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FROM SANDY THOMAS

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• MY ROMEIY #18

• MY BONDIY #18

• BLESSINGS OF HUNGER #16

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• THE BOY WHO ROomed #13

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• THE BEARDED LADY: Looking for explanations where none exist

• GREAT MOMENTS IN TV HISTORY

• COMICS

• GREAT MOMENTS IN TV HISTORY

• THE TRANSSEXUAL DYKE ISSUE, Part Three: Continuing acyberspace discussion on lesbian transsexualism

• HOLIDINES

• CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Cross-Talk is published entirely on recycled paper using soybean oil-based ink by Arena Press in Point Arena, California, whose owners just had another baby. We're not sure, actually, how they manage to be parents and still have time to print our magazine every month. Forward any questions of your own to them at (707) 882-2833.

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COVER ARTWORK by Danielle Storm.

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The News Queen
by Paula Jordan Sinclair

Ms. Sinclair is pleased to say that her adopted hometown seems to be getting something of a drag scene. While Philadelphia still lacks clubs that would rival those in New York -- or even in Dayton, Ohio -- several recent events seem to indicate that drag may be breaking away from the narrow confines of Halloween and New Year's Day and could become something of a year-round activity.

Here is Ms. Sinclair's evidence.

Home girl Helena St. Carlier won the third annual Miss Pennsylvania USA pageant that was held here shortly before Valentine's Day. Seven other contestants vied for the right to represent the Keystone State in the national competition next month in Dayton, Ohio.

The night was full of glamour and drama. Just before the evening gown competition, Lorenza broke her zipper. "I started screaming and went completely crazy, and my hairdresser told me to calm down, that things always happen for a reason." The broken zipper meant that Lorenza had to borrow a gown from last year's winner, Sasha Vega. Lorenza won on to win the evening gown competition as well as the title. "I'm always in that dress, too," Vega said.

The audience in the Ormandy Ballroom of the Doubletree Hotel was a diverse crowd: straight-appearing drag fans, gay boys, and even a gay-to-goodness transvestite (perhaps still hanging around from the IFGE convention that was held in the same hotel a couple of years ago). The pageant producer, Matt Geritz, said the event was intended "to organize and promote the many positive faces of Pennsylvania's female impersonation community."

That community got even more exposure a few weeks later and just across the street. It was opening night at the Merriam Theater and Carol Channing was performing in what is being billed as her last road show production of Hello, Dolly! And sitting in a prominent box seat was a Channing impersonator!

Some people -- including the city's leading society columnist -- were not amused by the drag tribute to Miss Channing. But Carol recognized the imitation as the sincere flattery that it was, and made sure that the look-alike was invited to a private post-show supper. Now that's class!

A theatrical event of a different sort was running at the same time -- a locally written and produced musical about the smash-and-grab drag queens who victimized exclusive Floridas boutiques a couple of years ago.

Jim Dwyer recast the thieves as aging drag divas, forced to pursue a life of crime to maintain the lifestyle they became accustomed to when they were headline-stealers. They turn straight in the end, meaning that they give up stealing.

The moral of the fun and campy piece, Dwyer says, "gay love and straight love really aren't so different. All we want is a little love and affection."

Of course, drag -- even in Philadelphia -- has a tawdry side as well. The body of a man dressed partially in women's clothes was found in the city's sprawling Fairmount Park.

The man has been shot in the head. Police had no clues as to the motive.

It is not an unlikely guess that the killing came as the result of an unexpected discovery by the murderer. While it is unlikely that this killer will be caught, a rapist in Marseilles, France, paid the ultimate -- and immediate -- price for trying to rape a man dressed as a woman; the attacker had a heart attack and dropped dead at the scene.

Police say that serial rapist Jean-Pierre Leveau, 43, attacked the transvestite as she was walking to her car in the parking lot behind the shop where she worked.

The transvestite, who did not wish to be identified, said Leveau punched her in the face and stomach, threw her to the ground, and pulled off her skirt. When Leveau saw that his intended victim wasn't really a man after all, he stood up. And just as quickly he collapsed from a massive coronary authorities said was induced by a severe shock.

Police said that shortly before his last attack, Leveau had been released after serving 12 years in prison on rape charges.

There are times, Ms. Sinclair is lead to believe, when mistaking the true gender of one's intended sex partner does not have a fatal outcome. Animals, it seems, often make that mistake.

Dr. Donna Fernandes of Boston's Franklin Park Zoo, makes that point during a "Sex at the Zoo" tour that she conducts. In addition to explaining the homosexual behavior is common among animals, even in the wild; she also explains that several species of animals are programmed to change gender, either as they mature (in some species of fish, in response to an imbalance between male and female hormones), or during reproduction (frogs and shrimp). Fernandes is something of an expert in the field, earning her Ph.D. in behavioral ecology by studying terrestrial slugs that change their sex.
The concept of animals changing sexes was not new to Ms. Sinclair's husband, who, while the pair was buying fresh fish at Philadelphia's Reading Terminal Market, told her that groupers and possibly striped bass convert from male to female.

The zoo tour has not been widely received by all. Boston City Councilman Albert O'Neil has called on the state to pull its funding from the city's zoo. "I think it's disgusting," he said.

