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BOOK OF PROGRAM TRANSCRIPTS

from the International Foundation for Gender Education's
1st Annual

"Coming Together—Working Together" Convention
Chicago 1987

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This book of transcripts is dedicated to:

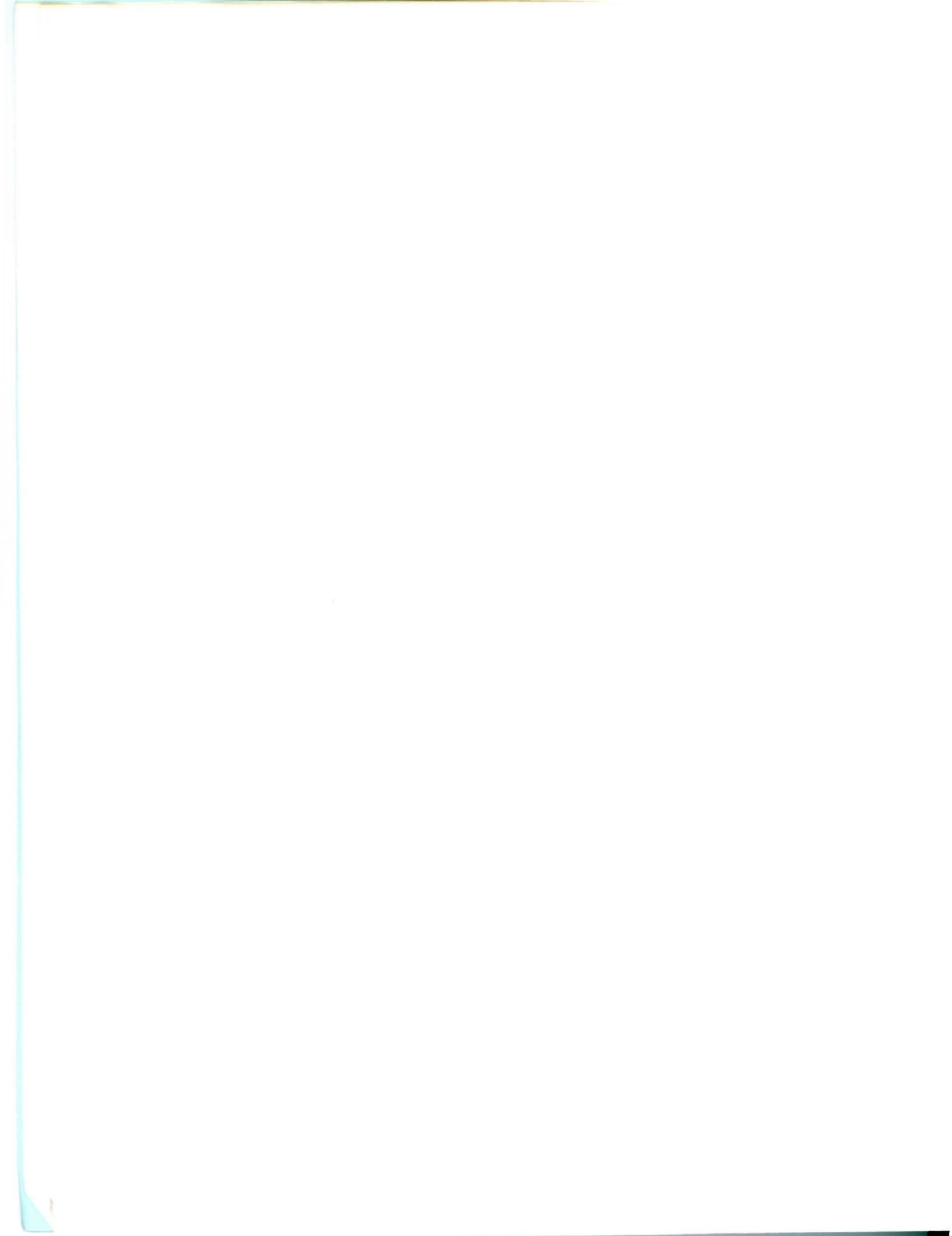
DR. VIRGINIA PRINCE

Recipient of I.F.G.E.'s first 'Outstanding Lifetime Contribution Award'

to express our appreciation and heartfelt thanks
for her years of devoted service to our Community.

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I.F.G.E.'S 1ST ANNUAL
COMING TOGETHER - WORKING CONVENTION
MARCH 4 - MARCH 9, 1987

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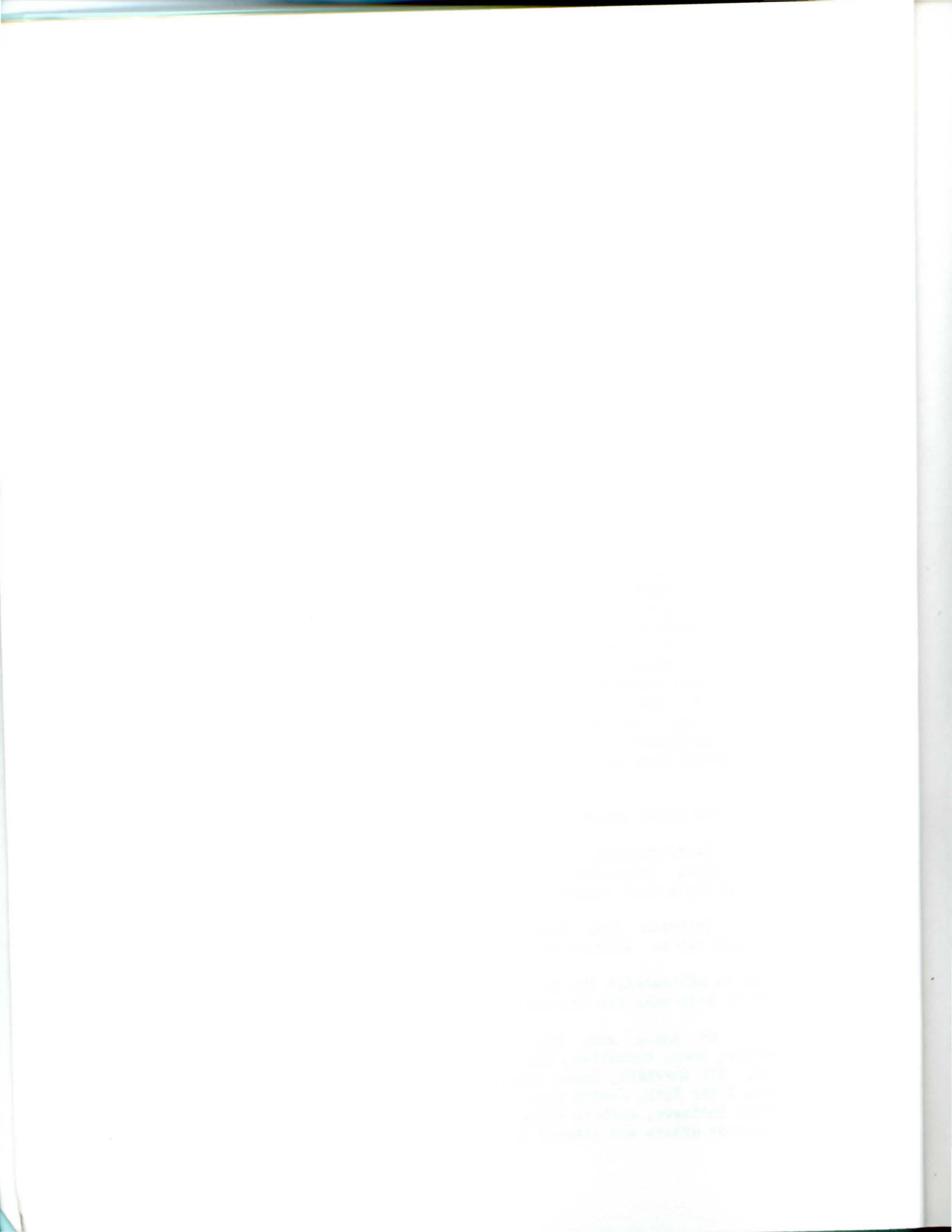
In addition to the above named persons, we wish to extend special thanks to:

David Maxwell and the members of the Chicago Gender Society for their show, reception party, for coordinating outside activities, and general logistical support.

Veronica Jean Brown, for her superb job transcribing over 22 hours of audio tapes. Without her, this abstract would not be possible.

We also wish to acknowledge the contributions of the following persons for their extra effort to help make the convention a success:

Dr. Roger Peo, Niela Miller, Siobhan Donovan, Linda Buten, Heather Peerson, Renee Chevalier, Gloria Peters, Joan Sheldon, Paula Riordan, Naomi Owen, Eve Burchert, Renee Kessell, Marcia Michaels, Ginny Knuth, Sharon Hart, Robin Esch, Janice Rupard, Susan Cole, Rachael Leak, Kaye Scherer, Ginger Robinson, Barbara Burgess, Helen Burgess, Wendi Pierce, and those many many others who pitched in when their help was needed. THANK YOU!



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this first convention was to have a convention that was of actual and effective service to the Transvestite-Transsexual Community and those persons affected by that Community. It was also intended to provide an educational resource to those persons who may be interested in issues related to Gender Expression and Identity.

The intention was to promote self-validation and self-respect, to develop a sense of togetherness and working together to benefit all, and provide an in-depth educational opportunity for all. The intention was to build a 'real' convention, not another outing or 'personal growth experience'. We needed the tools to get our collective act together. Our own convention was such a tool. We needed a chance to feel dignity and self-respect, and a chance to say, "We are who and what we are, and that's OK!" Our own convention gave us that opportunity. We needed to know how to help each other, and most of all know how to help those who needed us. No one was going to teach us how to do that. No one knew how. Our own convention would give us the opportunity to learn how.

If the members of our Community and those people important to us were to learn and receive the help they needed, then WE had to provide that help. If we didn't, no one else was going to do it for us. We needed a good convention, a real convention, a convention by us - for us.

This book of transcripts is probably one of the most important publications we have ever compiled. It is meant to be studied, to be reviewed, to be built upon. It is the summation of our first convention, and a cornerstone for future conventions. It is the foundation for the future of our Community.

- Merissa Sherrill Lynn
Director
'Coming Together - Working Together' '87



(*** The Steering/Planning Committee for our first I.F.G.E. convention, held recently in Chicago, selected Dr. Virginia Prince as the person who has made the greatest life-time contribution to our community. An 'Outstanding Contribution' award was named in her honor, and will be presented annually by the Convention Steering/Planning Committee to an outstanding member of our Community. Dr. Prince's speech 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' is a landmark speech for unity, for progress, and for direction.)

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW
or
WHERE WE WERE, WHERE WE ARE,
WHERE WE MIGHT GO IN THE FUTURE

Keynote speech delivered by DR. VIRGINIA PRINCE at the 1st annual I.F.G.E. 'Coming Together Convention' in Chicago, March 7, 1987

HELLO MY SISTERS! ... (- receiving an enthusiastic 'Hello Virginia' from the audience -)

Let me start out by welcoming you, not just to a gathering of cross-dressers in Chicago in March of 1987, but to what we may all hope becomes a historical occasion. It is rather fitting that I should have been asked to give the Keynote address at this convention because I opened one era for people like us when I started to publish 'Transvestia' in 1960. Today I am participating in the closure of that era and the opening of a new one. But, following my title, let us start with where we were 27 years ago.

Cross-dressing has occurred all down the ages and in all cultures. Those individuals who practiced it and who have come to our attention through historical records were usually isolated individuals. The situation was still that way in 1960. I had come to know about 8 or 10 other cross-dressers because we used to visit one of our number who was on welfare and had a rather beaten up house in Long Beach, Calif.. So, when in 1960 I decided that there ought to be a publication for people like myself, I approached these people and asked them to mention the ideas to their contacts. I asked for \$4 for a year's subscription and over the next 2 months the number increased to 25 and I felt that it was time to proceed. So issue No. 1 of Transvestia Magazine came off the press. 25 subscribers at \$4 each meant that the venture started on \$100 of capital. Issue #1 was 61 pages which my secretary typed and which was then photocopied.

By asking all subscribers to recommend it to their friends, by some small advertising effort and mostly by hope, it gradually grew. By No. 5 we started with our first Cover Girl which was Annette and some of you knew her. We also had internal pictures and it went on from there. At the time Transvestia was begun you couldn't find 10 TVs in one room at one time anywhere in the world. That was 27 years ago, and now look at us here. Progress has indeed been made.

A preview of our gathering here today occurred in 1962 when an early-on friend of mine named Susanna opened her resort in the Catskills for a famous weekend where some 62 TVs gathered. My clearest memory of that event was waking in the

morning and going to the bathroom only to find it crowded with about 10 of the 'girls' in nighties, slips, panties, bras, and the like, all trying to see themselves in the mirror while trying to shave... It was so crowded that they missed their own cheeks and cut the girl beside them.

Dr. Wendell Pomeroy, one of the original Kinsey researchers, was there too and was heard to remark afterward that it had been the "most asexual weekend he had ever spent". I mention this because it illustrated the general conception amongst professionals at the time that cross-dressing was done primarily for sexual reasons and therefore it was expected that some kind of erotic activity would be going on behind every bush. Of course everybody was having too much fun just being girls to worry about sexuality, and I think the experience was not lost on the good doctor and other non-TVs who were there.

The following year, Susanna repeated the performance and I took the occasion to announce the formation of the Foundation for Personality Expression abbreviated FPE or Phi Pi Epsilon to put it in greek letters. This was the first organization for cross-dressers in this or, as far as I know, in any other country. Chapters were formed in many cities and then over the years there were other groups which formed on their own or sometimes broke away from FPE. As most of you know in 1980 we renamed the group 'The Society for the Second Self', or Tri-Ess for short. But FPE still survives in Scandinavia where I helped establish the group called FPE of North Europe. They too have an annual gathering at some resort in either Sweden or Denmark with 60 to 80 attendees. The Beaumont Society in England, formed by British members of FPE has also survived for nearly 20 years and has chapters all over England. It got its first rush of members as a result of an interview I gave to the Manchester Guardian in which I mentioned the group and they had 30 or 40 applications. Another group of former FPE members set up the Australian TV organization naming it the Seahorse Society because I had selected the Seahorse as our symbol since it is the male seahorse that guards and brings up the young. More recently another former member set up the Femme Travestie Society in Switzerland. So we are not alone being organized in the United States. As a result of these organizational activities and the publications that resulted from them, cross-dressers in all the western countries now at least know that there are organizations, that they are not alone and that if they wish to do so, they can meet and associate with others of the same persuasion.

I mention these things not to brag of my part in them but simply to review the situation as it was, the 'yesterday' in the title of this talk. It all started with 25 members scattered across the country and it has grown to many hundreds of members of several dozens of groups some of which are chapters of Tri Ess and others which are independent organizations. Those early efforts have paid off far beyond my imaginings of 1960.

So much for yesterday... what of today? Today we have several focal points in what Ariadne likes to call our 'para-culture'. Beginning at about the same time a dozen years ago, Ariadne and other members of the groups in Boston put together Fantasia Fair in Provincetown, and Marilyn in Seattle put together the 'DREAM' gathering on the Oregon coast. These two gatherings were on opposite sides of the continent and were quite different in other ways too. DREAM took place in a fancy leased group of condominiums where the participants lived in some pretty fancy apartments but did not mingle with the outside world. Fantasia Fair, on the other hand, was in a resort city which is very tolerant of gays and other minorities and where the participants are free to wander around town on their own visiting shops, restaurants, etc. just like any other tourist. The interesting thing about that experience is that no TV 'passes' in Provincetown for the simple reason that the

only 'ladies' in town who wear dresses, heels, and makeup are the TVs. All the local women and most of the tourists who come to visit the town are in slacks and flat shoes and not particularly 'feminine' as we would define it.

I will put in a plug for the Fair at this point because it is an experience that all of you who have not been able to get out 'on the town' elsewhere should have.

These two pioneering groups were followed by the formation of the Tiffany Club in Boston which also had its special events in Provincetown and, in due course, there were weekend affairs organized in various places such as in the Poconos in Pennsylvania, Shangri-La and Tri Ess gatherings in New Orleans and San Francisco. Groups in the Bay area, in upstate New York in Orange county in California, and others that I have probably forgotten have gatherings from time to time. The mid-continent, not to be outdone by the East or West coast, has its 'Be All You Want To Be' weekend. The 'Be All' is sponsored by four separate groups, the Chi Chapter of Tri Ess, Crossroads in Michigan, Paradise Club in Ohio, and TransPitt in Pennsylvania. The gathering last year had 191 attendees of which something like 41 were couples, and was, I am sure, the largest gathering of cross-dressers that has ever occurred anywhere at any time. It was also outstanding in the large number of wives and girlfriends that attended.

On the publishing side there is still Transvestia now published by my friend Carol Beecroft, and the Tapestry published by the person who has been the instigator and driving force behind this convention, Merissa Sherrill Lynn. The Tapestry has become a very respectable sized magazine and one which serves all shades of opinion in our culture. And of course there are a number of newsletters put out by the various chapters and groups around the country. So the amount of printed material available today is considerable and no cross-dresser anywhere need be without at least correspondent contacts even if she lives in the middle of the badlands of the Dakotas.

Unfortunately there are a lot of other publications which directly relate sex and cross-dressing which do not improve our image. Not that CDs are not as sexual as anyone else, but unfortunately there are many shrinks, as well as the lay public that think that the only reason we cross-dress is to get our sexual kicks and when so many magazines of this type appear it tends to vindicate their position and thus blinds them and the rest of the public to any understanding of the real nature and purpose of cross-dressing.

The other aspect of our contact with the main stream lies in appearances and lectures. As most of you know I initiated such appearances on radio and TV back in the early sixties. In fact, probably a fair number of you here today first learned that there were others like yourself and there were publications and groups for people like yourself either from catching one of my appearances or hearing about it from a friend. Out of curiosity, will those of you who did make your first contact through one of my appearances please raise your hands? (- Nearly 1/2 the audience raised their hands. -)

I exposed myself like that so that others could find me because I had no means of finding them. I guess I must have made about 100 appearances around the country between 1963 and 1970. I didn't mind doing it in those days but once I started living full time as Virginia and traveling around the world with tour groups I had to stop it. When I could retire back into the personality of 'Charles' I felt fairly safe that I would not be recognized as also being Virginia. But once I started living full time as Virginia and traveling around the world with tour groups

I had to stop it because I could not take the chance that some member of the tour group might have seen me on a show and would recognize me. Since I often had to share rooms with other women you can picture the consternation that recognition would have caused.

Fortunately there are many other individuals now in all parts of the country who have followed me and appeared on various TV and radio shows to spread the word. Since two of the most effective and experienced performers this way are in our audience today and because they have done such a good job of carrying the word to the public on many occasions and many shows I think they should be acknowledged. I refer, of course, to Naomi and Eve whom most of you know. This is not to overlook the many others who have appeared, but with the exception of Ariadne of the Outreach Institute and Carol Beecroft of Tri Ess, and Betty Ann of 'Our Sorority', I don't know the names of most of them. But we all owe a debt to any of our sisters who will do this since appearances where they can be seen, be questioned and have a chance to present themselves as intelligent, friendly, and non-threatening individuals are one of the few ways open to us to make our position known to the general public. I salute all those who have been brave enough to do this and I hope many more of you will in the future.

I think I can take a little credit for educating a number of professional people through lectures given to various medical school classes, regular university classes and private organizations as well as through presenting papers to professional societies and publishing in professional journals. Of recent years I have been joined in this endeavor by several others, two which come to mind are Ariadne and Dr. Roger Peo. There are probably others that I don't know about and thus can't acknowledge but whose efforts we should all appreciate.

I can't leave this review of where we are at the moment without a word about my research surveys to which many of you have contributed. The first was a survey of 504 cases of transvestism and I presented it to the American Psychiatric Convention in Honolulu in 1965 and it was subsequently published in the Psychological Reports in 1972 in conjunction with Dr. Bentler of UCLA. The current project has by now been responded to by over 700 of our sisters and is in the process of being computerized by my collaborator, a PhD Candidate at the U. of New York. This is a terribly long job when you consider that there were 52 questions and on average about 5 parts to each so $5 \times 52 \times 700 =$ about 180,000 entries. So that accounts for the fact that the results will not be available for perhaps another year. But when they are they will be submitted to both Transvestia and Tapestry for publication as well as some professional journal. The large number of responses should make a real contribution to professional knowledge of the subject. Well so much for the past and present. There are probably areas and contributors that I have overlooked and no offense is intended by such oversights. There are lots of things I don't know and others that I don't remember.

But the main thrust of this convention is the future. Where do we go from here? Do we just keep struggling along as we have for the last 27 years with a few public activities, a few publications and a bunch of widely scattered social groups none of which have any real goals individually or collectively? Or, alternatively, do you come to see the activity of cross-dressing and those who practice it as something more than just a kind of weird behavior on the part of some isolated and in some way abnormal individuals? This has been the situation throughout history. But history is a process of building up some aspect of human life or social behavior little by little until a situation comes to pass in which the slow quantitative change relatively suddenly develops a qualitative change. This change of quantity into quality is a philosophical proposition which occurs over and over again in both

nature and human relations. My reason for bringing it up in the present connection is that I think our 'movement' if you will permit the term, is ready to undergo such a change. But the movement made is up to you, the individuals, so that for the movement to change, you the individuals have to change. Individual drops of water do not move but when many come together in one place the pool starts to move. That is what we are doing at this convention. The pool is made up of many drops--each of you--so that for the pool to start to flow, to become a 'movement' you individual drops have to move.

Now I am not suggesting that you change your way of living. I neither want you to suddenly go down to the office in heels and a chiffon formal or to tell all the neighbors, relatives, etc. No, I don't want you to change what you do, I just want you change what you THINK! After all, there is an old saying--"As a man thinketh, so is he." so If I can change your thinking, I will change you. "So what do I have to do?" you ask. It's easy! All you have to do is to stop thinking of yourself and other cross-dressers as kind of kookie, as something of an oddball because you do something most other men neither do nor understand, or as a sort of psychological and medical curiosity. All of us have entertained these and similar ideas in the past, and many still do. "But the times they are a-changin'" so the song says, and it is time that we cease looking upon the act of cross-dressing in these negative ways. "Well what other ways are there?" you ask.

Every one of you is well acquainted with the idea of women's liberation and I expect that most of you support and some of you are members of the National Organization of Women. But few men or women have stopped to consider that men need liberation even more than women, but they don't know it because being the ruling class it never occurs to them that there is any better place to be than where they are--the nobles of society. With women having been the peasants of society and having served the nobles for thousands of years the possibility of their wanting to change their status is both reasonable and clear. But if you are born a noble how can you improve on that? What is better is to be a free noble and not one bound to a centuries-old set of behaviors, expectations, requirements and life styles that prevent men from ever realizing a lot of their own potentials. Yes, men need liberation but not in the same way as women. Women have needed liberation TO, that is, the freedom to do the kind of work that interests them, of becoming a professional person like a doctor, a lawyer, or a scientist, or to go into politics and government at local, state and federal levels. They needed to learn how to stand on their own feet, make something of themselves and to be independent persons, not appendages to some male, father, brother, husband, etc. And those possibilities have largely been achieved.

But men already have these things. Men need liberation FROM, not TO. They need escape from the conceptions of manliness as one who is supposed to know about all manner of things, who is able to handle most any situation, who is there to comfort others not as strong as he is, to provide a shoulder to cry on and an encouraging pat on the back and words of cheer. He is expected to always be strong, be capable of handling whatever may arise and to be a leader. If he falls too far behind his peers in these ways he is regarded as a wimp or a panty waist by other men and his own self esteem drops proportionately. So it's liberation FROM these expectations that men need. If such liberation should be achieved some day men would be able to be and do what they felt like being and doing and not what society or other men tried to get them to be. This would be reflected in their work, their attitudes toward other, the kind of degree of expectations that would show up in independence of behavior, interests and dress. A society composed of both liberated women AND liberated men would indeed be a remarkable place to live.

Well that's all very nice, you say, but what has it got to do with us? Answer--Everything, because as cross-dressers you are already well on the way toward that goal. Any man who is held captive by others or by ideas and customs has enemies, namely his captors, masters and concepts. Thus in the drive to live up to society's expectations of masculinity there is one big enemy, one's own femininity. This is any man's greatest enemy because it is diametrically opposed to the masculinity that he is expected to feel and manifest to others. Thus ever since a boy was called a sissy himself or watched what happened to some other boy who was so labeled he has made a great effort never to let that happen again. This leads either to isolation out of fear, going through life in frustration and anger with accompanying physiological symptoms of ulcers, heart attacks, and other conditions, or at the extreme the development of the over-compensating attitude we call machoism where by making enough noise, attracting enough attention, doing enough daring and possibly destructive or criminal things a man 'proves' that he is a 'real' man.

The result is that for most men their biggest enemy is their own inner femininity because its discovery would destroy them in the eyes of other men. It is well known that men do not develop physically close relationships with other men as women do with other women. Men do not show emotions such as hurt, grief, fear, or tenderness lest such manifestations shall be taken as a sign of weakness--read femininity. Thus men always keep other men at a physical and psychological distance just as a moat around a castle keeps the enemy out. This is done because should the invader get inside the moat he might destroy the castle's owner. Should another man manage to penetrate a man's psychological defenses he might, just might discover something about that man which could be interpreted as not sufficiently masculine, which is to say, somewhat feminine. That information in the hands of another man would about destroy the victim's self esteem. You all understand what I'm talking about because you have gone to great lengths to keep your cross-dressing secret from brother, father, coach, boss, and friends lest they decide that you were indeed too feminine and not a REAL MAN. Have you ever reflected on the fact that you can hold hands, hug or give a hello or goodbye kiss to another CD if you were both dressed, whereas you would not think of doing the same thing if you were both dressed in men's clothes? That is because you have escaped FROM those masculine expectations and requirements when you are dressed as a woman. But unknowingly you behave that way when dressed because you CAN behave that way. It's a touch of freedom.

Well where does this leave us as far as the future of cross-dressers is concerned? It leaves me with the feeling that I want to get all of you to see yourselves in a different light; not on the defensive and apologetic side concerning your feminine interests, but on the aggressive, proud and self-confident side. And why not? Cross-dressers of whatever persuasion, gay or straight, TVs, TGs, or TSs are in point of fact the very vanguard of Mens' Liberation. Why? Because we have faced up to that enemy, our own inner femininity that frightens so many men. My personal comment about myself is, "I have met the enemy and SHE is ME." All of us have met this erstwhile enemy that so concerns other men and we have made a degree of peace with her. We have given her real time existence and 3-dimensional reality and we enjoy her when she is present. In this process we have to a degree and for the time being literally been liberated FROM all that masculinity that so encumbers the lives of other men and our lives when our femme-self is not present.

So if we can begin to see our activity in the positive light of being a liberation movement that all men will someday enjoy and that we are simply first in the field we can see ourselves as pointing the way to others. Now let me hastily make a statement before you misinterpret the above. I am definitely NOT saying that what we do, namely wearing dresses, heels and makeup should be done by all other men. That is not it at all. It is merely the technique that we have developed to

contend with the repression that society puts on us to conform. However, we sometimes place more importance on the clothing than is warranted. Clothing, besides keeping the wearer both warm and modest is only a kind of admission ticket to a certain way of life. Women's clothing is a means to an end, not an end in itself. To most cross-dressers, whether they know it or not, the feminine clothing simply gets them out of jail so that they can, for a limited time, be the kind of person they cannot be the rest of the time. Ideal liberation for both men and women is not to become women or men respectively, but to achieve the right to express and enjoy any of the various ways people can react to life without having to deal with the label of 'masculine' or 'feminine'.

Merissa has suggested that we need to become a real community and I agree. A community is a group of people with common interests, common goals and some consensus on how to achieve them. In the past we have been just a disorganized group of people with common interests all right, but not common goals because we have not taken the trouble to think beyond ourselves. We have enjoyed our pleasures and suffered our guilts on a personal level, never really asking why there are so many others with the same interests and the same fears and guilts. We are a community without really knowing it. What we really need to do to become a true community is to realize that: A) each of us is one of a large number, B) that both the pleasures and the pains are shared with others, and C) that we all have a common opponent--the social idea that men should not try to become whole human beings by developing their YINS as well as their YANGS, to use the Chinese terms, but rather should be satisfied to remain only half humans--nobles who live in their castles on the cold but stimulating mountain tops--never to enjoy the flowers and the warmth of the meadows below.

I see this convention as a kind of collimating lens--one that receives light coming in from many directions and putting it out all going in one direction. That is, it makes all beams parallel. We come to this convention not only from all geographic directions but from many different psychological directions too. We are of various persuasions regarding our dressing, some among us are gay, most are just straight TVs, a few of us are transgenderists and some are post operative transsexuals. Naturally the views of these various groups are very diverse and each of us is primarily concerned about the meaning and importance of cross-dressing to our own selves and our own group. This means that each group resents a different picture to society and society is therefore confused. A society that is confused and doesn't quite understand something will react negatively to it in order to protect its own values which it does understand.

The various types of people that make up our sub-culture should, therefore, recognize that we have a common opponent and that we would all be better off if we could present a common front to society in the hope that it could learn to understand us, hopefully to accept us, but as a minimum, to just let us do our thing. But to bring this about we have to stop confusing society with multiple presentations and differing explanations which induce society's negative reactions. To do this we have to find the common denominator between gay and straight CDs, and between full-time TGs and pre- and post-op TSSs. In short, we have to markedly reduce the internal strife and polarization between the various types of CDs and like to the collimated beam of laser light, all of us face in the same direction and realize that the real antagonist is not each other but social ignorance, misunderstanding and opposition. We have to find what we all have in common and present this to society in such a way as to educate its ignorance, provide a rationale for its understanding of our cross-dressing and thereby undermine its opposition.

From where I sit it no longer seems of vital importance whether you are gay or straight, that is a personal decision basically unrelated to dressing. It isn't really important whether you dress intermittently according to desire and opportunity, as most of you do, or whether you live full time as I and some others do, nor is it important whether you plan on or have achieved sex reassignment surgery. The common thread running through all these life styles is the need and desire to express and experience one's own self-concept and total potential. In doing so we can become both better and more complete human beings.

Once we have a common understanding of what we are accomplishing when we dress we can accept a common goal which is to make society understand that there is a need in our society for people to be free and to be complete. This does not mean just political freedom or racial freedom but social freedom--the freedom to express whatever is part of oneself as long as other people's rights and freedoms are not trod upon in the process. Gender as an outgrowth of sex and the division of labor in life's tasks, served a useful purpose for past generations. But under modern economic and social conditions with modern knowledge and modern understanding of ourselves and the world we live in, gender is pretty much an anachronism. Sexual differences of anatomy, physiology and psychology will remain, of course, but distinctions of social expectation, requirements and limitations as to life styles, interests, talents, dress and occupations will slowly disappear. This is already visible in the younger set. If you were an 18 year old TV today how would you dress to satisfy your desire to be like a girl? About all you could do would be to wear two earrings instead of one like the boys do. Young women of today wear little makeup or jewelry and many of them have boyish haircuts. They dress, act, drink, smoke, swear and give you the finger if they get angry at you just like the boys do. About the only differences left are those based on anatomy, boys wear jockstraps and girls wear bras.

So, to conclude these remarks, I'd like to see each of you leave this convention and start your own personal tomorrow with a new outlook on your cross-dressing. Namely that it is not a kinky behavior, that it is not sick, that in itself it is not an indicator of sexual partner preference, but rather, that cross-dressing is merely a means of your achieving a condition of more complete 'human-ness'. Be proud of the fact that you are in fact one cut ABOVE other men, not BELOW them, by virtue of having discovered the other side of yourself. You ARE one of the leaders of Mens' Liberation because you too have met the enemy, made a degree of peace with her, given her real life and brought her to this gathering. And as I look out over this crowd of "enemies" I hope I am looking at the future commanders of the real war--the war to achieve full human status for both men and women. Remember! If you can imagine something, it is human, if something is possible, it is human, if it is desirable and satisfying, it is human, if it is enjoyable and fulfilling, it is human, and if it indeed IS human it ought to be available to all humans regardless of their sex.

