

Phoenix

MONTHLY / INTERNATIONAL

GGA



#7

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another,
"What! You, too? I thought I was the only one."-C.S. Lewis

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Items must be recieved not later than the first Monday of the month preceeding the issue date in which they are to appear.

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THE WHOLE ROOT OF THE MATTER

by Gillian Books, B.S., C.E.

(PA-15)

Many of us spend a great deal of time and money in removing hair. It is the rare adult who is able to avoid this expense. Beards, underarms, eyebrows, legs, backs, chests and bikini lines are all subject to either temporary or permanent forms of hair removal. The reasons and methods are highly individual, but there is one thing we all have in common; we don't want the hair. This article will give you some background on hair growth, removal methods and what you can expect from them.

BACKGROUND

Hair protects the body against irritation and loss of heat, acts as an air filter and serves as a secondary sexual characteristic. There are two basic types of hair; lanugo or "peach fuzz" and coarser, deeper rooted, pigmented terminal hair.

Terminal hairs are composed of three concentric layers of keratinized (horny) protein. The outer layer is imbricated (scaly) providing elasticity and protection to the cortex or middle layer which contains the hair's pigmentation. The medulla, the innermost layer, varies within the same hair providing air spaces which determine sheen and color tones by influencing light reflection.

From the bottom up, the length of the hair is divided into the bulb, the root and the shaft. The bulb manufactures the hair and is fed by a capillary called the dermal papilla which is enclosed by the bulb. The hair root is the part of the hair below the surface of the skin surrounded by the indentation of the epidermis called the follicle. Extending above the surface of the skin is the hair shaft.

Hair growth is a function of many variables; endocrine system activity, genetic inheritance and sustained irritation are major determinants for coarseness, shape, color and distribution over the body. Since hair grows in stages, one of which is a dormant stage, all the hair you see is not all the hair you have. Hair is quite durable, persistent, defying and even benefiting from some forms of hair removal.

HELP NEEDED!!

Tomye Kelly, of Denver, is doing a two year follow-up on "Biber Girls" who underwent reassignment in June through August 1979. If you have not yet received your letter from Tomye look for it. There are several "graduates" who have not as yet replied to the initial letter so if you know any gals who had their surgery in Trinidad in the period mentioned twist their arm until they respond to Tomye's letter.

All of us realize you simply want to forget the past and get on with your life, but you must remember there are many others still on, or just starting on, the path you followed. Also remember many went before you along the path making things easier for you and now it's your turn to contribute for those following.

Follow-up studies are important because they contribute meaningful information and expand the fund of knowledge concerning the adjustment of the post-op to a new, and hopefully meaningful, life.

If negative studies, such as the Meyer Study, are ever to be refuted and if governmental agencies, at local, State and federal levels, are to view transsexualism and transsexuals in a positive light all post-ops must accept and bear the responsibility to provide the information needed by those qualified professionals undertaking the enormous amount of work involved in compiling, correlating and extracting meaningful data from the studies.

The studies are not intended to pry into your personal life nor will specific information about specific individuals ever be published although, obviously, some general and supporting information will be published. All the professionals involved in sending out the studies assure you the information will be held in strictest confidence as for relating specific information to a specific individual.

We again request you to do some arm twisting if necessary of any Biber Girl in the classes mentioned whom you know is not going to respond to the questionnaire sent them.

(Electrolysis continued)

Many of us, in our efforts to be more attractive, resort to razors, depilatories, tweezers and waxing; some try Depilatron. All of these methods of hair removal are rarely permanent and provide only temporary relief for the hirsute.

Since shaving and depilatory creams affect only the hair shaft, these methods are the most comfortable but provide the least effect. Within one or two days, or even hours after using either method, the area may feel like sandpaper again and the treatment must be repeated. However, for some these methods are sufficient. The razor and depilatory have little or no effect on the root so the danger of stimulating new growth or of causing existing growth to coarsen is kept at a minimum. Depilatories can irritate the areola and nipple, so be sure you are protected by vaseline or some ointment when using depilatories on the chest; in addition, daily use can result in severe skin irritation and may cause lesions.

Tweezing and waxing provide longer lasting effects, are more painful and can lead to coarser, more abundant hair growth. Of the two, tweezing is best because you can select the terminal hair only. Waxing (a form of plucking) takes all the hairs off, including lanugo hairs which can accelerate into terminal hairs with repeated treatments. Both methods remove the entire hair. In so doing, the papilla and follicle are partially damaged and blood flow into the area is stimulated. The hair growing tissues regenerate a stronger life support system and form darker and coarser hair with each treatment. Rarely does a hair stop growing as a result of repeated plucking.

Depilatron is the most expensive form of permanent hair removal available. Despite its claims of permanence, professional electrologist organizations have not accepted Depilatron as being an effective means of permanently removing hair. In general, the claims of this device seem to be poorly documented and misleading. As stated on page 2 of the Depilatron Operator's Manual:

"Depilatron uses hair as a dielectric material to get the R.F. energy to the papilla. If properly applied, regrowth is prevented."

Since dielectric material, such as hair or rubber, does not conduct electrical energy, it is impossible to trans-

mit electrical energy of any type through it. The use of Radio Frequency (27.12 MHz) makes no difference; the energy cannot reach the papilla and destroy it. Depilatron seems to painlessly remove the shaft without destruction of the hair generating and nurturing tissues so permanent hair removal seemingly cannot be obtained.

PERMANENT REMOVAL

Permanent hair removal IS available. Electrolysis has been in use for over 100 years and has evolved into three distinct methods of eliminating hair growing tissues: Galvanic or true electrolysis, Short Wave Thermolysis, and the Blend Method (a combination of the two).