Ms. Sinclair is not sure if Councilman O'Neil was more upset by the thought of life-long lesbian pairs of hermit crabs or by the idea that sexuality, sex, and gender don't fit into a neat binary system.

Speaking of animals, according to a survey of 100 men in five large cities, two thirds of American men want to be like scorpions. That is to say, they want to give birth. Prompted by Arnold Schwarzenegger's film Junior, in which he gets pregnant and has to dress as a woman, our second-favorite supermarket tabloid asked the men: "If science made it possible, would you be willing to become pregnant and give birth?"

"I would get pregnant in a heart beat," said Aaron Freeman of Chicago. "It would allow me to do something I've always wanted to be able to do: breast-feed a baby."

Bugs Bunny's explorations of the fluid world of sexuality, sex and gender have been made by people (except, perhaps, Councilman O'Neil) laugh since 1940. Bugs' zany drag antics comfort a lot of transvestites and titillate a lot of other folks. (Remember the scene in Wayne's World when Garth asks Wayne if he was ever attracted to Bugs in drag?) Film scholar Hank Sartin of the University of Chicago claims that Garth's reaction was probably what the Warner Bros. cartoonists had in mind.

Sartin writes (in an article reprinted in Cross-Talk #60) that the 1934 Hollywood Production Code banned "sexual perversion" from the silver screen, at least overtly. But cartoon characters were freer "to violate the norms of society, and one of the ways Bugs violated those norms was to refuse to conform to 'normal' gender roles."

Sartin points out that while drug flicks and comedies have long been connected. But while the comedy of drag most often depends on the incongruity of, say, a Milton Berle in a gown, batting his false eyelashes, Bugs goes beyond that, making "apparent gender's constructed nature and his success as a femme fatale suggest the degree to which the arbitrary signifiers of gender are usable by anyone."

"Many of us grow up with Bugs, loving that rabbit," he writes. "For many of us, he had a way of dealing with the world that seemed just right. He takes pleasure in everything he does, including dressing up and stepping out."

Sartin compares Bugs' use of drag to RuPaul, who doesn't deny being a man while he poses as a seductively attractive woman. In fact, RuPaul has become so successful as an icon of feminine beauty that he has landed a modeling contract with a cosmetic company.

The Toronto-based company, M.A.C., wanted a supermodel to push its line of lipsticks and blushes. But instead of going after the usual suspects (Cindy, Claudia, and Vendela), company exec signed RuPaul.

John Tesh may have taken pleasure in dressing up and stepping out like Bugs Bunny when he was a little boy, but no longer. In fact, the co-host of Entertainment Tonight wonders why his childhood drag experiences -- forced on him by his older sister -- didn't ruin him. "As a baby, I was virtually raised by Mary Ellen, who was nine years older," Tesh told a New York newspaper. "I've seen pictures of me with my toenails and fingernails painted and a little girl's hat on, riding in a stroller. And I'm thinking, 'That should have ruined me!'"

The article was quick to point out that John wasn't ruined by being made to dress like a little girl. As proof, it immediately states that Tesh is happily married and has sired a daughter.

And now for a correction, perhaps, and some updates...

Longtime readers will remember the saga of Sarah Luiz, the transsexual who got half-way through her transition in 1989 only to have her insurance company stop payments. At the time, she described herself as 'a half-and-half freak.' And here is where the story gets murky. According to one report, a New York businessman donated the money to pay for her surgery. But in another news story she told about how she and her mother had to scrimp and save to get the $15,000 for her operation in Colorado. For some time after that, Ms. Sinclair had heard rumors that Sarah was not happy as a woman. But no one could produce any documentation. Finally, Nie-Scene International from Australia ran a story about Sarah's regrets along with several direct quotations. "I was really screwed up to want to cut off my manhood," she was quoted as saying. "I've mutilated myself!"

Recently, the National Enquirer ran a color spread on Sarah's wedding. She was a gorgeous -- if not blushing -- bride. Someone is certainly crazy, and Ms. Sinclair doesn't think it is she.

While we are on the subject of marriages, here is an update on the case of Navy Petty Officer Steven Ladwig, whose pre-op transsexual wife Terrie was murdered last December while he was on deployment aboard the super-secret spy sub U.S.S. Pardee.

Ladwig told authorities investigating the murder that he knew his wife was not fully female when the pair was wed in Reno last summer, but that he considered her to be a woman. He said the two did have a "really sexual relation," and that they were "friends."

Nevertheless, 18 days after Ladwig discovered his wife's body, Navy authorities in San Diego recommended him for discharge on the grounds of misconduct and homosexuality. Police have said they will probably solve the case eventually, noting that Terrie had "relationships" with other people, that categorizes people into right or wrong, good and bad. There's no place for that in the 90s.

There's another reason to claim drag is not the resurgence in Philadelphia this month's column carries a contribution from Jessica Brandon -- of Philadelphia. You can put your town on the map by sending news items relating to crossdressing to Ms. Sinclair in care of Cross-Talk. Please note the name and date of publication.

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TWO ENDS BUT NO MIDDLE

by Virginia Prince, Ph.D.

