



THE TRANSGENDERIST

THE PUBLICATION OF TRANSGENDERIST'S INDEPENDENCE CLUB

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This month Halloween provides an opportunity to those who have not yet ventured out of the closet to flaunt our inner desires and urges without embarrassment, ridicule, or harassment. It is the one time of the year in which society allows people to express themselves in non-traditional ways.

Gianna's Column

To be bound by conventional rules the rest of the year is both stifling and sad for those who feel they must abide by such restrictions. There are those in society who do not accept differences in others and may resort to harassment and violence to anyone who is different. The risk to transgendered persons is real.

While it is not recommended that one act out their desires in an uncontrolled, impulsive manner, one can still express themselves in a way which seems right to them and still remain safe.

If you are someone who lives closeted most of the year then I do suggest that you should have fun on Halloween and explore other forms of self expression, trying out things you may feel to inhibited to do at any other time of the year. It could and should present a personal growth opportunity. Perhaps you will find it stimulating enough to venture out again when Halloween is past. You can do this safely by reaching out to the many organizations serving our community. If you have been reading *The Transgenderist* but have never had contact with TGIC, then now is the time to call.

At press time we do not have a list of events in the area clubs but you can be certain there will be many contests, events, and parties on Halloween. We should have a list of events posted in the club room for members. If you don't attend meetings, you may call us for information. There is some chance that many will come to the club room early on Halloween to help each other with costumes, makeup, etc. Volunteers are needed.

Included in this issue are two articles by Gianna E. [redacted], one on harassment of transgendered persons which should be useful for those contemplating venturing out on Halloween or any other night and the other about post-op living. Other related articles in this issue include the NY Times article on Transgendered people which appeared Sept. 8, 1996 and be sure to read the public notice on page 4 Have fun, be safe, and Be Yourself.

Gianna



Opinions, Opinions, Opinions

Everybody's got one. Some gay voters in Ohio identify with President Clinton's signing of DOMA, a bill to deny Federal Recognition and benefits to same sex couples, while other gay voters denounced Clinton for "historical misjudgment" and referred to the bill as "mean spirited".

The role of *Truvy* in the play, "Steel Magnolias" was recast 3 weeks before the play was to open in Memphis, Tenn because the actor Mark Chambers is a man. Mr. Chambers had played women before but Robert Vaughan, the director of professional rights for the Dramatists Play service in New York ordered the executive producer of the play to replace him with a woman. The decision stands despite appeals from the producer and theatre goers and despite the fact that Mr. Chambers felt his experience as a hairdresser for 20 years gave him insight into the character of Truvy. The theater's next production is "Peter Pan" with a woman cast as the lead.

Mainstream America is aware that there are gays in the military, that women can enroll at the Citadel (why would you want to?), and now the last single sex school, Virginia Military Academy is forced by the Supreme Court to allow women to enroll. The Citadel allows women to have longer hair than men but VMI superintendent, Josiah Bunting 3d stated women will be required to have crew cuts, just like the men.

.....AND speaking of opinions, have you tuned into the TGIC on-line discussion of what it means to be Transgendered? Let's remember to voice our opinion and respect the other person's opinion as well.

Gianna

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RANDOM THOUGHTS #15

by Jennifer [REDACTED]

Editor's Note: Random Thoughts #15 was printed incorrectly last month. Apologies to Jennifer and our readers.

Take out the Papers and the Trash!

Or... Garbage!

Yakity Yak!

Wednesday. Trash day. You get up in the morning, get ready for work (hopefully), and before you head out to work there's a little project you have to do. You don't like doing it... but, just the same, it has to be done. Every week it has to be done. You look in the cupboard under the sink for the plastic bags, open the broom closet where the garbage has waited patiently all week gathering unspeakable friends, and you begin sorting- yüich! Plastics and glass in one bag, metal in another, papers in a third, and the really disgusting stuff in yet a fourth. A squirt of disinfecting air freshener makes the closet nice and fresh. You tie up your bags and lug them to the curb, your hateful task done for another week. You are now free to go about your day confident in the knowledge that you did your civic duty and recycled. Hopefully, no one will notice the slight catsup stain where your blouse sleeve brushed against the trash bag.