Galvanic electrolysis was first demonstrated in 1875 by Dr. Charles E. Michel. After inserting a negatively charged probe into the follicle, a current measured in tenths of a milliampere flows through the tissues surrounding the hair bulb. The small current causes the salty body fluids in the area to break down into sodium hydroxide (lye), hydrogen gas and chlorine gas. The lye acts on the life support system of the hair and destroys it. After an average of 10 to 15 seconds, current is stopped and the hair is removed. At the conclusion of the session, the treated area is rubbed with a roller which is positively charged. The cataphoresis neutralizes the lye and soothes the skin. Keep in mind that this occurs in micro-quantities in very small areas. When performed properly, this method does no damage to the epidermis and is very effective although slow.

There are several Galvanic devices available to the general public through ads in various magazines. This author experimented with one of these devices and found it to be somewhat effective but discontinued use after several treatments because of the sensation it produced. In general, the Galvanic method is no longer widely used due to the advances made in hair removal technology.

Of the three methods of "electrolysis", short wave thermolysis is the most popular, the fastest and most comfortable method of permanent hair removal. A hair thin probe is inserted into the hair follicle and a 13.56 MHz signal is applied which produces a high frequency

(Electrolysis continued)

field around the root of the hair. This field excites the molecules of the fluid in the tissues producing heat, thereby destroying the hair generating tissues by coagulation or dessication. The probe itself does not get hot nor is there significant current flowing through the tissues, the heat is produced by the fields only in the tissues surrounding the hair. This technique is also referred to as the "flash" technique because of the application of the signal in several short bursts or flashes a fraction of a second in duration.

Short wave thermolysis is quite effective with repeated treatments and with the use of the Insulated Bulbous Probe (IBP) it is even more so. The shaft of the IBP is insulated exposing only a few millimeters of conducting surface its tip. This concentrates the H.F. field at the bulb and the lower root areas where tissue destruction is most desired. The IBP allows the use of higher intensities and therefore gives better results at a good comfort level and minimizes the after effects of treatment. Because the IBP costs more than the regular probe and requires a higher degree of insertion skill, treatments using this type probe will cost a few dollars more.

The third and extremely effective form of destroying hair generating tissues is the Blend Method. This method combines galvanic and short wave effects either by superimposing one on the other or by sequential application. Through the medium of probe insertion into the follicle, the galvanic current produces lye which in turn is heated and agitated by the short wave's high frequency field. The heated lye is very caustic and the agitation enables the lye to penetrate and saturate tissues throughly. This method eliminates the problems presented to the electrologist by deeply rooted hairs, distorted follicles and inaccurate insertions. In addition, the regrowth rate is very small, especially with coarse, large diameter hairs.

The methods are the current state of the art in permanent hair removal. As late as the middle 1800's such horrors as twisting barbed needles in the follicle, injections of carbolic acid, and even deliberate infections were used to permanently remove hair. Those methods were not only ineffective, but also resulted in scarring. Today hair can be removed leaving beautiful, clear skin.

THE EXPERIENCE

Deciding to go for the permanent removal of unwanted hair entails a commitment of both time and money. The amount of investment in obtaining one's desired image is governed by many variables. Hair density and coarseness, frequency and length of appointments, skin characteristics and endocrine system activity all enter into the speed and effectiveness of electrolysis. The very worst case, a coarse, dense beard, may entail an investment of several thousand dollars over several years of weekly appointments. As an electrologist as well as a client, with some one hundred hours "on the chair" this writer can relate what to expect as far as sensation, regrowth, new growth, as well as offer some tips on locating a good electrologist.

In general, there are five steps of treatment; the area is sanitized with alcohol, the probe is inserted into the follicle, the particular treatment is applied to and destroys the hair generating tissue via the probe, the hair is then epilated (removed), post treatment in the form of cataphoresis or topical lotion is applied to promote healing and to soothe the area.

The sensation created by the treatment is easily accommodated by most people. Tissue cannot be destroyed without creating some discomfort; if nothing is felt, there is no destruction of hair generating tissue occurring. The epidermis is not punctured so the probe's insertion is not felt, and with sufficient treatment, the hair slides out with little resistance. Only the treatment is experienced; there is no puncturing or plucking. Many patrons fall asleep during their appointments and claim it's the only time during the day that they can relax. Any discomfort is easily overcome by various relaxation techniques such as slow, deep breathing, over-the-counter or prescribed pain relievers, or by avoiding stimulants such as caffeine or nicotine prior to treatments. Relaxation is the key; the more relaxed you are, the more comfortable and effective are the treatments.

Regrowth does happen. If insufficient treatment intensity is used; or the insertion is slightly off; or the hair is in the shedding, dormant, or maturing stage, only partial damage to the hair's life support system will result and the hair will regenerate. Even so, the hair will be lighter and finer than its pre-

(Electrolysis continued)

decessor and will be easier to treat effectively when it re-emerges.

Occasionally one hears claims that electrolysis stimulates new growth. Most of the time, this claim is a result of discontinuing temporary hair removal methods at the request of the electrologist. When temporary methods are stopped, the hair is allowed to grow between treatments and the illusion of a more abundant hair growth may be created.

Regrowth and new growth are to the advantage of the patron and the electrologist alike. Since the best time to treat a hair is when it first emerges from the follicle and because new growth indicates additional hair growing sites, the electrologist is able to treat the area more effectively. Eventually with regular appointments, every possible hair growing site will be located and eliminated. Over a period of time, the skin will become free of hair and have a healthy appearance. Electrolysis is effective but requires time. Do not be discouraged; as the number of treatments increase the sessions will become more comfortable and the results will become more and more apparent.

Horror stories of pitting and scarring as well as tales of large monetary outlays for ineffective treatments are abundant. Unfortunately, some of these stories are true, but are the results of placing one's faith in an incompetent operator. A well-informed consumer can easily avoid being taken. This writer has had these experiences but was able to minimize the extent of physical and financial damage.