Several weeks ago there was an editorial in Newsweek titled "Freedom from Choice". It was by a man of mixed parentage: His father was black, his mother was a fair-skinned, blue-eyed blonde. His complaint was that for all his life he had been in a tug-of-war between his white friends wanting him to act in one way — namely white — and his black friends wanting him to act in typically black ways. He said that in this situation there was very little room for him to just be himself. He went on to comment that "American culture has an obsession with labeling. We feel a need to label everyone and everything and group them into neatly defined categories. Not everyone fits into such classifications. This presents a problem for me and the many biracial people living in the U.S. The rest of the population seems more comfortable when we choose to identify with one group (or the other) and it pressures us to do so, forcing us to deny half of who we are."

As I read the article, it seemed to ring true. The more I thought about it, the more it became clear that the author refers to. But in this connection let me point out that society is appropriate or become an oddball kind of an outcast. On man or a woman? (I'm not talking about male or female ways. He said that in this situation there was very little room for him to just be himself.

The other lesson in all of this is that those of us who find ourselves in an ill-defined middle ground in one aspect of life should be understanding, tolerant and accepting of those who are in some different and ill-defined middle ground. We are all victims of the "obsession with labeling" that the author refers to. But in this connection let me express a word of clarification and caution. Labeling is a kind of classifying something for the purpose of distinguishing it from other different but similar object or class is essential to gathering, classifying and utilizing information about everything. In science, it is called "taxonomy". Categorization is essential to any form of higher life. Animals have to be able to tell safe food from toxic food, harmless life form predators from parasites.

The trouble with classification is not from that process itself but from the attempt to force people or things into a classification whether they don't really belong or whether we don't want to classify them. Then is the misuse of classification, which is when people think he has the right system and all others should conform or where one class of object, people or behavior comes to be regarded as wrong or immoral and therefore is subjected to disapproval, penalties or persecution. Problems seldom arise from ideas, situations or classifications themselves but from their misuse and misapplications.

There are those in the CD culture who rail against labeling such as gay vs. straight, TVS, TGs, S/Ms and BJ/DJs. For there is nothing wrong with these categories. They distinguish one kind of person from another, one set of ideas and pleasures from another. We know that black and white, and down are different. But we don't have to put moral judgments on one or another of such groups and the people who belong to them. Those persons who would do away with "labels" explicitly just do not know what thinking is and how to do it. Thinking is a process of juggling concepts, classifications, and experiences that arc unchangeable.) Isn't it true that society is...
Re: "Newswire" (#63): As a member of the British based TransEss & Renaissance Education Community, I should like to warmly congratulate Linda Chenowith on her appointment as managing director of the Renaissance Education Association. Without wishing to sound "picky", I would just like to point out the record straight on the comment that she is the first genetic female (we tend to prefer the term "born woman") to head a national transgender community organization. In fact, our coordinator Stacy Novak has headed up TransEss for some ten years.

We believe her to be the first -- but stand to be corrected!

Yvonne Williams
Bwins, Essex, U.K.

Editor's Reply: The intent of the referenced remark was to distinguish Ms. Chenowith as the first genetic female (or born woman) to head an organization with affiliated chapters. It was not our intent to minimize Ms. Novak's long term as TransEss's coordinator.

Re: "A Patron Saint For Drag Queens?" (#62): I was somewhat puzzled by Brian Treglown's choice of Saint Eulalia. I would like to nominate Joan of Arc, who actually crossdressed (as a man). Better yet, she was executed as a heretic (with, at least, Church instigation) but later rehabilitated and named a saint -- sound like the acceptance of the transgender community?

Donna Wood
Publisher, The Master's Way
Newport Beach, CA

Vox Populi is the transgender community's "town square" for the exchange of opinions and ideas. If you have a response to any editorial, news item, or article appearing in Cross-Talk, please feel free to contribute. We suggest keeping letters to 400 words (one page typewritten or 2000 characters ASCII). Cross-Talk reserves the right to publish only those portions of a letter specifically addressing the issue. Personal attacks will not be published.

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In announcing the appointment of Cindy Pearlman to coordinate the program, Fair manager and Outreach Institute chair Alison Laing indicated that new innovations were designed to revitalize the long-running event in order to ensure its continued success. "As far as I'm concerned, there will always be a Fantasia Fair," Laing said, "and I am sure there are others in this community who feel the same as I do."

Many participants are returning for key positions in the 1995 event, including Dallas Denny, Kerri Reeder, Andrea Susan, JoAnn Roberts, Nancy Nangle, and Jennifer Brown. Emily Sheldon has been named "Fantasia Fair Ambassador" to promote the event.

Of the changes, Outreach Institute executive director Ariadne Kane said "It is great to see new life in a program so dear to my heart."

The prestigious Harvard Educational Review has issued a public call for papers for a planned special issue on relevant issues such as race, gender identity, homophobia, parenting issues and policy advocacy from a theoretical, research or practice perspective. The deadline for papers is September 1, 1995; an optional deadline of May 1 applies to those who wish to submit short proposals for feedback before proceeding. Those interested should request the Call for Papers from Harvard Educational Review, Gutman Library Suite 349, 6 Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Editor's Note: At press time, we were advised of the demise of the United Kingdom transgender support organization Gender Dysphoria Trust. A complete report by its last executive director, Fran Springfield, will appear in next month's issue.

CROSSDRESSING WITH DIGNITY: The Call For Transcending Gender
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HUMAN RIGHTS? EQUAL RIGHTS? SPECIAL RIGHTS?

