



Renaissance News

Volume 5, No. 2

Vision - Integrity - Quality

February 1991

Two tales of coming out

Here are two true stories about transsexuals coming out at work. Identities have been changed, but the facts are true. Perhaps there is a lesson here. Perhaps it is that when we demand sensitivity from others, we should be sensitive ourselves.

"I almost fell over, I was stupefied."

That was Stan's reaction when Bob, a transsexual co-worker, recently appeared without warning in the office of a Philadelphia firm wearing a dress, high heels and makeup. "I was hurt that he didn't say anything before," Stan said, discussing the incident that Stan now believes cost him and the transsexual their jobs.

Before Bob made the immediate, surprise transformation at work "I was one of his closest friends in the office," Stan remembers. "We used to talk a lot about football — the Detroit Lions were his favorite team." The two had worked together for three years, the last year they had shared the same office.

Evidently working that close together didn't mean that Bob — now called Lisa — felt obliged to warn Stan or even explain what was going on that first day. "All he said was 'Are you shocked?' Then went about his business," Stan said. It wasn't until the second day that "he started explaining different things," Stan said. "He said he had ideas in his head since he was a little child and had to come out in the open. He seemed much more relaxed than he had been in many months."

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"Effective 14 December, I am switching to life as a female."

That was how a transsexual on the faculty of a West Coast university began a memo addressed to "colleagues, staff, and other friends" telling them what they could expect in the coming weeks.

In the memo, a copy of which has been obtained by the *Renaissance News*, the transsexual said "I have always felt female, and have always felt more at home with female culture than with male culture." She described her "some 30 years of recurrent depression, gloom, and pain ... because of the incongruity between my psychological gender and my physical sex." Seeing a therapist and attending support group meetings for more than a year, she wrote, "I have gone for 12 months with no such depression."

She outlined current medical and scientific thinking regarding transsexualism. "Studies have found that attempts to 'rectify' it in ways other than gender change tend to be dead-end, condemning the transsexual to feelings of deep frustration and to ongoing periods of depression," she wrote.

To help the people around her better understand the phenomenon, the transsexual welcomed ques-

(Continued on page 4)

Transsexual found murdered in Center City

Three days before Christmas, the body of a 26-year old male-to-female transsexual was discovered in Center City Philadelphia. She had been stabbed several times in the chest and stomach.

A security guard working for Thomas Jefferson University Hospital discovered the body of Anna Francisco on the morning of Dec. 22 on a hospital construction site near 11th and Walnut streets.

Police say that Francisco was killed at or near the site. They had

no motive for the brutal murder nor no suspects.

According to her friend Joanna Sylvester, Francisco worked in the home health care field and was studying to become a nurse. She had planned to undergo sex reassignment surgery within six months, Sylvester said. She lived with her family in the Feltonville section of Philadelphia.

She was a sweetheart — gentle," Sylvester said. "She never hurt anyone. Her only mistake was being

a pre-operative transsexual. Why was she murdered? I am sure it was a crime of hate because of her true gender."

A \$1,500 reward has been offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for Francisco's murder. Anyone with information should contact the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission for Sexual Minorities, 686-1545. All callers are assured anonymity.

CHAPTER INFORMATION

New Jersey

South Jersey: Kelly Harris, chapter leader. Write Renaissance SJ, c/o P. O. Box 189, Mays Landing, NJ 08330. Meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Atlantic Mental Health Center, Inc. 2002 Black Horse Pike, McKee, N.J. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Call (609) 641-3782.

.....
* * **IMPORTANT** * * *
Until Further Notice
The Reading Chapter
Has Suspended Operations
.....

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Angela Gardner, chapter leader. Write Renaissance PHL, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia, Pa. Winter hours: starts at 8:00 p.m. Call (215) 946-8887.

Pennsylvania

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Brenda Davidson, chapter leader Write LSV-Renaissance, Box 2122, Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets the first Saturday of the month in Camp Hill, Pa at 8:00 p.m. Call (717) 780-1578.

NATIONAL INFORMATION

✓ Renaissance has a new mailing address, please correct your records: P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa., 19406.

✓ Renaissance has a new phone number as well. Call (215) 630-1437 24 hours a day for current information about events and activities.

✓ The board of directors has approved a new policy for the development of chapters and affiliates.

— Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit in-

stitution in their home state (except Pa.) before asking for chapter status.