Having made that peace with your own 'enemy' you have more freedom to interact with other people and problems because you now have a handle on both extremes of human nature. You understand the active and the passive, the assertive and the receptive, you have the outer strength to act if the situation warrants it and the inner strength to let the situation pass you by, if that is a more appropriate response. You know from personal experience what it is like to be a man and what the benefits and privileges of being a woman are, and you are able to select whichever pattern you wish at a given time. Moreover, you are beginning to understand that your clothing at the time really has little to do with it. A liberated human whether in pants or skirts has a choice between an assertive, attacking reaction to a situation or a passive, accepting and a let-it-go-by

reaction. And it makes no difference what the sex of the human being is.

So go forth from this convention to your own personal futures, love your 'enemy' as yourself (which she really is) and do your part in our common effort to liberate not only ourselves but all other men.

- END -



(Dr. Peo, Director of 'Androgyny Unlimited' in Poughkeepsie NY, delivered this keynote speech at I.F.G.E.'s first annual 'Coming Together' convention in Chicago, March 6, 1987.)

WORKING TOGETHER
- Roger E. Peo, PhD

Writing this speech has allowed me to clarify some ideas that have been rattling around in my head for the past few years. Images of meetings of cross-dressing groups, clients struggling with problems, sexuality conferences, workshops and meetings -- all needed expression. This sub-culture is complex. Problems faced by you, its members, are in some ways unique because your needs often go against the standards of society. For you to survive and progress you have to work together. Examining this concept let me to see there are several different groups that are a part of this community. Working together requires teamwork within the sub-groups and between them.

What does 'teamwork' mean anyway? When looking it up I found it was associated with words like 'synergy', 'harmony', 'solidarity', 'mutual assistance', 'common endeavor', and 'collaboration'. So, working together has the flavor of harmony which requires trust. Where teamwork can break down is in the area of leadership. Every team has a captain (captainess??) whose main task is to focus the energies of the rest of the team toward a common goal. When the leader is respected by all the members, things move smoothly. If the leader is arbitrary or plays favorites things can go awry. Thus leadership is a tricky business.

In this room are two fine examples of leaders -- Virginia Prince and Merissa Lynn. How did they do it? First, they are very dedicated to their goals. They have another trait --- the willingness to put in extremely long hours to make things happen. Lastly, they have the ability to get different people to work together. That last characteristic is perhaps the most difficult to define. Part of it is honesty. While you might not agree with their ideas, you at least know where they stand. Also they are fair and willing to listen to other points of view. They were able to make things happen that have brought us here today. Tomorrow we will hear Virginia talk about where you have been and speculate on where you might be going. Merissa is a significant influence on your future. This convention was her idea. It was her energy that made it happen -- not alone -- for many others have had a part in it. But without her vision I suspect we would not be here today.

When people work together, there is often a hidden effect. The result can be greater than any individual could have achieved alone. I am sure that all of you have experienced this effect when talking with other people. One person says something which triggers an idea or association for you. You offer a comment that stirs someone else's thinking. soon the ideas are flowing. The result can be an idea or activity that would not have happened if you had not joined together. By taking an energetic part in an organization's activities you lend support which makes the results greater than they would have been otherwise -- the synergistic effect. While it takes a leader such as Merissa or Virginia to focus your efforts, it takes all of you to make it work.

There is a 'flip side' to this group action. Some of you probably know that I have two careers. In my other career I work in a large corporation. Recently I had an assignment that required several different groups to work together. There was no formal structure to force us to work together, only agreements between the people involved. In the beginning of the project the engineering group had a good spirit of teamwork. We added a purchasing agent who had the attitude that no one in engineering should ever be trusted. Her attitude of mistrust caused endless delays and re-work. No matter what I said or how cooperative we were, her distrust persisted. When she was replaced by another woman who worked with us in a spirit of cooperation, the project moved and we made our goals. This experience taught me again that a single person can make a difference -- either good or bad -- in how a group activity will turn out. Obvious, perhaps, but something you can not afford to lose sight of.

Gender issues are often very isolating experiences. Because such behavior is disapproved of by society, you are often forced to deal with your feeling by yourself. Somewhere in each of your lives you found out about a group that dealt with the issues that you thought you alone faced. At last, a breath of fresh air! You went to a meeting and met others who were facing similar feelings. By talking to them you were able to feel better about yourself. Did you ever think about that organization that made it possible for you to have that life altering experience? If you have never worked in an organization, you have no idea of the amount of detail that goes into making it a successful operation. Mailings, dues collection, meeting location reservations, newsletter, refreshments, bills to be paid, etc., in short a lot of work. Most of it is unseen by the attendees at the meetings. So, your support is needed in the trivial and mundane as well as in the popular work that has to be done.

There are other aspects of working together. As I mentioned before, transgender needs often create isolation. In this isolation one can begin to feel unique. No one else has the same needs as I have..... Sometimes this feeling of uniqueness causes a fragmentation of your own ranks. Transvestites, cross-dressers, male-to-female transsexuals, female-to-male transsexuals, drag queens, female impersonators --- you do have different needs, but you have many common needs as well. Other sexual minorities such as the Gay Community have dealt with the same kind of societal intolerance that you experience. They have built organizations and handled the details of running them. You can learn from their experiences, for they have been there. In addition, you can perhaps form alliances with them for mutual benefit. To ignore these areas of common needs costs you, for here again you can learn from and help each other.

Another group with whom you have to work are your spouses or significant others. From my own observations I know that maintaining a significant relationship with another person takes a lot of effort. This is true even when there are no unusual complications. Pressures of jobs, children and money create stresses on any relationship. Sexual issues invade the most intimate area of a person's life. Our society does not provide healthy sexual images and does not encourage honest discussion of sexual feelings. Even the socially acceptable forms of sexual expression are not discussed. Thus, many people grow up with an inadequate understanding of the sexual forces on their lives.

We also have a double standard in our society. Often this means that women are treated quite shabbily and are 'sheltered' from sexual issues -- except on 'how to please your man' and 'how to raise children'. This isolation has serious consequences for us all. When it comes to dealing with a transgender issue in a relationship a woman is often ill-equipped to understand what is happening to her

and to her partner. If she is wrestling with transsexual feelings herself she often finds nowhere to turn. In a relationship, working together carries special significance. It hinges on two things -- good communication and the willingness to be sensitive to the other person's needs. Without these traits any significant relationship will have problems.

Yet another aspect of working together is the relationship between the helping professions and the transgender community. I personally have experience the anger of clients who simply see me as an impediment to their progress. As a therapist I strive to form a working partnership with each of my clients, for without that partnership any therapy as a poor chance of being successful. Key components in forming that partnership are honesty and openness. My goal is to have any client leave my office feeling better than when they arrived. For this partnership to work they have to trust me. It is hard for someone to trust another person when they are sharing their intimate feelings in a struggle to understand their situation. How I achieve this trust varies with each person I see. When I feel we are not functioning in harmony then we stop and work on what is getting in the way. The bottom line, however, remains the same. I answer their questions and share my observations with them. I treat them as human beings who have worth.

A goal of this conference is to tell society about yourselves. Why do you want to do this? The reason you say society needs more information about transgender behaviors is so you will be accepted. What does acceptance mean? In the most ambitious sense it means that a person can dress and act in any manner without being censured. I believe that such a utopia will never come about. Our culture runs on the ability to differentiate the sex roles. Until men and women deal rationally with sex roles, there is little hope that activities which blur such roles will ever be acceptable. You can, however, take a conservative view. If you simply want to tell people why you feel as you do and that what you feel is not harmful to them, you may be able to reduce criticism of your behavior.

The more difficult questions to answer are, "What is in it for society? and, Does society really want to know about you?" Assuming that society wants to hear more about you, how should you go about giving them information? I have been involved in sex education for more than 10 years. This involvement makes me very aware of how uninformed and unaware most people are about basic sexual behaviors and feelings. As a society we are described as sex-negative. This negativity exists in spite of the blatant appearance of sexual messages in advertising and the media. Before you can explain your special situation, you have to support general sex education which will provide the foundation for understanding who you are. Some of that sex education is formal. You support or deny it when you vote for school board members, members of Congress, legislators, etc. They, in large measure, control whether or not sex education will happen. Other sex education goes on in our everyday interactions with family, friends, and co-workers. Behaving in chauvinistic ways, stereotyping men and women, denying that sexual expression can have a positive influence in a person's life are all limiting activities. In short, each of us is a sex educator whether we like it or not, for our behaviors educate those around us.

A part of this conference is aimed at helping you move forward -- to establish new goals. One way you might gain some social acceptance is volunteerism. There are a tremendous number of worthy social activities that desperately need help. Now I am not advocating that you do this volunteer work while cross-dressed (unless that is your normal state). However, there are always fund raising activities and hours of work required to keep any organization functioning. Perhaps you could associate yourselves with such an activity and provide assistance, even

from afar. By working on socially approved activities you can show yourselves to be responsible citizens and not people who are just out for themselves. I realize that this suggestion has the potential for diluting your efforts. It is hard enough to find people who will work on your own organization's needs. Yet without some outreach to the general community you will continue to be isolated and misunderstood.

One area in which you have been very cooperative is sex research. In the past few years your sub-culture has been the subject of many investigations. There is, however, more to do. In some recent correspondence with Carol Beecroft of Tri-Ess she mentioned the need to have a more global understanding of the transgender culture. We do not really know just how many people have these feeling because they are considered socially unacceptable. Thus many people who have these feeling keep them hidden away because exposure can mean social and perhaps economic ruin. Carol felt there might be some way to take a national survey by enlisting the help of Ann Landers, Dear Abby and others. Further projects still need to be devised.

In conclusion, you have come a long way. This has been due in no small part to leaders such as Merissa, Virginia, and Carol. It has also been because of you and your willingness to work together for a common goal. Most of you who are here in this room today are part of a sexual minority. As such, your needs are neither understood nor accepted by society at large. Drug addiction, alcoholism and homosexuality are behaviors that define other minorities. These other groups have been able to move beyond that stigma and gain support for their members. Today they appear to have somewhat more tolerance from society than you do. We are bombarded by fundamental religious perspective and threatened by the AIDS epidemic. The result is that our society is undergoing some significant changes. Sexual minorities have always been looked at askance even in the most liberal of times. As society becomes more conservative you will probably experience even more intolerance. Whether or not you will ever be accepted by society is of little importance. The important thing is to work together to support each other, making each of your lives a little richer while reaching out to help others and who have not yet had the freeing experiences you have had.

Thank you.

- END -

IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

TRANSVESTISM AND TRANSEXUALISM (AN INTRODUCTION)

March 6, 1987

Tier 2, Tapes 1, & 2

Tape 1, Side 1

Elaine Willey, Dr. Roger Peo - Presenters

I'm Elaine Willey and this is Dr. Roger Peo. The two of us will be conducting and moderating this session. For our first convention we aren't sure what our audience is. This is billed as an introduction and in later conventions would be available for the outside public as well. Even with the people here, we have many different levels of folks being out of the closet and of what you would like to know about crossdressing. We don't want to open the floor to discussion but we do want to solicit your participation. We want to begin with a certain theme. The letter that Merissa sent out with the introductory package is a good place to start.

We are trying to do something here that doesn't involve coat-tailing on other conventions. We are attempting to define our own convention and in a more important sense, ourselves as well.

Many of the key terms we will discuss here, such as 'transvestite', 'crossdresser', or 'transsexual', don't have a definition. These are fairly new terms and are used differently by various groups. The medical profession has their own usage of these terms and so do the crossdressers. If you check dictionary definitions, you will find different meanings and definitions from the various editions of the same dictionary.

When we are talking about this area, some people don't like definitions. You may hear some people say they don't want to be categorized. People who are involved in some specific area take offense at others who may try to put them in some category or intellectualize them. They don't wish to be made to appear ordinary. They feel they are different and are being themselves. The title song to La Cage Aux Folles, "I Am What I Am", has almost become our national anthem.

You are most likely to be afraid that if you are categorized by someone, that is the same as being put aside. By being treated this way, you are looked at coldly and scientifically without any regard to any human emotions you may have.

On the other hand, you can't think about something without referring to categories. There are many areas where this technique is useful and important.

A third concern is what we call persuasive definitions. These are definitions that mix up facts and values in a way that is difficult to disentangle.

The person is trying to give an abstract and he's trying to redirect your attitudes in an important way.

The fourth pitfall I see here is when you try to define a new term. You can go back to its word origin and you think it ought to mean what the word origin means.

A lot of people think 'transvestite' and 'crossdresser' should mean the same thing because 'crossdresser' means in english what 'transvestite' means in latin. You can't make the word mean exactly what the origin word means and express the new meaning to give to it. You will get more shades of meaning if you have different words.

There are a few of the pitfalls we should be aware of when we are dealing with a subject in which we don't define things abstractly. We are concerned with something very important and personal. We are trying to understand ourselves in the process of defining.

Dr. Roger Peo - It is hard to discuss any kind of definition. I try to look at definitions in two ways. One is in research of a group of people and somehow understand their behavior. I will need some kind of definition to do that.

Definitions and labels are not useful when I am trying to deal with the problems of a client in my office. Each person is an individual and they are what they are. In a counseling situation, I will spend a significant amount of time getting them not to label themselves. The problem with labels is that you may say what that label means which isn't true and then you will treat that label. Which can lead to problems in counseling.

There are some basic definitions in the gender field. I want to discuss 'sex' and 'gender'. The words come from different languages and do have different meanings. Virginia Prince and others have said that 'sex' is between your legs and 'gender' is between your ears. To some extent, this is true. 'Sex' is biological and physical and it's your body and what you were born with. 'Gender' is basically a means of expressing who you are and has heavy connotations of sex in it that is male or female. In our society, we have two camps that deal with what a man is supposed to do and with what a woman is supposed to do. We call these kinds of things 'gender'. You can spin off such terms as 'gender identity' and 'gender role'.

In research terms, gender identity is the connotation of the internal understanding a person has whether they are male or female. Gender role is how they act that out in the society environment.

Another problem within the gender community is in mixing up gender issues with sexual partner choices, that is, whether a person is heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual.

Who someone chooses as a sexual partner has little bearing with their gender perception. A person who is male can choose a female or another male, or can choose both. Sexual partner choice does not automatically define a person's gender identity or gender role.

During the past 24 hours while at this convention, I had the opportunity to walk behind some of the participants of this gathering and have overheard comments by those not part of this group. The most prevalent definition they put on you is

gay. You and I know this isn't true but they don't. Being gay is a typical myth or misconception of crossdressing or transsexual issues being linked with sexual partner choice.

To move on to gender issues, a couple of terms I'd like to include here is 'transvestite' and 'transsexual'. 'Transvestite' literally translated from the latin means crossdressing. A more common term in our society is to talk about these people as being crossdressers.

In formal psychological terms, a transvestite is almost always a male who wears one or more articles of female clothing. Often times, the male transvestite has some kind of erotic sexual arousal relating to his crossdressing.

The person's sexual partner choice can be male or female and the idea here is that the man is in fact wearing female clothes for sexual arousal. This is the underlying diagnostic terminology.

We know that there are a lot more things in the gender culture relating to transvestites than sexual arousal. I can get some serious arguments from people as to whether or not there is any sexual arousal at all as a function of crossdressing.

Another interesting part of transvestism is gender identity or that person's sense of being male or female. Sometimes they perceive themselves as male and enjoy that role and at other times, they see themselves as female.

When I look at that other part of crossdressing behavior that is linked with transsexualism, I find a very different kind of phenomenon. A person who is considered to be transsexual always feels they are the other sex either all or most of the time. From a clinical point of view, there is one major difference between a transvestite and a transsexual.

There are certainly more underlying issues apparent here. The person who thinks he or she is transsexual is looking for hormone therapy, the sex reassignment surgery and sometimes other kinds of physical alterations which the average crossdresser does not look for.

The gender community has been prolific in generating other terms by which to call themselves by. Some of it is in violent reaction to "I don't want to be labeled with a clinical term that may carry along with it added things I don't believe are true about me..." Others perhaps wish to set themselves apart by saying this is a particular area I belong to and it gives me a sense of special identity.

Over the years, a lot of these terms have come into our language. The words 'androgynous', 'femmiphile', and some others, are terms defined that describe different aspects of crossdressing behavior.

Another popular term used by the general public is 'drag queen'. This has specific connotations referring to the gay community where there is a different kind of sexual behavior. In breaking the definition apart, drag in the gay community is often used to refer to a male dressing in female clothing which carries the idea of female parody or of putting women down. A queen in the gay world is an effeminate male. In both cases, these definitions carry the meaning of a specific sexual partner choice which is generally homosexual.

Question (Virginia Prince) - If gender identity is what you say it is, what does sexual identity mean? My point is, asking the question is rhetorical. What

you define as our own sense of maleness or femaleness is really sexual identity. When we take the term from our gender side of our lives and give it sexual connotation, we muddy the waters between sex and gender. Sexual identity to my way of thinking means I have a penis or I have a vagina. I am male or I am female. Gender identity is my sense of being a man or a woman. I think this makes it much clearer.

Roger - OK, I won't argue that.

Question (Kim Mackie) - I'm in the gender program at the Clark Institute and I've been having some problems with it. I've been labeled as gender dysphoric and while I can accept it, I haven't been able to define the term. Is gender dysphoria a definition of a sex, gender, or a mental illness?

Roger - Gender dysphoria is the term used by the clinics. 'Dysphoria' means 'uncomfortable'. When someone is classified as gender dysphoric, it means they are uncomfortable with the gender assigned to them by society. Gender dysphoria is another of those catch all phrases and it's simply a way of defining a class of people who are uncomfortable about their current situation.

Question - This is the second time in my life that I have been classified as suitable for gender re-classification. I've been involved with various organizations and I've found that many people who are in the same position as I am, are under the care of a psychiatrist or psychologist. I haven't been to that stage yet. In the medical world, is our problem considered mental or physical?

Roger - That's not what we are discussing here. I don't know if there is a clear answer to the situation. I think what you are really asking is where does gender dysphoria come from or why do you feel the way you do? And how does the medical or psychiatric profession classify it?

It really comes down to who you talk to. It can have emotional implications. If you are not happy with some aspect of your life, that will affect your emotions. Whether there is actually some physical cause for being transsexual is not known. There have been many studies done, none of which have been replicatable, that have tried to discover where gender dysphoria comes from.

There are postulated reasons from improper fetal development to hormonal imbalances shortly after birth and differences in brain development, but none of these have been verified. This is more classified as an emotional problem than a physical one. We know how to deal with the physical aspects in terms of hormone therapy and the sex reassignment surgery, but that really doesn't correct whatever happened earlier in life.

Comment - Some told me the American and or the Canadian governments have passed a law preventing crossdressed people from crossing the border. This was assuming that gender dysphoria was a mental illness.

Roger - You have a third area here dealing with laws that have nothing to do with what is going on in either the psychological or the medical community. some of these laws are passed by people who don't understand what is going on or who are afraid of it. This is a different category and we haven't talked about legal definitions at all.

Elaine - That you have a term like dysphoria which means uncomfortable is a reflection that some of these definitions are from the medical community which deal

with what they consider to be an illness. For the same reason when a transvestite crossdresses for sexual pleasure, this is considered a deviation, therefore an illness of some kind.

There is currently some controversy going on about the official classification of these things as illnesses. There is a book called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual from the American Psychiatric Association, or DSM 3, for the third edition. This book has generated some controversy.

The third edition is the first one that had specific definitions in it. Before this edition came out, there was a strong movement among the gay community to eliminate homosexuality as an illness and that was done. Homosexuality is not considered to be an illness but transvestism still is.

The fourth edition is being prepared and there is now controversy about whether or not transvestism and transsexualism should be considered as mental illnesses. It is no longer the case that we are assumed to be what the doctors think we are.

Comment - I'm in the SRS program in Dallas and my psychiatrist's diagnosis is supported by the AMA. We saw the HBO special, 'What Sex Am I?' in his office one day and it seems that leading experts in the field are leaning towards a medical cause for gender dysphoria. I believe that we will one day discover that gender dysphoria is caused by a mistake in the genetic coding.

Comment (Virginia Prince) - Dr. Norman Fisk at Stanford was the one who invented the phrase gender dysphoria. It's a wonderful example of how confused the professional people are about this field. I asked him later if this is truly gender dysphoria then why was a surgical change the solution? Conversely, if you feel a person will be better off by having a surgical change, then why isn't it called sexual dysphoria? This is one more instance where the professionals don't distinguish between gender and sex.

It was generally applied to people seeking the SRS but as a generalization, it's in the same category as what Elaine said about crossdressing. All transvestites are crossdressers but not all crossdressers are transvestites.

Here, as all of us are gender dysphoric in a certain sense, since we are not entirely satisfied with having our own gender roles, the term should really be sexual dysphoria for those unhappy with their anatomy from those who are unhappy with the role they lead.

Roger - Once we put a medical definition on something, that often implies a cure or a stopping of a certain behavior and this can be misleading. Another pitfall of the definitions is the implication of a cure or of at least an understanding at a level that we really don't understand.

The issue of why a person perceives themselves as a man or woman is not known. You can say things about cultural implications or early learning experiences but when we speak of basics, we don't know why people perceive themselves as they do.

Comment - We have quite a collection of crossdressers in this hotel and we have everything here from heterosexual transvestites to people seeking sex reassignment surgery. I've noticed that each of us to a certain extent in our own group tends to put down the other groups. Yet we are supposed to be working together. Some of the issues here do affect all of us.

End Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

Comment - I'm not an expert on this but I had to come up with an explanation for my parents and friends who found out about my desires. I tried to explain to them that gender is separate from sex and it is something you are born with. I feel I was born with a female gender in a male body. You can't change your gender but you can change your sex to match your gender. This is what I want to do to be happy and fulfilled.

Elaine - You will encounter controversy as to whether or not you can really change your sex. You can't change your chromosome structure within each cell and you can't change your ability to bear children, at least not with today's modern medical techniques. You can change some very important things considered so by many transsexuals.

I want to discuss a little bit of the history of gender issues to include some of the landmark events. There is no question that crossdressing behavior has existed in all times and cultures. There are some cultures in which the act has been institutionalized and the people involved given an honored place in that society.¹ Some societies do more than merely tolerate crossdressing behavior but in our present culture it has not been tolerated very well.

Until modern times, it would be difficult to classify various crossgendered people as being transvestite or transsexual. And there was certainly no chance for surgical changes of any kind back then.

The term 'transvestite' was coined by Mangus Herschfeld around 1910. he was doing research in this field but his library was destroyed by the Nazis and nothing has survived.

Havelock Ellis is another important figure from that era. He conceived the term 'eonism' from the 18th century transvestite, the Chevalier De Eon. This term has never caught on.

When Kinsey did his research he didn't focus on transvestites but spent a lot of time on homosexuality. he did manage to interview some 47 transvestites.

In the second volume of the Kinsey report that deals with female human sexuality, there is a section on transvestism. Kinsey's remarks in this section are all very perceptive.

The landmark event in modern times was of course the Christine Jorgenson case. This story hit the headlines in December 1952. It was the first widely publicized sex change surgery ever reported. This was the opening period of many people beginning to discuss this field.

Up to that time, there were very few crossdressing organizations or support groups. This history of this took place during the last 30 years or so. Even within the past ten years, the proliferation of these groups has been immense.

If there are no other questions on the history part of this, we will go to the topic Roger mentioned before on motivation and satisfaction.

Roger - If I'm dealing with a client, speaking to a group or even with one person, one of the first questions that comes up is why. Why do people crossdress? Why do men want to pretend they are women? There is no simple answer. We don't know why people feel the way they do about their gender.

I have spent some time categorizing reasons why people crossdress. I don't imply any order in these things because for some people, why they do it might be a single issue and for others they are immaterial.

There are several different major categories of motivation. One is called escape. Some of my clients like to crossdress because when they do, they feel more relaxed. The perception I get is they don't have to pretend or they don't have to be male. They escape into the feminine and don't have the pressures put on them that they believe society does.

Another category is called adventure. It's fun to do something different. The adrenalin flows especially when they are crossdressed. You wonder if you will get away with it and you can have some exciting fun in the process. It's exciting to go out and pretend to be something you aren't. And there is the "...Am I going to be read..." phenomena that adds more excitement to the adventure of crossdressing.

Another escape reason is in dealing with gay feelings. If one is crossdressed because they feel they have an attraction towards a male for a sexual partner, so they feel it may be more appropriate to be a woman in that situation in order to feel better or less anxious about their sexual partner choice. If the person is a crossdressed transsexual and is with a man, they feel more in tune with who they are than if they have to wear clothes prescribed by society by their biological sex.

Another escape item is to live out fantasies. A lot of us have fantasies and some may deal with crossdressing by actually doing the crossdressing. They are able to put themselves into a situation they have only thought about doing in the past.

The most important category of escape is what is known as exploring the feminine. What is it like to be a woman in this society? Some actually want to get out in public and experience life in that other gender role.

There are some pleasure aspects relating to crossdressing. Under this category, there is crossdressing for erotic arousal and I don't think I need to expand on this.

Another pleasure which is slightly different is in crossdressing for sensual feeling. In this society the clothes that are allowed for women only are very sensual. The suit I'm wearing is not very sensual. But if you think of a nice silky blouse or lacy lingerie, or a skirt with nylons, these are all examples of sensual clothing. These are sensual clothes because they feel good to wear. There is no sexual connotation here in sensual clothes. They just feel good to wear.

The final item under the pleasure category is simply to have fun. It may be fun to dress in women's clothes for a costume party or some other kind of event. It can be a fun thing to do because it is something different.

There are some serious reasons as to why someone crossdresses. The most obvious is to relieve guilt. This turns out to be a vicious cycle and I deal with clients about this a great deal. Crossdressing is fun and can be an adventure but along with this comes guilt. I am a man and I shouldn't be engaging in this behavior. It is not acceptable in this society.

I have a need to crossdress but I don't want to do it and this becomes a

vicious cycle. But when I'm crossdressed I don't feel guilty. It is only afterwards that I have guilt feelings. In this case, crossdressing allows the man to escape from his guilt.

Another reason for crossdressing is to merely flout social norms. Society expects me to behave in a certain way and I'll be damned if I'm going to do it that way. I will dress this way because I want to and if somebody doesn't like it, that's too bad. Here, we have a statement about society.

Along with this is the stronger statement about misogyny, or women hating. I would guess there are some people who crossdress to parody women and put them down. In this case, the crossdressing is done to express an anger towards women.

Punishment is another reason related to the previous one. I have been bad, I need to be punished. The worst punishment that I can think about while being punished is to be a woman. In this society, women are second class citizens and I'm going to be put down.

In the subculture of bondage and discipline (B&D, S&M), often times the crossdressing is closely related to the punishment aspect. This punishment aspect happens as opposed to the sexual aspects of this area.

The most difficult thing to deal with as a counselor is the issue of control, especially in the area of a relationship. Crossdressing is a very powerful means of control in most relationships.

I have done a study of a number of wives of crossdressers. A lot of the things I heard were the uncomfortable things that go through a woman's mind when she learns that her partner is a crossdresser. The issue is that if the man crossdresses in the intimate sexual environment, he then has control over his significant other or spouse's feelings. He can make her feel rotten if he wants to. It becomes a way of having some control where he may not normally feel that he has it in other aspects.

The motivations and rewards of crossdressing are very complex. It is not simply a biological urge although this can be a component of it. In general, why someone crossdresses is complex and it may change during the therapy situation as people begin to uncover these things.

Most of the reasons why people crossdress are not conscious. Many of the things that we as humans do each day are not things we plan out ahead of time because it gives me control over my wife or gives me a sense of adventure. The issue then is how to look at these things in a structured way and to get a little insight into why people behave the way they do.

Question (Brenda Harper) - My own crossdressing doesn't really fit into any of the categorical motivations and rewards you have mentioned. We allow our perceptions of ourselves to be muddled by society's perceptions and definitions of clothing. Certain silky clothes are reserved for women and other types such as suits can be worn by men and women. Society has placed these definitions on clothing and most motivations and definitions you gave included those same definitions. In other words, I want to wear this piece of clothing because I'm not supposed to, or because it's defined as someone else's clothing. I saw this theme apparent in the reward, punishment and control categories.

It's an entirely different thing with me. I was able to clarify it to myself a little by asking the following question. If it were suddenly alright tomorrow to wear women's clothes in my every day life as a man in the eyes of society, would I still do it? Would I still crossdress if it were perfectly OK to do so? Would I still get the same kick out of it or would it become mundane?

For many females today, if they don't want to go to all the bother of dressing feminine, they can put on a pair of jeans and a sweatshirt. If all of this were OK for me, would I still go to all this trouble? My answer to the question was yes. I would still crossdress. Why? Because I like the way I look. I like the image I present. To me, this is almost a phenomenon of my preferential dressing. It has nothing to do with that society says this is a woman's piece of clothing. As far as I'm concerned, this is my attire and I would wear it if it were acceptable or not.

Roger - I think what you have said fits neatly into the category of pleasure. It does give you pleasure to dress this way and it's nothing more.

Comment (Joan Bridgman) - A number of people involved with analysis at our gender clinic have run into this as a criticism. The psychiatrist or psychologist who interviewed them said, "I see you are wearing slacks and a sweatshirt. If you are a transsexual, why are you wearing these clothes?"

Roger - For the same reason that any woman does, because they are comfortable.

Comment (Kim Mackie) - You feel crossdressing is a pleasure bent compulsion from the person's desires. I'm going through for the gender surgery so I have a strong compulsion for crossdressing. My crossdressing isn't any part of it. I've wondered if there are any other people out there like me. I became emotional in my rejection of male attire. It had nothing to do with the clothes. I like being a female but it is a royal pain. I have no feeling in my life when I'm dressed as a male. It's not to be beautiful and feminine, I just don't seem to fit as a male. My doctor said simply I'm a female and can't function in the male world.

Comment (Stephanie) - I'm like Kim. I hate anything male. I hate to go to work every morning as a male. I hope I won't have to much longer. I am who I am. I'm a female not a male. I get little pleasure out of this, but I'm just being who I am. This is not something I seem to have any control over and it isn't something I can turn on and off.

What I was aiming for here pertained to transvestites as crossdressers and not for those persons transsexually inclined. I did focus my remarks more for the transvestite but did allude to crossdressers having some transsexual feelings. I didn't mean to leave you out. Yours is a different situation and my thought processes were along the lines of transvestism.

Your feeling are right. The important thing here is that the reason you dress the way you do is that it's comfortable and it is a part of who you are. It doesn't fit with the things I listed.

Stephanie - I don't have to wear a pretty dress to feel feminine. I can wear female jeans or sometimes something in male attire and still feel feminine. I also like to portray this image for society. I don't care what you think.

End Tape 1, Side 2

Start Tape 2, Side 1

Comment (Paula Riordan) - I think this is where the uniqueness of each of us comes through. If they were to develop feminine designed male clothes, and I know they have done that in places, I don't think that is what I'd like to wear. If it comes to men being able to wear skirts and women wearing knickers, I think I'd want to wear knickers.

Roger - Anytime I try to make categories, I usually leave someone out.

Comment - Having listened to all the motivations as to why people do what they do, we come back to the old problem of trying to define who we are as people.

Roger - We need to keep in mind that this session is intended to educate the public. The problem I have when I do this is if I don't use some kinds of terms or definitions then I don't have anything to talk about. The minute I start using terms there is at least one person in the room who will disagree with me.

