

News & views

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Renaissance

Consequences: A Death Sentence

by Angela Gardner

In March of 1995, Haddon Heights, New Jersey was rocked by a double murder and a 14 hour long armed standoff when Leslie Ann Nelson killed two law enforcement officers who came to her home to serve a search warrant for illegal weapons. The news accounts from then until now have referred to Ms. Nelson as a "transsexual." While it is true that she had sex reassignment surgery in May of 1992, according to two mental health professionals who evaluated her, at the request of her defense team, Nelson should have never had SRS. She is a transvestite, not a transsexual. A TV with other issues.

How did Leslie Ann Nelson become a killer? Dr. Carol Cobb Nettleton (one of the therapists who evaluated Nelson) said Nelson was "depressed and suicidal" because of a lifetime of turmoil caused by her gender identity issues. Court testimony also revealed that Leslie Nelson hated and was ashamed of her penis. This hatred was not related to Nelson's gender identity issues but developed over years because of voiding problems.

The young Nelson was a bedwetter well into his teens and his whole family made fun of him on an almost daily basis. The family did not seek medical help for the bedwetting problem. This led to Nelson having a severe psychological problem with urinating in public restrooms. It became impossible for the young Nelson to use a urinal. When it became apparent that the only way the boy would urinate was if he was sitting in a locked stall (and even then it was very difficult), Nelson's father would call him a little girl and taunt him with the name "Madeline." Because he could not use public restrooms his social and work life were extremely restricted. Is it any wonder that Nelson came to despise the penis that failed him on a regular basis?

Remember, Nelson is also a transvestite. What can you do when your male nature betrays you? Leslie Ann Nelson became more and more convinced that the female gender was the place to be. Being feminine, acting like a girl, these things brought her escape from the torture of having a penis that was an embarrassment. When she went to visit Dr. Biber for the initial SRS consultation, she said she wanted "to put her thing on the chopping block." Putting your thing on the block is only one aspect of changing your

gender. To Nelson it was the most important item.

A major clue that Nelson was not a transsexual came when she began to live fulltime as a female. She became *more* emotionally disturbed. The Real Life Test is a critical time of problem solving and for the true transsexual, as challenging as it is, it leads to less emotional problems—not more.

Many members of the transgender community deal with their gender issues by viewing them as a "gender journey." By putting one foot in front of the other and moving through each day one at a time many, many people have found resolution to their gender conflicts and lived healthy, productive lives. Leslie Ann Nelson's gender journey ended with a sentence of death in the murder of one of the officers and a sentence of thirty years to life for the other killing. An appeal is automatic in New Jersey but the best she can hope for is life in prison.

Nelson's is not the only ruined life in this sad story. Two wives will never see their husbands again. The officer's children will never see their fathers again. An officer she only wounded, whose life was saved when Nelson's mother shielded him with her own body, will never see his brother (one of the slain officers) again and his career as a police officer is over due to the extent of his wounds. Leslie Nelson will either be executed or in prison for life and her mother may never see her again. How did this happen? Where were the HBGDA's *Standards of Care*?

Leslie Nelson started her journey to SRS by seeing a therapist. So far so good. But, that therapist found she had mental illness and expressed doubts about Nelson's transsexuality. Nelson visited the now defunct South Jersey Chapter of Renaissance. She made the acquaintance of other individuals who considered themselves to be transsexual, individuals who were proceeding with their own self-treatment with the assistance of unethical physicians. Physicians who did not care about Nelson's penis hatred and voiding issues. Through her "TS" friends, she found a medical doctor who removed her testicles and began to administer female hormones. She also found a psychiatrist who wrote her the all important letter. The letter which was sent to Dr. Biber's clinic and got her an appointment in Trinidad, Colorado.

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Chapter & Affiliate Information

Chapters

Delaware

Wilmington, Delaware: meets second Saturday of each month. Write for info to: PO Box 5656, Wilmington, DE 19808. Phone: 302-376-1990 or email to: SadeCD@aol.com

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia: Write Renaissance GPC, 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719, Wayne, Pa. 19087. Meets third Saturday of the month in King of Prussia. Doors open 8 pm all year 'round. Call 610-975-9119 for information.

Lehigh Valley/Pocono area: Renaissance Lehigh Valley, PO Box 3624, Allentown, PA 18106. Meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Allentown area. Call for directions and more information, 610-821-2955.

Lower Susquehanna Valley: Write Renaissance LSV, Box 2122 Harrisburg, PA 17105. Meets on the first Saturday of the month. Call 717-780-1LSV (780-1578) or send email to: <lsv@ezonline.com>.

Affiliates

California

Orange County: Powder Puffs of California, PO Box 1088, Yorba Linda, CA 92686, or email to <ppoc@aol.com>

Connecticut

Bridgeport/New Haven: connecticutView, c/o Denise Mason, PO Box 2281, Devon, CT 06460. Monthly newsletter and activities.

Georgia

Atlanta: The American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), PO Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724 or call 770-939-0244, or email to <aegis@mindspring.com>. Information resources & referrals.

Atlanta: Atlanta Gender Explorations (A.G.E.), PO Box 77562, Atlanta, GA 30357, 770-939-2128.

Illinois

Chicago: The Chicago Gender Society, PO Box 578005, Chicago, IL 60657, 708-863-7714.

Louisiana

New Orleans: The Gulf Gender Alliance, PO Box 56836, New Orleans, LA 70156-6836, 504-833-3046.

New Jersey

N. Central Jersey: Monmouth/Ocean Trans Gender, (MOTG), write PO Box 8243, Red Bank, NJ 07701. Call 908-219-9094. Email: vikkimmotg@aol.com

Titusville: Meetings are 1st Saturday of the month at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing. Call Terri Risley at 609-933-2233.

New York

Manhattan: Metropolitan Gender Network (MGN), write 561 Hudson St., Box 45, New York, NY 10014, or call 201-794-1665, Ext. 332.

Long Island: New York GIRL & Partners, PO Box 456, Centereach, NY 11720, Call 516-732-5115 for info.

Long Island: Long Island Femme Expression (LIFE), PO Box 1311, Water Mill, NY 11976-1311. Phone 516-283-1333. email to joed2viola@aol.com

Oklahoma

Central Oklahoma: Sooner Diversity, part of the Central Oklahoma Transgender Alliance (COTA). Contact, Rachel Rudnick, P.O. Box 575, Norman, OK 73070.

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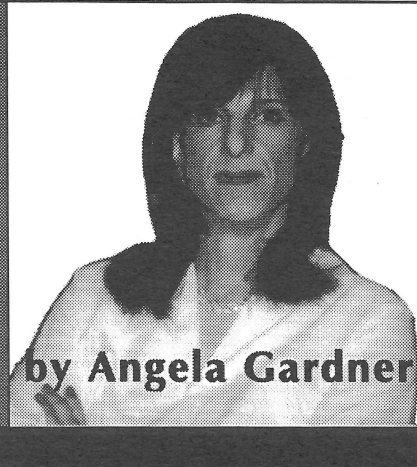
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Local Calendar

June

- 7 Ren. LSV
- 7 NJ Support
- 14 MOTG
- 14 Ren. Lehigh Valley
- 14 Ren. Delaware
- 19-22 Int'l Congress Sex & Gender
- 21 Ren. 10th Anniversary Party
Park Ridge Hotel, Vly Forge

News Beat & Reminder



Well, I must say at last the weather is getting seasonal. Spring (Summer in a few days) is in the air and my skirt is over my head. Oops! I didn't mean to say that. I guess that's what **Norm MacDonald** said after his broadcast on *Saturday Night Live* the evening of April twelfth. No, I'm not talking about his latest comments that could only offend any right thinking transgendered person. He let out a couple of four letter words preceding his TS bashing.

Now, I've done a little acting and I can only imagine the pressure of having to present the fake news on a broadcast that reaches millions of homes, but you'd think that a week of rehearsals and having the script in front of you would help poor old Norm get through the bit without fouling up and uttering foul language. Twice (that I remember) the lad inserted a four letter word. He seemed downright flustered. I can only guess that he may have remembered all the poop that hit the fan when he last slammed the transgendered in his remarks about the murder of **Brandon Teena (The Transsexual Menace)** came down on **SNL** like a ton of breast forms) and he was therefore a bit preoccupied. But, Norm, (c'mon, who's named Norm? Okay, don't send letters in defense of Norms everywhere. I'm still getting poison pen letters from girls with three names. It was a joke!) Normie baby, why'd ya say it? Referring to a case receiving national attention in which a transsexual father is seeking custody of her children Norm said, "Who's gonna win? The woman who gave birth to the children or the woman who used to be

a man who had his penis twisted into a fake vagina?" Evidently the Menace sensitivity training didn't take.

One encouraging thing was the audience reaction. They laughed, but it was a half hearted kind of I-know-that's-not-funny-but-the-applause-sign-is-on type of laugh. I, for one, don't find Norm's "humor" that amusing. It's only now and then that anything he does on the news segment makes me even smile. He's no Chevy Chase, if you get my drift. Perhaps it's time for Norm to follow in the footsteps of the other SNL stars, and move on. With luck he'll soon be the next Garret Morris. Who?

If you want to hit NBC now that they think the whole thing has blown over you can direct creative crank calls (please make them serious, not just diatribes) to Mr. Andrew Brewer, NBC Standards & Practices, (212) 664-4458, or Mr. Dan Ferguson, SNL Public Relations (212) 664-3733. While you've got the Standards & Practices guy on the phone tell him you didn't think much of the bit on Jay Leno's show May fourteenth. They had a segment called "Kid Books Gone Wrong" and the title of one of the books was, *See Dick Become Jane*. Yes, NBC seems to be the home of sensitive treatment for the transgendered.

Getting The Wind Up

I believe I mentioned the problem I've been having with my skirts. No, it's not 'cause I'm sexually promiscuous (I usually take them off for activity of that sort). The problem is Spring. It's windy out there. I stopped at an ATM

machine to make a withdrawal and while I was standing there pushing the buttons the mother of all winds came by and tried to reveal my true gender to the rest of the world. Now that's being "outed." That demure little pleated mini went up like a window shade. I can only thank the Goddess of Fashion that I chose to wear a body suit so my southern exposure wasn't too exposed.

This, girls, is the problem with flouncy type skirts. The least bit of wind and people are reminded what day of the week it is. (I always wear my day of the week panties, don't you?) It's really no fun to have to walk down the street trying to hold your skirt down and knowing that at some point around your body you aren't succeeding. This is why many women hate skirts and love to wear pants. It takes a real devil wind to blow your pants off.

It's not just a feminine problem though. Jessica Brandon sent me a newspaper photo of the British Army's Black Watch. Ooh, they're butch! But their ceremonial uniform is a Khaki shirt, white belt, black kilt and white spats over black shoes. The kilts are, of course, pleated. In the press photo one of the Watch men has his back to the camera and the hem of his kilt above his waist. We get a clear view of his rosy cheeks. The wind hoisted his skirt while the lads were lowering the British flag in Hong Kong. Since the Brits are leaving Hong Kong, I guess Mother Nature felt it was appropriate they show the city their backside.

So, if you are going out in the breezes and you must wear a short, flouncy skirt (and of course we must) please remember to act feminine when it starts to blow up around your waist. Demurely push it down and maintain your feminine dignity. Shaking your butt at construction workers is a definite No-No. Unless you're really into construction workers. Personally I find that they're more turned on by really short hot pants. But, I have to move on now. This isn't that kind of column.