Every day in the news, you can hear about some city proposing a new human rights ordinance. Also every day, you can read about some city like Cincinnati where a human rights ordinance has been voted into law by the city council. What usually follows is an outcry from some disgruntled citizen who wants to repeal it by putting it to a public vote. These laws all have the same common element. They have to do with discrimination against homosexuals in housing, employment, and other items they perceive to include as equal rights in general. The ordinance which Cincinnati City Council passed in 1992 outlawed discrimination based on sex, race, religion, disability, Appalachian origin or sexual orientation in housing and employment. In November of 1993, Cincinnati residents had the opportunity to vote on whether or not to repeal that ordinance. You didn't have to look hard to find someone speaking publicly on this topic.

Backers of the repeal measure turned the words "Equal Rights" into "Special Rights." They claimed that these rights are not needed. Yet when they get specific, they say they only wanted to remove the words "sexual orientation" from the ordinance. The rest of the ordinance -- including, of course, the religious part -- is okay. And after you hear them speak for awhile, it always came out that they are right-wing religious activists who only wanted to impose their religious teachings on everyone else.

Of course, they believe homosexual behavior is a life choice. We in the transgender community know this is not true. None of us know why we are a transvestite or a transsexual. What we do know is that the only cure is a medical one. None of us know why we are a transvestite or a transsexual. What we do know is that the only cure is a medical one. None of us know why we are a transvestite or a transsexual. What we do know is that the only cure is a medical one. None of us know why we are a transvestite or a transsexual. What we do know is that the only cure is a medical one. None of us know why we are a transvestite or a transsexual. What we do know is that the only cure is a medical one. None of us know why we are a transvestite or a transsexual. What we do know is that the only cure is a medical one.

Unfortunately, comprehension and forbearance are acquired virtues which some folks will never know. Many of us in the transgender community feel that we also need some form of protection from the so-called "normal" population. To accomplish this, some of the more outspoken individuals of our community have managed to tack on to these human rights ordinances such phrases like "sexual orientation" or "gender expression." If you are transgendered in any form, you are probably excited about getting something like this passed in your hometown. After all, it certainly can't hurt the cause... or could it?

In order to imagine how a law based on discrimination in our favor, might effect us in a negative manner, let's review some points that have come to light since certain minorities started getting special rights.

When it comes to employment, most ordinances state simply that an employer must not discriminate. The intent is to achieve "equal rights" for the minority workers. The problems arise when a select few twist it around for personal gain. They turn "equal rights" into "special rights," because that's what those select few believe it to be. It's almost like passing out guns for people to protect themselves, while at the same time also giving guns to bad guys who never before had one.

As I speak to you, keep in mind that I am a small business owner. I employ eight to ten people in my office. I also employ a large number of subcontractors, who in turn have many employees. None of my employees are minority. Most, not but all, my subcontractors mirror my company. Because my business is small and I do not contract with the government, I am not forced to follow any minority employment guidelines, like affirmative action. I do not hire protected minorities. It's not because I don't like them nor do I think they could not be excellent employees. It's because of discrimination laws. And it's because I plan to stay in business. Case in point: I've seen other small businesses who did hire some minorities. In more cases than I would like to count, if this employee didn't work out, and they were fired, they ratted back saying they were discriminated against. They now employ their "special right" by filing a lawsuit. The employer many times goes to court, plus spends lots of time and money, regardless of the outcome. Bigger companies may even settle quickly out of court because it's cheaper. Regardless, the business loses. And in the long run so do all minorities.

The bottom line is, if there are plenty of qualified people for the job, why take the chance and hire someone who may later be a detriment? This also holds true for someone who is transgendered. If there was a law in my town protecting, say, transsexuals, I would never consider hiring one. My heart goes out for the good worker, but the reality of real life business tells a different story.

And what about perceived minorities? Most of our girls out there have plucked eyebrows, pierced ears, shaved legs, or something. If you give reason for skepticism, you could be discriminated against because they suspect you could be
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relationships on things or events they hold in common while women base their same-sex relationships on interpersonal concerns, whether they hold them in common or not. What I have personally discovered is that the strength and security women provide for each other is unmeasurable. Sexism, like any other prejudice, is self-serving. By devaluing others, we can artificially raise the value we place on ourselves and our actions. Ironically, the devaluation of women by the transgenders is used to protect the individual from the woman within. If any of this rings true for you, do yourself a favor and at least take a cautious look at how you may be working against your own self interest. Yes, you will probably find the female part of yourself more compelling and maybe even have to face the possibility of complete acceptance, but at least you will begin to feel better about yourself.

(Copyright 1995 by Anne Vitale P.H.D. Dr. Vitale is a psychotherapist specializing in gender-related issues. She is an associate of the D Street Counseling Group, 630 D Street, San Rafael CA 94901, telephone (415) 456-4852, e-mail: aavvitale@earthwork.com. This column may be reprinted in any non-profit organization's newsletter if Dr. Vitale's name and address appears with it. Other publications must obtain written permission from Dr. Vitale. A copy of any reprint must be sent to Dr. Vitale.)

A WOMAN'S VIEW OF PASSING

by Linda Peacock

[Editor's Note: This article was written at the request of the editor of the Scream Belles, newsletter of the Central Oklahoma Transgendered Alliance, where it is concurrently appearing.]