But is your job done? Yes, you've done your civic duty, and your home is nice and fresh and clean for another week, but what about your duty to yourself? Have you taken out the mental garbage which had been accumulating for so many years? Have you sorted through the trash piled so high in the closet of our mind? Have you recycled that which you can reuse? Let go of the clutter of what other people have said over the course of a lifetime? Are you able to leave for the future confident and proud that you did your duty to yourself? Or is the weight of all the trash pulling you down so much that the only thing you recognize - and think everyone else does as well - is the stain on your personality?

Research has shown that by the time most people have reached the glorious age of 6 they have heard the word "NO", or negative variations on that theme, over a million times! As transgendered people, the "NO's" never stop. At least that's the way it seems. How often have you told yourself "NO" when dealing with the issues of your transgender? How many others have implied the same thing? How does this make you feel? Every day, transgendered people everywhere are burying their lives under this sort of trash.

Have you ever thought about coming out? True, coming out may involve some risk, and many do risk losing security, respect, family, jobs, and friends. But, why should they have to lose? Could it be that people just don't know transgendered people as people?

Recently, one transgendered person overcame the odds to gain custody of their five year old daughter. The court, ignorant of transgendered people as people, wanted to keep her from her daughter and repeatedly returned the child into an abusive environment rather than give custody. When the case started over three years ago, the parent, a MTF transsexual, was living full time as a woman, and the child never knew her as anything but a

woman. During the course of the case she was required to dress as a man, and have the child address her as daddy. With support and encouragement she unloaded her guilt and other trash, it was decided that she should be herself and that she would pursue her case as the woman she felt herself to be. It took years of persistence but in the end, her honestly paid off. She had support from state police, local police, foster parents, child protective (who was initially against her), a lot of good friends, and eventually, the court itself - all of which were forced to re-evaluate their judgments of transgendered people because of her efforts.

You know, there is an amazing amount of self satisfaction that comes from knowing that you are able to overcome a handicap. You also earn the respect of others when you can hold your head high and say, "Yes, I am", and move on from there. Wouldn't it be wonderful if more of us had that ability? You can too, but first you have to "take out the papers and the trash".

In 1968 there was a popular protest/counter culture movie and album called Alice's Restaurant. If you are too young or don't remember it, basically the theme was a metaphor about "big brother" government. The plot revolved around a group of "hippies" who took over an abandoned church and made it into a home/restaurant - hence the name. On Christmas they celebrated with a big Christmas party. After the party someone had to take out the trash. To make a long story shorter, the trash was dumped along side a rural road. They were spotted by the police and ticketed for "littering, disturbing the peace, and creatin' a public nuisance", and sentenced - to pick up the trash.

In the hit song from the album Woodie Guthrie Jr. rambles into a long narrative of the plot and how he served his sentence. He states, "And there I was, just picking and bagging, bagging and picking... Now, imagine if we had a hundred people, a hundred people! Just picking and bagging, bagging and picking, a hundred people! Why, it'd be a movement! And that's what it is. The Alice's Restaurant movement."

The point? Well, one person acting alone, often gets buried under a hill of trash. But a hundred people working together, well, that's a movement. Think about it. "You can get any thing you want at Alice's Restaurant... 'septing Alice"

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Shunning "he" and "she", they fight for respect

By Carey ██████g

LOS ANGELES -- In Boston, Nancy Nangeroni is helping arrange a courthouse vigil for a slain male-to-female transsexual. In Washington, Dana Priesing lobbies for laws that would ban discrimination against "transgendered" people.

And in Southern California, Jacob Hale and the rest of the local Transgender Menace chapter occasionally pull on their black Menace T-shirts and go for a group walkabout, just to look people in the eye with collective pride in who they are.

All see themselves as part of a burgeoning movement whose members are only now, nearly two decades after gay liberation took off, gathering the courage to go public and struggle for the same sort of respect and legal protections.

The name that scholars and organizers prefer for this nascent movement is "transgender," an umbrella term for transsexuals, cross-dressers (the word now preferred over transvestites), intersexed people (also known as hermaphrodites), womanish men, mannish women and anyone whose sexual identity seems to cross the line of what, in 1990s America, is considered normal.

That line has certainly blurred. Dennis Rodman preens in his bridal gown, Ru Paul puckers for MAC cosmetics, and viewers flock to movies like "The Crying Game."

But members of the movement say they still cannot escape the feeling that in a society that has grown more responsive to other minorities, they are among the last pariahs.