Sure Eddie, Right...

If you haven't heard that **Eddie**

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News Beat...

Murphy was pulled over with a TG hooker in his car then you must have been out of town or something. The bust was made by undercover officers at 4:45 AM on May second. They saw Murphy stop his Toyota Land Cruiser on Santa Monica Boulevard—in an area the police call a “prostitution abatement zone”—and pick up Atisone Seiuli, 21. They followed along in an unmarked car and then turned on all those flashing lights. The transgendered girl was busted on an outstanding warrant for prostitution. Eddie got to drive home and explain it all to his wife. Now which might be worse, off to the lock up or home to the wife?

Eddie told the media that he is just a Good Samaritan. After a sleepless night he decided to drive to an all night magazine store for a few issues of *LadyLike*... I mean, *Variety*, when on the way back to his lovely wife, **Nichol Mitchell**, he saw what his lawyer says he “thought” was a disoriented woman sitting on the curb. He pulled over in a very gallant manner and asked the fair damsel if he could be of assistance. She said, “Hey, you the Nutty Professor!” and asked him if he could give her a lift home. He complied, and added a \$1000 so she’d have cab fare (in case she wanted to go back out to pick up some magazines or something) and the rest is a police report.

I’ve seen Eddie’s face pasted next to pictures of TVs on the cover of three different tabloids and none of the TVs look like the same girl. (They’re all pretty hot.) Oh yeah, there’s a resemblance but I get the feeling they just dragged out (oops! a funny) any old queen and pasted her in. What headlines! Now that’s journalism.

Eddie, Eddie, Eddie, what were you thinking? If you want to help the TV hookers make an anonymous donation to a charity that helps them. Or, have your minions pick them up in unmarked cars and deliver them to you at a hidden fun pit... I mean, at a place where you can Samaritan all you like in privacy. Didn’t Hugh Grant teach you *anything*?

Eddie’s suing two tabloids, the *Globe* and the *National Inquirer*, and a relative of his hooker... I mean charity project. He claims that the tabloids published false stories about his encounter with Atisone. He’s seeking \$5 million dollars in damages for “severe emotional and physical distress, requiring medical attention.” Now that kind of money will cover all the deductible on his medical plan and let him set up a full service spa for street queens.

His legal eagles are also after a relative of Ms. Seiuli, one Ioane Seiuli, who made remarks concerning Atisone and Eddie in *The New York Post*. That suit is only for a mil. I’m sure Ioane has that much cash hidden in the sofa.

Of course, now that the sexy lingerie has hit the fan people are coming out of the woodwork to claim they either had sex with Eddie or knew that he had sex with TG prostitutes. Geraldo, ever the probing journalist, has a show in the can with several transgendered prostitutes who claim they have known Murphy in a biblical sense. (There probably was a little genuflecting involved.) We knew he had a foot fetish but who knew he was an “admirer?” I think it’s sad that a wealthy movie star can’t have sex with whoever he wants too. The only thing Eddie should be ashamed of is cheating on his wife. If he was single, so what? Eddie like’s drag hookers, and Ellen’s a lesbian. What a world.

Other Things We Didn’t Expect

How about **Charles Barkley** in a dress? Bet ya didn’t expect that. Has Charles been inspired by **Dennis Rodman**? Has he developed a heightened fashion sense? Nah. He lost a bet with Rodman. It seems that before the season started Barkley and Rodman made a bet on who would win the league rebounding title. That honor went to Mr. Rodman and now we can look forward to Mr. Barkley in a shift, or perhaps something with a empire waist. I do hope that whatever he wears to satisfy the bet (maybe he could get a fashion consult from Atisone) that he displays a better sense of style than Dennis.

If Dennis had lost the bet our biggest problem would have been figuring

out when he was paying up. Dennis, is this the dress that honors the bet or was it that thing you wore yesterday?

TVs On TV

It seems everybody on television is either coming out as a lesbian or jumping into a dress. Or at least making some TG reference. In a recent episode of *The Nanny*, C.C. was having trouble with a guy hitting on her. He tried to put on a sensitive guy act and then asked her if she “liked the sensitive guy?” She replied, “Yes. I used to be one.” Of course she wasn’t (at least not on *The Nanny*) but that seemed to, as they say in the vernacular, cool the Romeo’s tool.

One May episode of the *Drew Carey Show* had the gang trying to recapture the wild days of their youth. It seems that back in the day they all used to go to the midnight showing of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. They get decked out (Drew just does the white underwear. His buddy does Frank in corset and stockings) and head on out to the theater. When they arrive, to their horror they discover that *Rocky Horror* has been replaced by *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of The Desert*. Drew’s fellow employees, and his boss, are all decked out like the Priscilla queens. They maintain that their drag is the new drag and Drew and his bunch are the old drag. (Remember, this show is set in Cleveland.) What to do? A dance off! With clever cutting and smooth dance moves the competing styles of drag strut their stuff in the street in a big dance number. The winner is never really decided since the cops show up and drag (I couldn’t help it) everyone of to the pokey. Keep up the good work Carey. Next time though, you wear the corset. (Actually, the poor boy could use one.)

Speaking of Priscilla

The youngest queen of the Priscilla crew, **Guy Pearce**, is starring in the film adaptation of James Ellroy’s novel of crime and corruption, *L.A. Confidential*. Don’t get all excited girls. He’s

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News Beat...

not doing drag in this one. He plays a young cop named Exley, a new boy at the police station who has fierce moral, ethical and intellectual dimensions that don't quite fit with the regular cop attitudes of 1950s Los Angeles. The dresses will be worn by **Kim Basinger** in this flick. She plays a call girl who works for a pimp whose speciality is providing johns with celebrity look-alikes. So, in a way there is some impersonation going on. Look for it on the big screen soon.

Run, Is Monsta!

Another actor who we loved in drag is appearing in another big screen effort without his mascara and hose.

Hank Azaria, the nervous maid of *The Birdcage*, will be manly and fearless in his next opus, *Godzilla*. It's shooting now in New York City so look for it in theaters at the end of the year. It's a big budget flick, but just imagine how much *Godzilla's* airfare could be? Maybe they got Mothra to fly him in. New York's all in a tizzy over the shoot cause they've closed off several blocks in the restaurant district and it's bad for business. All the crushed cars and buildings are bad for business too, but since *Godzilla's* a major star he gets his way. Just remember Zilla, baby... no transgendered prostitutes.

Edelweiss, Edelweiss

Which brings me to reports that the den of iniquity we fondly called **Edel-**

weiss has been shut down by the vice squad. It seems the working girls at New York's only full time drag club got so thick you couldn't find a girl who wasn't working. I knew it was going down hill years ago when the guys stopped buying a girl a drink and started asking how much you charged. Now I know a girl's gotta make a living but they've really messed it up for the rest of us... who were willing to give it away under the right circumstances. Some new place has opened that advertises bring your own liquor (which at NYC drink prices was always a good idea, anyway) and no hookers allowed. It won't be the same. If only the hookers had followed Eddie to the Coast.

Don't Answer The Phone

In all my years of open crossdressing I haven't had too much trouble, knock wood, with morons harassing me. At least any trouble that I could relate directly to crossdressing. The other night at 2:15AM I was roused from a sound sleep by the ringing of my bedside phone. I thought that it might be a close friend who is ill so I answered with a bleary hello. A calm, quiet male voice said, "Hi (insert my male name here), do you want to talk about wearing women's dresses?"

Now, when I'm awakened at 2:15 AM by someone I don't know, I don't feel like discussing much of anything... except possibly what kind of jerk this guy must be. I controlled myself and informed the caller that no, I didn't feel like talking about wearing women's dresses. (What other kind are there?) he said something else that I

can't recall and I hung up.

I quickly took advantage of hi tech help and dialed "* 69." The automated operator gave me the clown's phone number and I wrote it down. Then I went to the bathroom to answer the call of nature. That's the kind of thing you do when you wake up in the middle of the night. While I was occupied I heard the phone ring, again. My machine picked up and when I checked, I found a message from my caller in which he left his phone number. I closed the bedroom door, turned off the ringer on my phone and went back to bed. I heard the machine take two more calls but when I checked the next day there were no messages.

Well, a strange night time phone call from a guy who seemed really interested in crossdressing. He must have been seriously interested since he left his number. But, as eager as I am to outreach to all peoples of the planet, when you wake me up... you piss me off. So, I started a little thinking and research. The number was a local exchange. I thought about who in the local area might know my real name and all about my crossdressing proclivities. It had to be someone in my apartment complex or someone who worked there. I went to the manager's office. She knows all about me. In fact, her office overlooks the courtyard of my building and many times as I leave for the Renaissance office in my feminine business attire we exchange waves. I told her about my call and gave her the number. She was outraged that some-

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Two Tales: One Conference

Two different points of view on the recently concluded IFGE/SoCal jointly sponsored Cal Unity '97 conference.

Rockin' The Boat

By Loren Michelle, P.P.O.C.

Well we certainly rocked that boat! The "normal" passengers got more than they bargained for when they reserved a room on the Queen Mary (the boat) on the same weekend as our California Unity Convention. Not to be vain (I can't help it) normally I am a 100% pass. However, in this environment I was asked on two different occasions "so what group is it that you are with?" and "Is this a wig convention?" Duh! To me this **proves** we raised the gender awareness of the average passenger on the boat... nah. It was probably the mini skirt, 5-inch heels, and lace top that I was wearing that gave it away.

There were crossdressers and transsexuals to the left. Drag Queens to the right. Some of our group in every restaurant bar and shop. Pretty hard to miss us. We had landed. We took over the ship. We were especially obvious in the elevator area because it was a common exit/entry point. The effect was staggering as more of us tended to linger aboard the ship as opposed to running about town like in San Francisco. I did dress "normally" most of the time, and I got the opportunity to be a "fly on the wall." Most of the passengers did not pick up on my transgendered status. I had a lot of fun wandering and exploring the ship, and observing the reactions of the guests who spotted our convention attendees. We were certainly turning heads.

A group of us were in the elevator when a man volunteered the telephone conversation he had earlier with the reservation desk. He said he called and asked for two queens. Then he made a joke and said he certainly got a few more than he was expecting! Overall, most folks were quite curious and willing to chat and ask questions. I only noticed a couple people visibly upset. As a bridal party made its way to check in, it only took enough time for their elevator lift and their stroll over to the main check in area before a convention attendee was spotted. A bridesmaid says to the bride "So, are we wearing our tuxes or our gowns?" the unamused bride just looked at her and said "Don't *even* go there!" The only other negative reaction I noticed was from a man standing with his family outside of one of the ship's restaurants. I was standing right next to him as two crossdressers wandered past that did not look all that good. The man turned to his wife and said "That's disgusting!"

As it happened my cabin was directly across from some rooms that another group was using for a wine and cheese reception. Someone there said, "Hey we need to liven our party up. What we need is some of those gender benders!" And through the cabin wall I heard "Guess what? There's a whole bunch of drag queens on the ship! Yeah, really!"

The convention successfully merged the transgendered with the ordinary for a week or so. We rocked the boat, turned heads, met new friends, and had a great convention!

