting in another hotel in time for an 8.00am meeting each day!).

Meeting with so many old friends, and making new ones from a mixed community of serious crossdressers and transsexuals (F→M as well as M→F) - and in many cases with their partners - was wonderful, however. Some old friendships were picked up after a six or twelve month gap, as though it has only been yesterday since we had last met, while other new friendships were forged which I hope will prove to be equally long lasting and worthwhile.

Of course, the unofficial motto of the gender community is '*Shop 'till you drop*', and as Oregon has no sales tax there was quite a rush for the clothing stores. I was particularly lucky in getting two more pairs of shoes (always a bargain

in the States) and a beautiful New York styled suit reduced from \$265 to only \$56 (and had the lovely experience while trying it on in the store's changing rooms of being asked to help another lady with a stuck zipper on her dress, and receiving a lovely "Thank you, dear" for my assistance). Needless to say, every ones suitcases bulged even more on departure than on arrival.

Arrangements were made for the advance work on next year's meeting in Atlanta, and it was with a sense of mixed regret at leaving these friends, and anticipation of the remaining two weeks of holiday with a very special and dear sister, that I took the early morning flight out *via* Minneapolis to Boston, where Bonnie met me and we drove round to Provincetown at the tip of Cape Cod for a few days total peace and relaxation in this beautiful and laid-back community. The weather was mixed, but it was so peaceful just being in this small town out of season. Walking around together we were more than once mistaken for yet another of the lesbian couples who frequent the town, and it was lovely to be so readily accepted by the local community. Especially enjoyable was the evening we went out in a foursome, escorted by two of our men friends from the local gay community, for a meal in a rather fine restaurant.

After nearly a week we then moved on back to Bonnie's home near Philadelphia where the 'shop 'till you drop' mentality again took over, and in between endless walking and talking we 'did' the local shopping malls in the nearby town of King of Prussia. (Yes, that really is the name of the place!). From earrings to computer software we proved that the USA really is a great place to shop (as well as a great place to dine in very superior surroundings as two professional ladies).

Finally I had to fly back *via* Boston to Glasgow, and thence home. It was an exhausting trip, and I arrived back physically tired but emotionally overflowing after a most

wonderful three weeks. The good old US of A really is a great place for a holiday - you don't even have to go anywhere near Florida, Disneyland, or even New York to have a wonderful time - and if you are passable and confident there is no problem in doing it all *en femme*. I can't wait until Christmas, for my next trip 'across the pond'. ☺



HANDY HINTS

Better leg shaving

If you shave your legs and/or chest then you must often have cursed (in lady-like fashion, of course) most 'ordinary' razors, which leave nicks, cuts and sore spots, and are especially difficult to use around the knees. So try the recently introduced Gillette *Sensor for Women*. This odd-shaped green and white razor has spring-mounted disposable twin blades that "adjust to the curves of your body" and incorporate a 'Lubrastrip' which applies aloe and extra moisturisers as you shave. Use it in the bath and it really does seem to do the job with maximum efficiency and minimum fuss. Refill cartridges for changing the blades are available and although it is not the cheapest razor around (currently £ 3.99 complete with two refill cartridges and a re-usable cartridge holder; extra cartridges cost £2.99 for five) it certainly seems to be the most effective for arms, legs and chest - and it's pretty good on the face, too !

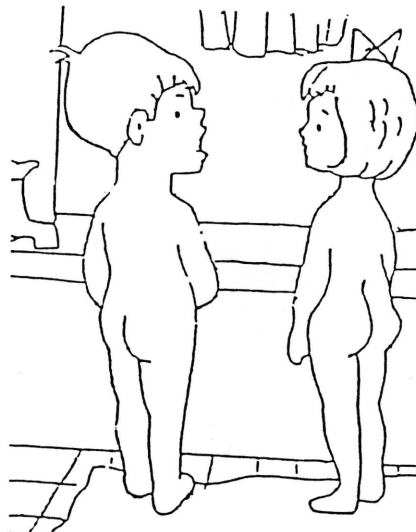
Trouble with Tights ?

If - like most men who have a larger waist in relation to your hips - you have trouble keeping a pair of tights up for any length of time, try **Legacy** tights by *Pretty Polly*. They have a 'unique comfort top' that grips better than most, and stays up without difficulty. There is a range of colours - including opaques - in a range of three sizes, and the finish is very attractive. Only a little dearer than most 'ordinary' tights they are well worth trying.

Stay-put lipstick

Lipstick is one of the staple items in your makeup kit, and there are so many different ones that it is often hard to

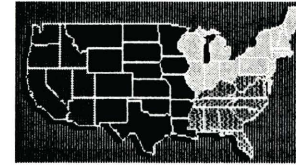
choose. However, nearly all lipsticks come as a standard 'stick in a tube'. But for all-day and food-resistant wear try CoverGirl's **Lip Advance**. This comes in a small and neat compact, looking more like a powder eyeshadow or blusher. It consists of a 'Long lasting Creme Powder colour' and a separate 'brush-on moisturising topcoat', and the compact contains a small mirror and a combined applicator and brush. If you moisturise your lips and then apply Creme colour with the applicator supplied, blot and apply a second coat before brushing on the topcoat, you will have a finish that lasts and lasts for the better part of all day long. (Extra tip: if you blot your lips with a translucent powder before the first coat, and then between coats of lipstick, applying the powder *through* a single thickness of a tissue, the colour stays put even longer). ■



NO, YOU CAN'T TOUCH IT, YOU
ALREADY BROKE YOURS OFF!!