The following are things to keep in mind:

1. Take advantage of the complimentary consultation, shop around, ask questions and have some hair removed.

2. The treatment should be felt; if it isn't, the tissue is sustaining little or no damage. The insertion of the probe should not feel like a puncture nor should the epilation feel like a pluck.

3. Ask to see the epilated hairs. A large percentage should have the bulb and root; if not, insertions and treatment intensity are not doing the job.

4. Expect some temporary redness and occasional minimal swelling after treatment in some areas. There should be no welts, blisters, blanching (white spots), or blood spots in the treated areas. Reassure yourself with a mirror or direct

inspection.

The most important aspect of permanent hair removal is the destruction of hair growing tissues. This is most effectively demonstrated by the epilation of the hair's root and bulb. If insertions are inaccurate, treatment intensity is insufficient and the hair is adequately matured, permanence will be obtained. In hair removal, getting the root is the whole root of the matter.

In some states, electrologists are required to have schooling and to be certified or licensed by the State. In other states there are no requirements and anybody can go into the business. For additional information and help in locating a competent, qualified electrologist contact the Electrologist Association in your area or contact The International Guild of Professional Electrologists at 3425 Kingsbridge Avenue, Suite 102, Riverdale, New York, 10463. Comments and questions addressed to this writer should be sent SASE if a reply is desired, to The Whole Root, 6112 Smithfield Street, Harrisburg, PA, 17112.

(Editor's comment: The majority of electrologists are probably sufficiently well trained and experienced to permanently remove the "peach fuzz" generally found on the female body, but removal of the male beard, chest and shoulder hair is an entirely different matter. Obviously it is best to obtain the services of an electrologist experienced in the removal of both beard and body hair from the male. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask if operator has the experience you need. Check the page(s) of the Directory of Information and Services for the State in which you reside for some of the qualified electrologists. Be an informed, not a sorry, consumer.)

A HANDBOOK FOR TRANSSEXUALS, by Paula Grossman. 70 pp., published privately. This book is the blueprint! Eight years in the making. Tells what to do, how, why, where, and even whom! An absolute must for all who contemplate a sex-reassignment. \$5.95 ppd., Grossman, 76 Norwood Ave., Plainfield, N.J. 07060.

THE DENVER CENTER

Tomye Kelley, correspondent.

The Denver Center is going great guns. The number attending the weekly meetings is increasing at a pleasing and suprising rate. If this trend continues we'll have to find a larger place.

We have had a presentation by a professional actress on speech and body movements. It was a dynamite meeting.

Those attending the early June meeting saw a presentation on wig care. The next June meeting saw a presentation on make-up.

At future scheduled meetings is a presentation by a female endocrinologist; two MSW's presenting on eye contact messages, body messages, sexual encounters and messages; a female public relations-person will present information on working effectively with the press--pit-falls and stuff to be avoided; and "one of the men in blue", otherwise known as The Fuzz, will talk about attitudes (not the law) of the police toward the gender community populace.

In the planning stages for future meetings, probabaly in the Fall, will be presentations on job interviewing and histories; the Colorado Legislature "where it is, how it got here and what we can do about it so far as it deals with the gender community".

July 6th saw a presentation on Androgyny which turned out to be an explosive meeting with strong discussion between the pro-Andy and anti-Andy sides.

We appreciate the information Tomye. Keep it comming. (Editor).

POSTAL PROBLEMS

During the past two or three months complaints concerning the non-receipt of the Phoenix have been recieved at the home office. In an effort to trace the problem of non-receipt we have contacted the Postal Service Customer Service Department. If you have suffered non-receipt of the Phoenix we suggest you contact the same Department of your local Post Office.

Normally the Phoenix is mailed within a day or two of the 27th of each month so there is no reason delivery should be delayed beyond the 15th of the following month.

If you are one of the unlucky people suffering from non-reciept please drop us a line and let us which Number you are missing. If extras are available we will send you another (by third class rates). The only extras we have are Number 3 and Number 6. We need your help to resolve this situation. If we don't hear from you we will presume the Phoenix is arriving at its intended destination.

--- BOOK SALE ---

We have been fortunate to secure 5 copies of Mirror Image, The Odyssey of a Male-to-Female Transsexual, by Nancy Hunt, printed in 1978 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, at less than the book store price of \$8.95 and thus can provide you a saving on the purchase of the interesting autobiography.

Our price, which includes postage, is \$7.00 per copy. Drop us a note with your check or money order and we'll get one off to you. Remember there are only 5 and they won't last long so get your order in early.

SPEAKER'S BUREAU

Need someone to speak at a function on the subjects of Transvestism or Transsexualism?

The Gateway Gender Alliance can provide personally involved individuals and professional presentations on the subjects of Transvestism and Transsexualism.

Write Post Office Box 62283, Sunnyvale, Ca 94088 or call (408) 734-3773 or (415) 527-8450.

FEEL LIKE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE?

WANT TO GET SOME INFORMATION?

WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT IT?

CALL ONE OF THE GGA HOT LINES

(408) 734-3773

For general information about the organization or other matters, for the male-to-female.

(408) 578-9215

For information concerning the female-to-male. Peer counseling, rap sessions and advice. (Ask for Bill).

MY QUEST FOR FEMININITY

Linda APON Y-10

As a new member of the Gateway Gender Alliance, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to a group of people that I feel so very close to--although I didn't even know that any of you existed until just a few short months ago.

In all of my young life, seldom have I ever faced a task as difficult as the one that I undertake at this time. Oh, to find the right combination of letters and words to convey the feelings that I have in my heart. I pray that those of you reading this article will understand that I write this without knowledge of things other who are "in the culture" are aware of. The thoughts expressed and shared are strictly those of this one frightened little girl. Yet, I am buoyed and encouraged by the knowledge that this article, as well as my new GGA membership, can be the turning points of a life that was previously torn by a horrible inner strife.