A Look at Cal Unity '97

by Richelle G., Editor of the *Born Free* newsletter

I was deeply involved in the planning and coordination for [Cal Unity '97]. This involvement allows me to share with you my impressions and opinions. Throughout my experience [at the convention], in no case did IFGE volunteers hold to their commitments. Local people had to fill the voids created by their lack of commitment. Not only did the IFGE leadership not recognize the efforts of the local volunteers, neither did [their] Board members. In fact their Board members never made their presence known, never circulated, never made themselves noticed, and never recognized there was a local contingent participating. Apparently manners and graciousness are not this group's long suit.

The Thursday night "Gala" can best be described as a farce. Most people showed up expecting food or snacks to be served, whether or not there was an additional charge. People paid a fee for two things: a fashion show and entertainment from the Queen Mary Lounge in Studio City. The fashion show turned out to be a promotion by Jim Bridges for his new line of clothes. It boggles my mind to see how IFGE deemed it appropriate to charge a captive audience to view a commercial promotion by Mr. Bridges. Secondly, the "Drag Queen" entertainment from the Queen Mary Lounge was enjoyable to most, I am sure, but I question the wisdom at a time when SOs were in attendance and could consider it objectionable. This all occurred with *Newsweek* in attendance. I can only reason that IFGE has some obligation to Mr. Bridges, and the entertainment was arranged by IFGE's Southern California board member who must be totally insensitive and out of touch with the community.

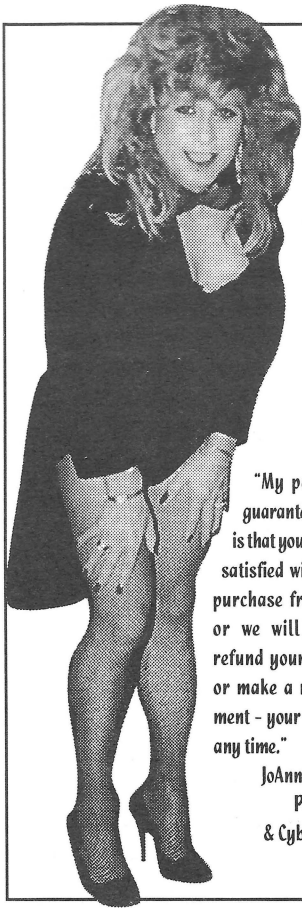
Saturday night was the ultimate in incest; after dinner IFGE spent the evening presenting awards to itself. The exodus at the start of these presentations was more than just obvious; it had to be an embarrassment, but they are so into themselves they probably didn't even notice.

My opinion at this time is that IFGE and its leadership are obnoxious, arrogant, and nothing but a "good old girls club." It appears at this time that IFGE will never be anything more than a bookstore, a marginal magazine publisher, and something a bunch of childish adults play at.

My recommendation to IFGE is that it reinvent itself by firing existing board members and replace them with dedicated professionals (50% from west of the Mississippi), stop operating like an exclusive club and start behaving like the responsible public service organization it claims to be.

My recommendation to the transgender community is to think twice before becoming a member of IFGE or subscribing to *Transgender Tapestry*. There are other TG organizations providing the same or similar information, with better newsletters, and also with a national focus. Ask others or seek them out yourself; they exist.





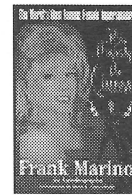
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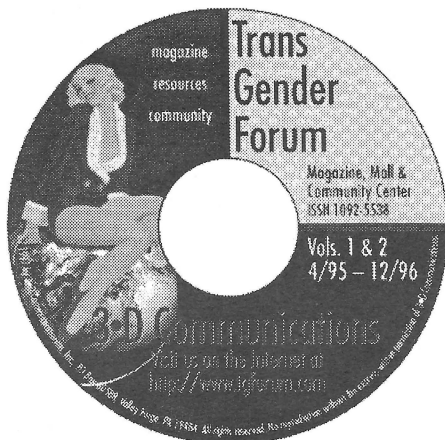
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On the downhill road to the end of civilization as we know it, we will pass several Planet Hollywood restaurants, where Bruce and Demi, Sly Stallone, and Arnold Schwarzenegger will try to entice us inside to see the collection of movie memorabilia “donated” by stars like Tom Arnold and Dan Aykroyd. The whole debacle will be covered by *Entertainment Tonight*, and E!, while *Hard Copy* leads off that night’s story with “Armageddon: Caught on Tape!”

Alan Dershowitz, Christopher Darden, and the host of lawyers-turned-analysts on the *Rivera Live* show will debate whether civilization has the right of appeal before we go down the tubes. Stephen Spielberg will produce a summer blockbuster starring Harrison Ford as the Last Hope For Mankind, with a fine supporting performance by Gene Hackman, certain to be remembered by members of the Academy come Oscar time. If, that is, there will be time left for Oscars.

In a last ditch effort to save America from anarchy, the networks will trot out Tony Danza, Ted Danson, and Bill Cosby in new sitcoms. (Wait, they already tried that.) Besides, it’s hopeless. The contestants on MTV’s *Singled Out* sucked out every last shard of human intelligence from the viewing public.

If I sound a little pissed off at American popular culture, don’t worry, I’ll get over it. I’ll just have to find my soft place now that they’ve canceled the funniest damn show since *Rowan and Martin’s Laugh In*; *Married...With Children*, I’ll miss you.

Tolerance Is A Two Way Street

The Winter ’97 issue of *The Sweetheart Connection*, a newsletter for

spouses of crossdressers published through Tri-Ess, had an article by an unnamed wife: ‘A’ is For Abandoned.

The woman began her essay by saying, “This is a farewell letter to you. I had hoped that Tri-Ess might help us save what was a very lovely marriage for both of us, but it was too late.” She tells of the dissolution of her marriage because her husband decided that he was a transsexual. Although it is a very sad story, she tells it objectively and without hostility that belies a hidden hate for crossdressing. That’s what makes her story so believable, particularly when you think about how close to the mark many of her points hit.

She tells of being surprised when he told her of his crossdressing desires after ten years of marriage. But she supported him, read literature on the subject, even contributed a “wife’s column” to his local support group newsletter. Meanwhile, her husband found self-styled transsexuals (presumably at his support group), and tapped into the Internet where he found other self-styled transsexuals, who fed him information about hormones, and how to self-actualize the woman within him. In short order, the husband was convinced that there was no turning back from becoming a woman.

Our anonymous wife/author makes some very potent comments about transgender “support.” She says, “I really strived to be an ‘A’ wife, although I found most of the literature for wives to be condescending to women.” An “A” wife is terminology used by Virginia Prince to describe a very supportive spouse of a crossdresser. The title of her essay is a play on the “A” wife boosterism promoted by spousal

support efforts. She also had this to say about spousal guidance, “All the articles I have seen written for married crossdresser couples are always a hard sell to convince the wife to compromise. Nothing dealt with the husband’s refusal to compromise.”

She likewise has some interesting things to say about the Internet as a font of “information” for transgendered people. “I can see the trash that comes through on the Internet and I can see that this is a community of very selfish men.” A lot of good stuff is available on the Internet but the cult of anonymity that the net fosters should give any thinking person pause before accepting “advice” from people chatting on transgender support lines. She continues on this topic, “I do not believe that all of these people are true transsexuals, but they have lost their families, screwed up their lives, and need to justify their behavior, so they ‘support’ others doing the same.”

As the transformation took place, she “was led to believe that telling my kids would be a good thing. I see now that the real point of telling them was only so my husband would not have to be discreet anymore and could push for even more.” The kids are embarrassed and won’t bring their friends home because of their father’s appearance. “Now my kids are in therapy.”

Well, it’s a sad story, sadder yet because we know it’s being played out in many households where the husbands are self-diagnosed transsexuals. There are certainly cases where late-blooming transsexualism is a fact that even professionals can identify. Unfortunately, professionally certified transsexualism doesn’t make it any easier on the families involved. The common thread that runs through so many of these stories is that the partner who takes the course to transform themselves is often very selfish, defensive, and almost purposely hurtful to their families once bitten by the bug to change genders.

The article written by this wife won’t stop any tg person from doing what they want to do to get their way. But it does point out a bias in our community support efforts that favors the

partner who crossdresses over the wives and children left behind.

Let Me Tell You About My Transgenderism

The *Crystal Chronicle* newsletter of the Crystal Club in Columbus, Ohio carried an article titled "Beyond My Family" by member Diana Savage. Diana relates how she broke the news about her crossdressing to friends and acquaintances after having already informed her family.

The first person Diana told was her Unitarian minister and that went over pretty well. The minister was herself a lesbian, and judging by the number of crossdressing groups who meet in Unitarian church facilities, those kooky Unitarians are open to anything.

The next person on the list was an old college friend, but one from whom Diana admits she has been "distant for the last four years." Again, things went okay with the revelation, but, as the fates would have it, the friend's husband turns out to be a closet crossdresser himself. The college friend seemed a little concerned if the same type of transgender awakening was in the cards for her own husband.

Another social acquaintance with whom Diana had planted "hints" was told and, again, acceptance was there for the taking.

In what seemed the oddest revelation, Diana is working up to telling her grocery store checkout girl. Apparently, Diana's painted nails and androgynous mode of dress has already indicated that "sumpin's up." With each visit, Diana is prepping her by wearing pink slacks and sweaters, so the grocery clerk won't need a course in rocket science to figure it out when the time comes for "The Conversation."

There are a lot of important issues raised by Diana's essay on revealing your innermost self to those you love and those you deal with everyday. But the thing that all of us can come away with from Diana's article is just how important a role in our lives is played by our grocery store checkout clerks. They are the unsung heroes of our everyday existence, providing us with everything from veal medallions to toilet

paper, and wrapping it up for us in double handled plastic carrying bags. As we march through our various stages of transgender expression, let us not forget the grocery clerks when the time comes to tell the world that, "**Yes, I am Transgendered!**"

No Passing Zone

The December '96 issue of the Northwest Gender Alliance's newsletter in Portland, Oregon carried an essay titled "To Pass or Not to Pass: It Will Always Be a Question" by member Dee Dee Davis.

Dee Dee addresses the age old issue of passing in public, but comes at it from a slightly different angle. She recognizes that crossdressers will generally get read in public, the more so if we travel in groups. She sees the issue of passability not so much as one of being able to go completely undetected, but rather as putting our best feet forward in our efforts to do so. "I feel that we should try our level best to pass as a matter of respect for others and their feelings." She felt that a dirty look from a female nightclub patron when they entered as a group was because one of their party wasn't passing very well. I think she understands that if they were read at all, they weren't passing, but the concern was that the unpresentable member of their party had somehow offended the woman.

We can't go through life constantly worrying about how others might perceive us, but there may be a correlation between how favorably we're viewed and how well we try to make ourselves pass. That having been said I will also offer the theory that public acceptance—if not passing—is all about how an individual crossdresser relates to other people. The most well-liked crossdressers in public places are not necessarily the best facsimiles of femininity, but they have a personality or project an open, friendly demeanor to those with whom they come in contact.

In every batch of newsletters I see each month, there are tales of derring-do by crossdressers in public and they all claim varying degrees of passability. Take this example lifted from an article about a shopping trip in a recent

newsletter: "Some of the clerks did read us, even though we both pass quite well." Is it just me, or do you agree that sentence doesn't make sense?