FROM ACROSS THE POND



- A LETTER FROM AMERICA

By *Bonnie Lynne Betz*

Well, Spring has sprung in all its splendor - and after a terrible winter it has been a welcome relief. Spring is the time for all living things to renew themselves, and for life to begin for others. It is a wonderful time of the year as it holds the promise of better things to come. I have started this article this way to lead into what my topic for this issue will be about - a re-birth of sorts, and the beginning of a new life. It is about a person who all their life has been in constant turmoil because of having to live life as society deemed it to be - a life filled with fear, anger, sadness, and denial. This person had been denied a life of their own and life was not worth living. So let me tell you more...

The person I am writing about played a role in life that would seem appropriate for any male in society; but the person was not a male but a female forced to live and survive as a male. Yes, I am talking about a transsexual. Life for this person was indeed hard and cruel, and survival meant doing things that they hated and despised. This life went on for more than 40 years, until finally this person could no longer cope with life as it had been lived and was going to do something about it - or die trying.

The person made a commitment to plan (and plan extremely well) the transition into the life that it was always meant should be lived. This planning included getting their

finances into line first, as without money all would be lost. One house was sold and another smaller and more manageable one bought. All necessary work was done to the house, and a plan put into place to make sure that this home would not be lost. Next came the start of electrolysis - a necessary step to remove all traces of a much-hated beard. After finding the proper electrologist and starting the long process, her next step was to find a speech therapist to help mould her voice to a feminine style. The next step was to find the proper psychologist, and once he had been found the transition was then put into high gear. During this phase of the transition many sessions were devoted to making sure that the person was indeed who she thought she was. , Starting hormone therapy was also a 'must', which was accomplished successfully. And while all this was progressing, the person started to put together a proper wardrobe for a business woman; after all, she was bound and determined to continue working in the job she had been doing for 25 years.

Work, and its accompanying wages, are what would sustain this transition, and careful planning was needed to make the work transition a total success. Here was another potential major stumbling block: what would the company do once the person announced her intentions ? But here is where the transition received some good luck. Finding through a mutual friend that another post-operative transsexual existed in the company, this person contacted her and, after a long discussion, discovered that the company was highly supportive of diversified lifestyles. Contacting a 'Human Resources' person who had dealt with this subject, she then contacted the local HR person and the process was put into place. The time had come for this person to start life full-time as a woman.

After much planning at work the big day came - May 26th of this year - and with much anxiety the person went to work. What happened that day can only be placed up there with the fairy tales - the 'coming out' event went so much

better than expected. People were extremely supportive and welcomed the person into her new life. There were problems with some people, of course, but overall most work colleagues were supportive and friendly. The day came and went and now this person was living her life as it was meant to be all the time - AS A WOMAN.

The days have progressed steadily since then, and life is getting back to normal at work, so the next steps must be taken. An official name change must take place and then on to surgery. Good news arrived again for this person: the psychologist approved a potential surgery date of March 1995, so she is now progressing and moving into the new life with renewed spirit and devotion. Life has finally come to this person after having escaped her for 40+ years. She is now at peace with herself and can enjoy others. Family and friends have remained by her side and have supported her. The life that had been made up of grey days and dark nights has been replaced with sunshine every minute of the day and night. Life has now become wonderful !

This article has touched on the life of a troubled person who has now found true happiness, and in less than a year will finally have the entire life that has eluded her for so many years. This person has 'bared her soul to the world' and has openly stated her 'deepest, darkest secret'; she no longer has anything inside to torment her. Her life is free so that she can be herself and live it as a woman, forever. She has now closed many of the doors in her life behind her, never to go through them again: she now has a life to live, and need not answer to anyone except God as to how she lives it. This person has learned how to smile, and to be outgoing with everyone. Never again will she need to suffer. She is now whole.

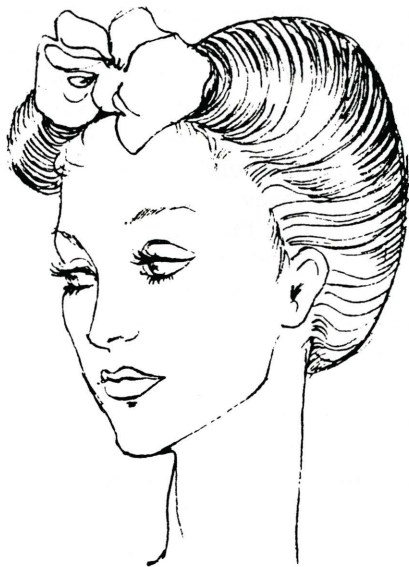
She has regained her life and retained her family name, as she does not have to hide any more to protect her family: and this person that I have been discussing is now known as Bonnie Lynne Betz. Yes folks, this person is ME !

I wanted to narrate this small piece of my life because I am now so happy that I want to share it with *everyone*. I am now, and always have been and forever will be, a WOMAN, and will henceforth live and work as a woman. God has granted me the strength and fortitude to accomplish this and I will not let Him down. After all, He created me, and I am now going to show the world the wonders of His creation.

I will close this article with a saying I coined a long time ago. *"I did not ask for this. God made me this way and God had a purpose for making me this way, so I will live my life as God made me - and I have to answer only to God for how I have lived my life"*.

From a very happy woman - God Bless you all...see you again soon. Love and Hugs to you all.

Bonnie Lynne Betz



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Dr. Sheila Kirk is both a board certified Obstetrician-Gynecologist and a Transgendered person. She has read the medical literature, attended numerous conferences conducted by researchers and world authorities on



Transgendered Medical Care and lectures herself to the transsexual community about hormonal therapy and reassignment surgery. She has summarized a great amount of up-to-date medical literature to aid you, the medical physician, in the care of the transgendered person.

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