When they give up the old dream of simply "passing" as their desired sex, they face painful battles both in everyday life and in the political arena, where they are roundly condemned as deviants by religious conservatives and often spark controversy among more mainstream gay and lesbian groups.

Their very existence, they say, is such a challenge to universal gut-level ideas about a person's sex as an either-or category -- as reflected in everything from binary bathrooms to "he" and "she" pronouns -- that they are often subjected to scorn, job discrimination and violence.

"There's finally a voice saying, 'Enough,' " said Riki Anne Wilchins, a Wall Street computer consultant and organizer in the movement. "We pay taxes. We vote. We work. There's no reason we should be taking this. When you have people in isolation who are oppressed and victimized and abused, they think it's their own fault, but when you hit that critical mass that they see it happening to other people, they realize it's not about them. It's about a system, and the only way to contest a system is with an organized response."

No one knows exactly what that critical mass is. Experts say that in the more than 40 years since George Jorgensen emerged from the operating room as Christine, several thousand Americans have undergone sex-change surgery; they are believed to include nearly even numbers of men and women.

Perhaps as many as 60,000 Americans consider themselves valid candidates for such surgery, based on what psychiatrists call

"gender identity dysphoria," according to the Harry Benjamin Gender Dysphoria Association, the leading medical association of specialists -- including sex-change surgeons -- that sets guidelines for treating transsexuals.

But that is only the tip of a far larger iceberg, organizers say, of cross-dressers -- many of whom are heterosexual men -- and people who live as the opposite sex but never undergo surgery.

The movement's growth, however, is easy to discern. Scores of participants rallied as part of a new advocacy group called Gender PAC for the first time in Washington last fall and plan to do the same in May, and transgender conventions now draw hundreds of people and number nearly 20 a year.

Increasingly, a "T" can be found tacked onto the "G, L and B" of gay, lesbian and bisexual events and groups, from community centers to pride parades.

In San Francisco, which a survey has shown is home to about 6,000 of the movement's constituents, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission has formed a Transgender Community Task Force, and the protest group Transexual Menace now counts 46 chapters nationwide, some of which are called Transgender Menace. There is even a new national group, Transgendered Officers Protect and Serve; members act as marshals at events when needed.

The movement's coalescence, which members say began over the last five years and accelerated in recent months, has gained particular momentum from the Internet, with its ability to connect far-flung people and afford them a sense of safety.

On-line groups that began by swapping tips on using makeup and obtaining hormones now also spread word of the latest victims of violence and the next political protest.

But "the fundamental building block of the whole movement," said Dr. Barbara Warren of the Gender Identity Project at New York City's Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, "is the willingness of transgender folk to put themselves out there and be visible."

That takes more than the courage to face funny looks in the checkout line. The most painful of rallying points is the frequency with which they are attacked and even killed.

"I know so many people who've suffered from vilification in their daily lives just because people have heard they're transsexual, not because they look weird or act weird," said James Green, a female-to-male transsexual and head of FtM International, the biggest group for what many members call "transmen." "As soon as the fact is known, they're just targets, and people are still being murdered."

Since last year, Ms. Wilchins and Transexual Menace have taken to organizing vigils after the slayings of transsexuals. In May 1995 they protested outside the Lincoln, Neb., courthouse where the rapist and killer of a young woman living as a man -- named Teena

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Brandon and known as Brandon Teena -- was coming to trial. Since then, they have marked the deaths of several transsexual women who were killed by men they dated.

The next will come Sept. 16 in Lawrence, Mass., where Deborah Forte, a transsexual, was killed.

"We're so invested in being men or women that if you fall outside that easy definition of what a man or woman is, a lot of people see you as some kind of monster," said Susan Stryker, a male-to-female transsexual with a doctorate in history whose book on changing sex is to be published by Oxford University Press next year.

Gender PAC, the advocacy group, is lobbying to have crimes against "transgendered people" included in the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which lets the Justice Department track crimes based on race, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

(These crimes do not fall under the orientation category because "transgenderism" concerns sexual identity, not sexual practices, Gender PAC says; some male-to-female transsexuals are lesbians, for example.)

Gender PAC's other priority, said Dana Priesing, its main lobbyist -- and a prominent Washington litigator until she began her sex change -- is to get the group's constituency included in the Employment Nondiscrimination Act, a bill in the House of Representatives that would protect gay people from job discrimination.