A bright, new world welcomed me as one of its newest customers some thirty years ago, in a small, Midwestern town. My alter ego was born the second of three sons to a career officer in the Air Force. Almost immediately, I became aware that I was radically different. It was discovered that I was readily able to learn and retain knowledge that was unusual for a youngster of my tender years. Considered a prodigy by my parents and by school officials; I was able to read and comprehend newspapers at age three, as a precocious first grader--took math and reading with the eighth grade, and was advanced past the second, fourth, and sixth grades in school before reaching the ripe old age of 10.

During the same periods of time, I also became aware that I was different in other areas as well. Being blessed with naturally curly hair, I was frequently mistaken for a girl in my toddler years. Even after entering school, my fair features and my slight build led me to be the brunt of more than a few childhood pranks.

One of my earliest memories of femininity came from my mother. Preceding the birth of her third child, she had hoped for a girl, she had counted on a girl, she actually fully expected to have a girl. Needless to say, she was bitterly disappointed following the birth of her third male child in as many tries. As a sensitive six-year-old, I can still remember seeing my mother's tears as she once again put away the baby dresses that she had bought in anticipation of her first child some ten years earlier. When I discovered the reason for her tears, I volunteered, "Since we didn't get a girl from God,

can I be your little girl for a while?" My mother immediately brightened and went out to buy a little girl's dress for her new "girl." I was to spend a full week in a dress and curls, which came to a quick end when my father came home from a business trip. Of course, my father put an immediate end to the very thought of one of his sons wearing dresses.

From that one isolated experience, I knew that my life would change. From that point forward, I began to look to the beauty in people, in life itself. I also began to notice girls, and the beauty they gave to my life. I began to look at girls to see how they dressed, how they acted, and how I could be like them.

Going into the third grade, I developed a crush on a pretty little girl in the second-grade class at the school. She came from a very well to do family, so she always dressed well. I still remember her pretty pastel blues and pinks, and the bows and ribbons in her hair. Since she was new at our school, she did not have too many friends, so she was rather lonely. I found myself spending a lot of time at her house, and it was there that I finally revealed to her what I dared reveal to no one else--that I wanted to be a girl more than anything else in the world.

That afternoon, I got as close to real joy as I would get for many years to come. She showed me her huge closet just full of clothes, and together with her babysitter; Joanne was able to help me to try on everything in her closet. I could not explain to her just how happy I was, so



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I started crying as I explained to her that I wanted to be just like her. And so, every Saturday for a month, Joanne and I would play dress-up, and I would cry every time I had to leave. It would have gone on much longer than that if Joanne's entire family had not been killed in the wake of a hurricane that ravaged our town.

Soon after those wonderful times, my feminine desires went into remission for a few years, as I went into sports. I tried my hand at playing Little League Baseball for a while and made the All-Star team for the three years that I was in the program. And until leaving the eighth grade, I was your basic All-American boy.

Not long after turning eleven, I entered high school. As much of a shock as it was for me in entering high school four years before my time, it was even more of a shock when I saw that the girls (and their clothes) had also changed in the period of time that I was able to keep my femininity hidden. The dresses were even softer, and prettier, and lovelier than ever before. Moreover, I had just discovered that I had grown to become my mother's size. And so, in an attempt to discover where I was in my femininity, I started wearing my mother's dresses to school under my male attire. During my breaks and study halls, I would go down to the restrooms and take off my pants and just twirl about in my dress and pretend that I was going to a wonderful dance or other party. It was on one of those trips to the restroom that I was discovered, and I was dismissed from that school in what must have been record time.

After some counseling from a psychiatrist, I was able to transfer schools; and in doing so, I was able to place my femininity into a holding pattern once again. At my new school, I was determined to become a jock if it killed me. And I knew that I would rise above this setback. I was able to play high school baseball, football, basketball and bowling; and was able to gain some recognition in many of my endeavors. I threw myself back into my studies with a renewed fervor and was able to establish some additional marks in that respect. The climax of all of these efforts came when I was able to graduate from high school with honors some five days short of my fifteenth birthday.

Even during those times of hiding my feminine desires, I still had those desires deep within my heart. Many times during those days I would lie awake at night and wish upon stars, make lavish plans, and literally pray for the day to come when I could become a girl. At that time, I had no idea how I could achieve my dreams, but I knew that I would not be very happy until I could somehow be a girl.

All during the time that I remained in school, I carried an extra burden with me. My

mother was working with a mental health committee, and I constantly heard about the horrors of conditions at the local mental hospital. My family was able to come up with the perfect deterrent to pursuing my feminine desires by suggesting that I spend a few years at the mental hospital. The very thought that I might be totally insane was enough of a reason to tone down my requests for further counseling on the subject.

My parents felt that a busy child was a happy child, and so after graduating from high school on Friday, I was given a weekend off, and enrolled at a major Midwestern university on the following Monday--still prior to my fifteenth birthday. As shocked as I was at entering high school at my tender age four years earlier, I was aghast at the sight of entering this college that had more people than the entire town where I had come from. Nevertheless, I did my best to once again throw myself into my studies--for lack of anything better to do. Partly out of fright, I became known not as the campus prodigy, but as its resident hermit. My grades continued to be well up in the honors category, but I found that it was taking all of my physical and mental strength to keep them up. There were times when I would get up, go to classes, go home and go to bed, and just barely be able to get up for classes the next morning.

Socially, the story was much the same. Never having been much of a talkative person to begin with, by this time I had become so shy and introverted that I would go days and sometimes weeks without talking at all--not even in class. Somehow, I lasted at that school for three semesters. To this day, I remember little of those times; its just as if those three semesters were a blur in my life. I still retain the grades, but other than the knowledge, the remainder of that time just isn't there.