If everyone in a store, nightclub, or wherever, is not pointing and jumping up and down shouting "There goes a guy in drag!" it does not mean you're passing. You can fool some of the people some of the time. To me, passing is just a synonym for fooling. And fooling your fellow man is not something that should be promoted as the be-all and end-all of our progress as part-time ladies.

The Secret Lives Of Crossdressers

If you are from the Philadelphia area, you are probably familiar with the fascinating circumstances around the Rabinowitz homicide investigation. For those outside our area, the story goes like this: a young wife, working as an attorney, is found strangled in her bathtub. The husband reports finding his wife dead, and after the coroner's report, police charge him with the murder. At first, the family and friends of the couple unanimously support the husband, saying they were the "ideal" couple, deeply in love, who just had their first child. Within 24 hours, the secret life of the husband comes out in lurid detail. Past liaisons with prostitutes, and tens of thousands of dollars spent at a local strip club, primarily on one particular dancer, the funds gained by second mortgaging their home, their in-law's home, and even hocking the deceased wife's engagement ring. If it wasn't such a tragedy, it would be laughable.

The thing that captured the public's imagination was the "secret" aspect of the husband's life. While the wife worked as a junior attorney, the husband was visiting the strip club almost daily, while supposedly running his own business, which has been found to be non-existent. Who knows what is going on in people's private lives? What drives a "happily married" husband and father to lead a double life completely hidden from even his closest family and friends?

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Gender Reflections

by **Barbara F. Anderson**
M.S.W., Ph.D.

Counseling The Partner of the Transsexual

Marie was referred to me by her minister. She had confided to him that she believed her husband, Martin, "was turning into a woman." Marie was a 30 year old homemaker, mother of 4, who had been married for 8 years. Martin was a successful young executive with a bright future in a medium-sized corporation. She'd had no suspicions of her husband's gender issues until he approached her and confided that he could not continue with his present lifestyle. He felt he was smothering as he played his roles of father, husband and wage earner in a male-dominated company. She came to understand that since early childhood he has believed himself to be a woman in a male body and this persona was seeking expression with increasing vigor. He could not contain "her" any longer and wanted Marie's support and love as he began to experiment with "transitioning."

This scenario embodies many of the following common concerns shared by spouses of transsexuals:

One typical issue is the absence of awareness by the spouse until her husband reveals his gender identity issues. The fact that the transsexual has inhibited his expression of his female persona since early childhood makes him particularly skilled in concealment. Additionally, because his dressing is not tied to erotic arousal, he is often more successful than the transvestite in hiding this from his spouse. My work with the woman often consists of a psycho-educational approach designed to raise

both her understanding and her empathy for her spouse and what he is going through. At the same time full recognition is given to her experience of betrayal, disorientation and loss of a male partner in her life.

Another common assumption is that the transsexual is "turning into" someone else. The spouse needs to be helped to understand that while from her perspective it may seem that her husband is being transformed, in fact a hidden part of him is emerging. He is becoming more complex but not really different. I encourage her to think of her husband as a book she has only begun to read and she has many chapters to go before she can understand him and his gender issues. I discourage her from leaping to conclusions about where his transition will lead them and counsel her not to make any assumptions about husband's desire for hormonal or surgical interventions.

In almost all cases the issue of betrayal must be dealt with in therapy. Having concealed this important aspect of himself from his wife, and in fact denying her the chance to make a choice about marrying and bearing children with a transsexual, he has set her up to be hurt, bitter and angry. This is hardly the frame of mind that will predispose her to be loving and supportive as her spouse transitions. Feelings of betrayal can be moderated, with time and treatment, to the more manageable emotions of disappointment and regret.

If Martin plans to transition com-

pletely, a process which will most likely include cosmetic, hormonal and surgical changes, Marie must be prepared for some major changes in her life. If SRS is desired by Martin, divorce is inevitable. If he is unable or unwilling to remain on his job during this time, financial pressures will set in. She may have to find employment and give up her role as homemaker and full-time mother. In working with Marie I encourage her to educate herself about her options as well as those of her husband. It is essential that he enter treatment also, but not necessarily with me, both to prepare for his transition as well as to deal with the emotional fallout of his decision to proceed.

Of course, all couples with a transsexual partner are not alike. Although I have focused on the commonalities in such relationships, counseling also addresses their unique qualities, such as religious, health or financial issues that need special consideration. Families with orthodox religious beliefs present special challenges, especially around issues of divorce and interpreting the meaning of TS behavior to children.

If either partner's health is compromised, this must be considered. When the transsexual partner has a chronic illness, SRS may not be an option. If his partner has a life-threatening illness, the transsexual may fear that revealing his situation or acting on it will hasten a decline of her health, causing him to delay his transition indefinitely, and creating frustration and depression in addition to gender dysphoria. A family's financial situation must also be considered as they balance the needs of all individuals with those of the transsexual who may be considering the costly process of sex reassignment.

The therapist must offer competent counseling, accurate information, sensitivity, and impartiality if a satisfactory outcome to therapy is to occur.



Where Were You When *Ellen* Came Out?

Our shopping girl takes a break from bargain hunting and makes a foray into the world of television. Our TV on TV asks the question...

by Jessica Brandon

Me? I was at a Phillies game that night, watching them get the beejezus beat out of them by the L.A. Dodgers. For what seemed like years, all the talk, both in and out of the “straight” world centered on Ellen DeGeneres’ character coming out of the closet on her TV show and how Ellen herself came out in real life. I don’t know about you, but that scene got old for me real quick, like after the first day after I started hearing the rumors.

Perhaps I’m being a traitor to the cause of alternative lifestyles, of which crossdressing is most definitely one, but I had no intention whatsoever of watching that show and getting duped by all the hype surrounding Ellen’s coming out party which looked like the biggest, most overblown media circus since the O.J. Simpson trial. In fact, when a neighbor who’s a real TV nut asked if I would be watching Ellen, I told her I’d wait to see the highlights on *SportsCenter* the following night.

For starters, with the exception of *The X-Files* and *Monday Night Football*, I avoid watching anything on the big three networks during prime-time like the plague. The crack I made about *SportsCenter* was true, as ESPN is just about the only channel I watch. Since I’ve never seen so much as one second of *Ellen* since the show’s been on, I had no frame of reference regarding the show, or the character Ms. DeGeneres plays on it, therefore, no interest in it whatsoever.

Secondly, from jump street, the whole thing stunk to high heaven of a ploy to boost the show’s ratings which, I’ve read in entertainment magazines and heard from no less an authority than the “King of all Media,” Howard Stern, had been in the dumper. What better way to jack up sagging ratings in the Neilsens than by dropping a bombshell? And you’ll find no bigger media A-bomb on God’s green earth than the lead character on a TV show admitting that he/she is gay.

Howard, who’s said on many occasions that “lesbians equal ratings” was dead on target as the coming out episode blew the doors off just about ev-

erything that week, so the ploy worked to perfection. Meaning that gullible people (and I’m being extremely kind here) from coast to coast were hooked and reeled in like so many trout. And wow, wasn’t it a coincidence it was that this episode aired during the biggest of the network “sweeps” periods? Coincidence my fanny.

If ABC wanted reactions from the controversy, boy, did it ever get them... in spades. From the gay and lesbian groups who cheered for Ellen and blindly saw the ploy as a victory, to the narrow minded, bible thumping firebrands who proclaimed that the episode was tantamount to the apocalypse and the downfall of the human race. Me? I just sat in Veterans Stadium that night, happy as a pig in slop as I marveled at Hideo Nomo’s weird corkscrew pitching delivery against the hometown team.

Now maybe I’m completely wrong to say this, but I really don’t think Ellen is gay at all. I believe this was all one HUGE act, coinciding with the blatantly transparent ratings ploy, and

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Hawaii Ponders Ban On Same-Sex Marriage

Advocates and opponents of homosexual marriage had divergent reactions to a move that could lead to a constitutional amendment barring same-sex unions in Hawaii. “We consider this a very great victory for marriage and democracy,” Rev. Marc Alexander, executive director of the Hawaii Catholic Conference said. But Sue Reardon, director of the homosexual rights group Marriage Project Hawaii, said: “I think our (gay) community is deeply disappointed.” Both sides were reacting to a vote by the Hawaii legislature to put a constitutional amendment before state voters next year that would allow the legislature to “reserve marriage to opposite-

sex couples.” However, as part of a compromise, the legislature also approved a sweeping package of rights and benefits to homosexual couples. Under the measure, which falls short of allowing same-sex couples to marry, couples registering as “reciprocal beneficiaries” would receive benefits such as medical insurance and survivorship rights. That measure was hailed by Dan Foley, a lawyer for three same-sex couples who sued the state six years ago for the right to marry. But it was the proposed constitutional amendment that was the focus of praise and criticism Wednesday. “After about four years wrestling with this issue, the people of Hawaii made it clearly

known that we do not want same-sex marriage,” said the Catholic Conference’s Alexander. But Reardon disagreed: “So many of us, not only in the gay community, but in the straight community, see this as a very, very scary next step when you start messing with the constitution to fit your own prejudices.” The constitutional amendment issue could be moot, since the Hawaii supreme court was considering the issue and was expected to rule later this year—before the next election. The court must decide whether to uphold a lower court ruling last December that the state had failed to offer a compelling reason to continue a ban on same-sex marriages.



Hot Buzz

JoAnn Roberts • CyberQueen



“Never attribute to malevolence what is merely due to incompetence.”

— Arthur C. Clarke, 3001

The news from the **Cal Unity** conference is just beginning to circulate in the community. (See Richelle G’s article this issue.) What was billed as the grandest transgender convention of the decade fizzled instead of popped. Cal Unity? It was anything but. Many people wondered out loud where the unity was with two separate SO groups, a separate FtM group and the rest of the attendees fend-ing for themselves. The groups didn’t even have lunch together. But worse was the ever increasing tension between the **International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE)**, **Powder Puffs of California (PPOC)** and the other local SoCal organizers. One Cal Unity staff member vented her resentment at IFGE calling the board members “self-important” and more concerned with deciding who gets the next “Lifetime Contribution to IFGE Award.” Another staffer quipped, “At the present, the dirtiest four-letter word on the west coast is IFGE.” The SoCal organizations feel they were slighted by the IFGE board and not given any recognition for their efforts. One vendor said he was told there would be between 400 and 500 people at this event and attendance didn’t even come close to those numbers. There were many good things that

happened at this convention (like the **Hirschfeld Exhibit**), but overall, it was the most badly managed event I’ve ever attended and I’ve been to them all. Both PPOC and IFGE need to take a long hard look at what didn’t work and why.



There was something that impressed me at the convention however, and my long-time readers will be surprised when they hear what that was. Both **Linda** and **Cynthia Phillips** were on hand and working the registration desk during the entire convention, as apparently they do for every Cal Dreamin. The Phillips were there on-time everyday, all day, helping people get settled into the convention. They did so tirelessly and without complaint. I don’t know what they were compensated, if anything, but it wasn’t enough for the effort they put in.