— Any group that wishes to become a Renaissance affiliate will pay a small annual fee for services normally afforded to chapters for free. Affiliates have no legal connection to Renaissance and remain autonomous. Services include unlimited access to reference publications and newsletter copy.

Write for details to Alison Laing, Co-director of Outreach, P. O. Box 552, King of Prussia, Pa. 19406.

AND, DON'T FORGET ABOUT...

• Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available: 1-Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing, 2-Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing, 3-PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others, 4-The Matter of Children, 5-An Annotated Bibliography, 6-Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View, 7-What Is Renaissance?, and 8-AIDS & HIV Safety and Ethics.

• 3R addiction recovery support group meets at King of Prussia on third Sat. of the month.

• The Pen Pal Project. If you are willing to write letters to pen pals, please inform Maryann Kirkland or write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

• A few copies of the Deluxe Edition of Dr. Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* are still available at \$39.95 postpaid. Make checks payable to Renaissance.

• Call the new Transsexual Hotline if you need need someone to talk with. Call (609) 641-3782 between 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. EST, or FAX (609) 561-5799. This service is provided by the South Jersey Chapter.

Renaissance News

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For current information call (215) 630-1437 24 hrs. a day.

Renaissance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing education and support to the gender community at large.

Calendar of Events

Febuary

2nd Ren. So. Jersey Chapter; **J.M. Kauffman, M.D.**, to speak on endocrinology and metabolism.

2nd Ren. LSV Chapter

16th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

22-24 Texas 'T' Party
B&P, San Antonio, Tex.

March

2nd Ren. So. Jersey Chapter

2nd Ren. LSV Chapter

16th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

April

6th Ren. So. Jersey Chapter

6th Ren. LSV Chapter

20th Ren. Gr. Phila. Chapter

S *JoAnn Altman Stringer* **SURVIVAL**™

Little do we think of it, but perceptions rule the personality of today's world. They make us think, believe and do things differently. Should someone become a hermit, living a lonely, solitary life up in the Alaskan tundra, their personality and goals will be diametrically different than the urbanite living in Los Angeles. And all because of perceptions.

In the closeted world of the gender conflicted, perceptions pose three distinct alternatives to how we act.

Perceiving yourself

First, is the conscious thought of how we perceive ourselves. Just exactly what do you think of yourself? Do you think you're fun to be around or are you 89 percent bitchy? Do you think of yourself as easy going or persnickety? Do you follow the desires of the group or go your own way. Most importantly, however, do you love yourself? What you think of yourself as a person is going to affect how you act.

I have touched on this in the past articles, but it is an important issue. In my book, *The Transsexual's Survival Guide to Transition and Beyond*, I noted that I never thought of myself as "transsexual." In my mind, I was always female, though I knew there was a difference between myself and genetic females. While I was going through transition in Denver, there seemed to be a prevailing belief that transsexuals should act in a certain way, even though they were trying to learn the ways of women. Many transsexuals would put on quite a display. They perceived that their actions were correct, yet others did not see them acting as normal women would. The transsexuals perceived themselves as transsexual — and acted according to that norm — instead of perceiving themselves as female.

Perceiving the world

Secondly, how do you perceive the world around you? Just how do you perceive life as it whizzes past you every day? Do you notice the difference in attitudes between the sexes? Do you believe you are giving something to society or taking from it? Do you think your work is beneficial or superficial?

How you perceive yourself will make an impact on how you see the world. If you view yourself as a transsexual, your actions will fit into a prescribed mold. This could be compared to the physics theory which states every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Your self-perception is manifested in an outward sign that says to the world "female" or "transsexual."

Your perception of the world around you is also affected by the sociological surroundings. Because of the socialization process, someone going through transition in the Jewish or Italian neighborhoods of New York City is going to act differently than someone in rural Mississippi.

Another factor that falls into the mix is the left brain/right brain issue. Are you analytical or artistic. A painter sees the world much differently than does an engineer. Being analytical or artistic causes you to see the world differently. Do you see a dying flower and understand the intrinsic beauty it once embodied, or do you see the same flower as now worthless? Many of the gender conflicted people I have met around the world tend to be in the analytical category as judged by their careers in electronics, science, law and the like. A few were dreamers, poets, artists, revolutionaries, but not too many. Too, an artist in New York City will see the world much differently than her counterpart artist in Mississippi because of socialization. The analysts, regardless of where

they live will pretty much be the same.