Question (Kay Metzger) - Are there any good books available I could get to help educate my parents on transsexualism, or is it just better to talk with them?

Roger - I don't know of a good book at this point. Each book or article I'm aware of has a different slant and this can pose a problem. The terms being used or what is being said in a certain book or article are not always appropriate for everyone's particular situation. It's difficult to say which book is best. Some books are clinical and others deal with specific areas.

Question - our club is starting a library. Is there a good list of books we can include to help the newcomer as well as the more experienced transvestite and transsexual?

Elaine - The library that is here is my own personal collection. I believe Tiffany has a library. IFGE is being formed, and doesn't yet have it's own library. I believe this will be a project for IFGE. Many of the books I have with me are scholarly books and most are available in libraries.

Roger - There are several different kinds of literature you should get. There are some good clinical books written by Dr. John Money, Green, and others who write about gender issues primarily for the professional environment. You can also get some of the more popular books like some that Virginia Prince has written. An organization might consider some of the fantasy type books. These are important in understanding who we are in the culture.

There are clinical and popular books about transsexualism such as Phoebe, Canary, Christine Jorgensen's autobiography, Conundrum, Second Serve, Tula and others. You also have the kind of books popular in the adult book stores. These are important from the viewpoint that these will give you a broader range of information about this culture.

Question - Do you feel the literature available in the adult book stores have affected a lot of transvestites and transsexuals by slanting their behavior towards a certain area?

Elaine - Are you thinking of the photos from these books or the fantasy stories?

Answer - I'm thinking of both the photos and the stories.

Elaine - Most people I've talked with got started on this kind of literature, since for them it often was the only and first kind available to them. I don't think this kind of literature has a strong influence. People have a sense of what they want and when they do find it, there is likely to be a sense of recognition.

Roger - The crossdresser can get into trouble if he shows some of the adult literature to the wife or significant other. If she is not prepared, the shock of reading that material and thinking this is what he wants may create more problems than what may be solved. For this reason, I caution my clients to be selective and careful as to what they show their partners.

Comment (Joan Bridgman) - One of the problems we've had in our Toronto group is interesting. We meet in a community center run by the city and we can't exclude people unless they do something outrageous. Our problem is that very often we have curious guys coming in who get off and this kind of literature. The resulting reactions can be disastrous. You can't get rid of the guy who likes the literature and the person for whom the group was designed to help won't come back because of the sexual connotations apparently involved.

Roger - I'm not suggesting you have a library that is generally available. A problem here is that the material will disappear bit by bit. Unless it is tightly controlled, you may lose most of your collection.

Comment (Nancy Ann Martine) - The way we address that problem is to have a publication reproduced and charge the individual for the cost. If you loan out a book that is not replaceable, it doesn't matter how big the deposit is, you can never make up the loss.

Comment - In regards to what Joan mentioned about the meeting hall in Toronto, I find it is true about some members becoming upset. This is an emotional problem that many transvestites and transsexuals have. They feel uneasy about being read and spend a great many hours getting themselves ready so they don't get read. I find that being read is sort of a conflict of learning. It doesn't make me uneasy. I like to go into a grocery store when I'm crossdressed where I've gone for years as a man, pay for my things, leave and look back over my shoulder to see the reactions of the clerks.

I can go into men's washrooms when I'm dressed in male clothes and feel uneasy, yet I don't feel uneasy about being read while dressed in women's clothes. Does this mean I have some abnormality in the gender culture?

Roger - I'd say it isn't abnormal at all. You have accepted who you are and we've had several other comments this morning about that level of acceptance. We probably have more people running around who are abnormal because they haven't accepted who they are.

If you are comfortable, it isn't a problem. You can't define normal so how do we know what isn't normal? In any of the things I do, I don't talk about normal. I will deal with behavior and generally accepted social behavior. Normality is a judgment.

Comment - do you feel a transsexual is in a normal healthy state of mind when they go out and are read and are accepted as part of life?

Roger - In general, yes. You can't say what is normal. It's how you feel about that particular situation. I don't like to use the words normal and abnormal. They imply a judgment.

Comment (Virginia Prince) - I'd like to give a definition people can use when faced with the situation of being normal or abnormal. Nobody knows what normal is. During a conversation I had with someone from a Boston television show I was abnormal. I told him I was statistically unusual. Everyone who's name is in the history books from Jesus Christ on down from any field you'd care to name, are statistically unusual.

Comment - Another way of looking at this is in the way a statistician examines a normal distribution curve. It's how most people react. We act in our own way. If you look at a bell curve, we fall at one end or the other.

Roger - That's true even in this subculture. The problem is one of terms. We started out discussing terms and no matter what you say, someone else will say that doesn't apply to me because I'm unique.

Elaine - I have a personal comment on the issue of whether you can go out and feel comfortable about being read. The first time I went to a crossdresser's convention and saw other people there like myself, my first thought was, do they pass? As the week passed that didn't mean as much to me as it did originally. It didn't matter to me at all. They looked that way because it was natural for them to look like that. but when they changed back to their male sides, they then looked abnormal to me and out of place. I think this feeling is fairly common amongst those of us who have been able to go out. I think it is good that we can do that. Let's face it, it is fairly difficult for most of us to make ourselves fairly passable. The real problem in not passing is when a social confrontation develops resulting in ridicule or worse.

Question - Is there some exercise we can do to help us feel more comfortable out there when we are crossdressed? When we are afraid of being read?

Roger - Being read is more a state of mind than what what actually happens. If a crossdresser spends a lot of time putting on the clothes and makeup and is nervous about what will happen when they enter the outside world, they will get read because they are doing something that is unusual. The only exercise you can do to minimize your chances of being read is to be totally comfortable in the clothes you are wearing. It's more a state of mind than a state of clothes and makeup. How you present yourself is very important.

My general advice to clients is they should never go out crossdressed unless they feel good about that they are about to do. You can get into a problem unless everything about yourself is right. This of course applies to public crossdressing and not to conventions such as this one where it is a relatively safe environment.

Comment - I never go out to see if I can pass. I go out for ordinary reasons like buying something at the store. What I have on my mind when I go out is what I am going out for.

Comment - We had a modeling class at Tri-Ess in San Francisco and the person conducting the class told us to create an image in our minds of what we want to be. We should become an actor and actually create a part or character. Good actors become the people they are portraying. Think of the image you want, believe in it and forget about the rest of the world.

Comment - I think this is the formula. When you are nervous, be an actor and don't show it. Stand up, walk tall and be proud of what you are. This will show it to other people.

Comment - The fear of the unknown is greater than the act of doing something. When you are at home worrying about what will happen on the street, you will become more scared.

Comment - We should be careful of the situations we pick when we go out. It's safe to go out at this time but it would be dangerous for me to go out of the downtown area of Chicago crossdressed at midnight. We could get into all kinds of trouble.

Roger - Transvestites often make the mistake of going out at the wrong time when they think there would be no one around to interfere with them. That is the wrong time to go out. It's safer to be out when there are other people around.

Elaine - You should consider what a real woman would wear and where she would go. If you are observant you will find people walking along in four inch spike heels and fishnet stockings at midnight on some street. And yet there are crossdressers doing exactly that thinking that this is the thing to do. If you are going to emulate real women, you must see what they wear, watch what they do and where they go. You must do what is appropriate. If a real woman appeared in the afternoon all dressed up in evening wear, she will be looked at and you will be as well. It's a question of common sense and doing what is appropriate for a given situation.

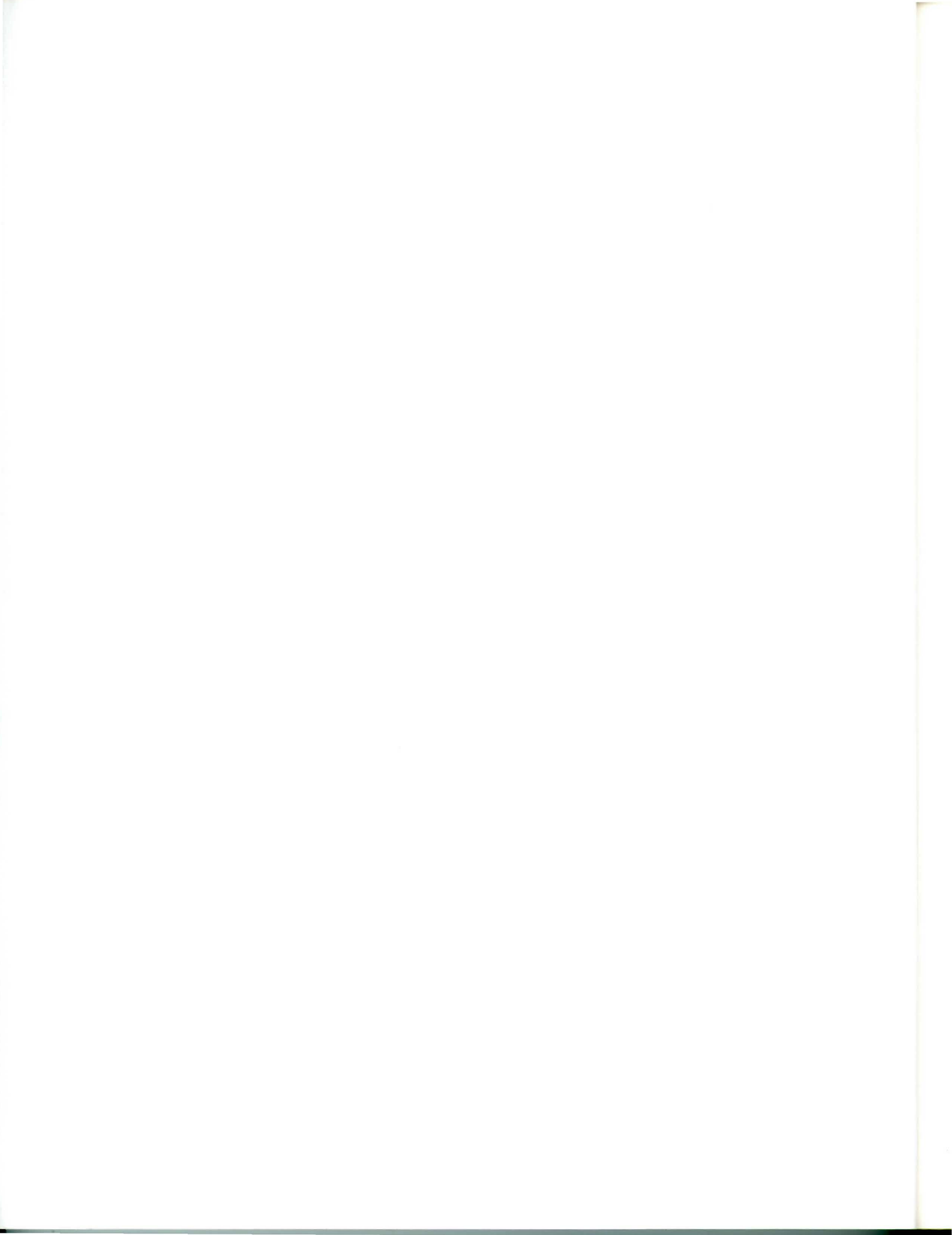
End Tape 2, Side 1

Start Tape 2, Side 2

Comment - The key is to be confident in who you are. Don't go out on a 'pass' test. My friends and I have been out in the Dallas area and we've been everywhere. As long as we are confident, we don't have problems. And if someone does say something derogatory, the best thing to do is smile and go about your business. Do not antagonize the situation.

Elaine - That makes sense. You need lots of practice. You can't talk yourself out of being unconfident. The only thing that makes you confident is to do it often enough so that it becomes natural.

End Tape 2, Side 2



IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

HOW TO FORM AN ORGANIZATION
March 6, 1987
Tier 1, Tapes 1 & 2

Tape 1, Side 1

Heather Peerson, Linda Buton, Angela Sheedy - Moderators

Ellen (NWGA) - One purpose of this first convention is to discover what information everyone has to offer and to exchange ideas to make future conventions better. The Northwest Gender Alliance was started six years ago by Ellen Summers and Linda Ann Tipton. There was a need for support for closet crossdressers. For the closet person, there is often on one to talk to. The best way to find out about yourself is to find someone else who shares your feelings and who understands. Relatives and friends to not understand.

There is safety in numbers. If you form a local organization and can build an active group within a given area, you can have more clout, acquire facilities, go out and become an active part of the community. We know we are different but being different is not really bad. In our group we try to explain and educate people about our harmless occupation. We admit we have two sides to ourselves and can express those two sides by getting together and enjoy each other's company at social events.

We began by advertising in the local underground and gay newspapers. This did not work. We tried advertising in local daily newspapers but at first, our ads were not accepted. A local minister wrote some appropriately worded articles that did prove acceptable by a local newspaper and we got a few responses to that ad.

We went out and joined already established local support groups of gay and sexual minorities. We solicited advertising from these groups and established stationary and business cards. We did a lot of word of mouth advertising.

A telephone hotline was established at the home of one member who was retired and had the time to give to this aspect. This hotline did much for our group.

People are paranoid about being found out and letters do not often work. Having a telephone number to call is very beneficial.

We have found that there has been more acceptance by straight people as they are curious. The interest generated in NWGA satisfied the needs of our closet members and afforded private and public affairs. Once there is an established organization in an area, you will get many calls and inquiries.

The NWGA presently has about fifty members in an area of 350,000 people. We serve five states and Canada and keep the group together with a newsletter. News and information is passed along to our members through the newsletter.

Question (Allison Liang) - For public functions, do you notify the establishments and local authorities?

Answer - We do tell the management of the establishments of the nature of our group. We have informed local authorities of our group and intentions and some of our members have walked into the local police station. We are known and accepted by most but there are some in the local authority who don't accept us.

We maintain a lady-like dress code at all times as to not bring bad light to our group. The general rule is dress according to the event.

Question (Barbara Burgess) - How do you approach the news media?

Answer - We'll hold the answer to that for later.

Question (Jane Anderson) - How did you get a telephone hotline?

Answer - It cost us \$50. We first needed a place in someone's home and it is usually a second phone line. We contacted the phone company paid the fee and listed the number under the NWGA. We also connected an answering machine for those times when no one was available to answer the calls.

Question/comment - I have a comment about answering machines. I tried 21 times to call a hotline once before I was able to talk to a person. It would be helpful to list those times when human would be available to talk.

Siobhan Donovan (Tiffany) - What is a mutual self help organization? What are we here for? We are here to be a friend. Let me show you a better way. People will not always like hearing 'let me show you a better way'. The only way is to help one another and before you can do that, you must be honest with yourself. You must recognize you own faults and problems and learn to talk about them.

At this first convention there are many questions, activities and plans on how to help one another. Each of the programs here is designed to help one another, to help us deal with the public and with the press.

Many of us need support. We all go through the initial guilt trip because we don't understand ourselves. Once we can learn to understand ourselves, we can then help each other. That's the purpose here. That's the thing called growth.

Each group must develop their own personality. No one group can tell another organization how to do it. You don't know what that particular area or those particular people need. Each area needs something different.

The individual is the most important factor. How do we help that person? We must understand their feelings and fears. Using a little humor often helps to put that person at ease. Once you help a person feel at ease, then you can deal with their guilt and paranoia.

For group meetings or rap sessions, let it happen. Let the other person speak. Don't jump all over them. They have legitimate fears and feelings, help them deal with it. Don't get too heavy yourself and above all else, don't take yourself too seriously.

Some of us may have difficult problems. We must learn to recognize those problems and when to refer someone to professional counseling. It is more common these days for someone to see a therapist.

Don't try to be a therapist yourself. You can help and you can counsel based on your own personal experiences, so you must be careful not to mess someone up. We are here to help one another, to learn and make it happen.

End Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

Renee Chevalier (TGIC) - We as individuals must work together and be honest. In this way, we can accomplish something. Don't stretch the truth, for most people can tell when the truth gets stretched.

The first name for our group was TV Entertainers, but that proved to be more of a deterrent than anything else. New members thought they'd be expected to perform on stage and this was not favorable for new crossdressers coming out.

TVIC is open to many groups including TVs, TSs and wives. We encompass the many different forms of gender dysphoria. We are open to everyone for when you limit participation, you will cause the group to shrink in numbers. When you limit membership, you show prejudice and who are we to show prejudice?

For communication, we have a newsletter that reminds our members of coming events. A little bit of humor helps some people to deal with their situation. People get turned off to pushing and shoving against their will.

Peer counseling is merely the act of making someone feel comfortable with him/herself. Once that is accomplished, they will be in a better position to seek help.

Our newsletter tells of the counselor available to help the members. We stay away from controversial topics to a degree, like religion, but stress primarily information flow. A big thing is our calendar of events of other local groups. Intra-group events provide a greater variety of places to go and things to do.

Once people come out, they will start to grow and gain confidence in themselves.

Shiela Kirk (TransPitt) - The inception of TransPitt began at a Joyce Dewhurst outing five years ago. I met two other people from the Pittsburgh area. We now have some 50 active members and a newsletter called Rhapsody. Our club has a board of directors which has further enriched the club. Every group has a hard working core of a few individuals and the board of directors has increased our core membership.

Our newsletter includes comments from members, editorials and information from other groups. We have a sister organization in the area as well.

We have instructional meetings for sharing information on fashion, wigs, cosmetics and these meetings are geared for the novice.

Socially, we have tried to become a part of the straight and gay communities. There is a large gay population in the Pittsburgh area and we are

totally welcome. The Lamda Foundation is a well established gay organization which has formally recognized our group. The gays have come a long way in their quest and we feel honored to have their support.

Our target areas have been for the new member and for educating the straight community. Our dress alone does not make an individual, but state of mind does.

Our current project is to establish a TransPitt House, similar in function to the Tiffany House in Boston. We need a controlled space where our members may freely come to dress and be comfortable. We have a lot of young, vigorous people willing to help and that's important.

Kim Hellman (ETVC) - We are a social outreach group in the San Francisco bay area. The first thing to consider in forming a group is site selection. Where can you have your meetings? The Rainbow Gender Alliance in San Jose meets in a church. In the past seven years, they have met in two different churches. In their present church, the minister is active and interested in the group. There is a kitchen at the church useful for coffee, tea and refreshments. There is room to move around and other rooms are available for meetings, rap groups and social events.

Other organizations to contact include synagogues, the YWCA, Salvation Army, senior citizens centers, libraries, banks, community colleges, state colleges, bars and restaurants.

ETVC has been at the same place for the last five years. We meet in the back room of a gay bar and already overflow the place at times. We get an average of 70-75 people per meeting and have had as many as 90 at one time.

We have a facilities committee to look for possible future sites for our upcoming ETVC Cotillion, big events and educational forums.

There is a couple's group that meets in members' homes on a rotating basis. We are always looking for other or alternate places to meet.

ETVC has a management or shared leadership format. Our executive committee has seven members and our coordinator does just that, coordinates activities with the group. We have a secretary, a treasurer, a social committee of two co-char people and an outreach committee of two co-chair people.

In 1979 a national organization was formed that eventually had hundreds of members, was well run, had a monthly newsletter, a correspondent's and resource directory and even a computer network called GenderNet. There were nationally affiliated groups but there was no main group membership. The one person responsible for all this suffered burnout and fatigue since she was running the entire operation alone. Last year, the Gateway Gender Alliance closed its doors. In the long run, one person alone can't successfully run any organization for too long alone.

We have a hostess committee to provide hostesses for each meeting. They introduce new people around and talk with them to help them feel more comfortable. Once someone arrives, we make them feel welcome and part of the group right away.

There is a rap group and in this group, we try to change the leadership every time. In doing this, we can develop new leadership for the group and give an opportunity for everyone to get involved.

Communication is most vital to our group. Our newsletter informs the membership of times and places of future meetings three or four meetings ahead.

End Tape 1, Side 2

Start Tape 2, Side 1

ETVC stands for Education TV Channel. We also like to think of it as Exciting TV Club. We try very hard to get people involved in the group. The hostesses at each meeting are responsible for greeting people at the door.

We are an extremely open group. We are open to TVs, TSs, TGs, Gays, Straights and Bi-sexuals. We have a support group for wives and significant others and we have a couples group.

We work closely with the gay community and encourage any type of individual who is genuinely interested. Our key focus is getting people involved very quickly, developing new leaders and working with other groups through communications.

Siobhan Donovan - The next part deals with groups that have had problems and how they have dealt with those specific problems.

Heather Peerson (CrossPort) - I've been crossdressing since a teenager and have been married for 15 years. My situation at home is I can dress whenever I want. I needed other people who understood and while my wife accepts, she doesn't understand. I don't understand why I do this. I was at a low point in my life and suicide was a possibility but watching the HBO special 'What Sex Am I?' helped to turn my life around.

Crossport will be two years old in June and we have 110 names on our mailing list. Average meetings have 25 people showing up.

Our initial problem was where to meet. Members homes served at first but we quickly outgrew this. Another place we found to meet was in bars, but this type of atmosphere is difficult for rap groups and support meetings.

There are a lot of different people who need a lot of different things. We had to become aware of these different needs and try to address them. You can't force people to do what they don't want to do.

As a leader, you must be willing to admit there will be people who come and go. This is particularly evident in the TS culture. Transsexuals will come in and need a lot of support and help in the beginning. As they progress in their transition, it is common for them to need to blend in with straight society and leave a group like this.

Sometimes they will come back but you have to be open enough to let them go. They need this space to be able to blend in with society and live the kind of life they want to live for the rest of their lives.

There can be friction between TVs and TSs. Tvs seem to want to be in the company of TSs, but sometimes, the TS doesn't want to stand out, especially at public affairs. They don't want to be in a TV group. They don't want attention drawn to themselves.

You must make your members aware of this problem. This is not a bias or prejudice. TSs need this space.

Be aware that there will be people who will not come back. Let them know you are not there to make them do anything. Some people just aren't ready to come out. Let them know you are there to help.

Don't try to counsel. Find out first if they are interested in listening. If so, then you can get information out to them. If not, they need to be referred to professional help. Remain open to the fact there are different types of people out there.

While we have been accepted by the gay community, some have problems and are afraid of the stigma that crossdressers can bring to them. When we are invited to gay events, we check to make sure there will be no problem in our group being there.

Most TVs and TSs consider themselves to be heterosexual, but there are guys who are crossdressers. Some people who come out for the group are not there for the reasons you are looking for. Some are not crossdressers and who want to have sex with a TV or TS. This is the reason for the screening process.

The screening process was at first to protect my home. It is needed to find out what people are looking for. Sometimes they are looking for a special one-on-one relationship, or they need to learn how to go out and how to act at certain times. They have to learn to dress for what is appropriate. Allow the group to go where it has to go.

We have a looser, less structured organization because of the people we serve. We draw people from other states and get the traveling salesman who is in town and has the need for a place to go and dress and relax.

Linda Buton (CrossPort) - My topic is how to get and keep members. I look upon all this as a business. You need to find the customer, present and sell the product and make sure the customer keeps coming back. I like to meet the people and frequent pars to meet others who look like they are crossdressed. Sometimes I get approached by others who are crossdressed. Either way I present the information to them.

We have advertised in local publications. We have contacted professional organizations, gay groups and national groups such as Tri-Ess. National groups are good to refer people to groups on the local level. You can inform the public through television and radio shows and by speaking at colleges.

We have found homes not to be good meeting places. Bars are more favorable. You have to keep them coming and made to feel welcome and comfortable. If not, they will not come back. The coming out procedure is a difficult thing for the novice to do. You have to be friendly, open, honest and a little humor does help.

Rupert Raj (MMRF) - In 1978 in Calgary, Alberta, I and two other F-M transsexuals started FACT, the Federation of American and Canadian Transsexuals. Our group was open to M-F and F-M transsexuals and we were essentially a telephone and mail organization with 80% of our membership in the United States.

I moved to Toronto in 1979 and took FACT with me. In February of 1980, Susan Huxford drafted the constitution which was accepted and we set up a board. Susan Huxford became the executive secretary.

In 1981, the constitution was suspended and Susan Huxford took over the group and included in it her own business of GenderServe.

Some common problems we have had were the lack of good resource people, a few people wearing too many hats, a rash of resignations and a high burnout rate among our few good resource people. Another problem is that one a transsexual becomes post-op, they usually go on their way and their skills and experience are lost. Transsexuals are at best, a transient population.

In August of 1986, the chairperson of FACT resigned. We suffered burnout and a lack of membership support. The FACT Toronto group became 'Transition Support' and left FACT. Since then we have been lacking in good leadership and membership has declined. I am also connected with the Metamorphosis Medical Foundation, a F-M group, and again, one person is trying to do it all and one person can't carry the load. People have to come out and support the TS groups. Just paying their dues isn't enough.

Question (Wendy Smith, Butternut Belles) - A major problem we've had with our club is one of geographical location. Some of our members live a hundred miles apart. How do you develop a local group?

Answer (Siobhan Donovan, Tiffany) - Tiffany is centrally located to all the New England states. We draw people from all over the area, including Canada and New York. We strive to be an outreach group and to reach as many people as possible.

Good communications is the key to any successful group. You have to be a resource. The only bad question is the one not asked.

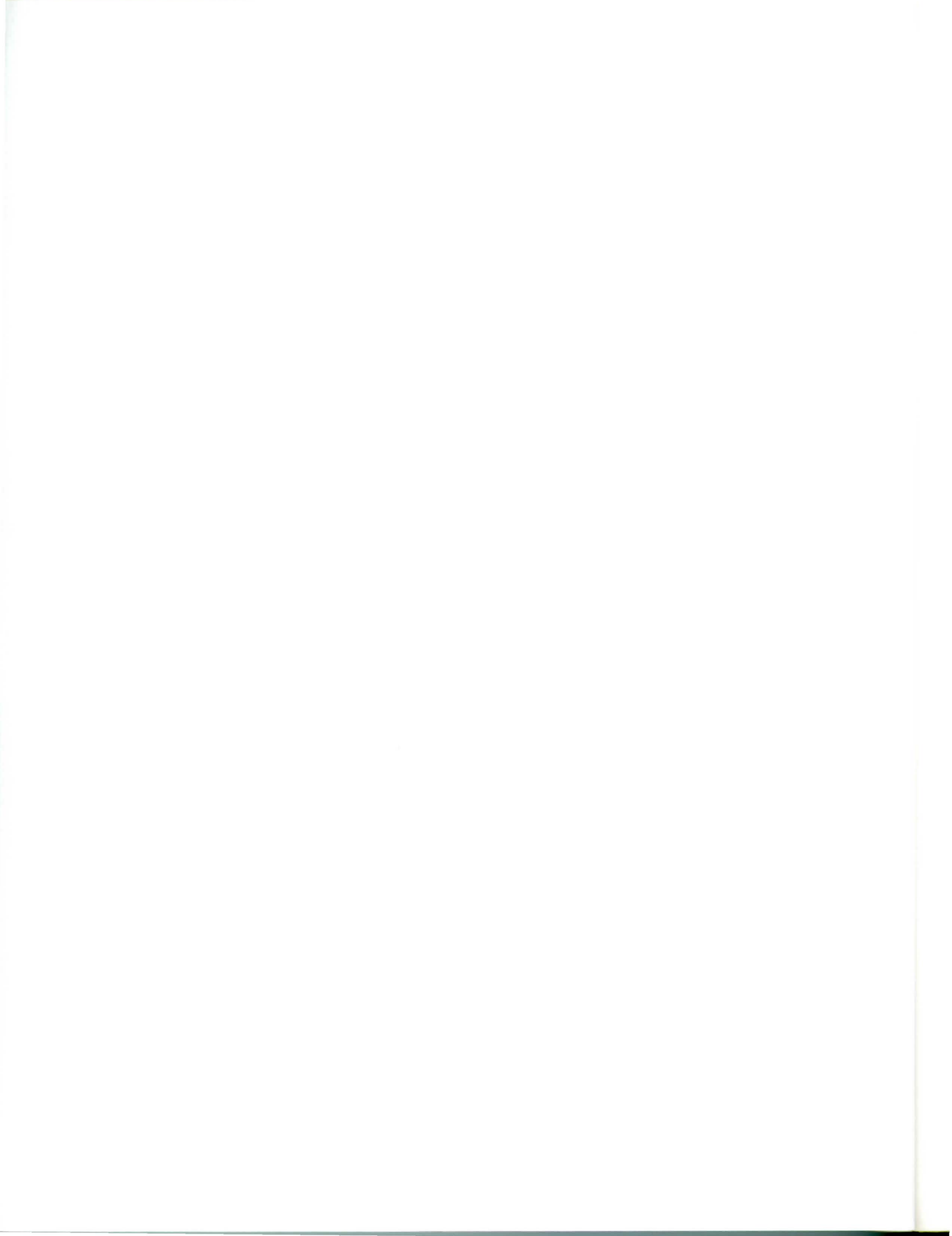
Question (Holly Cross, Tiffany) - How visible do you want to be to the general public? Or, how can you avoid it?

Answer (Siobhan Donovan, Tiffany) - We are not a wide open group and try to be selective in choosing the media and types of publications in which to get exposure. We can approach colleges, television and radio programs and other special media forms.

Question - What about affiliations with a national organization? There are so many diverse groups across the country. How can I choose which ones to join? Do you affiliate?

Answer - We are planning the IFGE to be the umbrella organization for all the groups across the country. We believe in good rapport between the individual groups while maintaining a good level of autonomy.

End Tape 2, Side 2



IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

REACHING OUT
March 6, 1987
Tier 1, Tape 1

Tape 1, Side 1

Gloria Peters - Moderator

Unknown speaker - We need to add to our knowledge pool and find as many people as possible to give help.

Gloria Peters (ETVC) - Advertising is a good way to reach out. We have tried the local gay newspapers and then the national TV publications. The Transvestian has been our best resource for the dollars involved. Each month we get three to four inquiries from the Transvestian, which is available in some adult book stores where many TVs go for their information. They can find out who and what they are and find information and make contact with others like themselves.

We get letters from all over the country. We need to have a large listing of all the clubs so we can refer individuals to local groups in their area.

From our ads in local gay newspapers, we received limited response. Most TVs don't think or know to look for crossdressing ads in gay papers. There isn't that much of a connection between the gay and gender communities.

We have used radio programs and television shows on the local cable and national levels and that is a good way to reach out and find all those interested people out there.

Most TVs are reluctant to appear on television shows and what works many times is to have members from a group; in a different part of the country come and do a show in our area. In this way there is little risk of someone being recognized.

One big problem is finding wives and significant others to come forward and share their experiences and problems.

Transsexuals are also very reluctant to come forward and appear on television shows. The TSs are living in their chosen gender role full time every day and are afraid of being recognized and labeled as transsexual.

We reached out with a public event and had a well marked booth at the Gay Freedom Day celebration. We were warmly received by the gays, observed no negative reactions and made a lot of contacts. We handed out our literature and our booth was plainly marked TV/TS ETVC. In this way we presented a very positive visible attitude.

One area we haven't explored is in using the local press, which gets seen by a lot of people each day. Ads cost money and most television exposure is usually a one shot deal and is limited.

We need to put together appropriate material and educate the television people before hand so they don't ask all the usual stupid questions.

When you decide to work with a news publisher, you need to have some comprehensive information about your group. A bibliography, lists of major events all help to provide the proper focus on what the article should be about.

Rupert Raj (MMRF) - I contacted a reporter to do an article on transsexualism. He came to my house and I gave him all the pertinent facts and issues on transsexualism. He took photos and in the end he wrote a parody and published some rather unflattering photos.

There are both positive and negative aspects on coming out for the crossdresser. With ads, you will have total positive control over the content. With an editorial or feature article, you have to hope the reporter will do the right thing and that you will have at least some control.