Business must be pretty good for the vendors serving our community because at least two that I know are putting together or have already put together full color catalogs of clothing. The **Jim Bridges Catalogue** (\$10) showcases Jim’s line of signature cosmetics and wigs, along with his new line of dresses and shoes. One really cool thing about these dresses is the sizing; small, medium and **Diva**. Small is 12-14, Medium 16-18 and Diva is 20-24. Contact the Jim Bridges Catalog at PO Box 4715, North Hollywood, CA 91617. Also coming along with a color catalog is **Lola, Inc.**, a local suburban Philadelphia vendor who has a large online presence. More details on Lola’s catalog next month.



If you haven’t registered for the **Second International Congress on Sex & Gender Issues**, you’re going to miss one of the best conferences this community has had since the first Congress was held in 1995. Plus it’s the celebration for Renaissance’s 10th anniversary. What more could you ask for? Get signed up.



The lobbying activity sponsored by **Gen-**

derPAC took place early last month and by most reports it was just okay. Attendance was down by 40% over the first lobby days in November 1996. One person told me it was like slightly organized chaos. No one really seemed to be in charge or in control. That’s really a shame, too, because those who did show up deserved to have their time used effectively. **Riki Wilchins**, executive director of GPAC, reports that several congressmen will go on record mentioning trans-people. (At press time a letter has gone out from several congressmen to Janet Reno about Hate Crimes.)



New terms for transgendered people keep popping up, mostly made up by people with great angst over the terms transvestite or transsexual. The dumbest one I heard was **GEM** for Gender Enhanced Male. So where are the GEFs? I’m also seeing the term “**gender variant**” used to be inclusive of transsexuals, transgendered, hermaphrodites, and those gay men, lesbian women, bisexuals, and straights, whose gender characteristics (including gender identity) and/or expression vary sufficiently from the “norm” to place them at risk. This last term is being used by some of our lobbying activists, so expect to hear it being used in political discussions from now on.



July will see the annual TRANSGEN conference sponsored by the **International Conference on Transgender Law & Employment Policy (ICTLEP)**. This may be their last one as there is a letter circulating throughout the community asking for donations to help keep their doors open. The letter makes their situation sound pretty desperate. And it seems like everybody’s asking for money these days. If you are inclined to make a donation, consider exactly what it is that the organization provides to the community and make your donation based on what they deliver in services rather than what they tell you they need.

HOT•BUZZ

For me, charity begins at home and my donations go to **Renaissance**.

The fifth annual **Spouses Partners International Conference for Education** (SPICE) will be held July 16 - 20, at the Ontario Hilton in Ontario, California (not Canada). Anyone thinking of attending should contact Peggy Rudd at PO Box 5304, Katy, TX or send email to <melpeg@phoenix.net>. Speaking of partners and spouses, a new partners network is being put together by Linda and Vanessa Kaye over the net. The Couples Network will have couples all over the U.S. that will be willing to meet with other couples just coming to terms with crossdressing in their relationship. Interested? Contact Linda & Vanessa at <mhk@ionet.net <mhk@ionet.net>

Onto the fashion reports. The winter shows just recently wrapped up and the big news was short, short, **micro-mini** short skirts. (I hear every TV drooling right now, but it gets better). What you wear on top of the skirt, a sweater or a shirt, isn't as important as what you wear on your feet—**pointy toed, stiletto heeled** pumps or knee-high boots with same. Oh Gawd! We've died and gone to heaven. Need to know where to get those pumps? Try contacting my friends at **Classic Pumps**, 815-748-5506, <www.classicpumps.com>. They've got gorgeous "knock-me-down..." well, ahem..., you get the idea.

For those of you who find that shine just make your lips look luscious, there's the new **MAC Lip Glass**. And that's not a typo either. This stuff is so shiny it looks like glass and looks even more fantastic on your lips. It is said to be sticky though and once you've put it on, you really can't add more but it does shine for hours.

Ever think of raiding your kitchen for a facial. You can and it's easy. Here's some examples... Use **Yogurt** as a cleanser... Use **Salt** as a scrub for oily skin or **Sugar** for dry skin. Mix either with a teaspoon of water and rub in with your hands... For a facial mask try **Fuller's Earth**

from your local health food store. Dry skin? How about **egg yolk and honey**... Finally, moisturize with **safflower** oil.

Hosiery is fashionable, affordable, sexy and fun. It's one easy way to make a statement about yourself and these days your choices are astounding. Color on your legs is the most inexpensive way to update a look; it's like adding an exclamation point for \$10. Here is what the experts from Pennaco Hosiery (they make Anne Klein, Danksin, Givenchy and more) say you should have in your wardrobe for summer: 4 pr. control top sheers in nude... 4 pr. control top sheers in black... 3 pr. sophisticated neutrals, like taupe, pale khaki and pale grey... 2 pr. pastel sheers in pale pink and pale lime... 3 pr. off-white sheers... 4 pr. of fishnets in black and white. For the rest of the year, add: 2 pr. of opaque in loden, brown, navy, red, and forest green... 4 pr. black tights... and 2 pr. textured or openwork tights in off-white, brown, and black. The hot colors right now are the nudes. Fishnets and other openwork styles are "in" for summer. Fishnets let in the air and keep your legs cool.

While we're down here with legs, let's look at feet and the hot, hot shoe for summer is the **ankle strap sandal**. (I have mine in red and in black). But ankle straps can make your legs look thicker and draw attention to your calves. So, if you want your legs to look longer, opt for slides of other sandals cut low in front.

We've talked in the past about all of the new "wont-come-off" products including lipsticks that wear like iron. So, how do you get that stuff off when it's time to crash? You don't need industrial strength scaling compound if you use products specially formulated to remove the long wearing lipsticks like **Shiseido Absolute Lipstick Remover**, or **Coty Color-Off Lipstick Remover**, or **Revlon ColorStay Makeup Remover** pads. If you're hungry, one New York makeup artist recommends eating a salad with lots of **vinaigrette** dressing.

It had to happen eventually and it did. **Hard Candy** and **Urban Decay** had discovered two niches in the nail color mar-

ket that the "big boys" had missed and pretty much had the run of the market. That's now been rectified with **Revlon's** introduction of **Street Wear**, a collection of nail color, lipsticks, eye-shadows and pencils that combine both Hard Candy's gloss with Urban Decay's palette. Some of the color names are just too precious, like Schmutz lipstick or two-toned nails done in White-out and Tar, or a blood-red color called Stain, and a near nude color called Icicle.

A problem that many real women have is being two different sizes on the top and bottom. Many transgendered women have this same problem but to a more exaggerated degree. To solve this dilemma some of the more upscale designers like **Dana Buchman** make the same clothes in Petite, Misses and Plus sizes so you mix and match the sizes you need. It will cost you more to dress this way, but at least you'll have stylish clothes. Other designers with petite-thru-plus size lines are **Emmanuel Ungaro** and **Ellen Tracy**.

Looking for a swimsuit for that vacation to Hawaii (don't you wish!). Seriously, buying a bathing suit is a real problem even for real women. So, try one on in virtual reality. **Jantzen** has a new website (www.jantzenswin.com) with an interactive segment that shows you swimsuits to address your figure concerns. Mine is a thick waist, so I need a slimsuit. Remember, our swimsuit pictorial is next February so take those pictures now and get 'em in to Angela.

Guess who's getting **liposuctioned** in record numbers? **Men**, that's who, specifically Wall Streeters. Seems these wunderkind can't work 80-hour weeks and get in time for exercise, but looks are still everything, so they get the fat sucked out. They're also getting **nose jobs** in record numbers as well. Vanity, thy name is too much money on hand.

So, those are my opinions, but, hey, what do I know? I think incompetence is a trait to be punished, not rewarded. Comments? Write care of this publication or email to <CyberQueen@cDSPub.com>. © 1997 by Creative Design Services.

An Open Letter to the TG Community

*Kymerleigh Richards, editor/
publisher Cross-Talk*

I have been noticeably silent in the past few months regarding the absence of *Cross-Talk* from our community. Out of concern for my reputation, I've been offered this opportunity to break my silence and give an explanation of what has been happening here. I thank RN&V for giving me the ability to reach many people who are understandably concerned.

First, I would like to confirm what I am sure many of you have already presumed; the cash flow in the past several months has fallen far below what is necessary to cover the costs of publishing and mailing *Cross-Talk*. In fact, in the past five months, we have taken in what we normally would have taken in for six weeks. Given this gap and my own personal finances, I have had no choice but to place the magazine on hiatus until such time as I can reorganize financially.

Issue #86 (what should have been the December 1996 issue) was printed and presently sits — in the original shipping cartons from the printer — in a corner of my living room awaiting the moment when funds become available for mailing. However, it is obviously more important for the rent on said living room to be paid (not to mention utilities and the like) than for the magazine to be mailed, and so it has sat for better than four months. I am certain you can understand that finding an "extra" \$200 for this purpose is a futile undertaking when one is otherwise unemployed (and with efforts to rectify same meeting with little success, such is the present state of the job market in Los Angeles). For what it is worth, I have only narrowly avoided eviction on three occasions this year (and it's only May!).

I have heard that criticism is being leveled at me for not, at the very least,

sending some kind of notice to subscribers explaining the situation. Unfortunately, my bulk mailing permit is not set up for letter-class mailings, and at 32 cents per letter, sending such a notice would cost as much as mailing the magazine itself (which I find preferable, as I suspect most of you do). This is also why I have — sadly — found it necessary to leave inquiries sent by subscribers unanswered, and long distance phone calls unreturned. I simply have not had the money to "do the right thing". Those of you that have contacted me via e-mail over the past few months have received replies, so you know my silence has not been complete.

Nevertheless, I feel I must apologize for leaving the vast majority of you in the dark regarding our problems, and I don't blame the community for thinking badly of me under the circumstances.

I know that several of you had hoped to talk with me at California Unity about *Cross-Talk*, and I am sorry that I had to disappoint you. I am also battling some health problems which are going to demand attention before I can even begin to address the rest of the problems in my life (which include not only the magazine, but finding steady employment to avoid further financial difficulties).

It is my goal to eventually get #86 out to the subscribers. Beyond that, it is my strong desire to resume publication, less frequent but with a slightly higher page count (perhaps in newsletter format to cut production costs), and hopefully shifting that portion of the subscriber base that has Internet access to receive us through that medium. In the past few weeks, Trish Anderson has transferred to me full operating control of Cross Connection BBS, and it is my hope that the two entities (*Cross-Talk* & Cross Connec-

tion) can be merged to a greater degree than was possible in the past.

I will give subscribers every option possible, once I am able to mail #86 and determine what is feasible to keep this venture alive. However, I can tell you up front that refunds are not likely to be one of the options, given the deterioration of my financial situation in the past year. I will strive to ensure that every subscriber receives full value for whatever credit balance they have with us, and I will be able to say more about that at whatever point sending the long-delayed December issue takes place.

In the meantime, if any of you are able to forgive me for the way I have had to handle this difficult situation, I appreciate it. If some of you cannot forgive me, I will think no less of you.



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Ellen...

that Ellen so bought into the big lie about her being gay, she started believing it herself. And then flaunting her pseudo-homosexuality for all the world to see, like her ridiculously out-in-the-open relationship with Anne Heche from *Volcano* so that John and Jane Q. Public would fall for the lie as well.

Far be it for someone like me to criticize anyone's lifestyle since I spend a portion of my time wearing dresses, but I regarded this whole Ellen business about her coming out as nothing more than a circus. Call me a cynic, but I had no use for this charade because I viewed it as being phony as a three dollar bill from day one. For my part, I'm somewhat curious to see what will happen from here regarding Ellen herself, not her show which I will continue to avoid like I do everything else in prime-time.