Others perceive you

The third and final consideration is your perception of how the world perceives you. We all act, to some degree, based on how we perceive the world wants us to act. Do you believe the world perceives you as just another woman (or man), or do people perceive you as transsexual (or weird)? Do you believe other people question what sex you are? Again, it come back to the action/reaction issue. If you believe people think you are transsexual, then you may put on a show just to reassure your audience.

As you progress further with transition, this could become very subtle feedback of how society perceives you. Do genetic female friends discuss personal things with you like periods, childbirth or menopause? These are the things they will discuss only with another member of their sorority. If this is the case, as it has been with me so many times, then you can assume that society is perceiving you in a very favorable way. You are being seen as normal.

When you receive this kind of feedback, you then can follow a pattern of normalcy. You can relax and just be yourself. You don't have to put on a show for the rest of the world. At that point your life becomes much, much easier, a pleasant rather than a burdensome task.

Always love yourself

One issue I briefly mentioned earlier is most important — do you love yourself? If you do, then the rest of the perceptions will fall into line and you will be successful. But if you hate and despise yourself, you will be drawn in a downward spiral to a pit of doom. While loving yourself will carry you upward into a spiral of success.

Stan's story

(continued from page 1)

But not everyone in the office was relaxed. Stan remembers that other people would turn away when Lisa approached. "They were very stand-offish," he said. As Stan remembers, the women in the office were not supportive at all.

The boss, too, was troubled. He ordered Lisa not to use the women's rest room, so she had to use the men's room. That caused only minor problems until a group of visiting executives headed to the men's room after along drive and found Lisa inside. "The visitors were embarrassed," Stan remembers, "and so was the boss. But Bob got a big kick out of it; he thought that was so funny.

"It was getting to the point that the boss was thinking 'we have to get rid of this guy. Visitors are getting embarrassed and the women are going to quit.'" So Stan speculates that a plan to reduce the staff was put into operation immediately. Three days after Lisa made her first

appearance, she was fired along with a third of the sales staff.

Stan said it was almost certain that there were to be some layoffs, but they were not expected until after Christmas. Still, he wonders if Bob's transformation didn't speed up the process. While not specifically protected in Philadelphia, transgendered people have received the support of the Commission on Human Relations. Stan said that Bob had shown the boss some papers that he thinks kept Bob from getting fired by himself. By laying

off other workers at the same time, the company could claim to be innocent of discrimination.

"I have met transgendered people before this," Stan said. "They are the nicest folks in the world. But I was shocked that Bob didn't confide in me. Turned me off that he was not more open with me and would just come in dressed as a girl without any warning. And then just to look at me that first time and smile — that just hurt me to the core"

"I would have understood," Stan said.

Sabrina's story

(continued from page 1)

tions. Furthermore, she arranged for her therapist and another professional to be in the building to meet with interested persons. She also provided several copies of *The Uninvited Dilemma* by K. Stuart for borrowing by co-workers.

How does the transsexual wish

to be treated now? "I am changing my name to Sabrina. I would like to be called by that name. I would appreciate it if you would make the effort to use that name and to use the pronouns 'she' and 'her' in referring to me."

"Thank you for your understanding," she wrote in closing the memo.



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THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

We never seem to run out of items about transgendered people and the justice system, either as the victims at the hands of others or as victims of the system itself. One consolation is that it seems to have always been thus.



In 1702, for example, John Smith, a resident of Strawberry Alley in Philadelphia was arrested and charged by a grand jury for "being masked or disguised in women's apparel; stalking openly through the streets of the city from house to house. It being against the law of God, the law of the province and the law of nature." Smith was following an old English custom of going about the neighborhood in costume for drinks and cakes on Christmas night.



The custom is practiced with a different twist in Detroit nowadays — men dress up as women and rob people with guns and knives.

According to Motown police reports, a gang of crossdressed robbers is posing as prostitutes. When they snare an unsuspecting john, they take him to a deserted location and rob him at gun point. So far, four members of one gang have been arrested and will stand trial for one attack.



Officials at the first privately operated jail in Florida have a special way of treating transsexual inmates who cause trouble — they have their hair shorn and keep it as a souvenir.