Employees currently have no recourse if they are dismissed because they reveal their sexual identity or undergo "transition" except in a handful of cities -- including San Francisco, Seattle and Santa Cruz -- and the state of Minnesota.

If Nancy Nangeroni is any judge, transsexuals still need help in the workplace. A 42-year-old, MIT-educated computer designer, she found she could not get a job if she volunteered that she was a male-to-female transsexual, but had no problem if she kept silent.

Ms. Nangeroni is not only open about her identity but also runs "Gender Talk," a radio talk show every Wednesday evening on WMBR-FM, a Boston-area station.

"There's a widespread discontent with gender roles," she said, "and transgenderism is trying to speak to that in a compassionate way, speaking only liberation and not doctrine. It's kind of like shooting fish in a barrel sometimes. People are very ripe for it."

Not everybody. Christian conservatives and advocates of traditional family values condemn the movement as decadent and unhealthy.

"This is yet another social pathology," said Robert H. Knight, cultural studies director for the Family Research Council, a think tank in Washington. "This is deviant behavior that seeks legitimization in the social, legal and political realms. It is part of a larger cultural movement to confuse the sexual roles and to usher in a relativistic mindset concerning sexuality itself."

The movement has also created some friction within the gay and lesbian groups that have generally accepted and aided it. Some gay and lesbian organizers have balked because its issues do not concern sexual orientation but rather identity.

Others argued, usually sotto voce, that flamboyant "drag queens" and "stone butches" would further alienate straight America and belie their claims that gay people are really just like everybody else.

But "transgendered people" have long been at the heart of the gay rights movement, said Kerry Lobel, deputy director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Now, she said, "they're seeking and have found their own political power."

"All of a sudden a lot of people feel, 'Hey, I am proud,' " said Alison Laing, director of the International Foundation for Gender Education in Waltham, Mass. "It's like gay pride. People say, 'I didn't choose this, but I do choose my behavior and my attitude.' "

Alison Laing's life demonstrates the kind of freedom the movement espouses. A husband and father, "M. Laing" (to use the honorific proposed as an ungendered alternative to Mr. and Ms.) spends about 80 percent of the time dressed in women's clothes and 20 percent as Al, in men's clothing, showing that "we don't have to live in gender boxes." Copyright 1996 The New York Times

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Official Public Celebration Of Shadow Selves/Gender Transgression

To: All TG People

This is to inform you that Thursday, October 31, has been declared an official national public celebration of freedom of expression. On that day, and at celebrations around that date, permission is granted for people to dress in whatever they want, without direct punishment or stigma from gender transgression. In fact, it is very probable that those who have the gumption to express gender transgression will be honored for their courage and/or wit. This honor may result in new friendships being made, or just valuable conversations.

Each one of you is encouraged to create one or more expressions of personal style, called "costumes," and wear them to public events on that day. This may include parties at nightspots and restaurants, shopping malls, and even places of work. To assist you in this, all vendors of clothing and other beauty tips will be aware of the upcoming celebration, and will be ready to assist you in the creation of a wonderful "costume" for this event.

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"POST-OP LIVING"

#05 / August '96

This article addresses some of the questions and issues presented to me by individuals who have had genital reassignment six, twelve, and even twenty years ago. The material addressed may also be of interest to persons who are considering permanently living "in role" as a member of the opposite gender, or who are considering undergoing genital reassignment. The decisions to live in role permanently and undergo genital reassignment are serious ones having numerous consequences.

"I Wish I Had Waited..." -Surprisingly, for all the clamor I have heard over the years from pre-operative transsexuals who feel waiting one year while living in role is too long, the preceding is one of the most frequent comments I hear in the privacy of counseling from persons who underwent genital reassignment. After feelings of permanency and newness wear off, many new women find that little else has changed in their day-to-day lives.

This is particularly true for those who placed more importance on obtaining surgery than on refining their overall appearance and presentation.

For example, women who did not finish their electrolysis still get 5 o'clock shadows, and those who gave up on needed speech practice still sound like men. Occasionally, I hear very masculine appearing women state that they wished they had spent their money on facial reconstruction, rather than spending it all on hidden body parts. There are many reasons a person may wish they had waited before undergoing genital reassignment, however, once the surgery is done life does not stop.