Will Ms. DeGeneres, having bravely bared her soul (said with tongue in cheek) become a tireless advocate for gay and lesbian rights? Will she be looked upon as a role model of sorts for other actors and actresses in Hollywood who, struggling with their sexual identities might take the same bold step Ellen did? Again, I'm being cynical, but I don't think any of that will happen. By the time summer rolls around, this will be all forgotten until someone else with bad ratings drops a similar bombshell.

Of course, I could be mistaken. Perhaps Ellen truly and honestly is gay, although from what I read about her in Angela Gardner's column last month, she looks to be terribly ignorant about the transgendered at best, borderline intolerant at worst. However, only the future will tell about Ellen and her foray into alternative lifestyles. So, to quote an old TV saying... stay tuned! And while you do that, I'll be at another baseball game.

Vis A Vis..

Imagine if some catastrophic personal event suddenly brought your secret life into the headlines. In this case, the stripper is a single mother herself, and now her name and face are plastered all over the newspapers because of the mess her admirer brought on. You never really know who you're dealing with, particularly if you're operating in a sub-culture such as ours, and you never know what someone else might be doing that could suck you into a vortex from which you can't possibly recover.

There's almost no advice that can be given on this topic. But we should all be mindful that if we have something to hide, and wish to remain hidden, we need to be careful of not only what we do ourselves, but with whom we associate. All you can do is keep your fingers crossed, and hope that you don't find your life exposed in a sidebar to today's headline story.



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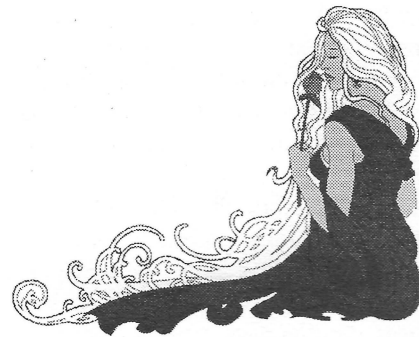
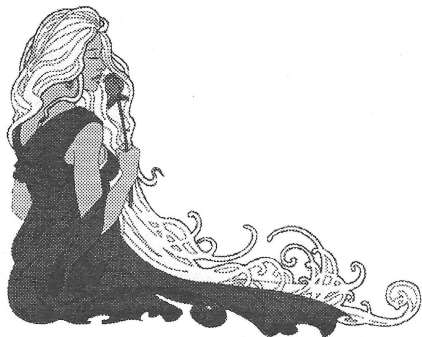
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Our Gender Journey

Creating a Gender Friendly World

By: Rachel Miller

Society has created a firm but arbitrary connection between sex and gender and that link is *the main source* of our problems. Transvestite or transsexual, male or female, gay or lesbian—all face the same issue. We know the role of outcast; someone who just doesn't belong. We have felt shame and fear of rejection because society says there is something wrong with us. We have learned to hide our true selves in order to achieve acceptance, but that level of self-denial creates unbearable internal turmoil. We share anguish, isolation, desperation. We share pain.

Whether the gender community actually exists is disputed by many, but most agree that the gay/lesbian community is real. Whatever their official status, the two groups have not effectively linked themselves as a unified force. Even within the groups, actions are often fragmented. Each includes people with significantly different views, life styles, personalities and agendas that frequently lead to power struggles, petty-bickering, personal attacks, finger-pointing and fragmented actions. Attacks on individuals and groups are commonplace and ugly. Individuals and organizations act independently. Coordinated action is the exception, not the norm.

We do open battle with each other while complaining about the prejudice society shows towards us. From mainstream society's point of view, we appear as one ragged group. As they observe our internal squabbling, we extinguish any hope of their acceptance. We show disrespect to each other. Why should they respect us?

While we share strong underlying bonds, they are largely ignored. Each of us is trying to bend, shift, stretch or break that culturally enforced link between sex and gender—the primary cause of our problems. We strive for self-expression. We want everyone to accept our gender expression. But we

quite often fail to accept other community members' expression because if differs from ours. What will it take to recognize and value our common bond?

The ultimate sadness is that we consistently fail to take advantage of an obvious solution that would benefit all of us. Suppose we lived in a society where it was impossible to distinguish men from women based solely on their clothing, makeup or behavior. A world where no gender rules were attached to wearing dresses or pants. A place where labels such as transgendered, transsexual and transvestite were insignificant—where no stereotypes were attached to bisexuals, heterosexuals or homosexuals. Then we could quit hiding and be ourselves. But everyone knows that's impossible—isn't it?

That open society was envisioned when the Bill of Gender Rights was first drafted—“It is fundamental that individuals have the right to define, and to redefine as their lives unfold, their own gender identities, without regard to chromosomal sex, genitalia, assigned birth sex, or initial gender role... (and) have the corresponding right to free expression of their self-defined identity.” Notice the statement extends coverage to everyone. Unfortunately society doesn't accept free expression. Tragically, we don't either. How can we allow that to continue?

I know that we can't, but nothing changed for me until I realized that I personally can't allow that to continue! Converting generalized rhetoric into a personal commitment, is the key ingredient for change. The power generated by an individual acting with passion and principles, creates new realities once deemed impossible.

M. Scott Peck wrote in *The Road Less Traveled*, “...we must accept responsibility for a problem before we can solve it. We cannot solve a problem by saying ‘It's not my problem.’ We cannot solve a problem by hoping that someone else will solve it for us. I can only solve a problem when I say,

“This is my problem and it's up to me to solve it.”

The problems caused by linking sex and gender expression are my problems. My personal Objective is to work to educate people so that: “The gender family is understood by and accepted into mainstream society.”

I pledge to accept every individual who considers themselves part of either the gender or gay/lesbian communities as a member of my gender family. I will treat their view of gender expression with dignity and respect. When someone doesn't accept me, my view or my principles, I will explain my position and invite them to share their thinking. I will *never* attack them or their position. I will seek to understand first, then to be understood. I will; however, insist that they communicate in the same constructive manner. If we cannot interact in a respectful manner, I will disengage as gracefully as possible while leaving the door open for future discussion. Inevitably, I will fail to honor the pledge fully. When that happens, I ask that you remind me of my commitment.

By acting this way, I move towards the objective. By encouraging others to act this way, I expedite the process. My Goal in 1997 is to find 7 individuals, call them The Magnificent 7, who share these ideals, help each of them find 7 more and encourage those 49 to each find another 7.

You know where I stand. You understand my reasoning. You see where I plan to go. My question is—Will you take the same pledge?

Ms. Miller asked the Renaissance National Board if we would support her objective. The Board saw no need to sign on as endorsing that objective since we have consistently worked for the understanding and acceptance of transgendered people by the rest of society since our founding ten years ago. If you wish to contact Ms. Miller send your correspondence to the office and we will pass it along.





Letters to the Editor

Dear Most Revered Editrix Angela:

We received the May issue in the mail today and a couple of items caught my eye that I felt merited comment.

First, while I am honored to be participating in the upcoming *Congress on Sex & Gender*, I could not help but notice that your publication misspelled my name... again. I hope that it will be correct in the final program in June.

On a more serious note, I thought your comments about those who use three names were inappropriate. People have all sorts of reasons for picking the names they do, but to engage in stereotypes of Southerners or Catholics is unfortunate. I know plenty of people here in the South who do not use three names.

And while I am not Catholic, there are plenty of others who are who do not feel compelled to use three names.

We in the tg community have to endure and overcome many stereotypes of our own. We should not engage in helping to perpetuate stereotypes of others.

Marisa Richmond
Tenn. Vals' Resident Two-Named Bitch

Dear Angela,

This is in regard to your recent column on *Ellen*. I think you were a little hard on her. I obviously don't agree with what she said, however, I think we should consider a few things.

First, just because she is gay does not mean she understands transgender issues. I think she just needs some information and education.

Secondly it seems she is still unsure of herself and in her role as a spokesperson for the gay community. I think she is still in a "reaction mode."

Anyway I suggest you send her a letter and information. My sense is if she thinks more about the issue she can be a

supporter. Overall, I think we should reach out.

Teri

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Making Sense of It All

Inside-Outside

Most of what I discuss in this column deals with the inner struggle faced by transgendered persons, the struggle to recognize and to accept ourselves as we really are. We see that we are significantly different, not only from those around us, but also from what we ourselves have usually been raised to expect in our own development as persons. We are eventually encouraged by fellow strugglers, by knowledgeable counselors, and by writers such as myself, to be true to ourselves, to be true to our feelings, to pay attention to our inner promptings. When we do act on those promptings, the result is fundamentally and gloriously, in one form or another and to one extent or another, an outward expression of our innermost being.

But the larger and more complex reality of that inner struggle and its various outward manifestations includes the equally important fact that we also live our daily lives in a world of action. Like everyone else we seek work and relationships and things and services as part of our everyday functioning. In other words, we live in an outer world as much as in an inner world. Life is a combination of inside and outside purposes, events, and efforts.

The question I wish to raise is: what is the relationship between our inner and outer efforts in life, particularly as transgendered persons? This question is important because, regardless of how much we may stress the importance of inner resolve and the value of inner courage and strength, there are usually social implications and complications. How satisfied, for example, would I be with my gender change if, regardless of my self-recognition and self-acceptance, I were seen or heard, not as a woman, but as a man in a dress? Would I still have the inner strength, let alone the opportunity, to function in a rather disapproving bipolar world which does not readily accept

androgynous appearances, that is, ambiguous gender identities, let alone what may come across as a poor impersonation of the other gender? What, in other words, is the real connection between my inner resolve and the larger reality of it all?

Some of my transgendered friends, transvestites and transsexuals alike, say they do not care what others think, though usually it is my transsexual friends who express this attitude. The transsexual point of view is understandable, for transsexuals are usually less concerned with clothing and more concerned with being their true selves. They usually feel that being oneself is of fundamental importance, regardless of what others may think, for their very lives are at stake.

Transvestites, on the other hand, tend to keep their crossdressing a secret, with varying degrees of secrecy depending upon their life situation, for they still value their assigned or given gender as their daily *modus operandi*. For the transgendered persons who, nevertheless, say they do not care what others think, the problem, as they see it, is society's. Of course, there is some measure of truth in this stance, but at the same time the forces of social attitude may make employment and other social involvements very difficult. Whose problem, then, is it?

My own struggle with this inside-outside issue is expressed in a poem I have written, appropriately called, **Inside-Outside:**

All my life
I have tried to be inside
outside,
but I have always felt outside
inside.

Now more than ever
I want what is inside
outside,
because at last
I am truly inside
inside,

even though I am still outside
outside.

So more and more
I am inside
outside.

In other words,
the more my inside
is outside,
the less my outside
is inside
outside,
aside from everyone else's
inside.

The point is
I just want to be inside
outside
wherever outside
is in.

In my own situation, where the feminine gender is my true self, my total functioning as a human being is at stake. I want to be my feminine self and at the same time I want to be part of the world. I want to stay intact as the person I really am but also be connected to, not separated from, life's events. I do not want to reject the promptings of my soul, nor do I want to be rejected by other people. I want what most of us basically want: personal fulfillment and social acceptance.