In a practice that sounds something like the human skin lamp shades at Nazi extermination camps, a barber at a state prison reception center was ordered to save the hair he cut from Rhonda (Dennis) Smith and send it to Robin Krakow, one of three jailers Smith is accused of biting and scratching while they were booking her at the

Bay County Jail. Krakow and the two other female jailers are employed by Corrections Corporation of America of Nashville, Tenn. The company operates the jail under a contract with the county located on the Florida Panhandle.

Smith, 32, was being held in the county jail while awaiting trial for criminal mischief. She was later convicted and sentenced to six years in a state prison.



Remember Charles Daugherty, the 26-year-old man who posed as a Colorado high school cheerleader for eight days earlier this year until school officials became suspicious? He has pleaded guilty to criminal impersonation charges. A judge in Colorado Springs said that Daugherty was attempting to obtain a public education through fraud. Sentencing was to be held earlier this month; Daugherty could be sent to prison for two years.



High school students in Muskegon, Mich., may be even less sophisticated than those in Colorado. Two female students believed that Mari Louise Medacco, 17, was really a guy and let "him" have sex with them on several occasions. But it was in the dark so perhaps they couldn't tell "his" penis was false.

Mari called herself Mario, tightly wrapped her chest with an ace bandage, and told the girls that she had suffered a rib injury.



Mari may have gotten the idea of crossing the gender line for sex from biology class. When males are in short supply, the female African reed frog develops testicular nodules and fertilizes the eggs of other females. There was no mention in the *Omni* article of where the frogs get the tiny ace bandages.



Women posing as men can be a mean lot. Take the case of Lynn

Falske, 34-year-old f-to-m transsexual. Last month, he was sentenced to five years probation after he threatened to kill the San Francisco city supervisors who voted to tear down his "beloved" Embarcadero Freeway. Falske said he had no reason to live and would take the supervisors with him.

Responding to the threat, police searched his apartment where they found a .38 caliber pistol, an Uzi, ammunition, and two pairs of brass knuckles. Under the terms of a plea bargain, Falske pleaded guilty to a single felony charge of possessing brass knuckles.



Finally, in the "crossdressing for success" file, we have this item about Brazilian Alfonso Felipe dos Santos. Smartly clad in a wig, pumps and black dress, he lied his way into the cockpit of a Varig airliner en route between Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro in November saying that he wanted to take a photograph. Instead of a camera, he pulled out a can of Mace and sprayed the pilots. A relief pilot rushed to the controls and the plane landed safely in the Canary Islands.

Dos Santos' sister said her 39-year-old brother had a death wish.



We don't wish to sound callus, but if dos Santos really wanted to die, he should have moved to San Diego. In 1990, four transgendered people were murdered and three others were assaulted.

Police say that while there are similarities in the cases, "the dissimilarities prevail." All of the victims were Hispanic and had know to engage in prostitution. Police believe most or all of the victims were members of a prostitution ring based in Tijuana and operating in the San Diego area.

The most recent victim was shot in the chest in the driveway of a

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THE *Paula Jordan Sinclair* NEWSQUEEN™

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motel. Police say the slaying came as the result of "a dispute."



Police in Memphis have no motive for the November murder of a well-known transsexual entertainer. The body of Michelle Maree was found not far from the Club Tiffany where she worked as a waitress.

While robbery is a possibility (her purse was missing when her body was discovered), some members of the city's gay community speculate that since she was working in a straight club, a patron may have gone off on a murderous rage when he discovered her true gender.

Maree was 40 years old and had lived as a woman for many years. She won the Miss Gay Memphis crown in 1973, and for the past two decades had performed in most of the gay clubs in the area and organized many benefit shows. A tribute and benefit show was held after her death to raise money for funeral expenses and to purchase a headstone.



After all of this *Sturm und Drang*, some innocent female impersonation is a welcome relief — even more welcome when the impersonator is related to a celebrity.

Alexis Arquette, 21, brother of actress Rosanna Arquette, has performed in Hollywood gay bars in drag since he was 17. "No one

guessed I was underage because I was dressed as a woman," he said. "Some fans say I am even more beautiful than Rosanna."

While he says his family is supportive of his act, especially his father and two brothers, Alexis admits there is some tension in the family. Rosanna worries that being known as a female impersonator may ruin Alexis' chances of having a career as an actor. But so far that hasn't been a problem. He got a role in the movie *Last Exit to Brooklyn* — as a transvestite.