(Speaker partially unintelligible) - ...pick out a particular reporter who is known and deal directly with him and not his editor ...interview the reporter to get a feel for what he may be able and willing to produce. Make him feel comfortable, educate him, give him pertinent information.

It's a good idea to have a select group of members. If one or more persons say the wrong thing, the entire slant of the information and the article will be altered.

Have addresses and phone numbers available to the reporter and try to get a preview of the article. You can offer feedback to the reporter and insure the best article possible.

some television stations have public service announcement slots available. If you go this route, you need to make the best presentation possible.

Television stations have the right to reject or edit any public service announcements.

We get calls from wives, girl friends, partners and mothers of crossdressers. Some are looking for professional help. Some want to be supportive and some just want to talk to another spouse of a crossdresser so they can exchange views. Our wives and partners group has been very successful.

There should also be outreach to the professional people as well. It helps to have friendly professional advocates for our cause, and we have to educate these people too. Eventually a professional may refer a crossdressing client to the local TV group.

End Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

We have special private events for our closet people where they know they will be safe. At the same time, we provide more public affairs for those members

who enjoy going out. We always get our own private room in a public place and often times our own toilet facilities.

In Portland we have stores and shopping centers that welcome us. We don't invade them in large groups but go shopping in small groups of two and four. We try to be discreet and ladylike.

We've done some other public things. We have a bowling team in a gay league. We got a local sponsor and bought pink blouses and red skirts. Our team name was 'The Other Side Of Midnight'. We bowled every Thursday night and the league had about half the allies. The rest of the allies were taken up by the Church of God group. The first few nights were interesting but after that things settled down.

Some of us decided our voices were a big give-away and we hired a female voice therapist and for six months, some of us took lessons. We learned to talk like ladies, to use ladylike expressions and drop our old male expressions. A southern accent, as was used in the movie 'Tootsie' was useful as this type of speaking pattern accentuates the softness of the tones. I can get by when I go out and that has been a plus for me.

We have one member of our group who is a full time crossdresser and helps us make many of our public arrangements.

We have tried outreaching into the business community. There are wig stores whose owners don't mind selling wigs to us. We leave club business cards at these stores to be distributed to newcomers.

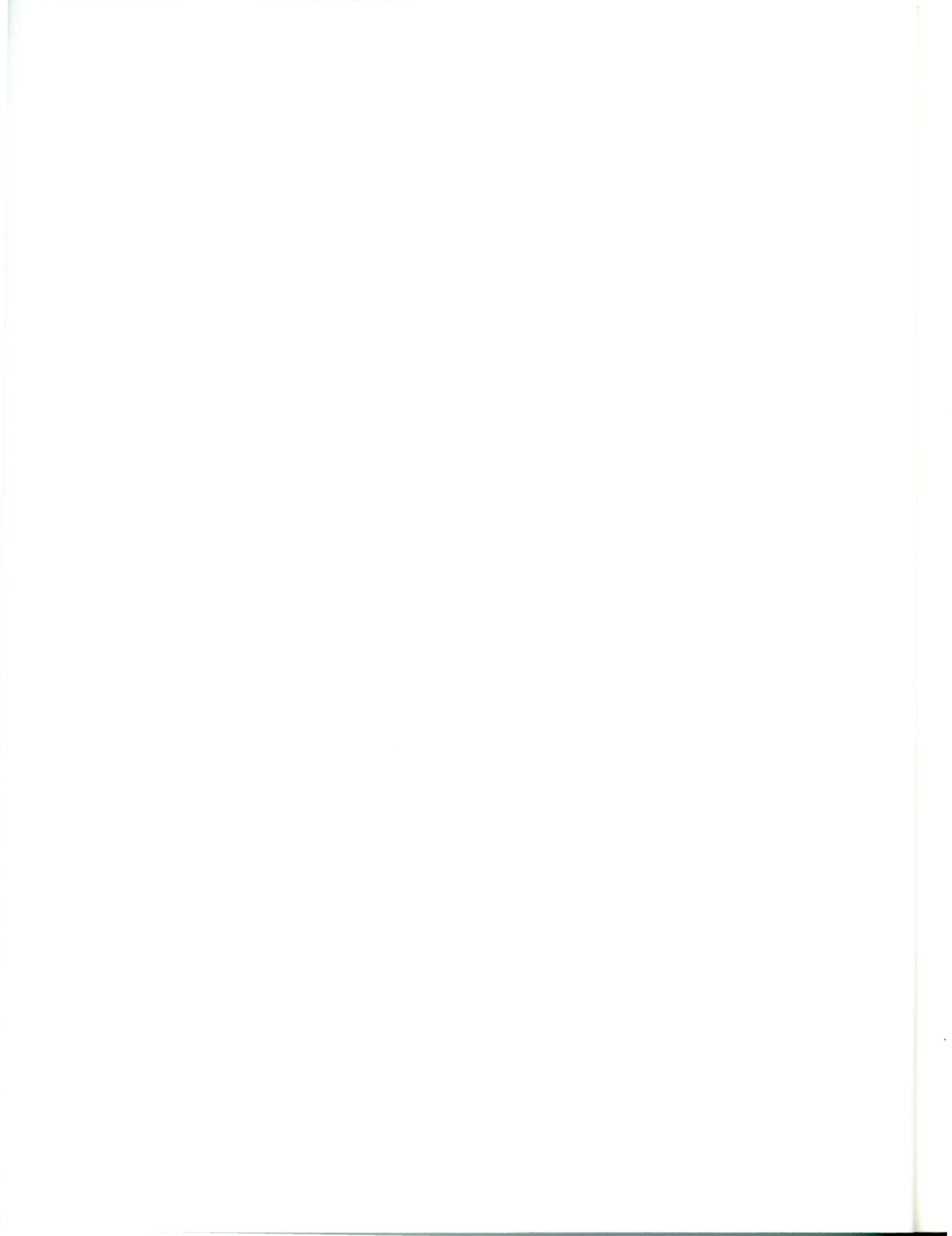
Special nights are arranged for us at some tall girls clothing, shoe and wig stores after hours. The doors are locked to the general public and we have a free reign to try anything on.

We got a call from a wife in the San Francisco area who wanted to find out where to go to get information on helping her cope with her crossdressing spouse. She called the Pacific Center and they couldn't help her at all except for attending one of their rap groups. This wasn't enough for her.

We started a significant others group. It's important to spread the word around to other parts of the country for people and wives who are in great need of this kind of information. This convention needs to get some kind of outreach and information service out and into the hands of the significant others.

Tapestry is a good publication that publishes information about many different groups around the country. Other clubs should make a stronger effort to emulate the Tapestry.

End of Tape 1, Side 2



IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

CROSSDRESSING PANEL DISCUSSION
March 6, 1987
Tier 2, Tape 1

Tape 1, Side 1

Paula Riordan - Moderator

Paula Riordan (Tiffany) - When I was about 25, I came to terms with the fact that Paula was a real part of me and that she is a nice part of me. I didn't then expect anyone else would accept Paula, so I kept her to myself.

I met a lady and fell in love. I knew I wasn't gay. I thought what I needed at that time was a wife and perhaps that would solve all my problems. I left the monastery and got married. I loved my wife very much.

I then found out that Paula hadn't gone away. This is an experience that many of us may have had. After three years while Paula was in the closet, I found the courage to tell my wife.

She is a professional woman and I stayed at home to take care of the kids. I told her one day, "I'm practically the wife and mother around here. When you come home tonight, I'm going to be wearing a dress." She didn't pay any attention to me.

That night when she came home, I was wearing a dress. She looked shocked at first and then started to laugh. She said I really didn't look that bad. During the rest of the evening, we just shared like there wasn't anything unusual. I was flabbergasted.

It was a painful experience for her. She was supportive for about six months and then became negative. She began talking about divorce. I even moved out of the house temporarily. We had children ages six and eight. She needed my help and participation with them, so I began to go home more and more.

Today, I am back at home full time and my wife has become more peaceful. We are together again. She doesn't want to encourage my crossdressing and doesn't like it, but she knows Paula is a part of me. She doesn't want this problem to wreck our marriage.

Renee Chevalier (TGIC) - I'm from TGIC in Albany. I used to be in TVIC, which is another Albany group that was formed a long time ago.

I've been an open crossdresser for twelve years and have been doing it since the age of six. I've been involved in the community for 12 years. My wife is very understanding and patient with me. We have a 17 year old daughter and a 14 year old son.

Presently I run TGIC and we put out a monthly newsletter. I've been trying very hard to get people to come out of their shells and their closets and to enjoy themselves. Our newsletter helps with communication between other groups. We try to get the groups to work together, having things to do, places to go either crossdressed or not.

My wife runs the mate's support group, is active and really enjoys what she does.

Gender has caused a lot of pain in my life and while this has been a big problem, I've also had difficulty with alcohol, drugs and other things in my life I never faced. I am a disabled Viet Nam veteran and this has presented me with some additional problems. I have learned to deal with my problems and this has, in my opinion, helped me to be a better person.

Linda Buton (CrossPort) - I'm from the Cincinnati area and I've been a crossdresser from the earliest times I can remember. I repressed it during my early years and I've been out in public now for about 10 years.

I'm 35, married and have three children ranging in ages from two to nine. Each of them is very accepting and have known from the beginning. We keep no secrets from them.

I've gone out in public to straight and gay places and just about any place I feel like going to. I usually always have a good time. I've gotten into every kind of trouble one can imagine. I've been caught while crossdressed with other women and with men, and have a wide range of experiences when it comes to being out in public.

Elaine Willey (Crossroads) - I'm 52, and in the past 10 years, have done the most extensive amount of crossdressing ever. Before that time I considered myself to be a heterosexual TV although I didn't know it at the time. I would dress in the closet and go through periods of abstinence during various times when I wasn't able to do it.

I have never married though I didn't think the crossdressing ruled that out. I would consider living full time as a woman without the benefit of the surgery. The only physical change I would need to live full time would be electrolysis.

There is no temptation for me to take hormones and I'm at a point where I feel comfortable in public even though I don't always pass.

Prior to ten years ago, I had no knowledge that TV groups existed until I came across a research study done in the Boston area called 'Transvestites And Transsexuals'. In the study was Virginia Prince's address. I wrote to her and she wrote back right away with information on Tri-Ess. Things happened very quickly for me from then on. Within a year, I had gone to DREAM, a west coast convention, and helped to form a local Tri-Ess chapter.

Since then, I've been very active in clubs and I'm on the board of directors of Crossroads, the major TV group in southeast Michigan. I've been active in the Tiffany Club and I'm an assistant director of this convention.

Question - Has anyone come up with reasons as to what does trigger crossdressing when one is young?

Answer - I do have some background in psychology and keep up with current research. Nobody has any good evidence as to why it happens. We don't know if it can be attributed to physical, hormonal or environmental reasons. I have no concrete evidence in my own case and have no precipitating home experiences that could account for any factors in my crossdressing. From my own knowledge of the field, there are no definitive causes but rather a number of theories.

Question - (To Linda) In regards to the legal aspects, what kinds of things happen when you are confronted by the police?

Answer (Linda) - You would be surprised, but more often than not, after they become aware of your true gender, they still treat you like a woman. Sometimes they will come on to you and ask you out. Usually law enforcement officers on the state and city level don't pay that much attention to you.

Question (To Linda) - In reference to making your children aware, did you have this intention from the start?

Answer (Linda) - About 10 years ago when my first child was born, I had to make the decision of telling or not. I didn't know if I could hide it forever. If your children don't know, this could prove detrimental later. If they find out during their adolescent stage when many things become important to them, it's a good chance that Dad may not be where he was before in their eyes. It isn't so much they will think Dad is queer, but during all the early years they've grown up under the assumption that Dad is honest and they know him well. If they then discover that Dad hasn't been honest and open as they thought, rebuilding their trust in him may be difficult.

Comment - The children's need to know is a personal decision between husband and wife. We use the term 'need to know' while they were growing up. We asked ourselves at various points in their development, do they need to know? When they got older, we did tell them and enjoyed a positive response. We felt it was too much of a burden to place on them while they were young.

Linda - I've never had to tell my children not to go out and tell their friends. They know this isn't the normal way life is, and if anything, they are going to keep me from exposing my crossdressing so they won't be embarrassed.

Question (to Paula) - Why do you think that women move in and out of acceptance and rejection?

Answer (Paula) - The special woman in my life showed an interest for six months and then she became negative. I asked her about this and she said she didn't realize at first what was involved with my crossdressing. Then when she became more familiar with it, she saw it was a deep seated thing with me and not something like going to a halloween party. Then she began to have second thoughts. Even after I assured her I wasn't a transsexual and didn't want the surgery, she felt cheated when we got married since I hadn't told her about this. My wife and I went for counseling with Niela Miller for a while and Niela brought out the fact that I really didn't deceive my wife because I honestly believed I would stop crossdressing.

I asked my wife why she was coming around and she said she did love me. She knew that Paula is a part of me that wasn't going away. She knew that the crossdressing scene was safe. She has been to Tiffany and has met a lot of nice people. She just wishes I weren't a crossdresser.

I know this is an experience many wives share with each other. They do go back and forth with their feelings. It takes a great deal of understanding to come to a place of comfort. If you have a wife who goes back and forth with her feelings on crossdressing, there is hope. You must go slow and be sensitive to her feelings.

Comment (from a wife) - If the wife is feeling comfortable with herself she can handle the crossdressing much better. If she's not happy or not having a good time, it is more difficult for her. In this case, the crossdressing may trigger negative feelings in her.

Comment - My children did not find out until this past summer. They are eighteen and twenty years old and it made no difference to them. They did have some suspicions about it for the past ten years.

I think the age when you tell your children is a personal thing. How you handle the telling is very important also.

Comment - I agree that it is a personal matter but I also thought of myself. For my entire life I felt so depressed not being able to wear what I wanted whenever I wanted so not to be able to express myself.

I thought by telling the children as young as I possibly could, I would have the advantage. I felt so much better about myself by being free and open. I actually felt closer to my family by being open about my crossdressing.

Comment (Nancy) - From my own experience with the telling of my children, I kept it from them. If they had asked me however, I would have told them.

I was addressing a divorce issue at the time but the crossdressing thing was part of it. I elected at that time to tell the children because I didn't want the crossdressing to be made an issue of in the divorce.

Out of the five children, I decided to tell the oldest boy and girl. Their reactions were matter of fact.

When you tell your children is something important to consider. You may find yourself being forced to tell them when you don't want to.

Comment/question - I did have a problem because I did not tell the children. Later I found out my son knew about it when he was twelve and never told us until he was sixteen. During that time, we had almost maximum rebellion from him.

Our daughters were told and gave us total acceptance. The son is still having a hard time coming around.

The pain of living those eighteen years in the closet was a lot to bear. I wished I had done it the way Linda did. It would have been better for me.

Linda - Not only was I doing it for myself, but I was able to share it with my family. Quite often, my kids will give me two gifts, one for my male side and one for my fem side. It can be a lot of fun.

Comment/question - I enjoy social drinking but I've always been afraid of having too much of it when I am crossdressed. I'm afraid that I will forget I am in the female personality or that I won't be able to control it as well. Could you comment on the synergy of crossdressing in conjunction with mind altering phenomena?

Answer - I've indulged with pot and alcohol to a large degree during my early crossdressing years and mainly when I had returned from Viet Nam. I did pick up some bad habits there.

The problem that was created by this abuse was that I was pushed further back into myself. I wasn't able to understand or learn to deal with myself. It also made me very closed minded and a closed person.

Self gratification was the only thing I had on my mind. I've learned to open up and share and to be a human being.

End Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

I still drink once in a while but I don't drink to excess. I haven't smoked pot since I met my present wife and she has been a good influence on me. She has helped to show me there is no need for it.

I've also found that pot tends to take your ambitions away. If your ambition in life is to be a human being and share with people, you are not going to be able to do it under the influence of pot or drugs of any kind.

Comment - If any of you have a spouse who is marginally supportive or negative, it would not be a good idea to go home after this weekend and tell her what a great time you had here. I find that when I go home after a crossdressing event, the best thing I can do is not mention it for a while. It is much better for me if I show an interest in her and the kids. I let her know I am glad to be home with her. Even though she has supported my coming to this convention, she still has those back and forth thoughts.

Comment - One thing that came to me about the person who has small children at home, is the possibility of the male TV being tagged as a child molester within the neighborhood. Nothing can be more vicious and destructive than rumors of this type.

Comment - On the child topic, no one in our neighborhood knows. I am fortunate enough to live on fourteen acres in the middle of nowhere. We don't have people dropping in on us unannounced. It isn't kept a secret not because I don't care but rather because we care that the kids care.

Comment - When people suspect TVs of being child molesters, it may be the case we are being stereotyped. People think that if we have one type of deviation that we must have all of them.

We got a complaining letter to 'Crossroads' recently from a person that one of our members was a former teacher. This woman was upset that this member had been in contact with children.

This person believed TVs to be rapists and child molesters. This is unfortunate because this stereotype just isn't true.

Comment - I didn't tell my children but they happened to find out anyway. My son is fourteen and my daughter is seventeen and they just recently found out. Someone breached my security which I had expected to happen sooner or later though I didn't expect it to come from the person it did.

My son took it well at first but later regressed into himself and his grades slipped in school. My wife and I had to talk to him and I had to specifically talk and relate to him. We spent a lot of time talking and relating personal experiences. This seemed to help a great deal.

My daughter had a problem at first but was able to work it out quickly, especially when she discovered she would have access to a new wardrobe. She didn't realize it was a two way street and got a little depressed when I started dipping into hers.

She now has a little more of a problem than my son has. She doesn't like to talk about it and has regressed somewhat into herself.

We do sit and talk with our children and that is very important. I chose not to tell them for one reason. When I met them, they were five and seven. I felt it wasn't wise to tell them at that time. If I had it to do over again, I would do it the same way and my wife agrees with me.

Right now, they are both more accepting and they are very cautious to whom they talk about it. They will talk to other crossdressers and their wives as well. But they won't talk to anyone else about it at all.

Comment - We did talk about the children and their knowing. One boy is six and the other is eight. We decided we would not tell them and we won't have to tell them for a while, but that day may come.

We feel that if we tell them when they are older, they may be able to handle it better. The longer we can postpone telling them, the better we will feel about it.

Comment - Somebody pointed out the dangers of telling the children when they are pre-school age. There is a window here between the ages of five and ten. Then the door should be closed again.

If you tell a child during early adolescence, they are so busy trying to become an adult, they are not in a position to take on Daddy's problems. After they get past adolescence, that is another matter.

In talking about educating people, we have to get across the idea that this is a gender phenomenon and that sex and gender are not the same thing. We have to tell our children the same thing. We have to make it clear that we are gender variants and not sexual deviates.

Comment - I am a 65 year old TV/TS. I want to be a TS but I have too many complications and responsibilities to do so. I have six children ranging in age from 28 to 41. I have a problem in that I just came out of the closet. My wife knows but nobody else does except some friends from the clubs I belong to. I've been to see Dr. Cole in Galveston.

My problem is whether or not I should tell my six children. Does anyone know?

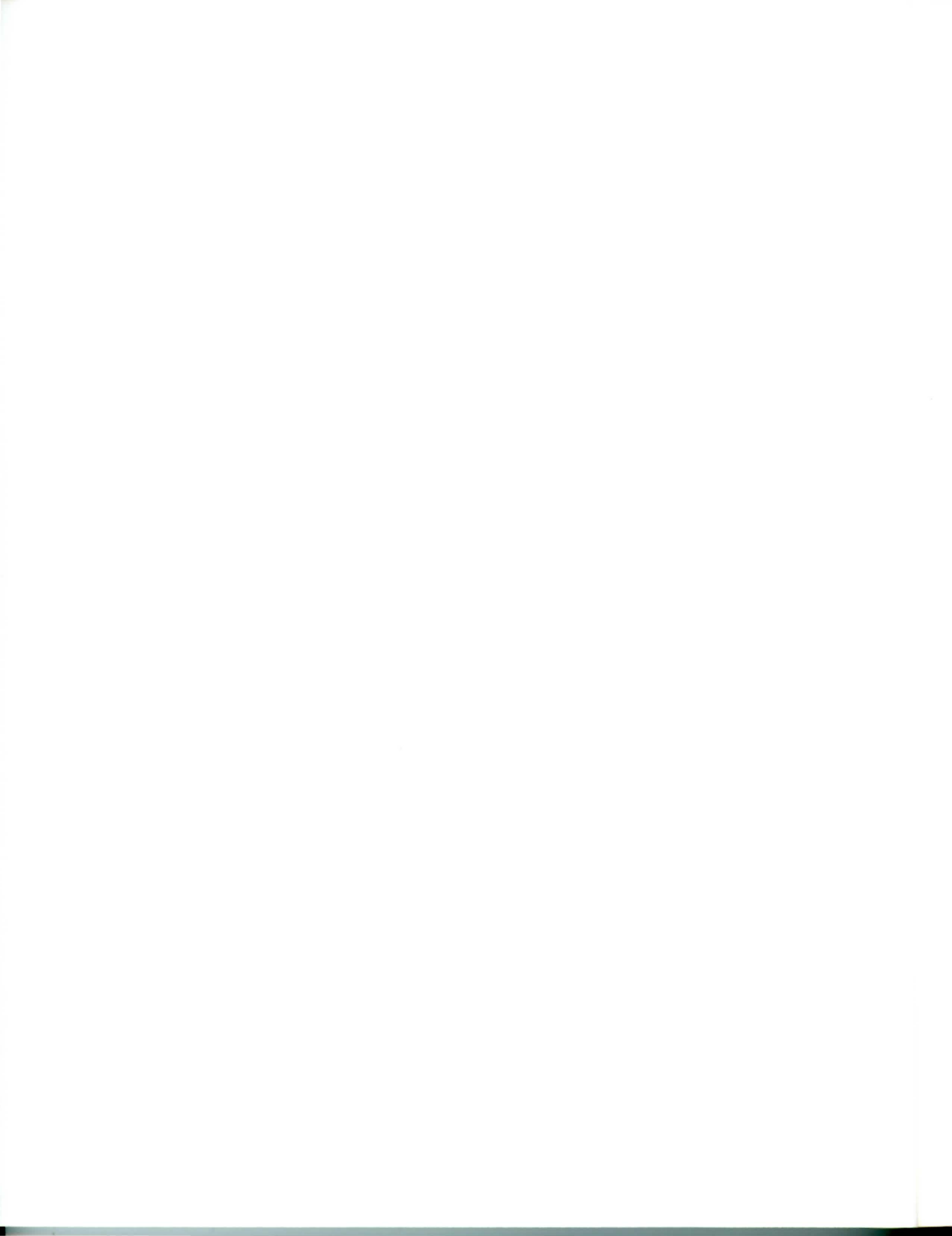
Answer (Virginia Prince) - If you've gone this far without telling them, why do it now? What can you hope to gain?

Comment - I may go into the gender program in Galveston. I'll be a woman

which is what my identity is.

Answer (Virginia Prince) - You don't get to be a woman by having the surgery. You have to be a woman in your head first.

End Tape 1, Side 2



IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

TRANSSEXUALISM: FACT AND FANTASY
March 6, 1987
Tier 1, Tapes 1, 2, & 3

Tape 1, Side 1

Rupert Raj and Kim Hellman - Moderators

We want to talk about how to find a good therapist and we'd like some input from you as well. Also, we shall be referring to transsexual basics.

One vital question for every transsexual is finding a good therapist. This is sometimes very difficult to do. There are a lot of professionals out there who profess knowledge, but have actually had little experience. They will tell you they have taken extensive courses in the field when they have really had only one portion of a course on the subject in college.

The Harry Benjamin Society is a good resource to ask about. You must invest some time at the beginning to find the right doctor. If you are looking for a good therapist, invest some time in finding out where the doctors are in your area.

A therapist is someone you will be with for quite a long time. They are someone you will work with in going over some problems and you may be exploring much of yourself. You may find out that transsexualism is not for you. So, it's up to you to find out more about yourself. Check with other people in your area for where to find a good therapist.

If the therapist can't tell you of any case histories or in their dealings with other transsexuals, it's a good chance you may be one of the first ones. If this is true, this may not be the best therapist for you.

When you do find a good therapist, be sure to utilize the therapist to the maximum. Get as much out of the relationship as possible.

Counseling versus therapy. Counseling deals with the practical advice on hormones, surgery and may involve one or two sessions. Therapy is more in depth and deal more with emotional and psychological problems, some of which may or may not be directly related to the gender conflict. Therapy may involve years of treatment and the evaluation of the transsexual is also included here.

There seems to be a breach here whenever transsexuals hear about therapy. There is sometimes distrust and hostility between the transsexual and the therapist.

Therapy can be very useful. You do need a good therapist and it may take time to develop a good rapport and open communication.

You will need to define the short and long term goals. The therapeutic goals should be spelled out for the mutual benefit and be acceptable for both parties. And of course, these goals should be able to be changed as the relationship goes on.

There is the stigma of this being called a mental illness, a psychiatric disorder.

A therapist does not have to be a psychiatrist. That person can be a social worker or a counselor.

Some therapists are not as knowledgeable as they could be, but they can be taught if they are willing to learn. The transsexual can teach them and they can teach you.

A good therapist can help to coordinate your development as a transsexual. They can refer you to other doctors such as an endocrinologist, a voice instructor or an electrologist. The therapist is a focal point for the transsexual in transition.

I have dealt with five therapist and the first four didn't have as much knowledge about this as I did. This has been the most expensive part of all this and the most dissatisfying.

I'm from San Antonio and for several years there was an active program at the University of Texas, with surgeries being done at the Bear County hospital. A Fundamental Baptist minister made such a fuss that the entire program was disbanded.

What we really need is to have available is an accurate listing of good transsexual therapists.

It is important to find out to what level your company will support you.

ETVC has a listing of TV/TS support groups in the US, Canada and Europe.

Gender clinics - there is a controversy where clinics are concerned and this is world wide. The one affiliated with the University of Toronto is essentially a research facility as opposed to a treatment center although they do have psychotherapy going on there.

People are taken in and you have to submit a life story and photograph and they will meet with you. If you are accepted you will be told of the rules and regulations governing the clinic. They want you to live and work in the chosen gender role full time for one to two years before hormones are granted.

It may take another one or two years before surgery approval is granted, if it is at all.

The average time span for the male-to-female is four to six years. With the female-to-males, it may take two to three years. The clinic is lengthening their time requirements since more people are changing back again. The clinics are mostly similar in their requirements, though the attitudes may vary.

A divorce is pre-requisite to getting into a gender program since the wife can sue the clinic or the surgeon who does the operation.

Start Tape 1, Side 2

Some clinics have become much more selective and strict with their candidates. Only 10-20% of the applicants eventually get approved for surgery.

Hormones - Hormone therapy is a lifelong thing. You will take them for the rest of your life. Black market hormones can kill you if you don't know what you are buying or if there is some undetermined pre-existing medical problem. Legitimate transsexuals are treated with hormones by physicians under strict supervision.

All the experience with blood clotting has been from genetic females taking hormones. There is little information concerning transsexuals.

If there is some pre-existing medical condition, you may be at great risk by starting hormones on your own.

For taking hormones, you need the services and supervision of a good G.P. or endocrinologist. You should be aware of all the possible ramifications of taking hormones. Ask questions, you need a knowledgeable individual. Ask questions and find out what you are really getting involved in. You should have regular checkups. Ask what the good and bad things that could happen when you start on hormones.

Transsexual hot information - The sex reassignment surgery will not solve your problems. Life will still go on. Whatever problems you had before the surgery, will still be with you after the surgery.

Set yourself reasonable goals. Setting unreasonable goals can be harmful in the end. As you go through the transition, you may find it will take longer for electrolysis than you had originally anticipated. It may take longer for living in the role than you thought. So, don't set unreasonable or inflexible time schedules for your transition.

The emotional pain of all of this can be far worse than any physical pain involved with surgery. You will have to deal with your family, relatives, friends and co-workers. This is where good friends, a support group and a therapist can be of invaluable help.

Some transsexuals have lost their families and friends. Some have achieved at least some partial acceptance and some have experienced total rejection.

Losing your job can be a distinct possibility though it doesn't happen in all cases. In a lot of cases, transsexuals do make a smooth transition on the job. Some companies are more supportive these days of their transsexual employees.

The ultimate goal of the transsexual is to blend in with the rest of society. That's what this transitory stage is all about. You must unlearn many former gender characteristics, such as your talking, walking, and mannerisms. This is where a voice coach, a therapist and general coaching will help. There is a lot of un-learning and re-learning to do.

The male-to-female transsexuals do experience second class status. It may take a transsexual time to establish themselves as intelligent women.

Some female-to-male transsexuals experience new authority. They find that more people will listen to them.

End tape 1, Side 2

Start Tape 2, Side 1

There is a tremendous tradeoff involved in all of this. While you may be achieving something very important to you, you may have to make some big sacrifices as far as your friends, family and co-workers are concerned. There are some post-ops who can't accept the lesbian stigma within them. Some post-ops find that after the surgery, they still have an interest in women and they didn't do all this to become a lesbian.

No matter what the reasons are for changing one's sex, you must be sure you are doing it for the right reasons. You must be doing it for yourself.

The surgery is the frosting on the cake. It is final and there is no going back to what you were before you started. Before you take that final step, you must get a lot of stuff out of the way first. Through psychotherapy, you need to get your head straightened out. You need to deal with the social, legal and vocational aspects of this. How will you earn a living once it's all over? Will you remain on your present job or get another one? Will people who know you, accept you socially as a woman or will you have to go elsewhere to find new friends? You need to get all of this done first.

There has to be life after the surgery. You may need a long time to adjust to the role change before the surgery and you may need a while to get used to your life after the surgery. All of this is a means to an end.

Another thing you must contend with is learning to be patient with your family and friends. This is such an unusual change, it may take quite a long time for them to accept or even tolerate the person you are becoming. You can't expect them to change overnight. Give them plenty of time to adjust and be patient.

When it comes time to tell your parents, try not to shock them. You might drop little hints here and there to feel them out first, before you tell them what is going on. They will need a lot of information about this subject and also other people to talk with. Try to gradually work it in. They might even need a therapist, a minister or some other knowledgeable person to talk with. Give them as much information and support as possible.

If you feel your parents may not be understanding and can't do it face to face, a series of letters may be the best way. Don't do it over the phone but do try to do it gradually. Sometimes a supportive brother or sister or some other family member might help.

It's going to be a big shock to people the first time they see you in your new chosen gender role. Let them see you as yourself and talk to them first. Let some time pass and later, ask if they would like to see a photo of the other you. Then take it from there and see how things work out.

Sometimes your parents may hear about it from someone else, like a former girl friend. You may take a lot of ridicule from your friend, but you will make some new friends while you lose some old ones. Sometimes the old friends may start to come around. Some will laugh at you behind your back, but even they may eventually come around and at least be tolerant.

In preparation for surgery, be sure you are in the best physical health possible. The surgeon's reputation and even their surgery can be on the line. It's hard to lose weight once you've been on hormones for a while. If you need to lose a few pounds, do it now.

You will need to live in your chosen gender role for 24 hours a day for at least one year before the surgery. This is a transition period to see if you can really do it. You need this full time life experience and not everyone who starts will be able to go through with it. There are many more who will start than who will eventually finish.

End Tape 2, Side 1

Start Tape 2, Side 2

You will need two letters of referral, either from a psychologist and a psychiatrist, or from two psychiatrists. Plan to go off hormones about a week or two before the surgery. Most surgeons will tell you this. If at all possible, make plans to stay with a friend after the surgery.

Expect to take eight days for the initial recovery period. Expect not to be able to return to work for six to eight weeks after the surgery. Some have returned to work in less time and had problems.

If you have a history of alcoholism, you may not be accepted as a surgery candidate.