Of course, none of this would have been a problem for me if I had not lived most of my life as a man. Prior to my decision to make the transition to full-time womanhood, I faced the task of managing a secret, the secrecy of my feminine wishes, the same management task which, as I have indicated, most transvestites continually face as they struggle with whatever degree of secrecy they deem important within their overall lifestyle. Following my decision to make a permanent transition, my task shifted from managing a lifestyle which encompassed a gender secret to managing a total and open change of lifestyle

continued next page

Couples Support Network

by Linda & Vanessa Kaye

This past March, Vanessa and I attended the famed "Texas T-Party" and at the invitation of Cynthia and Linda Phillips, we presented a seminar based on transgendered relationship issues. We had 41 attendees, plus ourselves, and we covered a variety of issues, but mainly discussed the importance of communication. Although many of the couples in the room had worked through a great many issues and had successfully incorporated the transgendered side of one partner, it was obvious that other couples were continuing the hard work toward their goals. What was very apparent to so many of us in that program was that couples really appreciated the support of others like them, and that this sharing is a real necessity to us.

On the way home that Sunday, Vanessa and I talked extensively about what we had heard from so many people at the T—that we, as couples in a transgendered relationship, need that sense of knowing there are others out there, just like us, who are working as hard as we are to find a way for this transgendered side to exist within the partnership.

Out of our conversation came the concept for the formation of the "Couples Network." Although this support organization is still in its infancy, we want people to know that this Network is now available and that it will expand to its full realization only with the participation of other couples.

There are those who have dreamed of such a Network, or Couples Support Group, such as Carol Beecroft, of Tri-Ess. Carol, along with her partner, has attempted to bring together couples from the area of California in which they live. Carol's greater vision was to have this support group expand throughout the country, and that may still be an eventuality.

What the Network will bring to couples, instead of a specific group meeting, is the opportunity for couples to help other couples. We have commitments from 20 couples across the country willing to provide individual support in their geographic area through email, snailmail, phone calls and possibly, face-to-face meetings.

Why and how, you ask, can this all work? Vanessa and I will do the following: We will organize a listing of working couples, to whom we will refer new

couples as they contact us via email. We have a web site, Vanessa Kaye's Pages, which includes a Couples Page, and we will have a section publicizing the Couples Network and its function on that page. We are averaging 200 hits a day to our pages, a good many of them seeming to be wives/partners, and if a wife/partner or couple desire to have contact with a couple in their geographic area, they may write us at our email address, <mhk@ionet.net>. Vanessa and I will respond and do our best to "screen" the couple, and try to find out what their specific needs are. Once we have had contact with them, and feel assured that we can refer them, we will contact a working couple in their area, and ask them to contact the inquiring couple. We will also send an informational notice to all support organizations and groups in the US and we are preparing a survey to be sent to each prospective working couple, which will allow that couple to provide us with the information we will need when referring a couple in need to them. The survey will ask how to refer the couples, i.e., email, safe mailing

continued on page 22

Making Sense...

which contained no gender secret at all.

In terms of the androgyny previously mentioned, we all have masculine and feminine traits within us. Gender ambiguity, both inside and out, may very well be a richer reflection of ourselves as persons, but, as I

have already indicated, the outer mix is not what society in general can handle, for none of us, as a rule, is raised to accept the idea of a gender mixture, that is, androgyny. Outwardly speaking, we are usually identified as either masculine or feminine, depending, of course, upon one's particular society and its definition of masculinity and femininity.

In any case, if there is to be some

meaning to the inside-outside aspect of our struggles as transgendered persons, it is most likely in the challenge to our personal courage. Those who can handle such a challenge, regardless of the gender variation involved, deserve a great deal of credit. Ultimately, no one else can meet the challenge for us, not if we want to call our lives our own, both inside and out.



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Shopping With Jessica

by Jessica Brandon



Greetings, girlfriends! It's your favorite columnist, Jessica B., a.k.a. The Beautiful Boxholder, back to impart more delightful shopping tips to you, my loyal and wonderful readers out in transgenderland!

Y'know, it's absolutely amazing how much knowledge I gain from the pulse pounding pages of *News & Views*.

Case in point, before I read Dina Amberle's column last month, I never knew that the male derivative of my femme name means "wealthy!" Heck, if that's the case, then I need to shack up with a filthy rich sugar daddy with one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel, like Anna Nicole Smith did, and wait for him to croak! So what if I'm being mercenary, let me tell ya, sweeties, it ain't easy to dress like a budding diva on slave wages!

For all you girls out there who are cursed with "podiatric over enhancement" (big feet) and are in the market for good fitting shoes in sizes above 10, I might have some news for you. A few weeks ago, I received some information from Jude Mikolajczyk regarding a store in New York City called Yorke Fashion Comfort Centre. Located at 140 East 55th Street (212-753-5151), Yorke specializes in hard to fit sizes.

They have women's shoes in sizes up to 13 and widths to EEE, featuring styles from Italy, France and Germany.

Jude was kind enough to send me materials on Yorke, including a color brochure on some of the styles they have as well as a letter explaining their services which include an orthopedic lab and custom shoe department, plus two other brochures, one an extensive

line of foot care products from a company called Pedifix (which I never heard of) and the other, a line of insoles made by Birkenstock. Yorke also has a mail order brochure on their foot care products for out of town customers. When I can spare the time, I'll visit Yorke and give a detailed report.

As I mentioned last month, Revlon has added new products to their wonderful line of ColorStay cosmetics; liquid eyeliner, brow color and cheek color. I took some time out of my busy schedule to experiment with all three products. Having always used pencil eyeliner, the concept of using the liquid variety was pretty much alien to me. Heck, even if I wanted to use the stuff it was more than a bit hard to find, even in the big name department stores, so this would prove to be quite an experience for me.

The ColorStay liquid eyeliner comes in four colors: black, black brown, charcoal and navy. For my experiment, I used black. The key thing with using a liquid eyeliner is you have to have a steady hand when applying it or it'll wind up all over the place, as it did on my first try. The brush applicator, which narrows to a tip, is somewhat stiff but once I got used to it I was able to draw fairly precise lines from skinny to bold and it went pretty smoothly. However, since it dries fast, you should decide beforehand how thick you want your line to be.

Next we come to the brow color. My brows are pretty ragged and because I have so much trouble drawing good eyebrows or filling in what I have, I purposely wear wigs with long

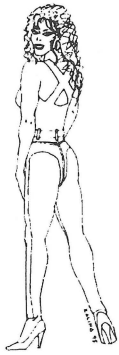
bangs to conceal them. The ColorStay brow color comes in black brown, brunette, auburn and blonde, and is a two way product. One end is a pencil that defines the brows, that's the first step, then you use the other end, a brush on gel to groom them. For my experiment, I used brunette and, after a couple of false starts, I was able to draw credible brows, which pleased me no end.

Lastly, we have the ColorStay cheek color. With nine shades to choose from your options are many. What I found interesting about the cheek color is that it comes in a cream instead of a powder, which I've never used before. Applying the product with the enclosed sponge was an adventure as I'd been so used to brushes. Nonetheless, it went on smoothly and looked good on me. With the addition of ColorStay makeup, eye color and their new moisturizing lip color, I was all Revlon. They even have ColorStay makeup remover to get the stuff off! Amazing!

The only problem, per se, is that you have to buy all this good stuff at your local drug store which doesn't have people at the ready to help you pick the colors you need. But, I just happen to have a solution. It sounds rather silly, but bear with me 'cause it works. If you decide to try the ColorStay line, take a piece of paper and create small swatches of the cosmetic colors you use now, then go to your local drug store and compare your swatches to the Revlon colors. Granted, it's an imprecise science, but, much to my surprise, I found it worked. Give it a try sometime.

While I'm on the drug store bandwagon (but near the edge if I wanna get off quick), I read a fascinating piece in the April issue of *Glamour* where big name drug stores were starting to add serious counter space, consultants and even prestigious name brands to their beauty departments. The magazine sent reporters to four of the big name chain stores (Genovese, Walgreens, CVS and Thrift Drug), and then gave reports on their findings. What I read in this article was both

continued on page 23



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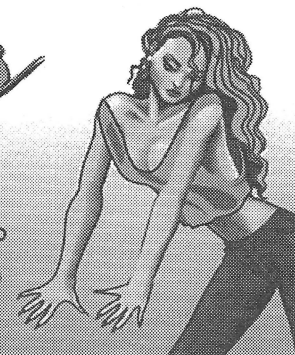
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Nelson...

During her first visit to Trinidad Nelson developed a fascination with guns. While in Colorado to visit Dr. Biber, she went to a gun shop and bought a Browning pistol using the money for her initial consult. That pistol became a replacement for the penis that never worked, according to the therapists' testimony. Later, after Nelson returned from surgery, she would calm herself by cleaning and stroking the pistol up to ten times a day. She painted the pistol six different times, in different colors to increase it's erotic value.

Nelson's first therapist attempted to inform Dr. Biber that Nelson was not a suitable candidate for SRS, but the warning was ignored. Clearly Dr. Biber, Nelson's psychiatrist, and the M.D. who did the orchidectomy, all chose, for whatever reason, to ignore the *Standards of Care*. The *Philadel-*

phia Inquirer reported that Nelson's attorneys said, "her disappointment became abject when she realized the surgery had left her unable to achieve sexual satisfaction and to live as a fulltime woman." The *Standards of Care* where developed to avoid tragedies like that of Leslie Ann Nelson. Perhaps if they had been followed Leslie Ann Nelson would still be on her gender journey, two police officers would still be alive, families would not have been devastated and there would be no need to write this editorial. The Nelson story is the worst case scenario. It's the worst example of what can happen when a transvestite lets his dreams become compulsions while other life-problems are ignored. It's the worst example of a transgender support group failing to provide education and options. The results of a mistake like Leslie Ann Nelson's may not be as dramatic for most, but too many lives are changed in a negative way when people ignore the *Standards of Care*.

Reminder..

one would disturb me and she said she would "take care of the problem."

Later in the week I spoke with the secretary of the complex and she told me it was one of the employees but nobody would tell me which one. The manager was so upset that someone on the staff would disturb me she really reamed the guy out. Guess if he wants to learn more about "wearing women's dresses" he'll have to call the official Renaissance number and go through channels. I guess I'll never know if he planned to go into abuse or serious inquiry. In any event, he hasn't called again and if the manager lit into him like I think she did I doubt if he ever will.

That's it for this month kids. Don't take any wooden undergarments and try my latest find, Revlon ColorStay foundation. It's great, and it won't rub off on him... or her... or your blouse. See ya!



Make Sense Of It All

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Shopping...

surprising and somewhat predictable.

All four stores featured glass counters, some with mirrors, stools, soft lighting and makeup applicators, and carried upscale brands like Ultima II, Elizabeth Arden and Charles of the Ritz as well as designer fragrances. As for service, all the stores had either full-time or part-time consultants to answer questions, while CVS offers free makeovers with an appointment, which I found incredible. On the flip side, the reporters commented that the help wasn't always available (at Walgreens for instance, the consultant was at the front register), so there are still bugs to be worked out.

In any event, it would appear that a revolution is taking place. I know many of you probably can't afford to shop for cosmetics in upscale department stores and drug stores are your only option. But since these places are working hard to improve their beauty products, along with providing customer service, it might turn out to be a good option in the long run.