If Alexis really wants to get his career on the fast track, he'll get himself to the Connection Theater in Louisville, Ky. That's the site for the 1991 Miss Gay U.S.A. pageant. The tentative dates are April 2-7.



While James Cagney didn't crossdress (at least not that we know), his early association with drag didn't hurt his career. The movie tough guy's first job was as a dancer in a vaudeville female impersonator's act.



Another type entertainment career seems to thrive on crossdressing — rock and roll, which Sting observed is "a bit like Las Vegas; guys dressed up in their sisters' clothes pretending to be rebellious and angry but not really angry about anything."



Patti LaBelle certainly isn't angry about men impersonating her.

"It's a compliment for anybody to do anything that connects with Patti LaBelle," she said in a recent interview. "It's never embarrassing to me. It's never like you're trying to move in on my territory. It's just that you appreciate me (enough) to want to do that. It's the highest form of flattery."

The Philadelphia native said that on one occasion she met a man who impersonated her to perfection, but he was wearing his male clothes at the time. "I said 'Girlfriend, you just don't look anything like me.' I just couldn't imagine how in the world he could get to that point where he looked so much like me."

She said that during a subsequent appearance in Gerardo, the same impersonator was so good he fooled Patti's aunt.



Through her extensive contacts around the world, Phaedra Kelly has provided an update on a foreign dispatch published in the December column...

The Pakistani transvestite who was campaigning for a provincial assembly seat received 7,000 votes. While Aslam Khusra did not win the race, she will run again.

Miss Sinclair does not dress in her sister's clothes, but she is angry when she no receive clippings about crossdressing. She was very happy this past month, thanks to Phaedra, Sharon Morgan, and Lisa de Lansing (note to Lisa — please put your address in your next note). You can keep her happy by sending clippings to the Renaissance office. Please note the name and date of publication.

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"So what is a woman, anyway? What is a man?..."

Does a slight chromosomal difference really matter that much? And do our traits and personality really come attached to our sex?... It is staggering to think of all the rules, limitations, and horrors that have been perpetrated in the name of gender when *no one knows what gender is!*...

"More and more, I believe that sexual orientation is far more diffuse that we dare consider in our ag-

gressively bilateral society. Many of my friends — male and female, straight and gay — admit that they might occasionally wander out of their label if such an adventure didn't have so many social ramifications. Maybe there are as many sexual orientations as there are people — and maybe these orientations are different at different times in our lives. And maybe there are as many *genders* as there are people —

and maybe even our genders are different at different times in our lives.

"Or, perhaps, in a world free of religious restrictions and cultural limitations, there is no such thing as gender or sexual orientation! Perhaps we are all just people."

—Lesbian syndicated columnist Wendy Caster in her "Double Mischief" column appearing in San Diego's Gay & Lesbian Nation.

"The them-and-us view ends at the jail gate."

To the Editor:

Initially, my anger at Joan Hoff's attitude (toward the letter from Lofofora Contreras, RN, Sept. '90) was such that I would have gladly given her a break — somewhere around the neck. But realistically, we are a human society with all the faults and virtues that go with that, compressed within a small minority which refracts those qualities to the extreme because of our very smallness. So we can accept that there is one of everything, including a "hang 'em high," gung-ho redneck who makes stupid blurts about minorities within our own minority...

The them-and-us view ends at the jail gate. When one of our own has been caught and incarcerated, it is not ours to judge or forgive, only ours to serve a member of the com-

munity in a hellish situation. Women set up women's inmate groups, gays set up gay inmate groups. So why not ours? If we propose to cease being seen as alien by society and to assimilate into society as human beings, we better take the rough with the smooth...

If you are so pure, by all means throw the first stone. But if you, like me, accept that despite your best intentions, the public still sees little or no difference between our "organized" world and our ignored and ill-helped crime and vice quarter, and if you are still confident in your own virtue, you will cast down the first stone and build foundations upon it...

I have contact with a transvestite in an American prison. She was put away for ten years for unarmed petty burglary. I thought at first

that she'd borrowed Fort Knox! In the United Kingdom, she would have been sentenced to a maximum of five years with parole in three. That is unless the criminal is transgendered.

It seems that on both sides of the big pond, our gender gets double for whatever we do. This is the case with one British transsexual I work with. Had it not been found out that she is transsexual halfway through a life sentence, she would have been out ten years ago. Now, if she went for parole, she'd not only not get it, but would end up in an institution for the criminally insane...