The real life test is the real test. Only you can be the judge if you are making it or not. Fantasies can be nice but don't try to delude yourself. You won't know what it is really like to live as a woman until you go out there and actually do it.

As you learn, you will gain more self confidence, you will be able to look people in the eye, and you will become more positive. It is very important for you to know how others really see you.

There are more transsexuals today who are living full time in the female role and are not opting for the surgery. Some don't need it. Some just can't do it.

There is a new category of the bi-gender transsexual. This is one who continues to work in the male role, while socializes as a female and does not want the surgery. This may become a more popular alternative than going all the way.

For the F-M surgery, the mastectomy usually comes first and the nipples can be surgically reduced in size. A hysterectomy follows and then the phalloplasty. The cost runs \$5000 - \$50,000, and in most cases the surgical techniques are still experimental. It may take several years to complete the surgery and a tremendous financial commitment.

For the post-op M-F, post-op care is extremely important. You must do the sitz baths, you must do the prescribed dilating of your new vagina. Be sure to ask a lot of questions of your surgeon. Be sure to get as much information as possible.

Dr. Biber in Trinidad, Colorado currently charges about \$7000 and this includes eight days in the hospital. He is a plastic surgeon and can also do breast implants and a rhinoplasty at extra cost. The program in Brussels runs about \$4000 and includes a three week vacation (although at the present time, Michelle Hunt has stopped the program due to devaluation of the dollar).

At Stanford University, you must go through their gender program and their cost is \$16,000. In San Francisco, it's about \$16,000.

Several people have been able to work out insurance payments and have been reimbursed for part or all of their surgery expenses. Others have paid the entire bill on their own.

And after surgery, you will need some follow-up care with a gynecologist, or if some complications develop, those will have to be taken care of by a local doctor.

End Tape 2, Side 2

No data recorded on Tape 3

IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

TRANSSEXUAL RAP GROUP (OPEN FORUM)
March 6, 1987
Tier 2, Tape 1

Tape 1, Side 1

Kim Hellman, Rupert Raj - Moderators

Kim - My name is Kim and I'm from ETVC in San Francisco. I've been involved in learning about transsexualism for a long time. I've been exploring with a therapist and taking hormones. I've met Christine Jorgensen and Kim Stuart. ETVC has a pamphlet called 'Transsexual Basics', and it is designed for the pre-op transsexual. It is not complete by any means but it does contain a lot of useful information. I have a good background in transsexualism but mostly on the male-to-female transsexual. The other moderator will introduce himself and his expertise.

Rupert - I'm Rupert Raj and I'm a female to male transsexual. I had the surgery in 1972 when I was twenty years old. I've been working with transsexuals in a peer counseling way for the past sixteen years. I've been instrumental in developing three transsexual support organizations.

Question (Jennifer) - I have a question on hormone therapy. Is there any recommended type of hormone? Everyone seems to be taking different types and quantities.

Answer - For the male-to-female transsexual, there are a lot of different doctors prescribing hormones. My endocrinologist uses premarin. Other doctors in the Bay area will start you out on one 2.5 mg per day and then go to 5.0 mg a day and add provera. For a final ridding of the male sex drive they use estinyl. Some doctors do things differently and each one has a different approach. You want to have a doctor who is very concerned about your welfare and one who will take good care of you by looking for bad side effects. You should be concerned that you have a good endocrinologist and that you get the right information and that it is right for you.

Question - Once you start the hormones, can you stop and go back to what you were before?

Answer - after a period of time when a man takes female hormones, he becomes sterile. After a longer period of time, and this varies with the individual, a man will lose the ability to get an erection and ejaculate. This is not reversible and constitutes chemical castration. The breast development will regress a little when the hormones are stopped but the breast tissue will remain.

Comment - I have a friend who had been on female hormones for nine months

and it was ten or twelve years after she stopped taking them when her breast development had gone down to the point where the appearance would be reasonable for a man.

Question - How do you find a good doctor?

Answer - In the Dallas area, I went to a variety of psychiatrists and was eventually referred to a psychiatrist who had a lot of experience with transsexuals. He had the contacts with a competent, caring doctor who is now giving me hormone therapy. His philosophy is to use premarin, and I'm currently taking 7.5 per day.

Comment - Some of the transsexuals in the groups I belong to have gone to clinics and from them I heard about the doctors and clinics who had a lot of experience with transsexuals. I would suggest that even if it involves traveling, that one go to an area where an organized program is available. You can be evaluated and screened for your needs for being transsexual. There are competent physicians in these clinics administering hormones and they are knowledgeable as well.

Question - How expensive is all this?

Answer - For the three premarin pills I take each day, it's less than a dollar a day for my treatment. The psychiatric evaluations cost about a thousand dollars. I added up all my expenses for 1986 and counted nearly four thousand dollars. I could have cut a few corners and have done it for less. I feel good about what I've done and it's been well worth it.

Comment - That is good if you have the right kind of gender clinic. The one in Toronto where I go requires that you first establish your cross-gender identity. You must live in your gender role for a year and then they decide if you can start hormone therapy.

Comment - It's almost two years to the day when I made the decision to start. One of the first groups I found was Tiffany. From there I found the XX Club in Hartford, Connecticut, which is connected to the Gender Identity Clinic, also in Hartford. I have a friend who had gotten started on hormone therapy and after making the transition with the real life test, went and joined the Hartford Clinic and was accepted immediately. There she got surgery approval.

Comment - I'm in an established program in Dallas and have a psychiatrist who is in contact with the gender clinic in Galveston. I've gone through extensive evaluations and testing and was diagnosed as a transsexual. I started hormone therapy and in a few months, I will start my full time living as a female. For my medical examination, I've had every kind of test done from checking my testosterone levels to having prolactin levels done and many more. My doctor is very thorough and expensive too. You shouldn't take any shortcuts with the hormones since one big side effect is blood clotting. There is no way to tell if and when a clot will occur and what level of hormone dosage may precipitate it until it does happen. Then it's usually too late if it happens near the heart, lungs or brain.

Comment - The clinic in Toronto requires cross-living before you start hormone therapy. They don't take into account future possible medical problems as a result of hormone therapy and if it does happen, the person has already role changed. It is stupid to put the cart before the horse by changing your gender identity only to discover that taking hormones is bad for your health.

Kim - Black market hormones are bad from several standpoints. The person who takes them doesn't know what they are doing. They don't know if there will be any possible side effects or if they have some pre-existing medical condition that might be aggravated by taking hormones. Sometimes the hormones themselves can be contaminated or impure. Black market hormones are to be avoided at all costs because it is your life you are playing with.

Comment - When you get the hormones from a pharmacist, there will be a pamphlet that comes with them that describes possible side effects. These side effects are on women because there isn't any long term study of female hormonal effects on males. My mother knows my little secret. She figured things out after watching a Phil Donahue show. My father doesn't know yet. He saw a show on transsexuals and later commented to my mother that would be a terrible thing to have happen in our family. He also said that of his three sons, Marty is the only one he worries about.

Comment - I've been diagnosed as transsexual but I'm stuck in a position where I can't seem to get anything done about it. I don't advise anyone to take any medical risks. Watch your hormone levels and be careful. A long time friend died last fall from complications resulting from her sex reassignment surgery... and she endured three months of pain.

Rupert - I have a copy of the standards of care from the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. This is a professional group with about a hundred members. They have a symposium every two years. The one this year will be held in June in Amsterdam. If you'd like a copy of the standards of care, your doctor could probably get one for you. It is surprising how many doctors, counselors and therapists are not aware of these standards of care.

Comment - There are medical risks and complications involved in all of this. There are also other risks involved here that include risks with society, family, friends and employers. I've already been exposed to a number of these and lost some of my family and friends. Just because you are diagnosed transsexual doesn't mean you have to do anything. You have to look at everything in your life and take a hard look at your situation and decide where you want to go. You have to put everything into proper perspective and decide if this is all worth it. Is it worth it even at the expense of losing your family and friends and taking the risk of medical complications and losing your job? It has to be what you really want and what it is you need to make you happy.

Question - Are there any statistics about the ration of male-to-female and female-to-male transsexuals?

Rupert - When Harry Benjamin did his book in 1966, he said there were eight male-to-females for every female-to-male transsexual. Later on, Ira Polly, the president of the Harry Benjamin Association, found the ratio to be four to one. It is now a one to one ration in some gender clinics. It is difficult to get good statistics in this field and there are many reasons for that. This is a very invisible group of people. The ones who have the surgery don't stick around to do follow-ups. I think it is approaching a one-to-one ratio but it is really difficult to say. I also think the female-to-males are a much less visible group. In the last few years in the mass media, this has been a recent phenomenon. The female-to-males don't come out to the support groups except at first and that is to find out how to get started. They don't like to mix with the male-to-females.

I hold rap socials at my home for female-to-males and they don't even come

out for those in most cases because if they have a wife or girl friend, that becomes their support system. They don't need a peer support group as much as the male-to-females do. They aren't even that visible to me but they are starting to come out more. I think it's because they are now more aware of what can be done surgically for them. With the gay or feminist movements, some women who may have considered themselves transsexual decided to remain as masculine lesbians.

Kim - The topic is now electrolysis or what is also known as the pain in the neck. In the Bay area, there are all kinds of electrologists. I'd like to ask you people how you found a good electrologist.

End Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

Comment - Someone in our local TV/TS group told me about an electrologist she liked but that person was too far away. I picked up the phone book and checked out the yellow pages. I found one who was located in the dermatologist's office and figured this would be a good place to go. There are people who don't know what they are doing. They can cause undue pain and cause scarring on your face. I've been going for about a year and had some problems with swelling for the first few months. I was going once a month and then switched to twice a month. I now go once a week and don't have time for more. My electrologist charges twenty dollars for a half hour session. You can read in Kim Stuart's book about the tremendous cost of electrolysis, but I haven't found this to be true with me. I think it will take about three years and that is a thousand dollars a year. It's a lot of money but it isn't all at once.

Comment - I found an electrologist who met my needs by talking with other people to find out where they were going. There was an electrologist in my area who provided excellent results. There is another one who uses her transsexual clients for her students to practice on. I prefer the former.

It took four to five years to clear my beard but I was also taking a drug to control epilepsy. This drug had a side effect of producing abnormal hair growth. It cost me \$21 for a half hour and the dermatologist I was seeing for another problem was very impressed with the work my electrologist was doing.

Comment - There is a school of electrology in San Diego where I go. I'm pleased with the results and they charge \$25 an hour.

Comment - I looked in the phone book and contacted several electrologists. I finally went to one and this person charges \$50 an hour for prime time and \$40 per hour non-prime time. he started off by not trying to clear an area but instead to thin it out and keep things looking even as he worked. I didn't want this as I wanted to get maximum results right away and get rid of the hair. I found another electrologist through a friend at the Tiffany Club and I've now been seeing her for two years. I'm fairly pleased with the results.

Comment - I found an electrologist in Dallas through my psychiatrist. This person charges \$80 per hour and uses a computer to determine needle depth, current setting and duration.

Comment - I have a nurse friend who does electrolysis but I'm using a national school in my area. So I have a good range of places to go.

Comment - Are there organizations that reputable electrologists belong to? And what would you look for to indicate that you weren't getting good results?

Answer - There is no specific board of governors who control electrologists. The only indication of quality and effectiveness of work is your own personal satisfaction. Be careful about using makeup after treatments so infections don't result.

Elaine - Make sure the electrologist you go to is thorough and conscientious. When I first went to mine she explained the hair growth cycle and described a cleansing program to me. She also gave me information about not shaving the area to be treated for at least two days before hand and not to use makeup for a day afterwards.

Hair removal for the transsexual can take 3-5 years and can cost \$2000 - \$6000. So anytime a transsexual walks into an electrologist's office, that person is a good perspective client for a long period of time. If they don't take the time to treat you well, you should go elsewhere.

Comment - My own electrologist has complained about the tendency among transsexuals to pay her with bad paper. She almost reached a point where she wouldn't accept a check from a transsexual. Be sure to keep your appointments. Her time is money and you must be considerate of her.

Comment - some states require that electrologists be registered. I know that is so in Massachusetts. They have recently formed a national board to regulate themselves as for standards of practice. Do not wax your beard. Waxing will damage the follicle and make it harder for the electrologist to do her job.

Question - On the issue of statistics, I have read a number of reports on male-to-female transsexuals in regards to follow-up and whether or not they achieved their goals for happiness later in life. I have seen reports that indicate a favorable condition for post-ops and other reports advising people not to get into this foolishly. Does anyone have any insight on this?

Rupert - There are tremendous problems in trying to get a representative sampling of this information. John Mayer did a study at John Hopkins that resulted in the closing of the clinic. John Money was in Europe at the time and couldn't respond to what was going on. There was a lot of politics and ideological issues going on.

It is important for post-ops to do follow-ups because if these people are moderately successful, we need that information. We are getting a very skewed picture of the success rate. And just how do we define success? Is it monetary? Is it emotional or relationship success? There are many different ways to define success.

I believe John Mayer's problems with the lack of success among his patients were primarily economic and sociological. He wasn't looking at this in terms of the individual and whether or not they felt comfortable and were happy.

Most of the people who seek professional help here have other problems in addition to their transsexuality. These professionals usually don't get to see the well adjusted happy ones. The Media also doesn't focus on these happy post-ops because they are not newsworthy. They only report the screw-ups, the losers and the ones who don't make it. And who presents these kinds of studies? It's the

psychiatrists, the ones who get to see all the maladjusted individuals. This is why Kim Stuart took a different approach in her book.

She interviewed 75-100 people in the Bay area, transsexuals as well as transvestites, a few gays and even some therapists. She concentrated on their feelings, experiences and attitudes. She tried to do it in an objective fashion but she was getting subjective information. This is rarely done in clinical studies.

Elaine - We are ready to wrap it up. Please fill out the evaluation forms so they can determine what to do or do better for next year's convention.

End Tape 1, Side 2

IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

COMMUNICATION
March 7, 1987
Tier 1, Tapes 1, & 2

Tape 1, Side 1

Naomi Owen & Eve Burchert - Presenters

Naomi - Eve and I have had some extensive experience in this area. We have spoken to thirteen professional groups, done five college presentations and six television shows. Eve has been in a Canadian television documentary. We have done two radio shows and there have been several feature newspaper articles. We also did one very interesting presentation to some law enforcement officials. Our total compensation for the past year was one dollar.

We have met the enemy and she is us. The first step in communication is us. What kind of image are you seeking to present? It is very important to know where you are coming from, the nature of your group and what kind of message are you trying to present. If your group doesn't have definition, it should. Is it a social group, and education or a support group? What are the membership requirements? Has it been determined who can or cannot belong? In essence, what is your product? You must have some well defined image in mind, before you can consider media and outside communication.

Your own club flyers and materials should create a good first impression. Make sure they are attractive and well written. Some of the quality in the paraculture isn't that great. We need to upgrade some our printed matter.

The same thing applies to a newsletter, the quality should be good. Another good thing to do is to exchange newsletters among the different clubs. Find out what the other groups are doing.

Some groups that have done well with outside communication are the ones that have had successful speaking engagements. You need a speakers bureau. You need well trained and articulate people to go out and speak and carry the message.

There is the college and school level contact, speaking for classes in human sexuality. You can speak before professional groups and this will go a long way in helping to educate these professionals.

It's important through this kind of outreach that through speaking engagements, you can get into the media. That's how it happened for us. We were invited to a law enforcement class. Eve and I had presented a program at a local college and in the audience was an FBI agent. He was a friend of one of the students. After the class he approached the professor to get in touch with us.

One of his duties is to lead training programs for what is called personal crime. The officers would sooner or later run into a crossdresser and these people, like the rest of the world, have preconceived notions about crossdressers. He invited us to the session to educate the law enforcement officers.

This presentation did change some attitudes against crossdressing. We got our message across and this was an important advance.

It is very important how you handle inquiries. A good idea is to have a hotline with an answering machine. When letters are received, it's important to answer that letter right away. Out of town contacts should be referred to other groups so you need to be in contact with these other groups.

In making your image, it's important to be aware of how and who represents your group. These people should be knowledgeable, articulate and assertive without being dominant.

The appearance factor is critical. The initial visual impact is important and should be the best possible. Eliminate the sleazy or hooker types. Your representatives must look reasonably presentable.

Comment - I called Tiffany one time and it turned out to be a dead end.

We've all had these experiences. You didn't get to talk with the right person. Total communication can be a problem. That's why we're coming together.

Rupert - There is a problem here when you try to contact some of these groups. I run Metamorphosis and I'm chief cook and bottle washer. I do the magazine and answer letters, all of which I answer individually. I've heard the same complaint about many other groups.

As Rupert said, it's usually one or two people who are responsible for information flow.

We have moral responsibilities here. If we are going to become a national support group, let's take it seriously. We need to follow up on all inquiries.

In each group, there are special circumstances you need to be aware of. We should have a pool of professionals around the country to help answer some of these special inquiries, such as a wife calling to find out where she can get help. A national network of professionals would be of great value in this area.

Comment - A simple idea would be to put an 800 number in the yellow pages in the listings of major cities. Put the listing under sex with reference to gender.

Tri-Ess has a goal of putting our library index card into a thousand libraries. We sent out five cards to each member. We get quite a large response from the public from this library card system. Many people go to libraries to find information and usually, there is nothing available.

One of our members went to a local library and was told that most of the TV/TS books were stolen from the library.

I have a problem with the library card method although I think it's an effective way of making contact with people. You are really using an unauthorized bill board there. Sooner or later, the library will find the card and pull it out.

I get the feeling we are building a little ill will there.

End of Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

Many supermarkets have bulletin boards and we've started a thing at CHIC. We put up a little piece of paper on the board that says, "Transvestism - CHIC, maybe we can help - phone number". We've done the same thing at a few gay bars. If they tear them off and throw them away, we just go back and put another one up.

Some of these underground newspapers have a free listing section for non-profit organizations. You can leave business cards at friendly wig shops. We put a calendar on the backs of our cards so people will keep them in their wallets and use them. They can also circle the meeting dates that way.

Media - There is a problem of handling solicited versus unsolicited interviews. You can try to get some kind of publicity by booking an appearance on the radio or television or sometimes, the reverse happens. You put on a convention and somebody hears about it and they send out a reporter to cover it.

The first question that arises is do you cooperate with the reporter and what are your options? You have to make an analysis of some sort. What are the advantages and disadvantages of cooperation. A lot depends on the relationship between you and the reporter.

I've had reporters barge in and try to cover the event as though it were a public event or a fire. They don't understand the sensitivity or the confidentiality of the affair. There are some people here who are very uptight about where they are and what they are doing.

My personal preference is to cooperate with the reporters but I like to feel that I am going to have some kind of control over the input and what is going to happen. Rather than turn the reporter away and taking the chance he may get annoyed and then pursue it in a derogatory manner, it's better to cooperate.

Are you dealing with a news writer or a feature writer. That's important. News writers think they have all the rights in the world like they are covering a police story or a fire story. The feature story will usually end up on the human interest page.

Control of content can be difficult to do, but you can make reasonable suggestions, particularly the feature writers. The best way to deal with this is to get your most articulate people to deal and reason with the reporter.

Rupert - We did an article in the Globe Mail, which is a conservative national paper, and we were approached by a reporter. He also talked to people at the gender clinic at the Clark Institute in Toronto. The reporter came to my home and I gave him all the important issues. We got the impression from this man that he would treat the subject objectively and fairly. When the story appeared, it was done as a parody. He treated the transsexuals as human oddities and freaks. It wasn't so much what he said but how he said it. Even the photographs he used were not very flattering. The photographer had done his best to produce bad photographs.

It's been my experience that most of the media people do not like anyone dictating to them the nature and content of their articles or stories.

Comment - I wouldn't trust television people as far as I could throw their truck. You have to go in with that attitude. They deal with a world where if the show dies, it's their problem. They want rating numbers and we want to get a message out.

I do a little teaching and the most important element is to know what you're talking about. You have to research the show. I wouldn't go on a show unless I've seen it at least a half dozen times.

You can get these people if you want to. Just because someone on a television show asks you a question, that doesn't mean you have to answer it. If they stick a microphone in front of your face and ask a question, if you don't answer, they are the ones who look like the jerk, not you. You could just reply, "I'd rather not talk about that..."

There are two types of shows. There the half hour sit down shows where usually everything will go on the air virtually unedited and there are the pieces for the news. They are dynamite because they can do anything they want with those things. They want a sensational story about a bunch of freaks walking around a motel somewhere. They can pick and choose what you tell them and distort it for their own purposes.

Use a tape recorder and rehearse answers for whatever questions you may think they will ask. Rehearse the answers so when you go on a show, you will have a constant flow of information to present. They won't get a sensational story unless you give it to them. With a little practice, you can take any question they ask and twist it around to giving the kinds of answers you want.

In a live show, you can manipulate the way the thing is going if you've had a little experience. With a documentary, you will have no control at all over the final product. Things can be taken out of context and put together in any way the producers want. This is a problem, particularly in radio.

In television, you have a real visual impact. Know what kind of show you are dealing with before hand, either by watching it a few times or by talking with the producer. Have a good understanding who and what you are dealing with. You can give a prepared information sheet to the producers to help them determine the format.

Eve and I have prepared a background information sheet such as what we used on the Donahue show. We also included a list of prepared questions and answers attached to the information sheet. By providing this list, we were able to help them determine the format of the show and Donahue used the sheet we provided.

End Tape 1, Side 2

Start Tape 2, Side 1

February, May and November are rating sweeps and this is the time these shows like to have the transvestites and transsexuals on to boost ratings. You have to really want to go on the show that will have something to say and are willing to speak up.

Don't be uptight and too serious. It helps to have some humility and a good style. A little humor goes a long way. Try to anticipate the questions. Don't be afraid to smile. Some of our people don't smile and this isn't good. Use humor to answer sensitive questions.

After you've done a show, do a follow up and write a thank you note to the producer. You may get future call backs from your follow up.

One way to do television shows is for a group to travel to other cities so the local club members don't run the risk of being recognized.

The use of voice filters, black outs or shadow viewing on television doesn't work well. Being interviewed in male clothes doesn't work either.

It would be very valuable to make you 10-page information sheet available to IFGE. We need to learn how to do these things right.

The idea of having an available pool of people to travel to different cities works very well. You need to have some humor on the shows and try to play off the others present. Be glad to be there. You should care about what you are saying. Be honest and direct. And most important, know what you are talking about!

You have to consider body language. Don't gesticulate, keep your legs together and don't fold your arms.

End Tape 2, Side 1

Start Tape 2, Side 2

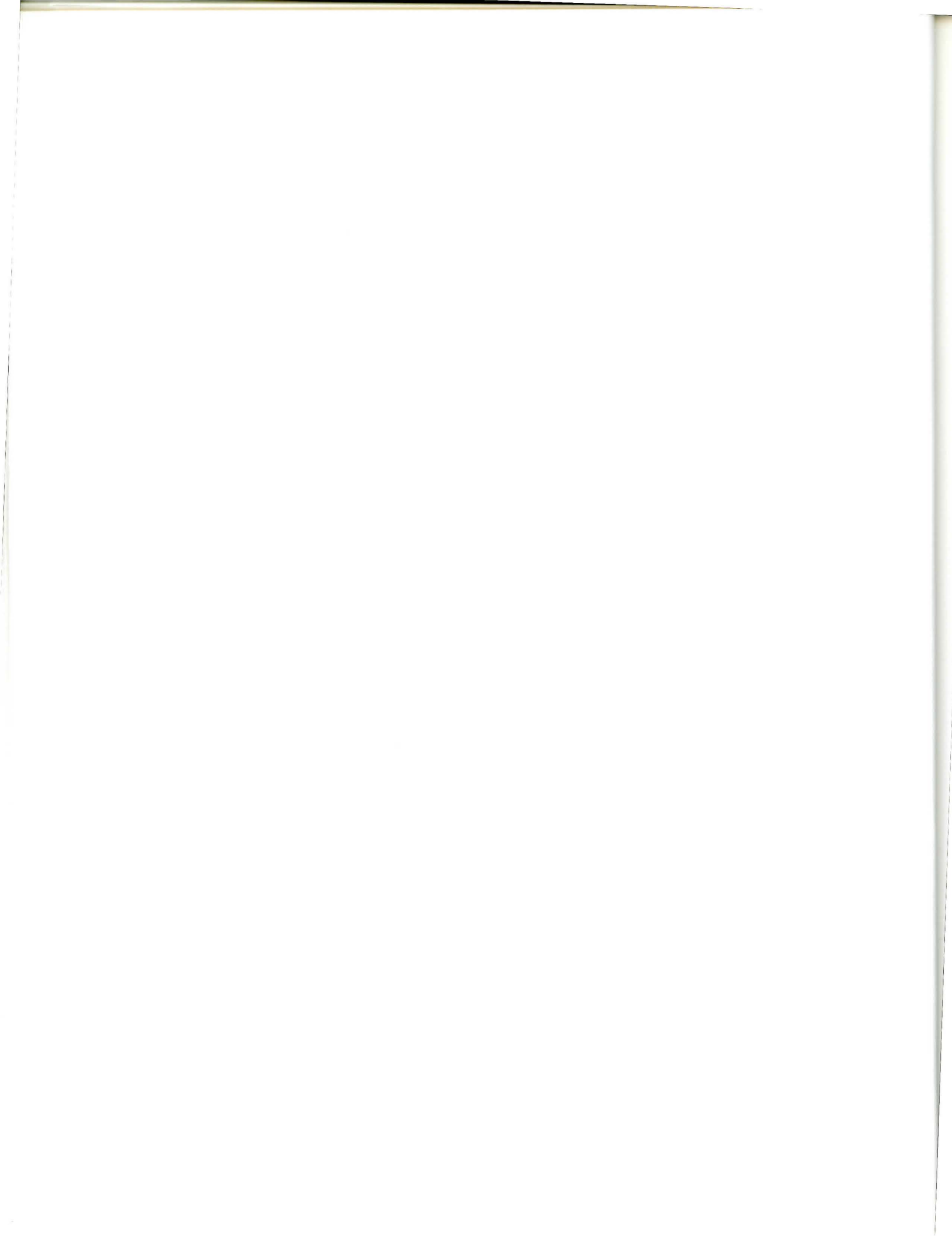
Keep the presentation light and friendly. We are here because sooner or later you may meet someone like us and you should know what it's all about. We are open and candid and it's informational.

If there is a confrontation on a show and someone is antagonistic, it doesn't pay to get angry back. You need to keep calm and a level head at all times. Sometimes the show host can intercede to keep things moving along.

It is difficult for the average crossdresser to get on a television show. Tri-Ess has done quite a bit of advertising in periodicals and we have an information kit available that tells how to approach the editor and how to deal with the news media. Television may be the best way but it's difficult to get into that media, so we must consider the printed media. It's another way to go and it's easier.

We should use every avenue available to us to get into the various forms of media.

End Tape 2, Side 2



IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

NETWORKING
March 7, 1987
Tier 1, Tapes 1 & 2

Tape 1, Side 1

Kim Hellman - Moderator

Kim - A major thrust of our group is to establish good communication between ourselves and other groups. One way to do this is by sharing individual club newsletters. Our group receives newsletters from all over the country, Canada, England, France and Australia.

Your your club doesn't have a newsletter, start one, even if it is only one page. You have to get information out and a newsletter is the best way to do it.

Another way of networking is to provide a direct club leader to leader exchange of information. Have your club leaders contact other club leaders. We have found this is not as effective as the member/group to group method.

Intra group communication is important. You can with other groups, share and exchange ideas and information. Projects may often be duplicated by one or several groups throughout the country.

Many groups have hotline numbers for members and prospective new members. The hotline should not become a crisis hotline, but should serve for information flow only. Things can develop into a dangerous situation if a club hotline becomes a crisis hotline and there are no properly trained individuals answering the calls. Do not get into offering advice on serious problems, unless the person doing the answering knows what to do and has had some kind of training dealing with crisis calls.

Work together in local regions to develop shared activities between groups. It is good to have co-sponsored events to allow equal participation of all the groups involved.

Events such as the 'Be All You Can Be' weekend, the 'Tiffany P-town Outing' and others, can serve as a happening for different groups to come together and share and exchange news.

Networking can also involve a library where you can have more information exchange through books, articles, bibliographies, video tapes and the like. Many groups have their own libraries as do some individuals.

Writing letters is useful as are also computer networks. There are about

five public bulletin boards available today. There are six gender oriented bulletin boards that include 'Gendernet', 'Pretty In Pink', "Carolyn's Closet' (Midwest), 'Jersey Shore System', 'Passing Fancy' (VA/DC area), and the 'Pleasure Palace' (LA).

Some of the networks are open to the public, some are closed. And in some, there are various levels of availability according to which parts a subscriber pays for.

Comment (speaker inaudible) - ...we have a rather loose network right now. Our people meet at P-town and other events ...we need to tighten up our network and establish better communication.

Comment - Our group gets 27 newsletters. We could use the computer technology to provide information to Merissa. We should publish 'how to do it' articles and lists of contact persons among the groups.

The ETVC has club listings for 102 U.S. groups and 13 foreign. We have been working on updating the address listings. We sent a TS pamphlet to all these groups and five were returned for incorrect addresses. There is a great need for updating the addresses and the names of the contact person.

I have brought a computer listing of gender networks and information on how to get started into computer networking. I will put together a better comprehensive listing. I have not been active in networks like Compuserve or The Source, but there is a per hour charge rate for these networks. For bulletin boards, the public access is free except for a yearly fee. Access to level two on Gendernet is \$45 a year.

With telephone contacts, there is a security problem. We could hire an answering service and provide limited access hours. This would eliminate the security problem since answering machines and individual turnover in private homes is a problem.

Sometimes when a group starts a hotline, it isn't properly maintained and the phone numbers go out of date. A fixed answering service would not go out of date.

Question - The ETVC is a very open group on the West coast. There are some groups open only to TVs or only to TSs. We do have different purposes and reasons for groups. How can we get together on some common ground to work together?

Answer - The individual groups should publish a policy statement. Let it be known what kinds of restrictions there are and publish a policy statement.

Comment (Holly Cross, Tiffany Club) - We could fit such a statement in the Tapestry if it is kept concise. The lines of communication are very short. If we could lengthen those lines and establish a clearing house for those groups who can then refer people to other groups in different parts of the country. That is what the IFGE plans to do. Hotlines and home phones are not the way to go on a national level.

We need an organization such as the IFGE to gather and distribute information. We have to cooperate with every group across the country. We must group together under one flag to implement this idea of cooperation, whether it be for a serious group, for fun and socializing, or whether it is for a TV or TS club.

Comment - Communication with other groups is not the problem. Our one common problem is with society in general. Our common problem is to educate society. We must coordinate all our efforts to accomplish this education.

Answer - To accomplish this, we need better communication between all the groups. We must join in to work together, to help ourselves and inform society and the world around us.

Comment (Heather Peerson, CrossPort) - It is difficult to operate any organization. It is even more difficult to be a part of a group when half of the members will not even admit they belong. We try to not duplicate services that a national organization already provides. We need a national group to provide things that local, smaller groups can't provide.

Public education is an important thing here for all groups concerned. We could establish a national 800 number hotline to be staffed with trained, competent and knowing people. We should bring all of this out into the open, into the real world where it belongs.

There can be too much stress on local people and this results in burnout. If a group gets too large, the members must be willing to back down and redirect their services. We need a strong national organization to maintain and carry on the movement.

Comment - We need to find a public answering service to establish an 800 hotline. This hotline can give the caller information on where to call or where to write for more information. Written information could be mailed out to the caller as well. The total cost of this service can be shared among the participating groups. There could be a taped message to tell the caller where to write to get information local area groups.

Linda (CHIC) - I propose we publish a national news information sheet every three or six months to be inserted in every local club newsletter to pass along news and information on the national level. I'd like to see a national movement evolve to respond to the news media against pressure groups. We need a method to respond to negative publicity.