After surgery, having special transgender needs does not cease, and persons with unfinished business are advised to move forward completing unfinished business as time and finances allow. If an individual is having difficulty putting together a good presentation, such as for a job interview, then seeking wardrobe and cosmetic consultation would be beneficial. If a person finds him or herself dealing with confrontation or transphobia, then he or she should seek assertiveness training and learn how to deal with harassment.

"Help, I've Gone Stealth and Might Be Found Out!..." This is a very, very common concern. Many transgender persons who are in the process of coming out or who have lived in role for only a short time look forward with anticipation to the day they can "pass" all the time. Others, who during transition had great difficulties, find themselves working as hard as possible to bury their former identity. However, no matter how presentable you are or how many surgeries you have, this does not stop you from having a transgender identity. For numerous transgender men and women, passing becomes easier the longer they live in role. However, passing can present problems of its own.

After surgery, some persons disconnect entirely from the transgender community. They may move to areas where few transgender resources exist, or accept an employment situation where nobody questions their gender identity.

Sometimes these persons have difficulty explaining their situation to a new physician, particularly after disclosure skills become rusty from disuse.

The art to living in stealth takes skill. A person must decide when

"Where Can I Get Gender-Sensitive Medical Care?..." -If you are located in a major city, contact a gender specializing counselor or therapist and ask for a referral. The next step is to check with gay and lesbian resources. Both post-operative males and females frequently require follow-up work, sometimes years after surgery. Stenosis or hardening of tissue may set in, or the person may have difficulty with urination. Transgender women who failed to dilate may need surgical intervention. They should contact a local gynecologist, urologist, or sex reassignment surgeon and ask for a specialized referral.

"A Tax Statement Showed Up With My Old Name..." -Oh, that paper tiger rears its ugly head again! Lots of people think being transgender is all about hormones and surgery. Wrong. It's really about the creation of lots of unnecessary paperwork and aggravation. If the tax collector says you owe money, pay it and then ask a supervisor to follow through with correcting your name. If you have problems with bureaucracies, continue climbing the supervisor/manager ladder until you find someone who will help you. If that doesn't work, try visiting a different office. Surprisingly, I have heard from clients having serious difficulties getting passports changed at one location who later had no problem whatsoever at another location. Finally, if you receive an inheritance or trust fund check payable to your old name, on the reverse, sign it the old way, then the new way and deposit it. This is standard banking practice. Afterward, write out a donation to your local transgender support organization.

*****GIANNA E. [REDACTED] EL provides nationwide telephone consultation, individual & relationship counseling, evaluations and referrals. She is principal author of The Recommended Guidelines for Transgender Care, writes Transgender Tapestry's "Ask Gianna" column; is an AEGIS board member and HBIGDA member. She can be contacted at (415) 558-8058, at P.O. Box 4244447 San Francisco, CA 94142, or via e-mail at [REDACTED]*

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WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEOTARD AND A WRESTLING UNIFORM?

Administrators say cross-dressed student violates school policies

BURLINGTON (AP) - A Burlington High School student is vowing to continue wearing a dress, makeup, and a wig to school every day even though he has been and will continue to be barred from class in such attire.

Sophomore Matt Stickney, 15, who is gay, has been the subject of a swirl of attention and controversy for the past several days because he has been showing up at school in a dress and the administration has been sending him home.

Administrators say his clothing disrupts class and therefore violates the school's dress code.

Stickney said Friday, after his latest expulsion led to a walkout by other students, that he did not plan to change his wardrobe.

"This is who I am," said Stickney, who showed up Friday with a black top and a pink, red, and green flowered skirt. "If they're going to kick me out every day of the week, this is going to happen every day."

About 100 BHS students cut class Friday morning to protest the school's decision. High school Principal Ridgely Schott said Stickney's dress disrupted the school business.

Friday, Schott again told Stickney he couldn't wear a dress. He then suspended Stickney for using abusive language toward Schott and an assistant.

Students gathered around Stickney outside the school building, some boys wearing pink lipstick and girls wearing white button-down shirts and ties.