The straw that broke the camel's back came during the fall freshman hazing period began on campus at the start of what would have been my fourth semester. By this time, I thought that I had become a regular feature on campus and that I would not attract the thoughts of the hazing committee. My thoughts proved erroneous when I was confronted by the hazers and told to prepare for hazing. My protest that I was no longer a freshman went unnoticed. Knowing of my "aversion" to girls, it was summarily decided by the female members of the hazers that I would be stripped and diapered on the campus common. And as it was decreed, it would happen--right then and there. My fears bordered upon mortification, for as I was stripped preparatory to the diapering, my pink satin and lace panties were discovered. Once again I was to be dismissed from school in

record time.

Upon the recommendation of the board of trustees of the school, I was placed in an institution for the next eleven months. This institution was your basic asylum, with bars on the doors, padded cells, and constant psychiatric monitoring. Needless to say, I underwent an exhausting series of interviews, mental tests, and other screening, I felt impressed to keep totally quiet about my femininity. I was sure that if I told anyone at the hospital about my secret desires, that I would be kept there forever, with no chance for escape. I did my best to wake up and come out of my shell there. Yet, despite all of the exhausting counseling and interviews, I found that the best advice that I was able to take away from there came from the janitor, of all people. And all that he had to say is, "The day that you can look back at it all and laugh, you're half way home."

My release date coincided with another auspicious date in my life. For upon arriving home from the hospital, the mail came--and with it a letter from an uncle--Uncle Sam to be specific. My draft notice had arrived.

For many of my peers, that draft notice spelled doom. I considered it quite a challenge and was all in favor of going into military service. At the time, my ego had to be at an all time low. After all, I had been kicked out of school and done time at a mental hospital. Besides, I was firmly convinced that all of this embarrassing thinking about being a woman would go right out the window as soon as I did something terribly masculine.

With that type of thinking, I allowed myself to be drafted into the U.S. Army. Basic training was difficult, as I had virtually no body strength. But I did manage to survive. The worst moment of my training was upon catching hepatitis and mononucleosis almost on top of each other. Looking for the silver lining, there was even a positive note in all of that suffering. I managed to lose 100 pounds of ugly fat, and my body took on proportions of a much thinner person.

After having survived the rigors of basic training, I did my best to hide my feminine desires beneath an all out effort to make myself into a macho dude. I even went so far as to volunteer for duty in Vietnam. I didn't realize the mistake that I had made until my plane wheeled to a stop at Danang. From that point on, I considered myself a non-combatant, and stayed as far from the action as possible. Unfortunately, it wasn't far enough, and I am now the owner of a Purple Heart for getting in the way of some Viet Cong guerrillas. Mercifully, that was my ticket home, and I resolved from that moment forward--that I would stay out of other people's fights.

As hard as it might be to believe, I still felt that the military life wasn't all that bad, so I signed on for another hitch. This came to be a decision that led to a major turning point in my life.

It had been close to six years after I first placed my hand in the air and signed on with Uncle Sam's Army. The six years had made me six years older, maybe even six years wiser. My head was in better shape at that time than in any time previous to that point. But there were still doubts. Doubts about who and where I was in the world. Although I had made a mighty effort during the first part of my military service to drown my feminine feelings and desires in a sea of masculinity, I knew that the experiment was a total failure. Female thoughts were in my mind almost constantly. I even went so far as to marry someone in 1973 whom I was sure would finally cure me of my femininity. No, I didn't tell her about my innermost secret--I was that sure that she would clear it up. I do love this vision of a woman. But rather than cure me of my desires of being a lady, she fanned the flames of desire to an even higher pitch. She was so much of a lady, that I tried even more to be just as lady-like as she was. And it was easier than before, now I had a person who was my size and who had such a wardrobe of beautiful feminine clothes, that I spent every available moment away from her so that I could spend time as the lady that I so much wished to become. And so the stage was set for a discovery that was to shape my life forever more.

The turning point in my life thus far came in 1975. I had been placed on military orders for Southeast Asia once again; and after a tearful parting with my wife and new son, I managed to arrive soon after the end of the summer.

This tour in Southeast Asia was far quieter than my last trip there. I had managed to obtain a truly non-combatant role, and I found that I had time to reflect on my life thus far. Being a non-drinker, non-smoker, as well as a non-carouser; one might correctly assume that a wonderful evening for me would consist of curling myself up alongside a good book. As a result, I made frequent use of the local base library. And it was during one of those trips to the library that it all came together for me as a feminine person.

On this particular trip to the library, I had made my book selection and was approaching the check-out desk, when this yellow book caught my eye in the return bin. The title fairly screamed at me--"Canary-The Story of a Transsexual." I nearly fainted from the excitement. I forgot all about the books that I was preparing to check-out. Instead, I hid in a dimly

lit corner and devoured the entire book from cover to cover. Only my Father in Heaven can possibly know just how happy I was at seeing "my story" in print. Tears of true joy were streaming down my face and I just could not believe that there was another person in the whole universe that was as happy as I was that night. It seemed as if the weight of the entire universe had just been lifted from my shoulders.

From that point forward, I have sought to learn all that I could about who I was and where I was in the world. No longer afraid of being a special person, I went to new lengths to learn even more about the TV/TS culture. On a subsequent trip to that same library, I was able to discover an article in a Playboy magazine that briefly discussed the work of Charles (Virginia) Prince with transvestites. Armed with an address, I immediately sent away for the "Transvestia" magazine, "How to be a Woman Though Male," and "The Transvestite and His Wife."

Once a book would arrive in the mail, I would shut myself totally away from the rest of the world and study that book until it was practically memorized. And I would think over and over again just how thankful I was for not being alone in my thoughts any longer. I bought as many of the magazines that I could before leaving Southeast Asia.