End of Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 2, Side 2

There was a Bay area news story about a couple, one of whom was a TV or TS, allegedly responsible for a child's murder and it was all over the 6 p.m. local television news. Television station KRON received 15 calls from a local TV group. The result of these calls prevented the story from airing on the 11 p.m. news.

Another positive response would be to issue from a central location, a letter or general statement explaining what crossdressing, TVism and TSism is all about. This could be sent to every newspaper and television station.

The letter could explain how we resent the stigma the entire TV/TS community gets whenever the actions of a single individual get in the news.

Comment - When the Renee Richards story was shown in our area, we sent in positive letters in support of the film.

We can work on the local and national levels every time other TV/TS related programs are shown to reflect positive aspects.

Another area we are lacking in is a formal, Hollywood style production explaining who we are and what we stand for. The production of a major film or television program showing what we really are would go a long way on educating the general public. The HBO program 'What Sex Am I' has been the closest production for showing the gender community in a positive light. We could focus some serious input to Hollywood and find a producer sympathetic to do a good film for our cause.

The major focus of what I am seeing here is the problem of getting the right information out to those who need it the most. If a national computer bulletin board were set up, anyone with a personal computer and a modem could communicate with the IFGE.

We need to establish a national organization and strong communications network.

There are some positive things that happened over the past few years. Virginia Prince started the legitimacy of crossdressing. She made many others feel prod and able to express those feelings associated with crossdressing. Some of us are no longer afraid to walk down the street. Many of us have learned how to act like ladies.

I heard many positive comments while being here this weekend and I believe the way we are doing it is right.

Comment - I had a difficult time finding out about this convention, but I did hear about it from Rupert Raj.

I stepped down from leadership in the group I belonged to since I wanted to present a more outgoing, public image. The rest of the group didn't.

I would be willing to maintain and finance a computer network from Toronto. I can see you already have a stable information network going here.

We are at the point where we need to funnel a lot of information into the IFGE. Every group that has information available must add their input to the general pool of knowledge and share their efforts as much as possible.

Outreach is one part of our goals and another is social. The East coast has well publicized events such as Fantasia Fair and the Tiffany P-town Outing. Once a general list is assembled, I'd like to see a lot more input and sharing of information. We need a national list, some type of natural leader and we need to keep people informed.

We need to make social contacts available for the traveler. A tip sheet could be made available listing friendly stores, restaurants, shoe, clothing and wig stores.

Through public communication, the public is aware about gender dysphoria and how it relates to the TS. Why don't we think in terms of gender euphoria to describe the positive condition of the crossdresser? Let's be positive about this. We need to present some positive aspects of all this as there has been far too much negative publicity in the past.

Any bulletin board consists of nothing more than a computer and a modem with a terminal communications package to operate the whole thing. This is a quick way to communicate across the telephone lines. Text is normally transmitted but the JSS bulletin board does offer some transmission of graphics for IBM compatible systems.

The exchange of large amounts of information is done through downloading the data to a disk drive or printer where it can be viewed later when the user is off the phone line. Bulletin boards allow the user to view the services available, provide public and private mail services and read or send information files.

The user would log on and according to their security or level purchased initially, would have access to various levels of information. Giving leaders special security codes would prevent the general public from access to certain types of sensitive information.

Access could be daily, weekly or monthly, depending on the user's needs. You can send mail, communicate with other people in real time and even conduct open forums in the so-called CB mode. One or more people who happen to be on line at any given time could respond to a question or make comments about something.

Merissa is willing to use the Tapestry as a communications tool between the various organizations. The national organization listings, representing quite a complete list, are published in each issue of the Tapestry.

To implement the sending of preliminary information to all the groups, I propose Merissa draft an open letter or questionnaire for a national mailing to all the groups. What can you do? Sponsor a 1-800 hotline? Provide a computer person? We need to get an agreement from all the groups.

Comment - Groups that have been seen on national television get a lot of coverage and often times, can't handle all the attention. But, the further we spread, the more we can reach.

End of Tape 1, Side 2

Start Tape 2, Side 1

The Tapestry may well become the official publication of the IFGE. Why doesn't each of us become a salesperson for the Tapestry? Many novice crossdressers frequent adult bookstores and this is where they learn something about crossdressing. Take a copy to the local bookstore and convince the manager to put it on the shelves. This would mean more money for Tapestry and the IFGE.

Tapestry is one of the finest gender publications around. If we could get it into general bookstores, we could get a lot more coverage than just from the adult bookstores. There are so many people out there looking for information.

Tri-Ess has been working on a library file card system for advertising. We have printed library file card size cards that our members slip into the card files under gender or TV listings. It has been our goal to get these cards into a thousand libraries.

Libraries can be a good source of information. What about a project to donate gender related books to libraries?

Question - Are there any negative aspects to this library card method?

Answer - The cards do get removed from the drawers but we keep putting them back in again.

Another important need is for the wives and girl friends of crossdressers. We have a significant others group and no TVs or TSs are allowed to attend the meetings. We need to network and share experiences. The news media is keen on couples, wives and significant others.

Only recently have wives gotten together to communicate and share. There is a lot of positive information to be gained from wife support groups. Many of us are indeed lucky to have their support.

We need a general letter to send to the media about ourselves. We need a national sheet to include in every local newsletter. The IFGE is a focal point. Each group should send copies of their newsletters to Tapestry.

The exchange of newsletters is important from the standpoint of the general membership.

This first convention was designed to get us organized. The next one will concentrate on educating the public. This one has been partially fun and partially socializing, but we do need to get down to work. Some of us won't want to work but we do have to start the promotion for next year. The 1988 convention will be a working convention.

We need a form sheet or press letter. The IFGE needs to create some of these materials. We need to formulate our ideas, define the terminology, get the right kind of information out to the general public and produce some appropriate will worded responses to both positive and negative publicity.

We need to get the Tapestry into more adult bookstores and give lectures at colleges and universities. Not everyone will be interested but at least they may become better educated. We must get information out to college professors and professionals and start reaching younger people for education.

The main thrust here is to educate the public about gender issues. We need a national organization, a strong focal point, a national effort focused on one point.

End Tape 2, Side 1

Meeting broke up into rap groups.

IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

COUNSELING TECHNIQUES
March 7, 1987
Tier 2, Tapes 1 & 2

Start Tape 1, Side 1

Dr. Roger Peo, Niela Miller - Presenters

- Part 1 - Counseling in general
- Part 2 - Roger's techniques
- Part 3 - Niela's techniques
- Part 4 - Questions

Dr. Peo -

What I often find with people who come into my office for counseling, is that often the things they are struggling with are not very clear in their own minds. the first thing I do is take a detailed medical and sexual history and ask a lot of questions. I ask about their family backgrounds and if they have been, or are seeing other professionals. I ask in great detail, questions about their sexual experiences.

Some of the clients feel I am prying into their private lives but all of this is important, even though some think it isn't very important. The first session usually last about ninety minutes.

I then try to find out why the person has come to me in the first place. A client will come in and present some problem they are having difficulty with. some typical ones are: "My wife sent me," or "I'm here because if I don't stop my crossdressing my wife will divorce me."

Another kind of problem I see comes from the self-diagnosed transsexual. They say they are TS. They know what they are and don't need or want any counseling. They want a letter from me so they can go and get hormones. This presents a different category of problem.

The first problem in dealing with the relationship issue is that it is difficult to come to any kind of conclusion without getting the other person in the relationship involved in the counseling.

The wife of one of my clients is convinced that if he puts his mind to it, he can stop his crossdressing. She sees this solely as his problem. She will not talk to him about it and will not come to see me or see another counselor. He has accepted his crossdressing but is trying to deal with the issue of what to do about his relationship with his wife.

The best I can do in this case is to get him to discuss the environment in which he finds himself and attempt to understand something about what is going on with his wife. I can take what he tells me but that is very much colored.

In the relationship issues, if the person who is coming to see me has pretty well worked through their feelings about their crossdressing, and if the wife is unwilling to be counseled, about the best thing I can do is provide a maintenance kind of help. I can give him some mental and emotional support and help with coping mechanisms. It is often very difficult to go beyond that point.

Some counseling methods I use are educational techniques. I've learned a lot about different kinds of counseling and I'll use whatever means that seem appropriate for a given situation. I use one technique called a fantasy trip which may be considered a form of hypnosis. I'll have the client do some free form association and that allows him to examine certain issues he may not look at otherwise.

I also will have the client dialogue different aspects of his behavior. If the person is a crossdresser, I'll have the male side talk with the femme side and vice versa.

There are also more conventional techniques in getting the client to more precisely define the problem in question they are trying to solve.

I can often see five or six problems and I'll have the client focus on the ones that are most important to them. I will instigate a dialogue with the client about what it is that seems to get in the way of having a better relationship or better feelings about themselves.

Question - How do you direct them towards problems that they can't see for themselves?

Answer - I do that usually by using leading questions like, What about this? Have you thought about that? It's important to me in a therapy situation not to sit back and tell the client that I know what his problem is. I have to lead them in some way to discover that for themselves.

Question - What happens when they don't want to address a particular issue you feel might be an important one?

Answer - In that case, I will bring it up. I don't play games in that kind of situation. To me, it's more important that the client finds the root of the problem for himself. This evolves out of the discussion and part of the dialogue.

The first issue is to get the person to define what the real problem is and often times, that's very difficult. I have to work with a self-diagnosed person to explore the possibilities of a change. Out of that exploration comes a set of goals. Where do they want to go from here? I'm looking here for short term goals as well. It doesn't matter to me how someone got to be a certain way. We have to focus on the current problems.

Niela Miller -

We have three basic needs. One is to take care of ourselves. The second is to relate to others and the third is to be in tune with the world. When anyone comes into therapy, they are usually out of balance between those three needs.

As a humanistic psychologist, my interest is in the whole picture of what are all the tools that this person has. I want to bring this person into balance. I want to find out how I can help by simply being a loving and objective observer and discovering whatever it is they are putting out to me, so they can better see more options than their problems.

My practice includes about fifty percent straight people with the rest covered by TVs and TSs, that includes both couples and individuals. I don't make a big distinction between one kind of problem and another. I think most people do know the truth about themselves but they cover it over in their desire to adapt to the people around them, to their conditioning, community and prior belief systems. Part of the work in therapy is to unpeel the onion and see if we can get to the essential self of the person.

I do this in a number of ways. I had one client come in who was highly anxious for most of his adult life. He made the mistake of getting into the military. He discovered he couldn't stand the pressures of having to do everything nearly perfect. He had been a crossdresser from an early age and had problems as to how he could fit this into his life.

He was attracted to drag queens and TVs and had a non-sexual relationship with a woman for fifteen years that proved to be safe and comfortable. He was conflicted inside because he felt there was a lot that wasn't coming out in him. He felt he was posing in some kind of way. There was no need to be a woman but rather, there was a lot going on with him that he wasn't handling.

We looked at some of the ways he would be living if he felt free about his crossdressing. He used to write poetry and played music and he liked color but dressed drably.

We began to experiment with his starting to view some of these things in the present, just as he was. He began buying shirts that were softer in texture and color. He enrolled in a poetry class and started writing poetry again. There was still the job issue to deal with as he had not been working for a while.

This client had been a purchasing agent for a large company and there was too much pressure there for him. He is trying to find out if he can live comfortably and be comfortable with himself.

Over the past year he has blossomed out, giving himself permission with my help to do all kinds of things that were allocated at one time to the few parts of himself, but things which he found quite acceptable and enjoyable. These things were part of his essential self. He now writes some fabulous poetry and I'm encouraging him to get some of it published.

I find that TVs are very out of touch with their bodies. There is a lot of information coming through that much of their in-touchness with their bodies has been sexualized and eroticized for much of their lives.

I work with self observation of what's happening about the way you breathe that tells how excited or bored you are, or how angry you may be. I watch what you do with your muscles, how you walk and sit. All of this body language observing contains much information that can lead you to becoming more in touch with yourself.

This becomes part of the session, that we pay close attention to a lot of what is going on with the body. After a while, the person becomes much more in tune and picks up on things for himself. This of course, is the ideal.

I see the therapist as being the hidden part of the person that needs to come out. The things I am encouraging the person to do are things that are already there but that are covered over. In that sense, there is a true self there that needs encouragement in coming out in various ways.

I pay close attention to people's dreams. TVs have very particular kinds of dreams. It is a revelation to them and TSs as well that when they start keeping a journal of their dreams and learn to read or use them, that they get a tremendous amount of information that helps them deal with their conflicts, like how they are really feeling about certain things and how they order their world. Some people have a real ability to fantasize. Being a TV is synonymous to being a good fantasizer.

Since some people have difficulty in putting things into words, I use art materials and ask the person to draw me a picture of what something feels like. This process releases all that pent up energy of wanting to express themselves and being unable to do it. Once we have something concrete to look at, we can discuss it and then they have found a way to express something they couldn't before.

With a dialogue, one of the ways people tell me they are ready for this is when they report of having internal dialogues within their heads. Part of being a good therapist is being able to recognize the signs people tell you in hidden ways what they need.

When this stage is reached, I have the person actually do the dialogue with the other part of them, whether it be their wife or boss. Then I have them switch and become the other person and see if what it was they would imagine the response to be.

If the response is negative, this is where some people cut themselves off. They don't want to deal with it. I think a major part of therapy is empowerment. They should feel they are not victims and do have some choices available to them.

Then I'll tell them to return to their own chair and play around with some different ways to handle that situation, ways that feel good to them, where their feelings of integrity are intact.

We are very careful to recognize that this is a very delicate issue for everyone and they are in a position to be blackmailed, or have some harm come to them. I take this confidence thing very seriously, even if I know they are very open people. You can never tell when someone is going to feel scared or sensitive.

Roger - My style tends to be more intellectual and Niela's is more humanistic. At this point, we have probably given you enough information to ask questions, so why don't we turn the floor over to the audience. We would like your comments as well.

Question (Janet) - When do you think someone needs therapy and do you think everyone needs it?

Answer (Roger) - You can tell you need therapy when you are in some kind of situation you can't resolve yourself, whether it's a problem with your life or with your job.

Niela - You may also need therapy when there is no one else in your life that you can talk with. Some people do have outstanding friends who are able to not get involved in giving solutions and who are terrific listeners.

Start Tape 2, Side 2

Most people can't do that with friends or loved ones since they have too much invested in the outcome. That is why people like us exist. We can be objective in that way.

Roger - We need later to talk about when peer counseling is effective and when you should go on to someone who is more experienced.

What we are trying to do is find out what works for the individual. I had a colleague who was trained in the classical Freudian method and who had a crossdresser for a client. He was determined to have this client do things his way and when I told him it wouldn't work, we sort of went our own separate ways after that.

If there was only one method of therapy available to me, then I would have to force it to fit the client. If that didn't work, then we would both be in trouble. I don't have any particular way of determining that you have to come to me or not.

Niela - I will say this and it may be biased on my part. There are many people who come to me who are not in deep trouble but want to fulfill more of their potential. There are different motivations in going to a therapist. In order to fulfill more of their potential, they need to find out more about things they weren't very much in touch with.

Usually, in the therapeutic interaction, there are surprises. There are things that come to that person because of the sessions that wouldn't have come if the person hadn't started therapy. It's sort of like they need an alter ego to help bring things out that would have normally stayed inside.

The best time to do therapy is when you don't have a huge crisis to contend with. It can be like an adventure where you travel around to different foreign countries, making one discovery after another.

Question - I have a totally negative spouse and have not been able to resolve anything in the past year. She will not go with me to my counselor or even to another one. How can you resolve something like that, or can you?

Niela - I would put her aside and ask you whether or not you derive more than fifty percent satisfaction by being with her. Is the relationship satisfying to you without resolution on this issue. If you can't be happy more than ten percent of the time and if you can't resolve this, then I suggest you look at your attachment with her and how you would resolve the question of whether you'd rather keep things going the way they are for whatever reasons you may have.

Would work more with you on getting clear on how this affects you and what you are going to do about it.

Roger - I might use different words but that's pretty much what I would do. It's impossible for me to work with the person who is not in the room. anything you may tell me about your wife will be colored by your own perceptions and I would be getting information second hand. I couldn't work on anything specific with you and your wife. All I could do is to give you some sort of perspective as to what is going on in your wife's head and this would be based on my experience with other wives.

Crossdressing and gender issues are often very isolating in that you see your problems as insurmountable and can't really see what is going on with the person you are involved or interacting with.

Niela - I have seen enough times where wives seemed intractable and where husbands were patient and persevering because of their love, and over a time, see a little more tolerance from the wives. Sometimes I've seen a bad situation turn into something quite tolerable for both persons.

One thing I've learned, if you give anything enough time, something will change. Things do not remain static in human life. If you are clear on what you'd like the outcome to be and are clear on what you are willing to do to have that outcome, which may mean just being loving to your wife and not pushing her on this at all, and simply going about your business as a married couple while accepting some limitations for a while, sometimes things will change.

For some people, this is impossible to do. They will say to their wives, this is so important to me that I want you to come with me to my counselor at least once. I'm asking you to do this for me as a favor, even though I know you don't want to be there.

Often times, if you are willing to make that clear a statement and take responsibility for what it is you want, the terribly reluctant person will do it, in spite of her reservations.

If the therapist does a good job and deals well with the situation at that first meeting, the wife may find it has been helpful. She will get information she didn't have before and from a person who is not feeling passionate about the outcome. Many times, after the wife agrees to come that one time, she does return for more sessions.

Question - From a standpoint of peer counseling, is there a rule of thumb when you find you can't give any more advice and tell the person to see a professional?

Roger - You have to be candid. If you clearly know that you don't know the answers and don't want to volunteer any more information, tell them it's time for them to go see a professional counselor.

One of the best things in peer counseling and this applies to the untrained person as well, is to have the ability to listen. Often times as a counselor, that is all I do, and provide some mirroring feedback. The trick here is to be genuine about what you are doing.

The change over point is when you begin to feel uncomfortable and it has gone beyond anything you know an answer for will make you feel comfortable. Then it's time to suggest a professional.

Question - What do you do when someone becomes a real pest?

Niela - You have to tell them to leave you alone. You may ask yourself what it is you are doing for them to seek you out and then modify your behavior. You will have to set some boundaries.

You can say almost anything to anyone if it comes from a loving place within you. It's when people feel put down or judged, or that you are being malicious with them, that they have a bad reaction.

If you feel you'd like to become more competent as a lay counselor, you might consider taking a counseling course. You will acquire the basic skills needed for counseling and you'll be more confident when approached by someone needing help.

Roger - If you have someone calling all the time and you make a clear statement, they may not hear you the first or second time. Be prepared to continually repeat your position until that person gets the message. I have to do this as a therapist all the time.

Question - What if someone keeps after you constantly and you feel you can't help that person anymore, and they refuse to see a professional?

Niela - You must be honest with that person and tell them you are out of your depth and are unable to help. Tell them you would be glad to accompany them to their first visit to a counselor. You could even provide them with the information of where to go.

Roger - The general guideline for whenever you feel uncomfortable is you must make it clear to the other person how you feel and then stick by your statement. It is so easy to get sucked back into it again. Be a good friend but direct that person to a professional.

Niela - The other thing I want to say about repetitive behavior patterns between people is whenever I see it happening between couples, a red flag goes up. Somebody will have to change their behavior in that situation and it isn't going to be the person in pain.

Your red flag should go up whenever you observe circular, repetitive behavior. You will need to do something different because if you keep doing the same thing, the same things will continue to happen. This is just simple logic.

Question - Could you elaborate how you would set up therapeutic goals with the client? Can they change in the course of therapy and when do you know when you've reached your objective?

Roger - Of course....

Question - Is there any legal liability when as a friend you've been dead wrong about the advice you've given?

Niela - If the other person were vindictive, they could pursue the matter.

Roger - There is no protection from that. That's why when you are in over your head and bells go off, it means a lot of things. When I have a new client, I usually ask why they are here. I want to find out what prompted them to walk through my door. As we begin to talk in the first few sessions, it will become clear to me what they are looking for in the way of help, support or guidance. The intent for me is to establish therapeutic goals early and I do share them with the client. Then we'll talk about how to get there. As we proceed along in therapy, the goals may change particularly when the client begins to feel more comfortable.

I can't say how many sessions a client will need since the problem resolving operation is dependent on the client. Some people move very quickly and others move more slowly.

The problem resolution can be difficult when the problems presented by the

client aren't really the real ones at all. They may block what is really going on with them. The crossdressing issue may be the apparent surface problem but there may be many other underlying problems affecting the visible one. These other problems will have to come out in the course of therapy and you'll end up modifying the goals along the way.

Niela - A contract is a mutual agreement between parties. When I contract with a party, in order to set the stage of our being two equal human beings, I make sure that I state my needs too. These would include that the person be on time for sessions and if they miss a session, they need to notify me 24 hours in advance.

We also focus on what it is the client wants to gain from the therapy and from me as well. I ask what kind of help would they like from me. I give them information about the range in which I work and get some information from them.

I ask how they would like to be feeling at the end of their therapy and what would they want their life to be like. What they initially present may not be actually what they need or want. As the therapy proceeds, new goals may emerge that are equally or more important than the original ones. Then, these new goals become part of the contract.

Question - what lengths of time are involved with therapy?

Niela - I've done everything from four visits to three years of therapy. I generally do not go longer than three years. I like to mobilize and empower people as soon as possible so they are in charge of their lives. Just as some lawyers have acquired a certain kind of reputation, some therapists also have made a bad reputation. Some people see therapists as money grubbers who try to keep clients in as long as possible. Roger and I do not subscribe to that kind of behavior. It really is an individual thing and just how complex the problems and the person is.

Roger - We talked a lot of how we as therapists move in that particular environment. There is a flip side to that. If you are in a therapy situation, there is a chemistry that needs to exist between therapists and client.

End Tape 1, Side 2

Start Tape 2, Side 1

I'm sure that everyone in this room who has been in a therapy situation, has had to interact with someone where the chemistry wasn't the greatest. It didn't make any difference what you said. The other person took offense at or misread it. This is as true in a therapy situation as it is in any other kind of human situation. The other side of this is you can go into a therapy environment and do all the things Niela and I have mentioned in terms of a contract, goals and so on, and it still doesn't work.

My rule of thumb is that if you went to four sessions and felt you were going around in circles, (whether you were or not is immaterial) and you weren't getting anywhere with that person, then you don't have to come back.

The therapist and you are partners in this kind of act that's going on. For the partnership to work, both people have to work together. If that is not possible, then it's time to do something about it.

Question - Are there any rules for setting up a support group, since it is a

form of peer counseling? We had some problems in my church with small support groups.

Roger - I've worked in small group setting in church groups and have had some problems in setting up group leadership. I insist on spending at least a day and a half training the leaders in small group leadership techniques, the goals of the program and just how the sessions are to be run. I go in with a structured program and that is a little different from what you mentioned, however there are different ways to teach small group leadership. The basic tricks in small group leadership are to be listening, guiding and enabling and not putting your own ideas out. It requires some training ahead of time. Small group leadership can be difficult as there are many concerns that aren't obvious.

Niela - One thing you can do is to have a self led group where people take turns just keeping the flow running smoothly along. You need to provide a chance for the shy people to speak and make sure those who dominate the conversation give others a chance to speak. One thing you can do is have a self-led group where people take turns keeping the flow going along. You need to provide a chance for the shy people to speak and to prevent those who dominate the conversation from doing so. It's a complex task to be a group facilitator or a group therapist. Not only do you have each person to contending with all the things going on inside of them, but you have all these different egos in the room. Each person has some idea or notion about what it is they want to see happen, and this may conflict with other people.

There are many different ways of running groups and there is no one right way. Some therapists are prophet facilitators, that is they facilitate whatever it is that arises in the session. They don't set any kind of agenda. Whoever feels like talking about something will bring it up and will get responses from the group. The facilitator generally comments on how the group is handling the situation and is not so much focusing on helping a particular person in the group with their problems. The main focus here is setting the conditions so the group can work well together in listening to each other and being responsive as a group.

The second type is where the group leader acts as a therapist and works with a person in the group with their problems. The other people are learning from what is happening between the therapists and the person. Human problems are often more similar than they are different.

You get something out of seeing the transaction between the therapist and the person. I would also ask other people in the group how they are feeling about what's going on and what issues it raises for them. Then we talk thematically about that issue and how different people have dealt with it, and with what results and how they feel about it.

A third type of small group leadership would be an activity oriented session where I would set a theme or activity for the group and have everyone address themselves to it. The we deal with the material that comes up.

An important thing to remember is that this is a multi-level experience where a lot is going on. The dynamics of the group are happening as well as the feelings of each person. There is the relationship and there are always authority issues to work out with anyone who is in that designated role.

In my style, I attempt to empower people in the group to have them feel they are capable of helping themselves and each other. I am not the only helper there.

This is especially true in a TV group where the people have had all kinds of experiences that I haven't had. They become the experts about their own experiences. What I attempt to do is control the amount of advice given.

Roger - In terms of asking questions, if you are going to a therapist for the first time and are going for a gender issue, you have every right to understand what competence that therapist has had with a particular issue. There are too many therapists who say they can handle anything that comes up in a session but who are really not that well informed about gender issues. They can give you problems.

If you find that from the first session or two, that you are doing the education of the therapist, you should perhaps take a second look at the issue.

Niela - A classically trained psychiatric person may not have as much to offer the gender community as those who have a more humanistic point of view. There needs to be more humanistic interaction in this thing. There is too much anxiety involved to promote people to see therapists who just remain an empty mirror.

Classical psychiatric help is certainly valuable for some people in some cases. One of the tragedies about the entire therapeutic business is that it is largely guesswork for the consumers. There is no place you can go or book you can read that will tell you all you need to know about the type of professional person you need to seek out based on your needs as an individual.

It's touch and go and you will have to do some exploring on your part. I agree with Roger that if you give it your best shot and go several times and ask the questions you need to ask, your gut will tell you that this does or doesn't feel right for you.

I think that in terms humanistically oriented psychologists, it is not required for them to know a great deal about this phenomenon in order to be helpful, because they are dealing with a whole person. Everything you say about yourself is going to be important to them and they are going to respond on a feeling level.

The will also admit their limitations. If anyone talks to me about wanting to go on hormones or on going through a sex change, I tell them I am not qualified to work with them on that, but there is another doctor that is qualified, and they should go see them. If what you want is to look at your life and get your feelings clear and your relationships going better, that is where I can help. This helps them if I can be clear about what my boundaries are.

Question - Do you feel that because of the lack of knowledge by both the consumer and the therapists, that this limits the effectiveness of the professional, whether it be for the TV or TS?

Niela - That's a loaded question, but the answer is yes.

Question - What do you think that we as a community can do to increase that level of knowledge?

David - I would think that in those areas where the groups are organized, that invitations be sent to seek out those professionals who are involved with the gender community, so those professionals would come to the gender functions to observe and mingle with us as we function outside of the therapy atmosphere.

Niela - Roger and I would do that but classically trained people would not

as it is part of their bias that they keep separate the consultations from any other part of the person's life, and that is unfortunate.

For most psychologists and other helpers who don't have that particular bias, that would be an excellent way for them to increase their knowledge and education.

This is how I have increased my own knowledge. I have many good friends in the gender community and we learn from each other. I'm willing to be open with them about what all this raises within me about my own femininity and about my attitudes towards men and women.

I didn't get off scott free and I'm sure you didn't either. You have to be willing to search yourself and be fairly open about what is going on with yourself if you get involved with this community, otherwise it's not going to work. You need certain kinds of people who are willing to do that.

Roger - I think there is another thing you can do though. Most large universities have psychology courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. With my experience in the New York area, often times people who are instructing those classes are looking for people from the various subcultures and sexual minorities to come and share with them, what is going on in that particular subculture.

One of the things the community could do is to go to these departments and tell them there are people available for these classes. The thing they have to understand is the confidentiality and anonymity of it. I try to get people involved who are geographically separated from a particular university by at least an hour's drive. When you go into one of these classes, you don't know who is going to be there. In this way, there is little chance for someone to be in the class who knows them.

Niela - I will often give talks at local mental health clinics with the psychologists who have not had much contact with the community, but who are interested and open minded.

There are a lot of humanistic psychologists who are becoming interested in this field. But I am at a loss to know where to send people who live in other parts of the country. I don't believe that sending them to classically trained professionals will help them much.

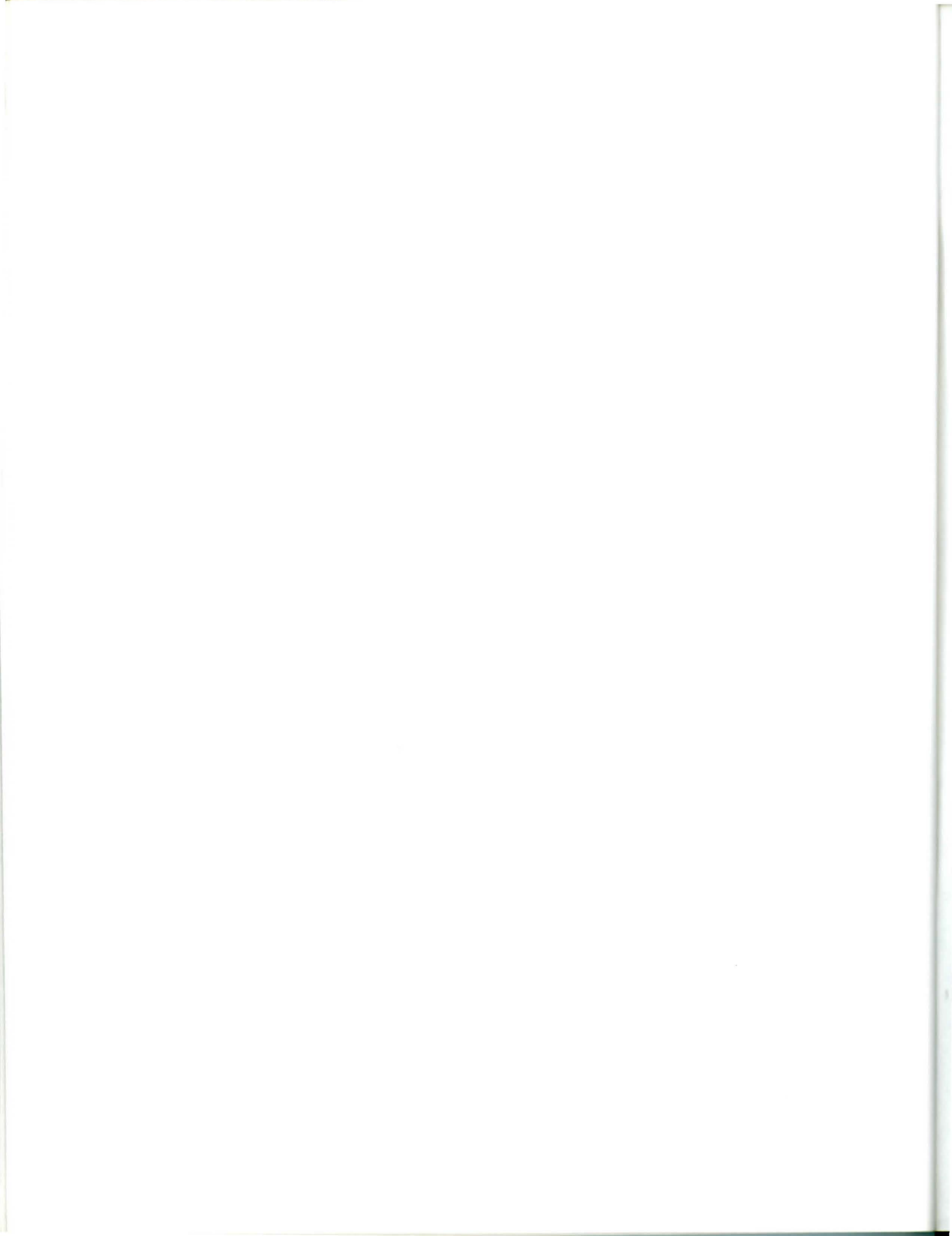
Most of the humanistic psychologists haven't had much real exposure to the gender community so they have to be educated. Next year when we have this conference, I am hoping that we'll have a lot more of these people coming here. Then you will have a great number of more choices around the country.