After seven years in the transgender community, helping crossdressers come out, socializing with them, and working extensively with other wives, I still find myself somewhat perplexed about the urgent need a crossdresser has to "pass." "Passing" seems to become an obsession to many crossdressers -- it seems to be an intense, internal need to have people in the general public not realize that they are a genetic male, and instead believe that they are a true female. At times, it becomes an all-consuming need, dominating the crossdresser's life. As a friend of so many crossdressers, I have tried, as their friend, to help them look more feminine. I've advised on hair, makeup and the clothing they wear. As a wife, I do that all the time with my husband, and he does well, especially with his taste in clothes, but he realizes that there is no way he could ever pass as a genetic woman. When these men look in the mirror, they see themselves as these real women, and they believe that they pass. In truth, the resemblance may be very slight, or only in their fantasy world.

Experts say that all of us have both femininity and masculinity, so it would seem logical to me that a man could express his feminine side. However, it cannot be done with lipstick or a short dress or extra-high heels. Instead, it needs to come from within the man -- to be expressed as a true part of his personality and being.
Gentleness, caring, sensitivity to other's needs, patience, joyfulness at simply being alive are all attributes of femininity, I believe. I don't believe that femininity is an external thing, and therefore, I can only look into a person's eyes to find it. It glows from within, expressed through their eyes and through the warmth of their heart towards others. The truly feminine persons, be they genetic men or women, take pride in themselves, are self-assured and like themselves. They want to give, and not only receive. They are more interested in how "you" are than needing "you" to tell them how good they look.

The crossdressers who "pass" all are like this, to me. Although they may take pride in how they look outside, they nonetheless care more about who they are inside. They rejoice in their male mode, putting balance into their lives. They enjoy the best of two worlds -- the expression of both genders.

Internal femininity is elusive to many because of their intense drive for external femininity. For those crossdressers who understand that femininity is internal, it will be reflected from within to their outer person. The person who "passes" is a person who joyfully claims all that makes him/herself. He or she offers him/herself, and knows that life to the fullest. The gift of gender is just that -- a true gift of the many facets that make up each of us. The gift of gender lives within each of us -- and it is how we utilize it that allows us to "pass" through life.

[Lupe Paezoo is the Tri-Ess director of wives' and partners' concerns, an IFGE board member, and chair of the SPIEC board of directors. She also publishes the quarterly newsletter for spouses and partners The Sweetheart Connection, and may be reached by mail at P.O. Box 24031, Little Rock AR 72221, by e-mail to lupe17@prodigy.com or by phone at (501) 327-8758.]

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**BUT WHY CAN'T I PASS?**

_or, Crossdressing and the Mind/Body Connection._

By Janyne Cresap

I had just finished doing a makeover and product demonstration for the company I work for, when she asked if I had time to talk to her for a few minutes. "Why can't I pass?" was all she really wanted to know. I fixed her blush, powdered down her shine, and brightened her eyelashes. Small corrections indeed; the same corrections I make on women on the long journey of living, and nobody is mistaking them for men. The makeup help I gave her was so minor that most people would probably not even notice. She looked better but she still didn't look different. If she couldn't pass before I fixed her she wouldn't pass after. People were still going to say the dreaded 'oh my God, that's a man' although they might now add 'great blush thought'.

Driving home, I thought about her and about why she couldn't pass. Her looks were not the problem: What was it then? Height? No, not that. Weight? No. Hands? They were O.K.

I realized that to me, she was a man and because of that she looked like one. To be mistaken for a woman is something most men don't desire. Men go out of their way to make sure that doesn't happen. On the rare occasions in the real world when a man has to wear a dress it's a problem for him. He will do it on Halloween, or for an initiation, or a skit, or something like that ... but the idea of dressing in feminine attire and running to the car wash, dry cleaners, and grocery store is something he hates the thought of.

The reason for all this fear is that men need to be men and need all the reinforcement that they can get. When people view a man dressed as a woman they (1) See a woman. This is unacceptable to most men. To be seen as a woman makes men feel inferior, that they need to be the one they look at. To be thought of as a woman is just as bad as being thought of as overman. (2) See a crossdresser. Worst of all. To be thought of as a womanly man, a transsexual, or a transvestite threatens the very core of his masculinity.

Men want to be seen as men and some men wearing dresses want to be seen as men also. It is not until crossdressers have really become comfortable with themselves as crossdressers that womanliness becomes desirable. The 'girl' I helped with her makeup projected her masculinity. The 'I think, therefore I am' syndrome. Most crossdressers do not grow up with a lot of reinforcement for their crossdressing. They feel at some level that men are men and women are women, and those who cross that line are somehow in the wrong. In other words, they haven't learned to respect the woman within themselves. They haven't visualized themselves as women but as a man wearing woman's clothing. The reality is they are people wearing their own clothing. We dress ourselves up and pretend in front of a mirror to please the man that we are, we are being sexist. We are also being very manly, men decorate their woman to satisfy their own ego's all the time. When men decorate their own bodies in the attire of women some men do it to feed a narcissistic need. They remain a man looking at his favorite woman. If they decide to go 'public' with their feminine identity they are seen to be men dressed as women. The crossdressers that successfully make the transition to being accepted as women have made an internal transition and have accepted themselves as women. I don't think this comes naturally; it takes time, and the willingness to be fully feminine although male.