Now that I had a name for my desires, and now that I knew that I wasn't alone any more, and now that I was sure that I wasn't insane any more; I just knew that I had to tell my wife. I felt I owed this to her, for I loved her so very much, that I wanted her to be in on my happiness in discovering myself. And so, just before leaving the country, I sat down and wrote her a 50-page letter, and included my copy of the "The Transvestite and His Wife." I went through the book in great deal and explained to her just how I felt about many of the things that were in the book. I also took time to tell her in my own words just how I felt about my femininity, about her, and about our relationship. I was so very sure that once I uncovered my very last secret to her, that all would be well and our love would grow by leaps and bounds.

Upon meeting my wife for the first time in nearly a year, I looked for a way to tell how she felt about me. She would not tip her hand as to how she felt until I tried to make love to her. She cried out that I was a man, and not a woman. Our next few hours were spent in bitter argument, and she left me saying that she had to think. I needed to think too, and somehow, I knew that I would think better when I was dressed. To say that she was even more shocked when she came back in the house would

be a mild understatement, and she insisted I swear to her I would no longer even mention the subject to her.

My next military assignment was to Georgia, and we drove there with all of our worldly possessions in a U-Haul Van. Upon arriving, we slowly set about to unpack our goods in our new apartment. All during this time, my wife was making me feel extremely guilty about my dressing up, and she was sure I was either a homosexual, a transsexual, a sex maniac, or all of the above. She won that round when she convinced me to dispose of my collection of Transvestia and other Prince books.

I felt so low that I really needed some comforting from an understanding, compassionate person. I ended up on a business trip to the San Diego area, and while out there I tried to look up Virginia Prince just to see if there was such a person. Imagine my shock upon finding out there was an open telephone listing for just such a person. And also imagine if you will, my shock about finding a real Virginia on the line, when I got enough courage to actually dial the number.

I found Virginia Prince to be a warm, caring, loving individual, who was deeply committed to helping fledgling ladies like me. Her calm manner and alive personality went a long way to bring me back from the emotional low that I was in.

Although my conversation with Virginia did wonders for my psyche, it did little for getting points with my sweet wife. Before leaving on my trip, I was under the impression that I had been able to convince her of my love for her. I had picked out many of the points in Virginia's "The Transvestite and His Wife," meshed them with my own theories and thoughts, and came away with an understanding that had her on the way to becoming an "A" wife.

Sometime between the first of January and the first of March, the bottom had dropped out of our understanding, and she had made high marks in the direction of becoming an "F" wife. When I was finally able to talk sensibly to her, I found out that she had gotten some information from some "well meaning" neighbors and from "sexual deviation" books. I continued to receive copies of "Transvestia" and other communication from the lifestyle at my home. However, in order to save our marriage and wear and tear on vocal cords, I cancelled my subscription to the magazine and went back into the closet once again. Amazingly, it worked--for a year.

A quirk of fate found my next military assignment bringing me back to my home state of Florida. And so once again (and for the 20th

time in nine years) our little band of gypsies hit the road again. I was so sure that this assignment so close to home would be the start of nothing but happiness for my family and me. And it started out to be just that.

First came a military promotion that brought me into the ranks of non-commissioned officers (NCO). On becoming a member of the NCO corps, I found out that the standard behavior expected of an NCO is much different than what I had expected previously. Smoking, "drinking," cursing, carousing, etc, go much against the grain of my true inner self and the lady that I strive to be.

Next came a new female addition to my family. No, my wife hadn't suddenly turned into an "A" wife before my very eyes. However, we were able to share in the birth of our second child. I was actually able to be in on the

miracle of birth in the delivery room. My newly purchased 35 mm camera did an admirable job of recording it all on film, and I gained a new insight on the miracle of creation. My thoughts in the delivery room were confused. I was proud that I had contributed to the making of the wonderful spirit that now lay cuddled up to its mother's breast. Yet, somehow my dominant feelings were those of jealousy more than anything else. I longed to have the baby snuggled at my breast. I longed to have the breasts to be able to service our new infant. More than anything else at that moment, I wanted to be a mother. And those familiar feminine desires welled up inside of me until I could stand it no longer. I then went home and dressed for the rest of that week until my wife and new daughter came home. From that moment forward, I vowed to myself that I would continue to strive to find out why I had these feelings and do something about them.

The very first thing that I did to reinforce my femininity was to choose a new name to give my feminine life some meaning and direction. The name of Linda Beverly Long was chosen after much thought and soul searching. The first name of "Linda" was chosen for its Spanish heritage of being pretty. This I hope to become in thought, word, and deed, as well as appearance. The Spanish have fostered gentlemen who have grown to love their ladies in an old fashioned way of true beauty and purity. My new middle name of "Beverly" gives thought to its French connotation of being lady-like fluid grace. Being graceful and lady-like in all that I do are vital virtues that I hope to make a part of my future life. The French lady gives much of her efforts in the areas of fashion, beauty and affectionate love. For a less obvious reason, I have chosen to retain my own surname of "Long." Becoming a woman has been on my

mind for a long time. Not wanting to fool myself, I realize that it will take a long time before I may accomplish this quest. Yet, when the glorious day arrives that I may truly be the lady of my dreams, it will be a feeling treasured for a very long time.

My next step in my feminization was to rent a post office box in town so I could be free to order clothes to fit my new lifestyle. A side benefit was to exchange correspondence with those who could be of some assistance in helping me to achieve my feminine desires. One correspondent of note was Ms. Phyllis Frye of Houston, Texas. A biological male, she was also, at one time a member of the armed forces and helped me place my head on straight in a time of great personal crisis. Phyllis Frye was also able to introduce me to the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC).

MCC is a haven of peace and rest for those who are of gay sexual preferences. While I do not feel myself to be gay as per se, this organization does embrace a largely forgotten and maligned population.