"I'm 17. If I'm going to wear a leotard, they're not going to stop me," said Louis Gilbeau, a junior. "What's the difference between a leotard and a wrestling uniform?" *Bennington Banner, 9/16/96* (Thanks to Steph who submitted this article)

ROOMMATE WANTED

Roommate wanted to share a large single-family house in Clifton Park. Must be neat, non-smoker, very discrete, and willing to share chores (such as cleaning, mowing lawn, and removing snow). Garage stall available. Contact Pam Van Buren, PO Box 196, Schenectady, NY 12301

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Transgenderist's Independence Club (TGIC) is a nonprofit, educational, non-sexual social support group for persons wishing to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of gender, including crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends.

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Readers are invited to submit articles relevant to the Transgendered Community for consideration. You may bring or mail typed pages for publication to the TGIC club room. Format should follow that shown in the current newsletter. You may also e-mail the articles to Jeeena@AOL.COM. The article should be part of the body of the e-mail. If you must attach a file please save it in ASCII. Thank you to all who have submitted articles. *Gina*

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"HARRASSMENT"

by GIANNA E. [REDACTED]

We live in a society which does not promote respect toward persons who have different appearances, ideas or ways of living. Consequently, many transgender persons experience social difficulties ranging from subtle harassment to indiscriminate violence. This article provides useful information when dealing with these issues and specifically provides coping mechanisms for transgender persons.

It is common knowledge that there are individuals who cannot tolerate differences in others. At times such persons use intimidation, coercion, harassment, or even violence, in an effort to make others feel afraid. Depending on the level of harassment, such persons are known by different names. These include: perpetrator, victimizer, bigot, jackass, creep, scum or jerk, just to name a few. For sake of clarity, I like to refer to these individuals as "bullies," because their behavior can easily be found on any schoolyard.

Bullies typically act with malice toward others who are different for a variety of reasons. Many do so because their behavior makes them feel powerful. Some bullies feel entitled to hurt others because they believe it is socially acceptable or that their actions will have no consequences. Others are harassing because they believe that their viewpoint or way of living is the only correct one. Occasionally such persons are uneducated and not aware that others have differences or that their harassment is hurtful.

Whatever a bully's reason for harassing others may be, during a confrontation such reasons should not be introduced as a topic of discussion. Generally, a bully is happy to use such discussions in order to avoid acknowledging responsibility for their behavior. The Most Effective Way To Deal With A Bully, Is To Relay A Focused Message That Their Behavior Is Hurtful And Will Not Be Tolerated No Matter What Their Reasoning! Furthermore, another effective way to reduce harassing incidents in general is to understand prevention. Here are some pointers:

*Acknowledge your role in harassing situations. Nobody likes being a victim, however at times people invite harassment without realizing it. This may be particularly true when a person has been victimized in the past or feels extra sensitive when criticized by others. Sometimes it is possible to mistake another person's lack of interest in gender issues as a form of harassment. Occasionally in such situations a person may set themselves up for harassment by drawing unnecessary attention to themselves.

If you are uncertain whether you are being harassed, pass your feelings and information about the situation by several friends you trust. Ask them how they might handle the situation, or if they believe you are overacting, and then proceed with some extra insight. If you find yourself regularly being harassed by others, or suspect you may be continually setting yourself up for victimization, seek professional help and learn assertiveness skills.

*Think Ahead! If you are newly "Coming Out" or have never been out crossdressed by yourself, plan your activities with safety in mind. Travel with friends, or restrict your activities to locations where you feel safe until your confidence level rises. It is unlikely

that there is going to be a bully around "every" corner. In fact, the more times you go out the more likely it is you will notice that most people really don't pay a lot of attention to others. Some persons may however respond with curiosity if they have never met a transgender person. Their curiosity may be acknowledged with a slight smile, or simply ignored as routine. Finally dress appropriate to the occasion. If a person dresses in a manner designed to draw the attention of others, he or she should be prepared for that attention and even potential criticism.

*When encountering harassment do not feed into it. You can do this by simply ignoring the bully and his or her behavior. This advice is particularly useful when encountering offhand comments from strangers looking for a confrontation, such as out in the general public. Additionally, if you find yourself encountering harassment routinely from one particular person, avoid feeding into that person's behavior by not acting revengeful or antagonistic. Acting maliciously in response to someone else's behavior only gives the harassing party further reason to bother you.