When I began to wear dresses and met other crossdressers the feminine pronouns came as a shock when they were directed at me. I didn't at that time have an internal 'she' that I could relate with. It wasn't until I internalized my femininity and became 'her' that my own personal womanliness was accepted by me. After that transition public acceptance came rather easily. The result being that when someone sees that I am a male in feminine form I am still accepted and moved freely about to do my business.

I am living more and more of my life today as a woman. I attend church, do my grocery shopping, and all of life's little chores as Janyne. Since I started this I have met and become friends with people who only know me as Janyne; they may suspect -- or be damn sure -- that there's a man in that dress, but they accept and really seem to like Janyne. The woman is the one they look at and she is the one they speak to. It just feels right to me to be Janyne, I love to hear my name called out by a friend at church, or the simple 'here you go ma'am, your orders ready' is right for me. The internal she and the cosmetically created image are becoming the person I am.

We walk along, with the man I also am. (continued on page 20)
HotBuzz
by JoAnn Roberts
"It is better to be hated for what one is than loved for what one is not."
— Andre Gide

The HotBuzz on the newsstands is the suspension of all feminine advertisers, the publisher of publications by Tania Volcn, Inc. In a brief message to readers, Merissa Sherrill Lynn, Founding Director of IFGE, stated that the convention would be cancelled, but the IFGE club, which makes the colors go on darker and deeper, she said, "I'm just barely making my room-night contract in Minneapolis."

In my Art & Illusion books, the most common correctors are yellow, green, pink and purple which are used on Caucasian and Asian skin. Now comes to correctors for darker African skin in Brick Red and Black, however, these correctors are added to foundation, not the skin. The Brick corrector will darken and enrichen a brown foundation that is too chalky or ashy. The Black corrector is used to correct deep brown foundation. More shades are on the way. The Black corrector is available from Shu Uemura. The Brick is available from Shu Uemura, Mary Kay and Iman.

One great retro look that was long overdue for a comeback is the sweater twin-set. For those of you young enough not to know what this is, allow me to describe. A twin-set consists of two sweaters worn in two layers. The inner layer sweater is usually a sleeveless shell with a mock-turtle collar or gentle neckline. The outer layer is usually a cardigan of the same color and texture as the shell. The twin-set when worn with a pencil skirt can be devastatingly sexy.

Oops! I forgot to mention tips for Spring. Colors are very, very bold and bright. Matte lipstick is "out" and shiny is "in".

Given that the feminine figure is back in style, many women, especially our "kids" of women, need a little help with their figure and can find it in the venerable girdle. But the new breed of body shaper bears little resemblance to the girdle that mom used to wear. These lightweight beauties use microfiber and extra-strength panels to nip and tuck here and there. The Valentino Intimo Couture bodysuit is said to knock a full two inches off the waistline and for just $100. More economical choices might be Bodysifters by Nancy Gane for around $35, Ball's Firm Control Waistiniper at $21, or Wacoal's sheer net longline girdle at $38. But the ultimate figure shaper is a corset and the new figure conscious fashions have revitalized the corset industry. Just about every designer now offers a corset or two. But, for my money, there's only one really great buy in a corset and that's from Axford's in the U.K. While a bit pricey (due to import duties and exchange rates) Axford's maintains the highest quality. I know that Best Value Products, Wildside, and Lee's Mardi Gras all carry Axford's corsets.

Lemme make an observation here. The World of Fashion really has no idea how to adapt runway looks to their individual sense of style. The women they choose to model runway shows are in no way representative of the average woman. Most models are too tall, too thin, and too young. The majority of women in the world do not look like runway models. They have trouble finding clothes that fit and look nice. The women who look the most "put together" are those who find ways to adapt runway looks to their individual sense of style. They have a unique way to wear what they wear. (no fashions at the supermarket). You best guide to dressing yourself is to observe real women in the real world and then adapt their styles to yours. However, there are times and places for wild fantasies too. Don't deny yourself those little pleasures.

Speaking of little pleasures, here are a few combinations that are knock-outs — Middlebary tony bar over cigarette pants with patent make-ups. Buster layered over a sheer tee, button front short skirt, fishnets and ankle strap sandals. Shiny stretch Lyca dress that bares the shoulders over bare legs and spike sandals — Clingy zippered jacket over hip-hugging mini, sheer hose and those ankle strap sandals, all in black.

Sky high heels are back and the feminists are fuming, but who really buys these shoes. The February issue of Mirabella gave a peek. It should be no surprise that the likes of Marisa Tomei, Vanessa Williams and Susan Sarandon have purchased stilettos, but would you believe the First Lady, Hilary Rodham-Clinton owns a pair of Bruno-Magli four-inch heeled Napa leather sling-back Mary Janes? Why not try it! How about Princess Caroline of Monaco and three-inch patent leather Mary Janes? Or Jane Pauley and Paula Zahn with Bally three-and-a-half-inch kidskin pumps? Yes, children, real women do wear high heels.