Our inmates' group is in its infancy, and is so far the only one in the whole United Kingdom. I couldn't see that a gala dinner would do much to help it, given that the job

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NEW CDS TITLES

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TS inmate sues N.Y. State for sex assault; gets \$25,000 and transfer to women's prison

New York State has agreed to pay a transgendered inmate \$25,000 to settle a law suit that charged she was harassed and sexually assaulted by guards in the men's prison where she was incarcerated. In addition, she has been transferred to a women's prison.

A repeat offender, Jackie Farrell, 35, has been in and out of several New York prisons. According to a corrections department spokesman, some of those sentences were served in men's prisons and at least one was served in a women's prison — Bedford Hills near New York City. Spokesman Jim Flateau told the *Renaissance News* that the assignments to different gender prisons came because Farrell's arrest reports, furnished by the New York City police, sometimes listed her as a man and sometimes as a woman. She claims to have had a sex change when she was 18 years old.

In 1985, Farrell was sentenced to three and a half to seven years in prison for robbery, her most recent

offense. At that time, corrections department officials sought an independent determination of Farrell's gender, and had her examined by a panel of university medical and psychological professionals. Although she presents the appearance of a female, Flateau said, the experts determined that Farrell was most suited for a male prison. She was incarcerated at the Clinton Correctional Facility. That was where Farrell charged guards mo-

Court approves name change for Garden State transsexual

The New Jersey Superior Court appellate division last month ruled that a Bergen County pre-op transsexual can have a female name.

John W. Eck had been prevented from changing her name to Tina Lindsey by Superior Court Judge Birger Sween. Although Eck had lived as a woman for much of the past decade, Sween said a legal name change would be "fraudulent because Eck is still physically a man."

lest and harassed her and forced her to have sex with them. This formed the basis for her suit.

Flateau said that transgendered inmates such as Farrell who have medical authorization can receive female hormones at state expense. He also said that if officials determine transgendered inmates are "victim-prone," they can be placed in voluntary or involuntary segregation to protect them from other inmates.

With the assistance of the American Civil Liberties Union, Eck won a tentative decision in her favor in December. The final Superior Court ruling came last month.

"Absent fraud or other improper purpose," the court said, "a person has a right to a name change." The court also said Eck's decision to live as a woman is "of no concern to the judiciary, and ... has no bearing on" approving the name change.

"The them-and-us view ends at the jail gate."

(continued from page 7)

demands only hard, physical, hands-on, practical work which our community ought to be able to do by now.

My American transvestite inmate reports that she and her sisters get monthly medical and psychiatric checkups. The professional conducting these sessions confesses that he knows nothing about transgendered issues and will not consult others who could instruct him. So Lisa Leggett (*RN*, Dec. '90) is by all accounts a very lucky little girl to be getting all she wants and needs in the way of help...

Hoff expects that inmates should become less "selfish" overnight. I am sure there are negative transgendered inmates, just as I am sure that there are more selfish people on the outside where there is more

room to hog the benefits of groups and give nothing in return...

What are the needs of the comparatively free? More transgendered arses on seats in groups, more parties and frillies? It can't be much more than that, since I see hardly any attention paid to a campaign for improved media relations or to work overseas for the victims of Islam or communism.

What *are* you doing that is so vital it takes precedence over your own front line? How many of you have heard a cell door slam, seen religious police guns on a night street in Istanbul, the glint of knives on the Bois de Boulogne, or the five-foot truncheons of Pakistani riot cops? In some places where the Gender Transient Affinity has been and will continue to go transgendered people are arrested, tortured

and murdered just for being transgendered. Yet, these victims would count themselves lucky just to be known to exist, unlike in some strict Arab states where transgendered people are stoned or rent physically apart by their families and neighbors, their bodies left to rot on the desert without even the right of cremation...

If you will not join in with the physical work, then let those of us who do it receive some result of your fund raisers, some *funding* to help us do the job. You have the time to raise money, we have the time, ability and energy to make it count for something. What Lofofora and I are saying to you is this — for God's sake let's tie the two together!

—Phaedra Kelly
United Kingdom

THE **I** JoAnn Roberts TM CONOCLAST

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. — I'd send them a dictionary, but I'm afraid they'd cut it up...