*If you encounter a person who is continually harassing, tell that person his or her behavior is hurtful and you will not tolerate it. State so in a brief, clear manner. Surprisingly, most bullies are scared off by these assertive words. If you feel uncomfortable confronting someone about their behavior, develop a "confrontation plan" with your counselor or knowledgeable friend. You may also take along a friend as a witness and for added support. However if at all possible, stay away from persons who use violence or threats of violence.

*Set limits or boundaries to the amount of harassment you will accept. For example, you might say, if you continue to harass me I will ask someone to help me deal with this situation. You may also state that you will report their behavior to a supervisor or, the police or appropriate authorities. Or, you may state you will choose to no longer associate with the person. Whatever limits you set, stay with those limits or the person will not recognize you mean business and their behavior will continue.

*If you encounter a situation which becomes overheated, physical or threatening in nature, leave immediately. If you cannot leave, at least keep moving. A moving target is harder to hit, buying you time to find a way out. If you must hit back in order to get out of a situation, do so. Once out of a situation, immediately contact friends, your counselor or the police for assistance. If you become a victim to violence because you are transgender, file a report with the police as well as with the violence prevention program serving the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community in your city. Do not allow the incident to go unnoticed. Otherwise, even if the perpetrator stops harassing you, he or she will likely continue victimizing others.

GIANNA E. [REDACTED] provides nationwide telephone consultation, individual & relationship counseling, evaluations and referrals. She is principal author of The Recommended Guidelines for Transgender Care, and Transgender Tapestry's "Ask Gianna;" an AEGIS board member and HBIGDA member. She can be contacted at (415) 558-8058, at P.O. Box 424447 San Francisco, CA 94142, or via e-mail at [REDACTED]

LETTERS

Some Basic Lies About Transgender

To the Editor:

The article you chose to printed in the September Transgenderist, titled, "Some Basic Facts About Crossdressing," and attributed only to TRI-ESS, a discriminatory organization that rejects all but self diagnosed "heterosexual crossdressers" should have more likely been titled "Some Beliefs About Crossdressing" -- even if many of these beliefs are unstated. TRI-ESS, as its ancestor organizations did, has a policy of trying to define separations between femiphiles/crossdressers, transsexuals and homosexuals.

For example, in the definition of transgenderist, which is considered under the category of crossdresser, the phrase "who lives and works [as a woman] all the time. Unlike the transsexual, he is content with his male organs and does not plan surgery to remove them."

So, to TRI-ESS, one who lives and works as a woman is still a he -- not a transgendered woman, but a full-time man-in-a-dress. This is an important definition, because two of TRI-ESS's top supporters, Virginia Prince and Kym Richards identify as transgenderists -- yet are not forced to resign from a society that is exclusively for heterosexual crossdressers. In fact, for many years, Prince preached against body changes -- while it was obvious to observers that she was using hormones.

This is all consistent with the notion that no crossdresser ever wants to be a woman, also espoused in the article. But surely we all know people who were self diagnosed as heterosexual crossdressers and who, as time passed, decided to go full time, and even to have sexual reassignment surgery. This "fact" makes the fact TRI-ESS choose to state that no crossdresser wants to become a woman a lie.

It may be argued that the crossdressers who want to become women were in fact mis-diagnosed transsexuals -- but who is to say that many, if not all crossdressers are mis-diagnosed?

TRI-ESS, it would seem, has a strong belief that males cannot become women -- even if they live full time -- because they don't want to become women. The only people who can become women have always been women and are born with the wrong genitals, hating them so much that they need to have them surgically altered. This statement implies that the definition of women is those with vaginas -- a very shallow and heterosexist view.

Yet, TRI-ESS has many heterosexist beliefs. Take for example the question "Are Crossdressers Gay?" where the response is that this is the worst of all myths about crossdressers. Not going into the question about why they believe being gay is such a bad thing, the bigger question is how they can speak to this point.

Kinsey has shown that most humans have a very large range of possible sexual activity -- that very, very few people are exclusively heterosexual or homosexual. It is clear that this range also applies to males who transgress gender norms. Are most males who choose to transgress gender purely heterosexual? It is clear that is not true. For example, when a transgender male has sex with a

female -- but is dressed and acting like a woman -- is that heterosexual sex?

Crossdressers are not gay because one of the key criteria for entry into the largest crossdresser organizations is that you are not gay. Therefore, if you have engaged in relations with those of your own birth sex -- even if those relations were heterogenderal (i.e. you acted as a man with a woman, or woman with a man) you are required to deny that to be accepted as a crossdresser.