Close to the end of 1978, my world came perilously close to falling in on me. Due to recent pressures at home, I felt that I had to take time out to go out of the house to dress and relax for a few hours. I thought that I had found the perfect place to dress in order to keep from using up expensive hotels by using my office after hours. The set-up was perfect in that I had access to a shower and locker facilities. I was able to go to the office at night and dress up to my heart's content, and go home to my family in a much better mood than before. All this came to an end when all lockers without names had the padlocks cut off of them. When the female wardrobe was found, it was all I could do to explain it was left over from a Halloween Party. When the heat died down, nearly all of my co-workers kept giving me funny looks for long after that. I barely escaped a military investigation.

At that point, I knew I had outlived my military usefulness to that unit and it was time to move onward. And so, in order to leave quickly, I placed my name on a volunteer list for Europe. After only a three-month wait, I arrived in Europe in March of 1979.

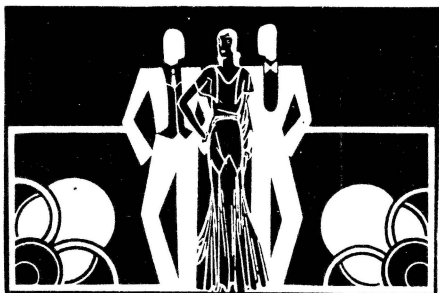
Europe was a new experience for me, as I had never been there before in what was now an eleven-year career. However new the experience was for me, the feelings and longings were the same. I had to face the fact that I just simply felt more comfortable living the life of a woman. But since I could not live my life with the femininity that I wished, I had to do what I could in order to preserve what little sanity that I had left. For a time, I was content

to exchange correspondence with pen-pals through the United Service Organization. I was seeking to be able to correspond with a woman who would sympathize with my desires to become a woman and just furnish a tender ear to listen to my feminine desires and to offer a few words of encouragement. However, every time that I tried, I would get nothing but reviling words from people whom I thought were tender and sensitive people. From this experience I was able to learn that although a woman's nature is to be kind, sensitive, emotional, and sympathetic, "tain't necessarily so." Each human being must be judged on his/her own merits.

My family joined me in Europe and we were once again a family living together. My wife shocked me by having a partial change of heart. She still could not fathom my reasoning for wanting to dress and act the part of lady, but at least she would tolerate it (for lack of a better phrase). Yet even in sharing this long dark secret with her, and with our subsequent talks and battles on the subject, she has--in effect--only hit the tip of the iceberg. She feels me to be a transvestite. I might be just that, but the womanly feelings that well up inside of me every day and every night tell me more--much more than that.

As 1980 dawned on an otherwise unsuspecting world, I made a New Year's resolution to explore all avenues in learning as much as I could about myself. In doing so, I started to go to other sources to find out what I wanted to know. The first place that I tried was the base library. Actually, I had covered the library before, but I hadn't been very scientific about it. On this trip, I looked to some of the many library learning aids for assistance; the first of these being the listing of "Books in Print - 1978-79." From that source, I was able to learn of the "Christine Jorgensen Story," "Conundrum," and "The Transsexual Phenomenon." Eventually, I was able to find and read all three of these books.

(continued next month)



BORN LIVING, BUT WITHOUT LIFE

(by Denay)

Life--the word meaning to live. To explore and witness a pleasant existence with your fellow beings of today's world. But, because of my true inner feelings of myself, life only comes out at night. During the day I must, like many, burrow back into myself only to be something I'm not. Why? Because today's people haven't enough knowledge and understanding that there are those of us who are not what we appear to be.

Even upon total physical change, one must hide their past from today's labels damage our inner pride. We were put on earth to live out our lives peacefully and happily anyway we choose. But yet, the "normal" people won't allow that. We have become their pastime, an extra story to fill in the pages of their newspaper. The maker of their money for those who wish to capitalize on a person who feels a deep wrong was done them. The abnormal, weak-minded freak of nature.

We have the right to walk this earth with pride and self-respect. And unknown to many, we do. But because of the way people believe, we have no life. We exist only at night so that we may also have the part of life we are denied the right of having. And for that we are labeled less than human.

But beware, all you "normal" people, for someday you may meet your mate and person may not have started out what they are today. But think, if you love a person that your own self-righteous way labels less than human, what does that make you?

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AN EDITORIAL

Recently we have received comments and/or complaints concerning the letter response policy of some members.

Generally the theme runs like this "I have written umpteen letters and have only received 1 or 2 replies." or "someone told me I'd get a reply if I sent a picture in each letter."

We know of no established rule whereby it is required to include pictures if one expects a reply. Admittedly it is nice to send pictures to friends and have pictures of friends. But we think pictures should be exchanged after communications have been established rather than a mandatory part of opening the channels of communication. Basing the decision to reply to a letter on the image presented in a photograph seems a rather shallow basis for friendship.

Now, about not responding to letters received. One of the most frustrating things many of us have found over a period of time in attempting to establish contact with others is the failure of the contactee to respond to the contactor. We realize some of you have received letters from people with whom you did not or do not wish to establish or maintain long term contact. But, it is a simple matter, and common courtesy, to at least send a short note stating that you do not wish to continue the correspondance. Remember how you felt the first few times you sent off letters to unknown people and never had a word in reply?

We forward approximately 30 letters per week and hope an equal number of replies are sent out in response. Be assured that each letter sent to us for forwarding is sent on. The rare exception is when a letter is received addressed to someone no longer on our mailing list and for whom we no longer have a valid mailing address so in the latter case we simply return the letter to the sender.

Please remember if you expect replies to letters you write you must reply to letters you receive.