Our "favorite" cut 'n' paste newsletter (*Lifelines*) arrived from **Long Island Femme Expression** with a notation on page two that they were proud to have received the "prestigious 'MONA' award" from the "Rennaissance (sic) Educational Association of Philadelphia" in "December 1989." Now I know why they cut 'n' paste; it was April '89.

But, I really got a belly laugh from the "reprint" statement which says, "Any not-for-profit group in the TV-TS community may copy anything out of *Lifelines* whether we wrote it, adapted it, or stole it from someone else, just give us credit or we'll scratch your eyes out..."



TENNENT, N.J. — The sales figures speak for themselves...

A "tempest in a teapot" was stirred to life not long ago when **Mariette Pathy Allen's** photo essay book, *Transformations*, was given a negative review in **The Transvestian**. The publication is edited by **Tania Volen** and published by her husband **Fred Barry**.

The brouhaha over Allen's book started with an unkind and uncredited review by **Daniel M. T. Graham**. Graham says the book is "bland" and the author couldn't make up her mind if it was supposed to be "a photo book or text." His final recommendation was, "it's not worth purchasing."

Well, Daniel, wave a red flag in front of a bull why don't you!

Several members of our community are hopping mad about the review and wrote to Volen to say so. The complaints fell on deaf ears.

First, Graham is a professional book and video reviewer. His opinions, I'm sure, come from a much broader base of information for comparison than the complainers. So, he didn't like the book. So what?

Second, the *Transvestian* is not what I would call a "representative" publication of our community and anything published in it I'd treat with circumspection.

Third, the sales numbers say it all. This community did not rush out to buy Allen's book. We failed to give it support. Sales were flagging long before Graham wrote his review. It is not his fault that *Trans-*

formations has been relegated to the "clearance" pile.



WOODLAND HILLS, CALIF. — Speaking of circumspection and deaf ears...

Our community's walking version of a venereal disease has turned up again. According to **Kym Richards** in the November issue of *Cross-Talk* **Phillip Salem** is taking personal ads in several transvestite publications, including *The Transvestian*, under the pseudonym of **Tanya Ray**.

Richards has been building a file of Salem's activities, most of which involve allegations of mail fraud. Salem's front, the **North American Transvestite Transsexual Society**, solicits money for information and either sends old TV magazines or does nothing. Then, if you file a complaint with postal authorities, Salem has been known to identify complainants as transvestites to authorities, thus breaching your confidentiality.

Salem claims to be a medical doctor and a psychiatrist. Both claims appear to be patently false. He has also offered hormones for

(continued next page)



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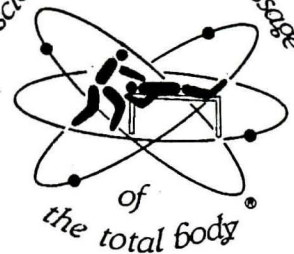
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sale through the mail, which is illegal if they are really prescription hormones, i.e. drugs.

Richards tried to communicate this to **Tania Volen** at *The Transvestian* but Volen still isn't listening to complaints from within our community. She accused Richards and *Cross-Talk* of carrying on a "vendetta" against Salem.

Cross-Talk urges all members of the community to avoid all contact with Salem and his organization.

I wholeheartedly add my support to those recommendations.



PORTLAND, ORE. — I bitched awhile back when the **Northwest Gender Alliance** newsletter mentioned a book on how men and women communicate. They didn't tell us the author or publisher.

My thanks go to **Roni L.**, the newsletter editor, who filled in the missing information in the December NWGA issue.

You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation is a fabulous book with an incredible insight into the language structure of men and women. Central to the book's thesis is that women talk to each other to make "connections," i.e. build community, while men talk to each other to gain "status," i.e. my dog's bigger than your dog. We in this community would all do well to read this book.

The author is **Deborah Tannen, Ph.D.** and the publisher is William Morrow & Company, New York. It's only available in hardback. I picked up my copy at B. Dalton for \$18.95



ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Some members of the **Fiesta Chapter of Tri-Ess** were stung by my comments in November's column about their sargeant-at-arms.

One in particular, **Wendy Smith**, wrote to explain their situation. It seems, as is often true in any group, there are a few "takers" who have

no intention of reciprocal "giving." Smith says the local economy is pretty bad and the "freeloaders" [my term] are a real strain on the group. So, they decided to do something about it. Hence the new policy and officer. The group also has an "exception" policy for true hardship cases which was not mentioned in the original article.