When I started doing this kind of work, I knew nothing about this culture, but I had no prejudice and I was very open minded and I always have been this way about many different kinds of people. It wasn't until I had done a great deal of talking with people and had done investigations that I started seeing people individually. I feel it is life-long and I keep learning as I go along.

End Tape 2, Side 1

Start Tape 2, side 2

No data recorded.



IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

FEMALE IMPERSONATORS PANEL

March 7, 1987
Tier 2, Tape 1

Tape 1, Side 1

Renee Kessell, Moderator

Renee - My name is Renee Kessell, and I'm the president of Paradise. Here are some credits as to why I am qualified to do this particular program. I have performed on stage and I am the owner of Glass Slipper Productions, which sponsors contestants in the Miss Continental USA pageant. I also have been a judge at the local and state levels in the Miss USA pageant system and have modeled in New York. I have also appeared on the Sally Jesse Raphael and the Oprah Winfrey television shows.

At this point, I'm not sure what we are supposed to do here. I had hoped Marsha Michaels would be here. I've known her for 20 years and consider her to be very good. Marsha Michaels is a gay male who dresses as a female for the purpose of entertaining, but she lives her life as a male.

Leslie ReJeanne from the baton was also invited and was apparently unable to make it. Leslie is a professional entertainer and is also the MC at the Baton show. She lives her life full time as a woman and has some cosmetic and breast implant surgery.

There are two different types of people who are in this business and there are very few straight people involved. They are usually gay in one way or another and the majority of these performers live as males.

Does anyone have any questions?

Question - Can you tell us how extensive it is for the female impersonators and how much of it there is?

Answer - It is quite extensive across the country and there are several different show formats. The first is called pickup. This will involve local entertainers who get together and perform on a given night at a certain location. These types of shows are quite common in cities where they have gay bars. The second type would be the Baton show where you have a permanent cast in residence. And it's usually this same group of girls who perform night after night and may do two or three shows each night.

The Queen Mary in Los Angeles has this type of show, as does the Rogue in Washington DC, The Copa in Fort Lauderdale. Atlanta was big for this type of

entertainment for a while but over the past year, this has become almost non-existent.

A third and more unique type of show is what you will see in Las Vegas perhaps at the Silver Slipper. This type of show has a permanent cast but is different in that they try to impersonate women who perform in Las Vegas and also those who are prominent in the entertainment community in general.

Question - Could you say something about the audiences?

Answer - The audiences are very interesting. It depends on the situation though. At the Baton, the audience is largely straight on the weekends but on Wednesday and Thursday nights, there may be a mix of gay and straight. The Queen Mary in Los Angeles has a straight crowd but there is a gay cruise bar in the back for those gays who are looking to spend some time with someone or have a sexual encounter. In other cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, Washington, Dallas and Atlanta, the audiences are more gay.

Question - What about New York?

Answer - New York is a very tough and scarce market. I have heard of one place in the city but there isn't much there to speak about. There are a lot of queens, no shows and the bars are difficult to find.

Question - Where do the entertainers come from and how do they get started?

Answer - What usually happens is that when someone is around the age of eighteen and is gay, they have a friend who asks, "Can I put you in a dress sometime?" Then they take the crossdressed friend to a bar and the owner sees this and wants to put them into a show. Then there are those individuals who will actively seek out this kind of work.

It's a minority type of business with some 45-50% black, 20% hispanic, 10% oriental with the balance being caucasian. There is a progression of the various ethnic groups just as there has been in baseball and boxing. The hardest thing to find is a caucasian blonde. They are very rare.

And how do these girls earn a living? some have second jobs in full time regular employment situations. For those who are fortunate enough to be in a regular cast, this is their full time employment. The money is good and ranges from \$200-400 a week. some club owners provide medical and health benefits similar to ordinary people who have regular jobs. Prostitution is not that common amongst female impersonators. It is more common among the girls who come in to see the F.I.'s. If these girls are good, they will get paid \$50-60 per show and should get that much in tips as well. The tips in this business can be very good.

Question - Isn't the expense for clothes quite a drain on their finances?

Answer - It can be but it does depend. If you are good enough to make your own costumes, you can save a lot of money. Some of the girls have gotten away from the glitter and give their audiences some very attractive evening wear, with maybe just a little flash. It all depends on what level they are operating at and what their ambitions are. There are girls who operate at the local level and have no aspirations to enter contests or pageants or titles. The girls who get into the pageant systems will begin to see some return.

Question - Are most drag queens gay?

Answer - Yes. The majority of the girls I have encountered are gay though a few are pre-operative transsexuals. Of course, after a transsexual has her surgery, she can't really be in the business anymore.

Question - What happens to those at the top tier, the ones who have a lot of beauty and talent, after their good years are gone. Where do they go and what do they do for the rest of their lives?

Answer - For those of you who have been around the Chicago drag scene for the past 20 years, I want to lay a name on you. How many remember Jackie Knight, who worked at Sparrows? She was one of the prettiest female impersonators that I've ever seen and certainly a very fine entertainer at the top level. So what happened to Jackie? Jackie got a sex change, got married and opened a beauty shop. A lot of them have beauticians licenses and do go back into the real world.

I think a better addition to your questions would be, what happens if you have tits? If you are really into it, this can be a problem. The hormone girls have been new to the business for the past 15 years. We don't have a lot of history to work with here with these girls.

Chili Pepper has been asked this question on Donahue's and Oprah's shows. Chili says, "I think this is what I'm best at." I took this to mean that she will probably do this until she is 60 or 70 or so.

Have you ever seen Little Lil? she's one of my favorites on the strip in Vegas. She's pushing 55 or so and weighs in at an easy 200. She will probably die in the business. But for others, they may leave it behind them and end up tending bar.

Richie watches the door at the Baton and is a former entertainer. He is employed full time by Felicia and collects money at the door. Many of these people tend to stay within the community. Maybe this is something else about their lifestyle. In the larger cities, the entertainers seem to live in a common geographical area. They eat, sleep, do their business there and aren't out much during the day.

Comment - To add to what you have said, a lot of them tend to stay in the gay community. Some have sugar daddies or a lover who takes care of them for the rest of their lives. One common thing I have found is that most don't stay in the business that long. It's a few years at the most and then they go.

Comment/question - Speaking of the Baton Club, a few of us went down there a few nights ago and it was a beautiful experience for all of us. What surprised me the most was that the audience was mostly women. Why are women drawn to this?

Answer - This is difficult to answer. As president of the Paradise Club for the past five years, we've done a show and hired local professionals and brought in one out-of-towner to join the cast. The first year we did our show, it was held at a lesbian bar called Godmothers. We had some 100 people in the audience and most were lesbians.

I think that for the straight women, most enjoy the beauty and the glamour of it and just the idea that some men are able to transform themselves into a feminine mode. I'm not so sure why lesbians are so interested in this but they are good customers.

Comment - I believe it goes back to what we do in the crossdressing, crossgender community. Women seem to accept us more readily than men do. Men seem more interested that we have a feminine side. Women are fascinated that we can take the time and make the effort to do what they do, and sometimes even better than they do it.

Renee - A lot of the straight women who come to the Baton arrive in groups. I've seen a lot of bachelorette parties at the Baton. Often times, when the gay community does something special, it is done in drag. When they have a fund raiser or special event, it will sometimes include a drag show. This is where the interest from the gay men comes from. As for the straight community showing up at drag shows, they will sometimes charter a bus as a group. I've seen church buses show up on a Saturday night full of conservation church people to watch an entertaining drag show at the Baton. As far as prostitution goes, most bar owners won't allow an unescorted crossdressed person into the bar. They simply don't want the hustling or prostitution in their place.

Comment - The Baton is one of the few clubs in the country where I've been and the action isn't there. I know why Felicia does it and I think it is a good idea.

Comment - Years ago there was a place about three miles to the north called the Chatterbox. It was a sleazy dive where a lot of hustling took place. The Chatterbox had a 2 a.m. license and the Baton had a 4 a.m. closing. After the Chatterbox closed, some of the sleazy patrons would come to the Baton. That's the reason for the escort policy.

Question - I find the pageant business quite fascinating. Could you tell us whether it is growing and a viable activity? And what are some of the major points of interest around the country?

Answer - It is a growing industry. In fact, it is growing far beyond my own imagination. Norma Christie initially operated Miss Gay America, which was an interesting pageant. The participants should be gay males who have not augmented themselves with implants, silicone or hormones. These are all no-no's. Yet there have been those contestants who have entered and who have had some of the feminizing augmentations done. None of these people have ever finished near the top.

Felicia created Miss Continental Gay USA and it is now just Miss Continental. This pageant was more directed at providing a free environment in which anyone was able to compete, regardless of what level a person enhanced their femininity through augmentation. The contestant may have had benefits from hormones, implants, silicone and cosmetic surgery. The judges were told to be aware of these augmentations and not to judge down for them. In this way, these qualities are considered to be negative ones.

End Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

Miss florida is one of what I call the renegade pageants. You must be a resident of Florida for at least six months. It is held some time in the spring but I'm not sure of the exact date. A lot of the girls go down for the winter and sign into the Copa or into Renee's, or one of the other clubs. They live in the state to qualify for the pageant.

Most of these pageants are rigged but I can't say that for sure about Miss USA or Miss America but I know that Miss Continental isn't. There is a lot of rigging at the local level. Many of the judges are bar owners and they give privileges to their friends or else the pageant's owner has some say in it.

If any of you would like to put on a pageant, you will have to pay a franchise fee depending on which system you choose. You will have to bring in the reigning queen and pay her an entertainment fee, as well as for her room and transportation. You will need to hire a hall unless you can get a bar. If you can't make any money off the liquor, you may lose a thousand dollars. You don't make money putting on a pageant. It's all ego and that's what it's really about.

So right now there are three major pageants, the ones for Miss America, Miss Continental, and Miss USA. And there is the renegade Miss Florida, which is a large event and attracts some of the best entertainers in the country.

Question - In our introductory workshop, Dr. Roger Peo suggested that the term 'drag queen' sometimes connotes elements of a parody which in a man is likely to be a symptom of hostility towards women. How do you feel about this?

Answer - Sister, why do you do these things to me? I think you may be right. Let me make a comment about another form of drag. I was in a restaurant with Miss Dee one night and I thought she was going to get us all in a fight. How many people here have seen, or maybe done it yourself and this isn't meant to be negative, a guy in full leathers? This is another form of drag and they're probably wearing chiffon underneath. I think it is somewhat of a hostile perception towards females.

Question - Are the queens you know negative towards women?

Answer - No. If anything, I have detective negativism towards feminine gay males who do not choose to dress as women but will wear some article of female clothing such as a sweater, pants and flat shoes. The queens are disturbed about that kind of thing.

Question - What is their attitude towards the type of people at this convention, if indeed they know about us at all?

Answer - Question not answered... This is Marcia Michaels for those of you who don't know who she is. Marcia, you are supposed to be up here with me.

Marcia - I've worked with Dana McKay for many years and lately she has been looking into becoming a makeup consultant at one of the big m,all type department stores. This is a good possibility for her right now. It's what we call in the business, getting a straight job. The night life job of working in bars and performing on stage is so day-to-day it really doesn't seem like a job. You are constantly putting money into costumes and finding new material. You don't want to become stale to your audience. You have to work at it all the time even when you are away from the job.

Question - Do most performers enjoy wearing female clothes and what do they do during the day?

Answer - Most of the performers have to enjoy it to some extent in order to be able to do it. I don't know if it is a turn-on to them or if it is sexually gratifying. A lot of the girls get a mental high from performing. It's part of the

idea that you are fooling the general public a lot of times. It's also the idea they get a lot of attention they wouldn't get normally.

Question - are the girls who work in the business typical of other professional entertainers. Are they insecure of their ego demands of the audience...do they need that constant feedback that they are being appreciated?

Answer - Yes. There is something to be said about any entertainer. They have to build a personality and always be sweet to people. You never know when that person is going to be in your audience or if that person can do something to further your career. You have to build a super personality to be able to continue in the business and keep doing what you like doing on the stage.

As far as what we do during the day, there are different kinds of people who are entertainers. Some are transsexuals and live in the female role all the time. Some other performers do have silicone breast implants and become more like a woman for stage purposes but try to hide these during the day, so they do have a completely different personality. This is done in case they meet people who know them as entertainers and won't be hounded for autographs. A lot of the entertainers, like many of us, have trouble passing during the day. It's the idea of taking off the clothes and taking off the makeup that can be very refreshing. If you are putting on makeup every night and getting all dressed up to perform for five or six hours each night, it does get tiresome. It also can be rough on your skin and hair and on your legs since you are on your feet all that time. It's a way of relaxing when you can take it all off and it can be most gratifying.

The schedule of the performer is completely opposite to most everyone else. We work until 2 or 4 a.m., then go party for a while or have breakfast. We get to bed around 8 a.m. and are up again around 4 in the afternoon to start all over again. Our schedule is sort of like a night shift.

Question - What is the highest pinnacle for an FI?

Answer - There are some any fantastic places around the country and so many excellent FI shows, it's difficult to pick out even one or two of the best. Perhaps the La Cage Aux Folles in California or in Las Vegas might be a pinnacle for some. There are some other places in California that are very good, perhaps even the Queen Mary. There are also some places in Florida and Georgia that have good night spots.

Question - Do FIs move around the country as entertainers or do they normally select a locale in which to live and work and then don't move around?

Answer - it partly depends on how much mobility we have. Some entertainers like to perform locally and like to get in and stay in a place. At the Baton here in Chicago, there are entertainers who have been performing for over ten years. They will travel to some of the other night clubs around the country and work for a few weeks or so. That is usually rare that they do go and then maybe only for once or twice a year or so. Some people like to have roots in one locale while others do enjoy some traveling. And there are some touring shows around too.

Question - Do you sing?

Answer - Only when I'm not asked. It is difficult to find a night club or bar that will have the right P.A. system. It is much safer to stay with lip synch records and with pantomime.

There is a club in San Francisco and from what I've heard, the whole show is done live. They do not pantomime anything. It is good when performers are skilled enough to use their own voices but their voices are subject to fluctuate. When you constantly do shows every evening, it's hard to depend on your own voice all the time. It's good to have some live entertainment in a show but you can't always talk the owners into it.

Comment - The club in San Francisco is Finocchio's and they don't allow crossdressers in the place. So when you are in that town and think you do a really good job at passing, Finocchio's will provide an acid test for you. You are really good if you can get into that place.

Question - You mentioned your male side is introverted as opposed to your fem side. I can identify with that as my fem side is very outgoing and has a lot of friends while the male half of me has almost no social life. Is this motivation for you being in this business?

Answer - For me personally, I've always felt I should have been born a woman. But once I started learning how to do female impersonation on the stage, I also learned how to be a man.

Question - How do the performers pick their numbers and routines and how much practice is involved? And is there much jealousy involved between the performers?

Answer - There is an awful lot of jealousy and competition in this business. In Chicago, there are only a select number of good jobs available for FI entertainers. Right now, the Baton is about the only good established place that has an ongoing show. Sometimes there will be another bar or two with shows but these usually close within a year or two. They don't last long enough for someone to try out their basic career on it.

We try to pick numbers that we hear on the radio or in shows or from television. We try to pick numbers we think the audience will enjoy. Then we build a routine around it so that we can emphasize that particular song. Some can be comedy routines that we pick up from Richard Prior, Phyllis Diller or Joan Rivers.

Joan Rivers is a good example as to what the monologues can be like today. Years ago there were a lot of monologues by entertainers like Rusty Warren and other females who did comedy routines on records. There are few females who do this anymore. Today it's mostly the males who do this type of standup comedy routine.

For practicing and rehearsing, it may take a couple of weeks to learn something new or it could take a couple of months. It depends on how much time you put into and how easily the number is to pick up.

Many of the new FI entertainers rely on videos. This is one way they can learn something fast and do it exactly like someone else is doing it. They can build the exact character they want to portray. Many entertainers try to portray specific characters and try to look like them and do the numbers just like they have seen it done on a video or in the movies.

Renee - We've spent a lot of time talking about FIs who work the drag bars. There is another type of entertainer we should mention. These are the illusionists like Jim Bailey. They tend to play to more legitimate places around the country and are mostly entertainers who work alone. They do various routines and impersonations

throughout the evening using their own voices most of the time.

Marcia - Someone asked earlier about what would be the highest pinnacle for an FI entertainer. Well, I think it would be like what Jim Bailey has done. He has performed in movies, television shows and also has done Carnegie Hall. I think Carnegie Hall is a real height.

End Tape 1, Side 2

IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

WIVES AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS PANEL
March 7, 1987
Tier 2, Tape 1

Tape 1, Side 1

Marilyn Frank and Ginny Knuth, Moderators

(Early part of meeting not taped...)

My story is different from these ladies' stories. I am not a wife. I am a significant other of a transvestite. I was divorced from my husband thirty years ago and have lived as a career woman and have been supporting myself all this time. In doing so I moved from Ohio to California in 1963 and I had met in San Francisco some lovely, wonderful gay men. I became friends with these men who I was previously sure were certainly mentally retarded from the rest of society. I was curious enough and open minded about the men I met to learn more about this as I discovered I had been misled. I learned over the next ten years how wonderful gay men are and became good friends with them.

I met drag queens in San Francisco through this association and became close to some of them. I learned to love them and became aware of their need to express themselves. Everybody has their own needs and I thought I had seen it all.

As I shared a lovely apartment with a gay man, I met a six foot two, handsome, fun loving man who was sexy, gorgeous and full of the love of life. He liked me and we started going together. We had so much fun going out to the piano bars and he was so wonderful.

Here I was at the age of 49 meeting a man for the first time in my life with whom I could really have a great time with. We did a lot of beautiful things together. I was able to share things with him that previously I had only done alone. Here was this wonderful man who I was now involved with in every possible way and I felt so lucky.

He started to get distant from me and I couldn't understand what happened between us. I tried to get him to open up to me and he told me one day that he had a secret that he couldn't reveal to anyone.

We had been so open about our relationship, in our love for one another and in our caring. I wanted so much to know what his secret was. He was afraid that if he told me I would leave him. He told me afterwards that of the three women he had told about his secret, all had told him he was a freak.

After we had six drinks at a bar, he finally agreed to tell me. We went

back to his place and he said he couldn't tell me but I insisted. He said he was a transvestite and I said thank God, I had thought he was gay. And I didn't know how that could possibly be with the kind of relationship we had enjoyed together.

I knew very little about transvestism except what I had read in the dictionary. Transvestites were usually men who dressed in women's clothes for some form of pleasure. I had absolutely no idea of what their motivations were.

He had a full beard at this time. So here was this big, beautiful, bearded man telling me he liked to dress in women's clothes. I said to myself, "I've got to see this." An to him I said, "Put something on..."

Out of the closet came Tenderloin Tessie. This is not funny to most of you but that is how I felt about it. He had these special needs to look like a woman and the woman he was trying to emulate was this trashy sort of person. This is where he was coming from. With the information available to him, that's what he thought he should be doing. This is why our information dissemination is so important. If I had read a Tapestry at that time, I would have gone through one less year of concern and confusion.

I knew that in my heart I had to encourage this. For fifty years this man had kept this inside of him. He had been married and divorced and had told his wife and she didn't tolerate it. He went through a lot of pain while trying to keep it inside of him.

All of his needs and feelings were kept inside of him because he felt embarrassed and guilty. He felt that he should be punished. He had come from a life with a strong religious background where there were so many rules to follow. And if you didn't follow them, you are wrong.

My only thoughts were that he must be allowed to express himself and be encouraged to do so and I encouraged him from the beginning. The following week he came to my apartment and I took out all my clothes. They were too big for him which was unusual. I had some pretty gowns and he tried them all on. We decided this would be Nancy Ann's birthday. Every August we celebrate Nancy Ann's birthday as well as Don's.

I began to get him presents and he was just so excited and so delighted. Then we got serious and I looked all over for some information. He went to DREAM which was a convention in Oregon and this changed his whole life. It meant so much to him to meet other people and to know he could have this interest and still be a good person. He so enjoyed looking beautiful and being loved by decent people. It changed everything about him and made our relationship better.

Our relationship was cemented by his transvestism. We have a better relationship because we can share this together. We shared it not only personally but in an outward way through the clubs in our locale and at ETVC. We tried very hard to share what we have.

There is a tremendous beauty in our relationship and a beauty in his being a transvestite and there is a pride of feeling good about who you are and enjoying this pride with others who feel the same way. Thank you.

At this time the floor is open to people in the audience and please come up to the microphone because we are recording.

Comment - I don't have a question but I'm a wife too. Everything that each of you has said with minor factual changes comes from your hearts. I went through it all. The beautiful person I met was very special to me and I couldn't believe there were other men like him out there. I had been divorced and had been single for six years until I met a man who liked to talk about music and planted flowers.

I found out about his secret in a different way than you did. I was a 'Miss Lib', and hadn't shaved my under arms. I learned a lot about femininity from my husband. I never wore dresses when I married him and he bought me dresses. But when Rosie came out, he quit buying me dresses and bought them for Rosie instead. That was a relief for me because I didn't want to wear the dresses. But now I'm free to wear them.

It has been a growing experience for me every bit as much as it has been for Rosie. Our marriage bond has been made stronger by all of this. There were some bad moments at the beginning when I first found out when I thought he was cheating on me. He said once during a discussion if I had to choose between Rosie and me, I'd rather be dead. What could I do?

Question - How did your daughters find out before you did?

Answer - Barb lived behind me in an apartment house and the girls downstairs knew Bob, so she took the girls up there. I wasn't married at the time.

Question (Fran) - I've known Mary Lynn from about three years ago. This was the first note of sanity I had found in what I was going through at the time. I still have a little problem that I'd like to address to any one of you. My wife knows and she tries to be good about it but I still believe that what I am doing is selfish. I'm sure that at times, she views my activities like coming to Chicago or other places as being selfish. How do you combat this in a relationship with your spouse?

Answer - Crossdressing isn't the only thing in a relationship between a couple. There has to be some sort of communication and negotiating as well. It was mentioned in a previous workshop that when you go home, don't go home so enthused about the terrific time you had. Go home with the idea in mind that you are glad to be home and that you missed your family.

Also think about her being home and fantasizing all kinds of things about what you were doing while you were away. We've all gone through that. You may have gone to a regular meeting and nothing much really happened. Even though it was our decision not to join you at that meeting, we are at home wondering what is going on.

When you first learn about crossdressing, it seems to be sexual for the wife and she thinks that her husband is out there engaging in some sort of orgy. This happens even though she knows she can trust him.

Intellectually she knows that isn't true but what you feel inside is another matter. Spend a weekend with her after you go back. When we go back to the real world, we forget there are other things than crossdressing and you need to share that with her. If she is going to accept this, you will have to work with her.

Wives have ups and downs. There are good and bad times just like we do in every other aspect of our daily lives at work, at home or wherever. There has to be communication and you must have a sense of humor.

We are not laughing at you but you have to have some fun. It can be taken as seriously as it appears to be. When I go shopping and come home, my daughter, who is the same size as me, asks who I bought the clothes for. Sometimes I'll say, it's up for grabs ladies...

She doesn't have the hangups I had. I would not wear anything of Linda's at any point. I would buy something, wear it once and give it to Linda. I'd never wear it again. My daughter will ask her dad to borrow a blouse for a suit she has. He will tell her it has to be laundered before she returns it. This is the kind of relationship we have.

My children are 26 and 28. The youngest got married in November. The only date available for the hall was on the same date as the Tri-Ess meeting. I told her she had a choice to make. Either you can have the entire Tri-Ess chapter cue your wedding, or you will have to change your date. I was only kidding of course, but she started to laugh and said, "...very funny mom..."

This is the kind of thing that takes place but it did take some time to get there. Unfortunately it took me more than 20 years and I hope everyone else gets there a lot sooner than I did. There can be a lot of hurt along the way. Reach out to others because when you do that, you help yourself as well.

Question - What can you do about the wife who lays a guilt trip on her husband? She says he is selfish and she minds very much that he is spending money on female clothes and trips. It's not that she feels lonely and afraid he will engage in orgies, but there are many wives out there like this.

Answer - Obviously I'm not a wife. It's difficult to know what his particular situation is and exactly where the wife is coming from. In my counseling experience with wives, I've seen a tremendous amount of scare involved. Crossdressing for a wife brings up a lot of sexual issues. The ladies on the panel have alluded to some of them.

I can understand your anger here and you're saying it's her fault. In a relationship around crossdressing issues, the communication is often terrible. Things can be withheld and there can be fears involved. One thing I've discovered in talking with wives of crossdressers is that the wife is atypical in our society in general and is often in a one down position. She is often times subservient both economically and socially to her husband. There is a large amount of dependence and when you overlay that with an issue such as crossdressing, she can be scared out of her mind. It often comes across as a guilt trip. She is saying, "You are not paying attention to me..."

This matter can only be discussed between you and your wife because I don't know anything about what goes on between the two of you. All of us are having such a great time here. You are getting a tremendous amount of energy from this convention and by being here with friends and others like yourself as you interact with the others. You can be yourselves here to a greater extent than if you were anywhere else.

When you go back to your wife after you have had a great time, remember that she was at home doing all those routine things. You have been here absorbing energy, exchanging ideas and having a good time. Your wife will wonder what really did go on here during this convention. All of you should learn to be sensitive to those feelings. As far as the wife is concerned, I would guess she is coming more from being scared than from being angry.

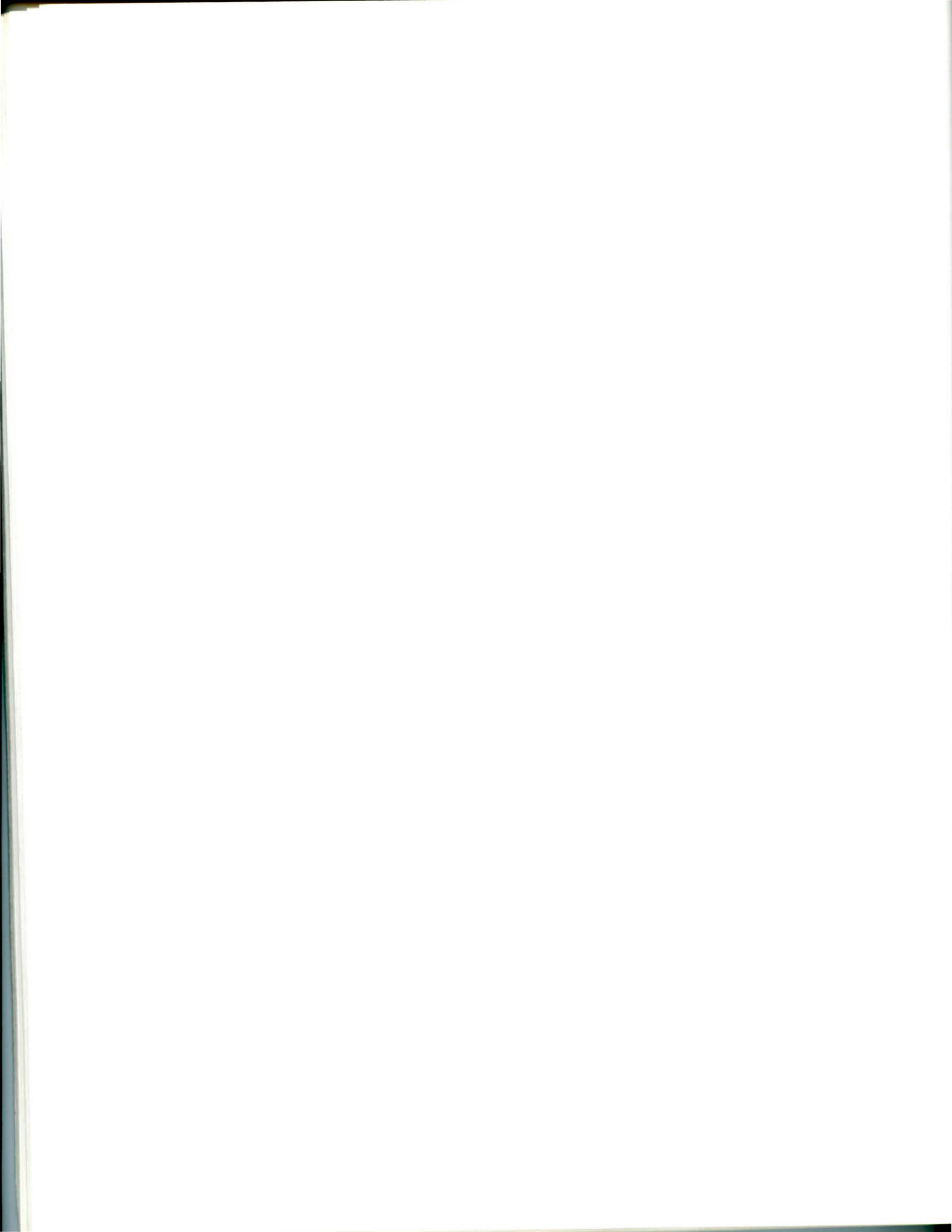
Comment - I can offer a suggestion from personal experience. Two years ago Rosie went to a convention and it was her first time. I didn't go. When he came home, his feet were off the ground but he came right to me and told me all about this nice time he had. "I had the greatest time," he said. "We did this and we did that. There were all these other people there just like me. I felt so wonderful and next year, I'd like you to go."

We talked about everything he did and he told me he wished I had been there. I would have had a good time because they were such wonderful people. What would I say? The next year I went and it was true. We had the best time since being together on our honeymoon.

We told people at the last convention that we had been part of the Spring Fling. We were out for four days. He was the girl for the entire weekend and we had a ball. He keeps telling me now, aren't I glad that I have a transvestite for a husband.

My husband has shared so much with me and he tells me everything he does. I was initially afraid to attend the meetings. He used to tell me all about them after he came home. "There was a doctor there," he told me once. "And he came dressed. This can't be all that bad."

End of Tape



IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

TRANSSEXUAL RAP GROUP (SESSION II)
March 7, 1987
Tier 2, Tape 1

Tape 1, Side 1

Kim Hellman, Rupert Raj - Moderators

Kim - Welcome to the early morning session of the transsexual forum. My name is Kim and this is Rupert Raj. In yesterday's session we didn't get to discuss books, articles and publications and how to find them, and which may be of more importance to you and the others.

Learning more about any subject that you are personally involved in is valuable. Learning more about transsexualism as a transsexual is important to you as you can pass this information on to your family, relatives and friends, to help them gain a better understanding of what is happening to you.

We have found medical libraries at major universities to be a good source for information. In the Bay area, Stanford University has probably the finest medical library around. There is a vast array of articles, dissertations and publications about the transsexual field available there.

In other parts of the country, John Hopkins still has a good medical library on transsexual information. I'm sure there are many other medical libraries across the country with similar material. This is one area you can seek out and find transsexual information.

A public library is interesting to go to and you may find as many as two or three books on transsexualism, and perhaps four or five related articles. You may find them not always on the shelves as other transsexuals have them checked out all the time or the books may have disappeared from the shelves permanently.

You can find information in the Reader's Guide to Periodicals or what is called 'Books In Print'. do not only look under transsexualism because many libraries may file the books under the heading of change of sex. Many major newspapers keep libraries of their own about articles they have printed in the past.