*****QUESTION*****

How many gender therapists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but the bulb must really want to change.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

My Dear Ladies,

Rather than address this note to one of you, at risk offending another of you, let me address this note to all of you beautiful people (and hope that I do not offend all of you).

Basically, I just wish to thank all of you on the staff of the GGA for all that you have done for me since becoming a member nearly one year ago. I came to membership in the GGG/G as somewhat of a babe in terms of my knowledge about our paraculture. Much has happened in the meantime. I have written a few letters to various girls to try to establish some new friendships in my new gender role. But, out of 18 letters written some months back, only two ladies chose to respond. One of the ladies then informed me that responses seldom come unless there is a photo attached. I wish I had known that earlier, as I might have had more chances to establish that dream friendship, had I been aware of this condition.....

.... I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the countless hours that I am sure that you and your staff spend each month in the publishing of your truly wonderful magazine. The articles contained therein have done much to increase my awareness of my womanhood, and my love of all things that are beautiful and feminine.

Linda Beverly
(APO NY-10)

EDITOR'S REPLY!

We appreciate the kind words Bev. We empathize with you concerning the lack of response to your letters.

Linda authored a lengthy bio-type article which she sent to us several months ago and the first installment appears in this issue. Due to its length we will present it over a period of several issues.

Dear Editor,

I enjoy the Phoenix very much. It is full of interesting articles and informative columns.

I grab the membership supplement first to see how many new members we have acquired from my area and especially enjoy seeing photos of all my beautiful sisters.----

Keep up the good work.
Nancy (AZ-14)

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA

Meeting time at each location: 8 PM.
 SAN FRANCISCO: 2nd Wednesday.
 BERKELEY: 4th Wednesday.
 SAN JOSE: 1st & 3rd Friday.

PACIFIC CENTER, 2712 Telegraph, Berkeley.
 1st & 3rd Wednesday rap sessions. Last
 Friday, special topic or guest speaker.
 Meeting time: 7:30 til 10:00

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 7:30 pm. Contact Lynn or Ann (213) 241-
 9093.

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 Nancy (714) 834-0928 for information.

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 Contact Sonia Smith, PO Box 1374, Denver,
 CO, 80201 or call (303) 777-7081 for
 specific information.

CONNECTICUT

HARTFORD-TVIC: Every second Saturday.
 Contact Patsie Pinchon, PO Box 180,
 Hartford, CT, 06107 for information.

XX-CLUB. Primarily a TS Support Group.
 Contact Rev. Clinton Jones, 45 Church St,
 Hartford, CT, 09103 for information.

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TIFFANY CLUB: Tuesdays & Saturdays, 7-11
 pm. Usually a \$5.00 fee for non-members.
 Call (617) 891-8022 for information.

KAY-MAYFLOWER SOCIETY: Every Wednesday,
 7-11 pm. Call (617) 254-7389 for infor-
 mation.

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DELTA CHI CHAPTER (Tri-Sigma): Betty Ann
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ACADEMY AWARDS (Drag-gay). Contact: Betty
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 ria, VA 22312. FLORIDA

SUCCESS CHAPTER of GGA (New Port Richie).
 Meetings on the 2nd Satyrday of each odd
 numbered month. Contact Susan Armstrong,
 POst Office Box 1601, Pinellas Park, FL
 33656. NEW YORK AREA

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 76th Street, Jackson Heights, NY, 11372
 or call (212) 335-3048.

TV PARTIES:(Long Island). Contact Casey,
 PO Box 708, N. Bellmore, NY, 11710 or
 call (516) 548-7736.

ALBANY-TVIC: Meeting every 3rd Saturday.
 Contact Wm. Thordsen, 1104 Broadway,
 Albany, NY, 12200 for specific infor-
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PARADISE CLUB, (Akron Area). Contact H.J.
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 PA 15242.

PI CHAPTER (Tri-Sigma), Pittsburgh Area.
 Contact Patricia L. McDermott, PO Box
 576, Export, PA 15632.

PHI CHAPTER (Tri-Sigma), Philadelphia
 Area. Contact Michelle Williams, PO Box
 322, Collingswood, NJ 08108.

VIRGINIA

BETA-RHO CHAPTER (Tri-Sigma). Roanoke
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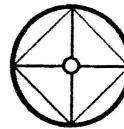
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GATHER FROM ALL RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND DISSEMINATE ALL INFORMATION PERTAINING TO AND OF INTEREST TO THE GENDER DYSPHORIC INDIVIDUAL.

PROVIDE REFERRAL SERVICES FOR THE VARIOUS GENDER INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WITH WHOM/WHICH THIS ORGANIZATION IS IN CONTACT.

ENCOURAGE COOPERATION AMONG THE LEADERS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE VARIOUS EXISTING OR FUTURE GENDER DYSPHORIC GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS OR ASSOCIATIONS.

DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL TO ASSIST IN THE EDUCATION OF THE GENDER DYSPHORIC IN DEALING WITH HIS/HER LIFESTYLE CHALLENGES AND ASSIST THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN ACCEPTING THE GENDER DYSPHORIC INDIVIDUAL AS A PERSON.

PROVIDE A PUBLICATION CONTAINING ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE GENDER DYSPHORIC INDIVIDUAL AND COUNSELORS.

PROVIDE THOSE MEMBERS DESIRING IT A LIST OF PSYCHOTHERAPISTS COUNSELING IN THE GENDER DYSPHORIC FIELD.

PROVIDE A LISTING OR REGISTER OF ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST IN LOCAL OR ACCESSIBLE AREAS TO THE INDIVIDUALS AFFILIATED WITH THIS ORGANIZATION.

ADVERTISE TO ATTRACT UNDECLARED GENDER DYSPHORIC INDIVIDUALS WITHIN OUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.

ENCOURAGE THE FULL AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THIS ORGANIZATION OF ALL GENDER DYSPHORIC INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