Since shoes play such a large part in both fashion and crossdressing, many crossdressers are faced with the daunting task of locating feminine shoes for masculine feet. You may have noticed a new advertiser in our pages, Queen Cushion Shoes. What makes QCS interesting is that they are manufacturers of women's shoes and they'll make women's shoes on a male shoe form. QCS, in their quest to revitalize the corset industry. Just about every designer now offers a corset or two. But, for my money, there's only one really great buy in a corset and that's from Axford's in the U.K. While a bit pricey (due to import duties and exchange rates) Axford's maintains the highest quality. I know that Best Value Products, Wildside, and Lee's Mardi Gras all carry Axford's corsets.

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about $125 to $175. This may seem high if you can buy your shoes in the local mall, but it’s cheap if you wear a size 14 man’s shoe. Call OCS at 1-800-422-6639 and ask for Athena.

The quest for Community continues. Two more organizations have signed on to the Pledge for Community. At its meeting in January, the Executive Committee of IFGE voted to take the Pledge which must be ratified by the full IFGE board at the convention in Atlanta. Linda Buten, Chair of the IFGE board, sees no obstacles and expects the full board to take the Pledge. Jane Ellen Fairfax, Chair of the Tri-Ess board, also informs me that a majority of the Tri-Ess national board members have approved a motion to take the Pledge and that as far as she’s concerned, Tri-Ess is on board. So, the Transgender Alliance for Community now has five national organizations participating. It is hoped that the Law Conference board will also take the Pledge soon. A meeting to plan Pledge partners participation at various events will be held during the Bi All in Cincinnati in June. Representatives of organizations wishing to participate in community-wide projects should come to the Bi All planning session. So far, the partners will be attending the NASW and the AAMFT conferences next Fall.

WHY CAN’T I PASS? ... continued from page 17

feeling the flow of our varied gender experiences, blurring the lines of convention, making the rigid in society discernable, and just being a person accepted and loved by God. Why can’t I pass? Well, I guess I can ... but who cares? I don’t need to. I don’t want to fool anyone. This isn’t a game anymore ... it’s my life.

[Janene Creasey is the editor of Alpha Bias, the newsletter of Alpha Chapter Tri-Ess, where this article originally appeared.]

THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY AND YOU

SOFTWARE YOU USE BEFORE YOU BUY

by Charlene Day

A computer is a great tool, but ... you need software to make it run. Perhaps you have a special task that you feel could be made easier to accomplish by the use of a computer. If you’ve been reading this series, you may be aiming at connecting with an online service to join the transgender community on the information highway. However, as you survey a list of commercial programs that might solve your problem you become wary: Will they be too complicated to use? What if they are not really suited to your task? Like all of us, your budget is limited so you too complicated to use? What if they are not really suited to your task? Like all of us, your budget is limited so you

About the Authors

Charlene Day is a member of ASP and owns many different kinds of computers than anyone else we know. The Software Labs may be contacted at 7800 14th Avenue NE, Redmond WA 98052, telephone (800) 569-7900; The Association of Shareware Professionals, at 545 Grover Road, Jackson, MS 39201; telephone (800) 362-6335.

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Perhaps you have gone thru all of the first seven steps then you can do so without fear, for all the cracks that were previously in your marriage will have been mended. You can now tell her that it is because you are a crossdresser that you are the person that you are, that the changes that have developed in you have occurred because being a crossdresser. I am not advocating that you go around the neighborhood shouting to everyone that you are a crossdresser, but should people ask about the crossdressing, this is your choice and you are the person who is. A person who is a crossdresser that you are the person that you are, that you are a crossdresser that you are the person that you are, that you are a crossdresser that you are the person that you are. The crossdressing is caused by heredity, some believe in the self-imposed guilt and actually learn to take pride in being a member of the transgender community. While I am not familiar with the twelve steps in Brenda's program, I have twelve steps that you can take on the road to pride. The first step of course, is to admit that we are crossdressers, and more important, to admit that we are not crossdressers by choice. While some believe that crossdressing is caused by heredity, some believe in the cause being in our upbringing, and some believe it to be a combination of the two, it is clear that we did not choose to be crossdressers. Since we did not choose to be crossdressers, then the choice must have been made for us by a power far greater than we are, and that leads to the second step.

The second step is to put our trust in God, however we know Him. It matters not what God you believe in, only that you put your trust in Him. Recognize that He has a purpose for each and every one of us on this earth, and then recognize that his making you a crossdresser must be a necessary component to the fulfillment of his purpose for you. Now if we put our faith and trust in God and recognize that our crossdressing is a part of His purpose for our being, then I think the logical third step is to turn to Him and to ask Him for guidance, to say "Thy will be done". Now we take a little turn from the traditional 12 step programs. Our next (fourth) step is to educate ourselves. Our next (fourth) step is to educate ourselves. Our next (fourth) step is to educate ourselves. Our next (fourth) step is to educate ourselves. As crossdressers we spend a good part of our lives as males, dressed as males, but there is no reason why we cannot be our feminine self within. Without destroying the positive masculine qualities that you need to function as a male, carry over as many of the feminine qualities that you develop while dressed into your masculine role. The sixth step is to integrate the feminine in with your masculine. Remember your crossdressing is a tool to make a better person out of you. Now we come to the seventh step ... to truly emulate the woman, to feel empathy toward her. We cannot feel the pains and discomforts that only a female can feel, but we can attempt to visualize what it would be like. Listen to the things they complain about, try to visualize yourself in their shoes and how you would feel. Recognize the woman as an individual and as a person, a person who is an equal to you. You are a woman inside, so treat her as you would want to be treated yourself.