Smith also says the "sargeant" appellation is not very popular there but they didn't what else to call it. (I liked "First Amazon.")

I never seriously thought that Smith, chapter leader **Shirley Kay**, or any other officer were only interested in the money. My intention was to point out the irony of the title and to prod the group into devising new ways to gather their lost sheep back into the fold.



ST. LOUIS, MO. — First South Africa, now Arkansas...

I can just see the mass exodus to Little Rock. This town won't know what hit them once the word gets out about this.

According to the December issue of the **St. Louis Gender Foundation (StLGF) Gazette**, the Arkansas legislature passed a law which makes sex change surgery a mandatory sentence for men twice convicted of crossdressing. First timers get probation. The surgery will be performed at a state hospital. No word on who pays for the surgery.

But, the really important news in this issue is about **MAGGIE**, the **Mid-America Gender Group** and **Information Exchange**. (I just love clever acronyms.) **MAGGIE's** goals are to pool regional information and resources, sponsor an annual regional event, coordinate activities among regional groups and encourage growth on individuals through participation in regional and local events. At this time, **MAGGIE** is supported by **StLGF, Iowa Artistry, Omaha River City**

Gender Alliance and **Kansas City's Crossdressers and Friends**.

I'm really pleased to see regional organizations like this and the **New York State Gender Coalition** springing up. It means we're learning how to work together and build true community.

I propose a similar organization be formed on the east coast. I'd like to see a **Mid-Atlantic Gender Coalition (MAGC)** pronounced magic formed from support groups between Connecticut and Virginia. Can it be done? That's up to our leaders, but I think it can.



GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. — Words of wisdom...

To those who think that I have a quiver of poisoned arrows aimed at their hearts, please take note of this uncredited item from the Nov.-Dec. issue of *Puff & Stuff (I.M.E. of Western Michigan)*.

"Few people get through their working life without being criticized every now and then. This observation holds true whether they are executive vice presidents or the lowest worker on the totem pole.

"Truly mature people — those who don't allow themselves to be blinded by resentment — can sometimes find good even in the most malicious criticism. If the critic — no matter how unfriendly — points out some weakness you weren't conscious of, and you take action to correct it, you will have turned the intended injury into a genuine benefit"

Ignorance is a temporary condition; stupidity is permanent.



NOTA BENE — The opinions expressed here are mine and mine alone. They do not represent any "official" position of the Renaissance organization or any other person.

If you'd like to comment, positively or negatively, please write to me at P.O. Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA 19406. I'd like to hear your opinion of things.

Phila. Outreach Director lists goals

By Maryann Kirkland

Being elected outreach director for the Greater Philadelphia Chapter is for me a deeper commitment to ongoing efforts in this vein. So, I find myself in the early months already very busy and in high gear. My program for chapter outreach in 1991 has three components:

1. A revitalized participation in the ongoing projects of the national outreach directorship. These include mass media exposure, college classroom speaking, pen pal writing, and prison outreach.

2. As the I.F.G.E. representative, to ensure that correct information flows between Wayland, Mass., and here. Also, I plan to encourage, by means of example, participation in regional affairs. Delta Chi Education Association is one of three organizations in the District of Columbia/Virginia area that wishes to

"fraternize" more with Renaissance. Regionalization has occurred in other parts of this country—the "Be All" weekend is proof of that.

3. And lastly but most importantly, outreach efforts to our own membership to determine needs for personal growth. It was an unanimous decision of the chapter's new board to both examine individuals' satisfaction with basic skills and socialization and to adopt policies that will foster the personal growth of transgendered persons. The forum by which we hope to accomplish these goals is the TV rap session. Each month, spontaneous discussions have been occurring in the room designated. Now several people, including Michelle Lynn and myself will be more available to initiate and lead rap sessions on whatever topic.

My favorite topic is the expression of your femme self when the

makeup and clothes are removed. How comfortable are you with "her" when you are "him?" Do you prefer to have your two personas completely meshed or completely separated? Of course there is no right of wrong answer — only personal preference. So come out and discuss your lifestyle with others.

I expect to be caught in the act of performing one of my goals at the monthly meetings. However, I can not possibly succeed to the extent necessary without your help. Please look over this list of outreach program components and select an activity that makes you feel better in return. I am not bashful and will be actively looking for "a few good women." For those members who cannot attend meetings, I plan to write a regular feature on true outreach activities with the great unwashed public.



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