Other transgendered males who are gay -- like drag queens, bisexuals and others, simply don't appear on the radar of TRI-ESS. That simple. Dallas Denny has written an essay on "The Myths Of The Heterosexual Crossdresser" in the latest Chrysalis, which makes the point that the beliefs of TRI-ESS are not grounded in fact, but rather in myth -- what TRI-ESS founders wanted to believe about themselves, and what therefor the organization reflects.

There are many more problems with TRI-ESS's facts in the article. The notion that everyone has masculine and feminine sides does not explain at all why some are so profoundly transgendered that they risk great stigma to break gender norms. Explanations that look at socio-biological reasons that talk about how TG can benefit tribes are much more compelling -- though they may eventually fall by the wayside too.

And the discussion about female crossdressers would be hotly contended by the growing FTM community and the growing voices of Butch women.

In short, the whole set of questions posed by TRI-ESS attempts to explain the behavior of wearing clothing assigned to the gender that doesn't match your genitals. However, that behavior is not the issue. The issue is the fact that some people are born crossgendered -- either a little or a lot -- and that various environmental factors influence how they express it.

Many have chosen to express it by following the myths of the "heterosexual crossdresser" as espoused by TRI-ESS -- but we should be clear that what they hold is a series of beliefs and not a series of facts.

I appreciate TGIC letting the voice of these self diagnosed heterosexual crossdressers be heard -- but I do hope that we can be clear that one person's "facts" may be another person's lies.

Callan 

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(Public Notice Continued from page 4)

Many of us have used this national celebration to break the ice and freely exhibit gender transgression, as well as to gain assistance in developing our expression. Stories range from starting new relationships to opening up new and useful discussion with co-workers.

Others use this day to exhibit other shadow selves, be they gender transgressive or not. It is a time to use stylized forms to explore and expose new parts of ourselves or comment on things that we see in others. This "masquing" using masks that both conceal our identities and reveal other parts of ourselves, often results in new insights and deeper connections.

To those who have never celebrated this national day of expression, we encourage you. TGIC members stand ready to assist others in developing appropriate and engaging expressions (or "costumes") that can help them have a great old time of play. Expressions that represent people (either real or fictional, current or historical), roles (like maid or dominatrix,) creatures (animal, human or a mix), things (like condoms and jellybeans), or that are simply visually dramatic are acceptable. Many people have found that the more effort they put into designing an appropriate expression, the more effective and fun their expression is --- in fact, some events honor the best expression with tokens of recognition.

Repeat: On October 31, and in events around that time, there will be a national public celebration of shadow selves, including gender transgression, and all TG people are encouraged to participate and to enjoy themselves.

If you need to refer to this event for any reason, use the reference, "Halloween."

Long Island Femme Expression

**Come Celebrate Our 11th
Anniversary Ball at the Plain
View Plaza**

150 Sunnyside Blvd.
Plainview, NY
at the Suffolk Banquet Room

Nov. 16th, 1996

\$50.00 Per Person / \$90 Couple



Cocktail Hour 7-8-Buffer Dinner 8:30 Music by TGIF Hospitality Room for

TGIC NOMINATED FOR AWARD

A tip of the hat for Mark Daigneault, the treasurer of the Capital District Gay and Lesbian Community Center, who visted TGIC for our last Christmas Party, for nominating TGIC for the CDG&LCC's annual Organizational Award for a local l/g/b/t group that has furthered the empowerment of the community.

We lost, but that's no reason not to go to the CDG&LCC Awards Dinner on **Thursday, October 10** -- a nice dinner, new friends and someplace new to go. Call their InfoLine for details, 462-6138. And maybe next year, for the first time, the T part of L/G/B/T will be honored.

"It really bothers me when I see people doing my mother in drag. I mean, just imagine if you saw people doing that with your mother."

Cher's lesbian daughter, Chastity Bono

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Experienced Professional Makeup Artist interested in doing theatrical, bridal, photography and personal make-over makeup. Previous work includes two plays for the Egg. Call Kym at 518-426-4829

*Sounds like an interesting person for a Tri-Ess meeting or for doing a workshop at TGIC ---maybe for Halloween makeups---
Callan*