The San Jose Mercury in the Bay area has a vast library of all the articles they have compiled and printed over the last forty or fifty years. These articles are listed by topic. You can purchase a reprint of any article you choose for a minimal cost.

You can also gather information from television talk shows such as phil Donahue, Oprah Winfrey, Sally Jesse Raphael and others. Also watch some of your own area local shows as well.

Your own hairdresser, electrologist and other professionals in the field can be a source of transsexual information.

In my own group at ETVC, we have been compiling our own library for ETVC members. We have some books and articles and are trying to figure out a good way to circulate them. We started an article file and have 21 articles collected so far and some are better than others.

One of the best transsexual books of recent vintage is the 'Uninvited Dilemma' by Kim Elizabeth Stuart. Kim made a presentation and talk at ETVC last November and she is a very interesting person who is knowledgeable about transsexualism.

Christine Jorgensen's autobiography was one of the first books I ever read on the subject of transsexualism. her book was also one of the very first ones available. There are several good biographies available but Christine's is the best of this type.

There is a vast number of technical publications in the field so if you are into this aspect of transsexualism, there should be no problem in finding information.

Rupert - Kim Stuart's book is excellent and is especially good for the significant other, the employer, or the clergy person. It is a compact and easy book to read and was written in lay terms.

Another source is the Kinsey Institute of Sex Research in Bloomington, Indiana. I have the address if anyone is interested. They have a 23 page bibliography on transsexualism. I believe there is a ten dollar charge.

In university medical libraries is a a publication called the 'Index Medicus' which is a monthly listing of all the articles published including some non-english ones, from all the medical journals.

Second hand book stores provide another good source for information. The books are usually available at various times and in paper back form which are cheaper than hard bound. Some second hand book stores have a search service and may be able to get a certain book for you.

The gay and adult books store provide yet another source for transsexual literature. If enough people showed an interest in this topic, some store may even start to carry more transvestite/transsexual related titles and publications.

If you feel the Tapestry or any other related publication for that matter is worthwhile, suggest it to your local librarian. The idea here is to get these publications out into the hands of the public.

ETVC is a good source for information. Please do write to ETVC for their catalogue. The address is: ETVC, P.O. Box 6486, San Francisco, CA 94101

The cost of reprints is ten cents per page plus postage. If you'd like to use us as a source of information, that is fine. One of our primary functions is in education. If we don't have an answer to a particular question, we may be able to refer to someone who might have it.

We have Dr. Paul Walker in San Francisco, Lin Frazer and Millie Brown in Los

Gatos. We have two transsexual support and rap groups, one in Berkeley and one in San Francisco. Kim Stuart is in Marin County. We have several other people available, and there are a lot of post-op transsexuals who are available to answer questions.

ETVC is an open and varied group that includes transvestites, transsexuals, drag queens, significant others, wives, girl friends and anyone else interested in gender issues. Our emphasis is on education and we also have some good times at parties and other functions.

End Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

Question - There hasn't been any input about plastic and cosmetic surgery. I've also noticed there are not post-op transsexuals here. Are they a lost people?

Answer - Rupert is a post-op. I think a lot of people here are seeking information. Normally what happens with most post-ops, as soon as they have the surgery, their main goal is now to blend in with the rest of society. They want to forget their past. I have several friends who were close for a long time. After their surgery, they changed jobs and moved away to different states. They don't want to talk about their past.

One of the unfortunate post-ops has had difficulty inventing a past so when she is asked about something, she gives an answer one way one time and a different answer the next time. She's had as many as four different stories running at one time with different people.

As far as many post-op transsexuals are concerned, they would rather forget their past. There are several post-ops who can pitch in, but they aren't here. Another factor with these people is the cost factor in just getting here. Some don't have the extra available cash to spend in attending a convention.

Comment - I've had two hair transplant operations. It is itchy and uncomfortable and some of you may wish you had never had it done. Due to my own specific problems, I had to do it. The cost was \$1500 per session and this was for eighty plugs. The operations were done four months apart. The surgeon takes plugs from the back and moves them to the balding areas in front. You won't look great at first but once the hair grows in, it does look much better.

Comment - I have a friend from San Jose who has had almost every type of plastic surgery available. This person is insecure and has had a lot of hair transplants done, a rhinoplasty, cheek implants and a tracheal shave. She would love to be stunningly beautiful, like Racquel Welch or someone like that, so she keeps on getting more cosmetic surgery. I have other friends who have had no plastic surgery done and they are quite happy with themselves.

Most physicians say to do as little as possible because no matter what you do, the tissues never totally heal. There are different costs for the various procedures. Some procedures such as the shaving of the adam's apple are risky and dangerous. Some are not practical. At least half of the people who have had their adam's apple shaved and some type of voice surgery have not had good results at all. Some end up with a worse voice after the surgery.

Question - What is the purpose of the tracheal shave?

Answer - It is to reduce the size of the adam's apple. Some people have the larynx changed or have adjustments made to the vocal cords. Most people who have this done are not successful. There was a presentation at Fantasia Fair a couple of years ago by a speech therapist. The topic was female speech patterns. This technique included speaking into a tape recorder and listening to your voice on play back. You worked on your voice by reciting specific paragraphs. It isn't just the height of the tone but a lot has to do with inflection too.

Comment - There was an ear, nose and throat man in Toronto who was doing voice surgery by changing the timbre. I've heard a number of people who have had this type of surgery and a number of them have voices like Minnie Mouse. Others have very husky voices. As a technique, I would not advise this. I would advise speech therapy first.

Rupert - I agree with Joan. People should look into speech therapy first. In some cases there is an apparent scar with the voice surgery. I know the people Joan is referring to. Their voices are extremely high and don't sound very feminine. Their voices sound unnatural and strained.

Comment - I've worked at the Central School of Speech and Drama in England, which is the finest speech therapy school I know of. An actor like Sir Lawrence Olivier would go through classes to get training for a specific part, even a female role. They would practice spoken parts while singing like a woman and reduce the musical overtones until it came out like a normal conversation. This is their secret in learning to talk feminine. The most common characteristic about male voices is the projection of the voice in a dominant fashion. A woman does not project in this manner.

Comment - Another difference between male and female speech patterns is the choice of vocabulary. We had a linguist at one of our meetings. Women use very little profanity while men use a lot more.

Comment - I think women enunciate their words more clearly than men do. Men tend to slur their sentences together rather than speak them.

Comment - One of the benefits of a convention like this is to get together with people from your own area than you might not have met otherwise. If there is no transsexual group in your area, you might consider starting one of your own. A group can meet in someone's home and provide a meeting place to exchange ideas and information. That kind of flow is greatly needed during the critical transition stage. It is important to get together with people like yourselves to share things.

Rupert - In the Tapestry is a listing of groups and this is a good place to let people know you want to start a group. Use the Tapestry and other publications. They are good communication vehicles.

Comment - I haven't said I'm transsexual and only came out of the closet three years ago. I've heard people say if you don't know then you're not. All of us must go through a struggle with ourselves. There are situations in my life which prevent my deciding to go all the way for a sex change. There are people in a kind of never-never land. I'm here because I have a lot of reasons to think that I'm basically inclined towards being a transsexual. It is not a decision I've made about myself yet.

Comment - We have a broad continuum here from end to the other. You have to find a point along that line where you are comfortable and can be happy.

Comment - There are many different types of individuals in ETVC. We have some pre-op transsexuals who want the surgery and even some transgenderists who don't want it. It sometimes takes a long time to find out who you are. You need to find a good therapist to help you along the way. I had a good friend who had the surgery two years ago and it took her twenty years to find out who she was. There are many more people today who don't go through with the surgery than those who do go through with it.

Comment - You need to be careful. There are some people who will start the steps and it turns out to be a self fulfilling prophecy. If they've been on hormones too long and want to back out, they still continue forward even though they don't really want it. But to them, there is only one direction to go. I've known a few people who got caught in this trap and got quite a ways into the transition. It all comes down to the fact that you must be honest with yourself.

Rupert - There was a good article in the Tapestry by Cheryl Costa called, "Playing The Transsexual Game (Or Being Honest With Yourself)". She wrote how she thought she was transsexual and how she started hormones. Along the way she realized she wasn't transsexual and needed to stay in the male role and remain married. She got off the hormones and luckily she did it soon enough.

End Tape 1, Side 2

Start Tape 2, Side 1

I spoke with a transvestite who thought she was a transsexual and wanted to take hormones. She did realize she wasn't a transsexual and went back to being a transvestite. There are many examples like this.

Comment - There have been people who have read all the standard definitions of transsexuality and know exactly what correct answers to give.

Comment - We must be careful as potential transsexuals to not reject these people who have had the courage to turn back. There was a person in our Toronto support group for a number of years and they found religion. She is probably preaching at some Bible meeting right now, about her life of perversion as a transsexual. She is actually hurting more people that way than she is helping.

Comment - These people are a bit flaky. From my own experiences and insight from looking at the gender groups, I think we overlook loneliness as an extreme part of the transsexual phenomenon. You can never be sexually or emotionally happy with a partner if you know or feel you are different. Loneliness can be a devastating factor during the transition. I've been to many transsexual meetings and functions and a transsexual rarely brings a male companion to a dance or function. After the surgery, many transsexuals go out and find themselves a man.

Comment - The people who start the transition and have the courage to admit to themselves they are making a mistake deserve a lot of credit. The people who go through the change and then decide they made a mistake and change back are the ones doing the great injustice to our culture. These are the ones who appear on the television talk shows and make a big thing over the terrible mistake they made. They condemn the whole transsexual business and make it more difficult for others.

Question - What are the prospects for a person who doesn't go all the way not because she decided she wasn't transsexual but rather because there are other things in her life preventing her making the total change? Can one person fine

happiness by not going all the way? Can one find happiness in going all the way after resolving all the previous ties and be at peace with yourself?

Answer - I know a number of people who have not gone all the way and are quite happy with themselves. There even options for those who don't want to take the hormones and this includes breast implant surgery. And most of these people live as females without the benefit of hormones. There are a number of options available but you should explore these with your therapist and with your peers. Surgery is definitely not the only way to go.

Comment - I've had some long conversations with my mother since she figured things out. She is moderately supportive. I made her a promise that if I ever felt uncomfortable, I would stop.

Comment - The ones who go through with it and decide to change back may foul up our relationships with the surgeons who do the breast implants and only have to take them out again a few years later.

Comment - One thing that doesn't show up enough in the literature where the people we see come and go at Tiffany, while doing a lot of talking about the hormones and getting the surgery, is the subject of electrolysis. This is a major expense that can cost as much as four to eight thousand dollars spread over several years. Anyone with a beard shadow has no business going around with a set of breasts.

Comment - One thing my doctor pointed out is the dependency of transsexuals on hormones. She thinks we should get by with very little hormones. Do you feel that people do take too many hormones?

Answer - Many people have a definite urgency to use hormones. They would like to take more hormones than they should. Your endocrinologist is the person to consult about hormones.

Comment - A transsexual phoned me and had taken an entire months supply of hormones in about a week. It's frightening to think of the damage she could do to herself. she could suffer liver damage, embolism and a lot of other things.

Comment - For those people who say "I want to be a transsexual...", that's not the reason to take hormones. I think for some people it is a fad.

Comment - The question to ask is, do you want to be a transsexual or a woman?

Comment - You need to get a lot of help along the way from your support group, peers, doctors, electrologists and anyone else who can help you. It is to your advantage to find the best people in your area and spend a few extra dollars to get the best you can. There are a lot of professionals in different areas of the country. It may be difficult to find the best ones, but you really need to get qualified people to help you.

In talking with pre-op transsexuals who are now post-ops, I've found that there are many emotions that come out in this process of transition and being on hormones for a number of years. And the process continues even after the surgery. Transsexuals in some cases are looked upon in a better light than a transvestite is. A transsexual has a real goal in mind in comparison to a transvestite who doesn't have a goal and just wants to dress as a woman.

Rupert - There's a transsexual in Manitoba who said we should give a certificate to those who do make it through the complete change because it is a hell of a thing to go through. It's a lot like going through a university curriculum. It can take many years and a lot of hard work. There are all kinds of tests you are subjected to and must pass to one degree or another. These are both physical and psychological. It is quite an ordeal.

Comment - I appreciate all the effort from the people here who organized this convention. It's the first chance I've ever had to get away from my home environment and actually be Paula. It's been a very enlightening experience for me. I appreciate the efforts Kim and Rupert have put into these meetings so the rest of us can make some intelligent decisions.

It seems there haven't been very many feelings expressed here. For example, how do you feel about the clothes? What do the clothes do for you as a transsexual? In my own case, the clothes have not been of any primary importance. This may have been influenced by all the transvestites I used to hang out with. I always felt a little out of place. There have been many facts presented here, but feelings have not been discussed. I was wondering how people feel about what we are.

Answer - I tend to buy expensive clothes. I like a nice dress or a sharp looking suit just as any genetic female would. I don't get carried away by dressing to a flamboyant extreme. Unfortunately some of our transvestite friends do things that way. It's called the inappropriate attire for the occasion. As a transsexual, my reaction is the same as what women have, nothing more and nothing less.

Comment - I'm generally in sweat pants or something else comfortable. I don't need to wear a skirt to prove I'm a female. I know that I am. I just feel comfortable this way.

Comment - For me, my feelings have more to do with how I relate to people and how I go through my every day life. I enjoy looking pretty and enjoy having nice clothes. I get embarrassed when I go out with transvestites who have no desire to pass. They just want to put on a dress and have a good time. They speak in their loud male voices and wear outlandish attire. I have fun with them in a way but it's not really where I'm at. I'm not interested in going out and passing either. I want to be me. I want to relate to people in the way that I feel I am as a person.

Comment - The only thing important to me is feeling that I am myself. When I am dressed at home and the family is around, it feels like I'm at a costume party. I'm not being me. I'm dressing how I'd like to dress.

Comment - I've always hated clothes in my male identity and I like the clothes in my female identity. I think it has something to do with self respect and of deserving to look pretty and to let that side come out. It's also important in experiencing being a woman. You have your family and friends to consider and the general public as well. You can't function in the female role with the general public unless you can look feminine in a convincing way. I know some women who are just crazy about clothes so I don't think it's in any way different for a transsexual to like clothes.

Comment - The most important thing in going through the transition are your feelings. Who are you and how do you relate? A lot of times, clothing is not important until you start your real life test. When you work with other women, you can pick up hints on clothing styles and learn what is appropriate. All of this is

a learning process. I know other transsexuals where clothing is very important in their lives. They want to look sharp and wear pretty clothes. The most important things are their emotions, the exploring and the finding out about themselves.

End Tape 2, Side 1

IFGE Convention - March 1987
Transcribed Audio Tapes

OPEN FORUM WITH THE IFGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
March 8, 1987
Tier 1, Tapes 1, & 2

Tape 1, Side 1

Merissa Sherrill Lynn - Moderator

This is a hastily put together structure here, as we were originally going to have an open forum with the IFGE Board. We thought it might be more important if we concentrated on next year's convention and the one after that.

First, I'll give you a listing of the IFGE Board of Directors. Every Board member and Board alternate we serve in a business capacity. The elected members will have voting power, the rest will serve as alternates in the order they were elected. Should a Board member drop out, the 1st alternate will take his or her place.

The members of the Board are: Eve Burchert, Renee Chevalier, Joanna Clark, Cheryl Costa, Holly Cross, Shiela Kirk, Betty Ann Lind, Merissa Lynn, Naomi Owen, Virginia Prince, Roger Peo, Ellen Summers, Helen Tibbetts, Pat West, and Elaine Willey.

The alternates of the Board are: Rupert Raj, Bette Johnson, Yvonne Cook, Lynda Frank, Maureen Taylor, Samantha Walls, and Nancy Ann Martine.

Originally the IFGE was to be the convention programs division of the Tiffany Club. Tiffany was restructured to be the local support organization for the Northeast region. IFGE was then formed to publish the Tapestry and other educational material, and to sponsor our convention. IFGE is intended to be an outreach tool, and to serve as a communications device, and a unifying factor for our community as a whole.

Ever since we started our conventions, whether it be Fantasia Fair, or whatever, we have wanted a "convention" convention, not a personal growth convention, not a party. We have been coat-tailing on certain professional organizations where we were the patients and they were the doctors. As a result, they were not quite in tune to our needs as a community. It was obvious that whatever was to be done for our community, we would have to do it.

Two years ago at the Spring Fling, we were discussing the possibility of the development of a convention. There were a large number of groups represented by that affair. The intention was to have a convention that would be sponsored by IFGE, on behalf of the community and it would be planned by and run for the community. This is the TV/TS Community's convention. IFGE is only the sponsor.

We set up a structure, a staff and a steering committee. The steering committee was made up of one representative from each organization. The steering committee would plan the convention and OK everything that would go into the convention. The committee would select a director, a financial manager, a program coordinator, convention coordinator and audio visual. A Staff underneath that structure was selected by those individuals made up of basically anyone who was willing to work.

The agenda and proposed program content was selected and approved by the steering committee, including site selection, long range battle plan and program selection.

For this first year, the convention is a closed one for leaders of the various groups. Next year we want to have a convention that we can put on the road. It takes about two years to plan a convention.

For next year, we plan to keep the machinery in motion. We would return here and have the convention we originally conceived of with a smaller, restrictive number of participants. We may have a walk-in serve for the public, or helping professionals. For the following year, we will be ready to take it on the road and perhaps go to the west coast, and the year after go to the east coast. We can then take this polished convention on the road each year there after.

One of the objectives of the steering committee is to make this organization as representative of all the groups as possible.

It's important for each club representative to return to their respective organizations and raise the level of excitement. What would they like to see for program ideas for 1988. Think about what you can do to be responsible to help all this to happen.

This may better apply for next year, but we could put together a press package as quickly as possible. We need something to bring back to our groups and hand out to our own memberships and also to the general public.

End Tape 1, Side 1

Start Tape 1, Side 2

Linda (CHIC) - I'm still beating this newsletter horse. I'd like to see coming out of all this, some kind of sheet or insert from IFGE. This could then be duplicated and put into all the local area newsletters. It would give a much stronger feeling within each group that they are a part of the IFGE. I think the constant contact with this group and the local groups is very important. It would be a constant reminder of our affiliation with the national organization. This would help to continue the enthusiasm throughout the year.

Most of the local newsletters are 8 X 11 format and a full page insert would be ideal, whether it is monthly or bi-monthly basis. This would keep the membership of each group in touch with what is going on here.

...Discussion of name badges...

...Discussion of Communication Seminar...

I think there were some basic tools missing from this convention that I've seen at other conventions, like pre-prepared visual aids, prepared outlines of

workshops. We have to take the message back to our people. And you missed another basic took and that's coffee in the back.

...Discussion of various aspects of the convention...

Two things I'd like to input. One concerns the press room downstairs, and it was closed yesterday. We were in there and we got kicked out. I was down there on Thursday at 2 p.m. and it was again closed.

Also, there seems to be a lot of conflict between some of the seminars, and there were times when not much was going on. Perhaps we could spread things out more for next year.

The press room was closed yesterday because Bette Johnson got fed up by not being able to attend anything herself of what she paid for. We had the same problem at Fantasia Fair. The only staff people we have to run this thing are the ones who have paid for the event themselves. If they have to run everything, then they are paying you for the privilege of working.

The solution is simple. We had a list of fifteen hostesses but we were not organized well enough to get those hostesses trained at the responsibilities to keep things open. In the future we will do this. I'm certain we can do a much better job next year.

I just wanted to make a suggestion about the wives group. We had a great rap session and it wasn't long enough, but it came at the end of the convention. I think we should meet right as soon as we get there. We need to find out who the other wives are.

The solution is to have wives group coordinator be able to sponsor a reception for the wives at the beginning of the convention, as well as for any special interest group.

For the registration and problems, we have a number of people who didn't come to the convention. These people are available to work and would be more than willing to work for a few perks. They could have access to the buffet or to the evening socials. That way, you can free up your paying members to attend the functions you want.

I think it's important that if we decide to gear to the professional crowd, we should think about the image of the material we put out, we should consider going from a photocopy format to a pre-printed handout.

Those of you who have any connections with the professionals in your area, and even if you don't, that you start talking with people in mental health agencies, hospitals, clinics and so on, about this work, to generate some interest in having some people come and join us next year.

If we are to approach the professionals, we should get a form letter with your stationery to send out to mental health groups. This is needed to provide some credibility for our cause.

End Tape 2, Side 1

Tape 2, Side 2 - nothing recorded

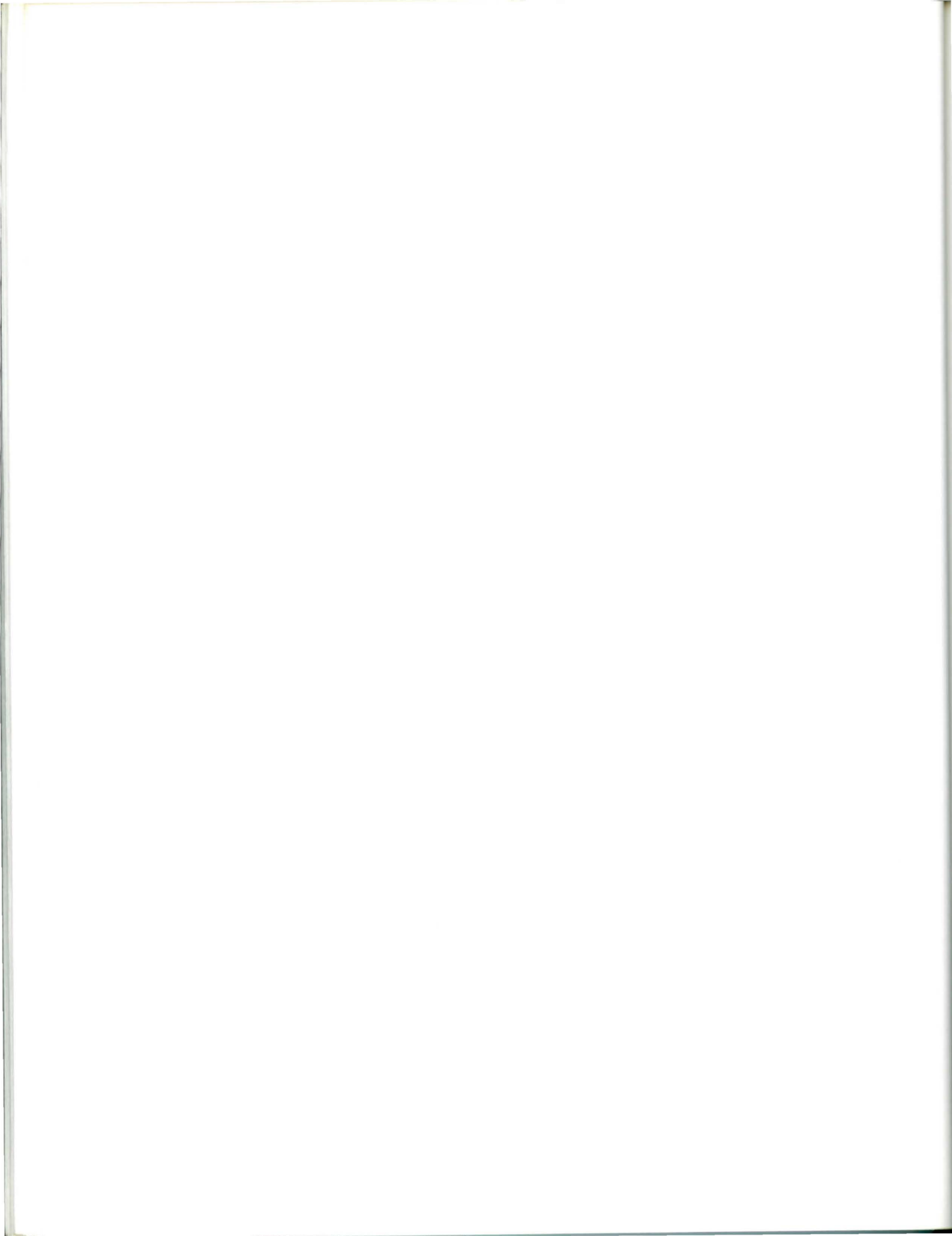


Photo Album



Dr. Virginia Prince (Tri-Ess)
Merissa Sherrill Lynn (Dir. IFGE)



Shiela Kirk (Dir. Tier-III Programs)
Yvonne Cook (Treas. IFGE)



'Mrs. Shufflewick'





David, Shiela, Rosie



Virginia, Eve





Bette Johnson (Conv. Coord.) presenting the 'New Girl On The Block' appreciation award to Virginia



Carol Beecroft (Dir. Tri-Ess)
Naomi Owen (Pres. Chi Chapter)



Northwest Gender Alliance: L-R Robin, Ellen, Dorothy, Carolyn



L-R Renee, Angela, Siobhan,
Heather, Kim, Rupert,
Linda, Shiela

Registration: Siobhan, "You
want to register for what?"



L-R Lynda, Merissa,
Marilyn, Niela, Roger



Niela Miller (Pres. People Systems Potential)



Yvonne & Merissa: "The Convention staff had a good 'working' relationship!"



Niela & Merissa



Virginia receiving her 'Lifetime Contribution' award



Shiela Kirk (Tier-III Programs)
Yvonne Cook (IFGE Treas.)



Ginger Johnson (ETVC)
Dorothy Finch (Emerald City)



David Maxwell (Pres. CGS)
Shiela Kirk (Pres. TransPitt)
Rosie E. (CGS)



Mariette Pathy Allen (Photographer)
Barbara Burgess (Dallas Chapter)



Marcia Daniels (CGS)



Kay M. (Dallas Chapter)
Jane M. (Delta Chapter)





Eve Burchert (Chi Chapter
Shiela Kirk (TransPitt)
Yvonne Cook (Iota Chi)



Virginia Prince
Helen Tibbetts (Tiffany Club)





Kim Hellman
(ETVC)



Siobhan Donovan
(Tiffany Club)



Linda Buten
(Cross-Port)



Merissa Sherrill Lynn
(Tiffany Club)



Heather Peerson
(Cross-Port)



Rupert Raj (Dir. MMRF)



Rupert Raj (Dir. MMRF)
Carol Beecroft (Dir. Tri-Ess)



Dr. Roger Peo
(Dir. Androgyny Unlimited)



Eve Burchert (Chi Chapter)
Mariette Pathy Allen

Shiela Kirk (Pres. TransPitt)



Yvonne Cook (Treas. IFGE)



Elaine Willey (Conv. Co-Dir.)





The Chicago Gender Society Vaudvillians



Staff 'Thank-you's'
Visible L-R Shiela K.,
Merissa L., Naomi O.,
Eve B., Yvonne C.,
Helen S., Elaine W.



Greelings Dove
To Doctor Ughand Prince
 All through the years you have given to the others who the
 benefit of your knowledge and experience. You have written
 letters, answered questions of your time and expertise with wisdom,
 interest, constant attention and unceasing attention.
 You have given to us all, Ughand Prince, or otherwise, to give
 us wisdom through the loving to be with and with of us.
 Your strength and encouragement you have led the way to
 the development of many, organizations and others who are
 carrying forward the "light" which you have in. Through
 and through we are making bright the light you brought
 to the darkness.
 You speak with wisdom and affection. We appreciate
 you, with deep respect. We honor you, with love.
 We give Ughand an everlasting thank you for your devotion,
 warmth, respect and steadfastness.
 With much appreciation
 All of your sisters





Shiela, Virginia, Laura



Niela, Roger



Virginia receiving the 'Virginia Prince Lifetime Contribution' award



Virginia receiving a 'Thank you' from the 'new girls on the block'



Registration L-R
Bette Johnson (Conv. Coord)
Helen Tibbetts (Tiffany)
Yvonne Cook (IN Chapter)
Katherine B. (Crossroads)

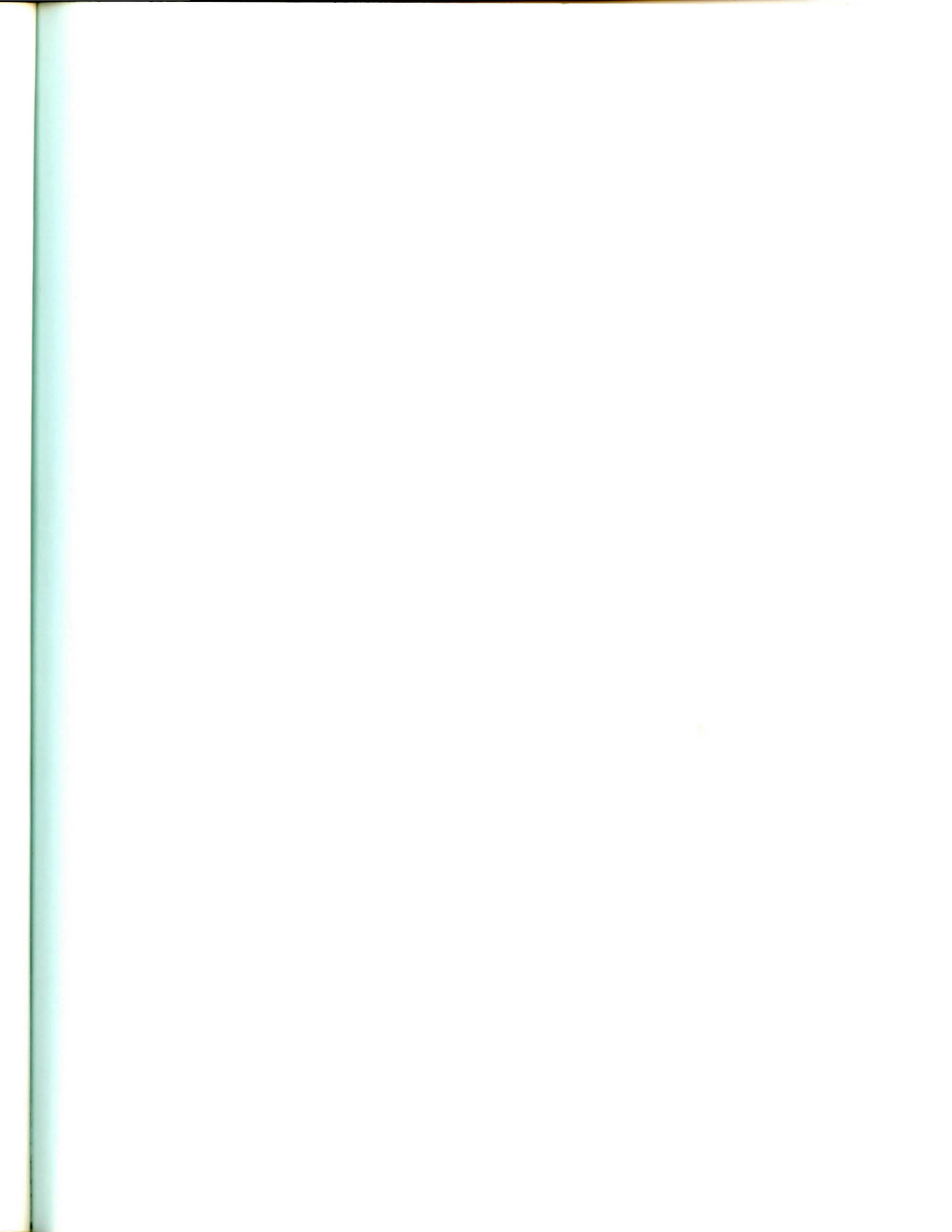


L-R Eve & Carol (Chi Chapter)
Linda McKim (CHIC)



Virginia receiving the 'Naomi Owen You Can't
Take Life Too Seriously' award







*THE TRINITY OF BEING:
OF BEING MASCULINE
OF BEING FEMININE,
OF BEING ONE
WITH YOURSELF AND NATURE!*

IFGE
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