Well, girls, it's time to shuffle off As always, my electronic mailbox is open for your comments at <treetop@voicenet.com>. Until next month, be smart, buy smart and look smart! Happy shopping, sisters!



Resources

Background Papers

Background Papers are \$1.25 each:

1. Myths & Misconceptions About Crossdressing
2. Reasons for Male to Female Crossdressing
3. PARTNERS: Spouses & Significant Others
4. The Matter of Children
5. Annotated Bibliography
6. Telling the Children: A Transsexual's Point of View
7. Understanding Transsexualism

All of the Background Papers and Community Outreach Bulletins are available for free at the Renaissance web site <www.ren.org>.

Couples...

address, what topics they feel they have had useful experience in, such as children's issues, security, money issues, etc.

What if someone living in Boston, emails or writes to a couple in, let's say California? The couple in California would contact us, we would then search through the database and find a support couple in the Boston area. This is how "networking" works. It is basically an organized referral service.

What if we have a working couple who is not on the 'Net? Working couples such as this will have a safe mail address, such as a PO Box, and we will refer the inquiring couple to that.

As the Network grows, Vanessa and I will begin producing a newsletter for couples involved in the Network, taking their contributions and comments and perhaps doing regular columns about our couples. It is not only an opportunity for the Network couples to get to know each other, but also their opportunity to share their stories.

Eventually, we hope the Network will grow to a point where we can begin meeting as a large group once a

year, at a Couples Conference. This would not be competition with any other conference or convention program; rather, it would be a chance to meet each other face to face, talk about issues, solutions, and just have fun. There would be times for the transgendered partner to express both the male and femme personas.

However, this Couples Conference is still a ways down the road. There is much work to be done in getting the Network going, and becoming a vital link for couples who need to talk to other couples.

It can't be done with just the 20 couples we have. We need many couples across the nation who are willing to step out and offer to be friends and supporters to others. It is time to go to work, to unite, to become a vital outlet within the "gender community" as a whole.

Vanessa and I have a vision of this Network having no affiliation with any national

or local support organization. It would be a separate entity that prospers because couples work together to make it work. Financially, it would require little, if any money to run. It would only take commitment and time on the part of the couples willing to give of themselves.

If you are interested in being a part of this network, and are willing to be there for couples who need your support, strength and wisdom, please contact us. Those of us who have been helped by others, have an obligation to help others like ourselves. The Couples' Network is one way that we can make the road a little less rocky for others than it was for so many of us.



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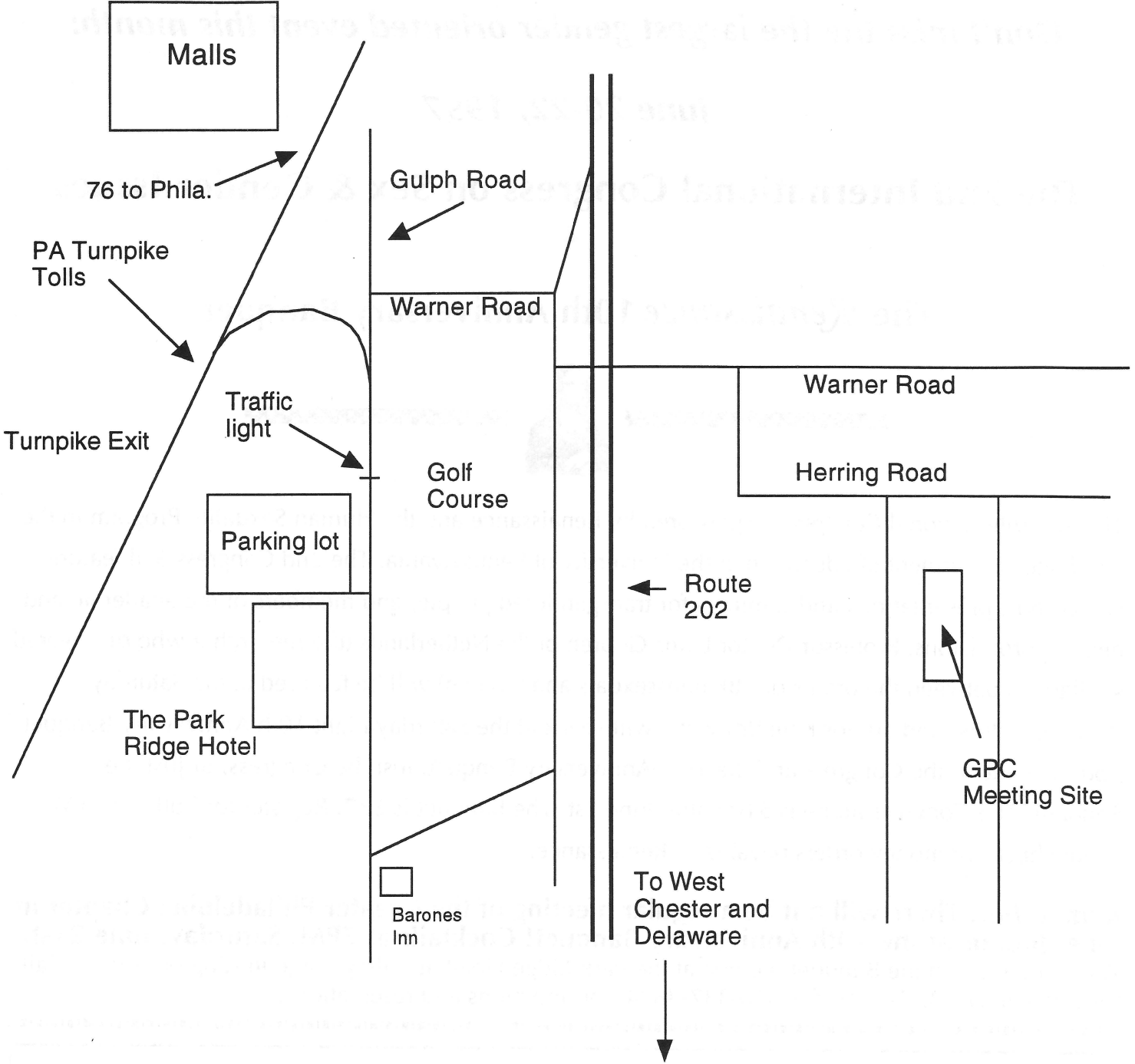
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Don't miss the the largest gender oriented event this month:

June 20-22, 1997

The 2nd International Congress on Sex & Gender Issues

&

The Renaissance 10th Anniversary Banquet



The 2nd International Congress is sponsored by Renaissance and the Human Sexuality Program in the Graduate Department of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. The 2nd Congress will feature workshops, presentations and seminars for transgendered people, and members of the academic and helping professions. Professor Doctor Louis Gooren of the Netherlands (the researcher who discovered similarities between the brains of MtF transsexuals and women) will be featured at the Saturday Plenary. Actress and author Kate Bornstien will speak at the Saturday night 10th Anniversary Banquet. You may attend the Congress and the 10th Anniversary Banquet, just the Congress, or just the Banquet. The Congress alone is \$100 after June 1st. The Banquet is \$37. Register for both for \$137. Make checks or money orders payable to Renaissance.

Remember: There will not be a regular meeting of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter in June. Join us at the 10th Anniversary Banquet! Cocktails at 7PM, Saturday, June 21st. The Congress and the Banquet happen at the Park Ridge Hotel at Valley Forge in King of Prussia. Call the hotel at 610-337-1801 (fax 610-337-4624) for directions and reservations.

Registration Form: 2nd International Congress on Sex & Gender Issues

Please reserve ___ registrations for the 2nd Congress at \$100 each and/or ___ spaces for the Saturday evening 10th Anniversary Banquet at \$37 each. Total amount enclosed: \$_____

Check Money Order enclosed. Congress registrations will be acknowledged by return mail. No tickets will be issued for the Banquet, your name will be at the door.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

return this form to:
Renaissance Education Assoc., Inc.
Congress Registration
987 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 719
Wayne, PA 19087

Thank you for volunteering to complete this CONFIDENTIAL (use no names or identifying information) survey on sexual fantasies. This research project will make a valuable contribution to the understanding of the great variety of sexual fantasies. As far as I am aware, there are no risks involved to you as a participant. However, if at any time you wish to discontinue participation in this study you may do so. And, if you should become distressed while completing any of it, you should call you local mental health agency for counseling services.

Sexual Fantasy Description

Most people fantasize from time to time. Fantasies are similar to daydreams and may occur while you have sex, masturbate, or at any other time. Please describe in detail your favorite or most frequent sexual fantasy involving another person. Be as specific and complete as possible. You may use both sides of the Sexual Fantasy Description, if needed. Please complete the Sexual Fantasy Description first and the Demographic Questionnaire last. After you have completed these two items, please place them into an envelope and mail to: Nina Barnes, P.O. Box 13104, Kansas City, MO 64199-3104. If you wish to receive information about the results of this study, write a name other than your own and address on a postcard and send it to me at the above address. You do not need to participate in the study in order to receive information on the results.

What sex are you in the fantasy? _____
What sex is the other person(s) in your fantasy? _____
What is your relationship(s) with the person(s) in your fantasy?

Demographic Questionnaire

Please mark your response to each item. Write your answers where there is a space.

1. Biological Sex: Male (born with penis & testes)
 Female (born with vagina)

2. Age at last birthday: _____

3. Ethnicity: Caucasian
 African-American
 Asian-Pacific Islander
 Native American
 Latino/Hispanic
 Other, please specify: _____

4. Circle the number of total years of formal public or private education completed:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 Under-
 Graduate Graduate Professional

5. Highest earned degree:
 BA/BS MA/MS Doctorate
 Other, please specify: _____
 (if no degrees earned, check other, specify none)

6. Religion: Catholic
 Protestant
 Jewish
 Other, please specify: _____

7. Current church attendance:
 Never
 Yearly
 Monthly
 Weekly
 Daily

NOTICE

***** PLEASE COMPLETE THE BACK SIDE OF THIS PAGE *****

For questions 8-12, mark or circle the one response that most closely approximates your feelings and/or behavior. Be sure to mark only ONE response for each of the questions.

8. Based on both your thoughts and your experience, rate yourself on the following heterosexual-homosexual scale (mark only ONE):

- 0. Exclusively heterosexual
- 1. Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally or insignificantly homosexual
- 2. Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally or significantly homosexual
- 3. Equally heterosexual and homosexual
- 4. Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally or significantly heterosexual
- 5. Predominantly homosexual, but incidentally or insignificantly heterosexual
- 6. Exclusively homosexual

9. Which ONE of the following statements most clearly reflects your private personal internal conviction (mark only ONE) :

- 1. I am unquestionably a male
- 2. I have difficulty deciding whether I am a male or female
- 3. I am unquestionably a female

10. How do you define yourself (mark only ONE response)?

- 1. Sexually attracted to females.
- 2. Sexually attracted to males
- 3. Sexually attracted to both
- 4. Sexually attracted to neither

11. I desire to dress in women's clothing (mark only ONE):

Never		Occasionally		Always
1	2	3	4	5

12. I desire to have sex reassignment surgery (mark only ONE)?

Strongly				Strongly
Agree		Agree	Disagree	Disagree
1		2	3	4

TOTAL CONFIDENTIALITY OF ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL BE MAINTAINED AT ALL TIMES