The eighth step will be the hardest for most of us. It is time that we come out of the closet. If you are married and your wife does not know about your crossdressing, this is the time to tell her. If you have gone thru all of the first seven steps then you can do so without fear, for all the cracks that were previously in your marriage will have been mended. You can now tell her that it is because you are a crossdresser that you are the person that you are, that the changes that have developed in you have occurred because being a crossdresser. I am not advocating that you go around the neighborhood shouting to everyone that you are a crossdresser, but should people ask about the changes in you, you can be honest and tell them how being a crossdresser has helped to make a more masculine and feminine you have, and most important, what qualities you would like to have; especially the feminine. As crossdressers we attempt to emulate the female in as many ways as possible; therefore, when dressed we should try and display as much feminine qualities as we possibly can. Use your crossdressing as a tool to develop those feminine qualities that you desire to have, and to further enhance the qualities that you do have. As crossdressers we spend a good part of our lives as males, dressed as males, but there is no reason why we cannot be our feminine self within. Without destroying the positive masculine qualities that you need to function as a male, carry over as many of the feminine qualities that you develop while dressed into your masculine role. The sixth step is to integrate the feminine in with your masculine. Remember your crossdressing is a tool to make a better person out of you. Now we come to the seventh step ... to truly emulate the woman, to feel empathy toward her. We cannot feel the pains and discomforts that only a female can feel, but we can attempt to visualize what it would be like. Listen to the things they complain about, try to visualize yourself in their shoes and how you would feel. Recognize the woman as an individual and as a person, a person who is an equal to you. You are a woman inside, so treat her as you would want to be treated yourself.

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to match its thoroughness; to be fair, this is the first year that publishers Vicky Lee and Caroline Eggerton have ventured out of familiar territory, and at least their series were no serious inaccuracies that I could detect. I'm certain coverage will improve in future editions.

The Guide also included a section reviewing a number of books and magazines on crossdressing, features on law and hair removal, and a "who's who" of drag performers in the U.K., with photographs. There was also a very well-stated editorial on the differences between the terms crossdresser, transvestite, and drag queen.

I'm sure that if I was going to visit the U.K. anytime soon, I'd want to have a copy of this with me.

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The Diva of Dish
by Angela Gardner

Another month -- another frothy whip of words from the word processor of the queen of the comma, the princess of punctuation. Yes, it's time for The Diva of Dish by me, Angela Gardner. So, hold on to your wigs, here we go...

DRESSING UP IN THE GREAT WHITE NORTH: I started February by flying to Toronto on the first day of that frigid month and boy, are my arms tired. Sorry. I can't resist a cornball joke. (My mother was frightened by Shirley.) I was there as the Outreach Institute's resident gender specialist Ari Kane. The show was meant to focus on how crossdressing explorations and intimate relationships between lesbians who were born female and lesbian transsexuals. The magazine also had articles on relationships that cross national borders, abuse, lesbian nurses, and osteoporosis; a profile of musician and graphic artist Jennifer Gilmour; two short fiction stories, a commentary on feminism, and two very funny pieces on writing love scenes for lesbian novels and a proposed questionnaire on heterosexuality.

12 STEPS TO PRIDE... continued from page 22

better and more complete person out of you. If you have educated yourself enough about your being a crossdresser, you will be able to explain to them that your crossdressing is a tool to bring out and to develop the positive feminine qualities in your personality.

Nineteen, take pride in who you are. You are a unique individual, a creation of God, one who has received a special gift from God. Be proud that He saw fit to choose you to be the recipient of that special and wonderful gift. By now you should not only have alleviated the guilt, but should have reached the point of being proud to be a crossdresser. Step number ten is to search to God for ways to use your crossdressing to His glory and His purpose in life for you. There is a special reason that He made you a crossdresser, and now is the time to seek that purpose and to fulfill it.

Become active in your group, and in the transgender community. Help the community as it has helped you. This is step number eleven.

You have reached the twelfth and final step: To seek out the little sister, the one that has not started her journey down the road to pride. Take her hand and lead her, for you are a leader.

You are a unique and special person, a Crossdresser, a transsexual, and a child of God. That is something to really be proud of.

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custom made skates that had been fashioned to look like black high heeled pumps. Lloyd, for it was he, also wore a traditional flouncy skirt skating dress. Isabelle wore a mustache and men's clothes, kind of like a barbershop quartet getup. When they completed their routine they skated over to the after-competition interview to wait for the judge's score. The judges gave the couple a 49 which didn't seem to please Lloyd since he made an 'up yours' gesture at the end. They were pumped. Lloyd felt that Mrs. Westinghouse, the candidate for President, was really a man. She was also his wife.

"B" MOVIE BABE IS BAD GUY: Surfing the Saturday afternoon "B" movies sometimes pays off with bonuses for those of us who get a kick out of finding crossdressers worked into the plots. I happened across a 1961 sci-fi/rock and roll movie called Riders of the Storm one recent snowy afternoon and fortunately didn't have to watch the whole thing to spot the crossdresser. I tuned in to the close end and right away that Mrs. Westinghouse, the candidate for President, was really a man. She was running on a right wing platform, and a pair of platform pumps. When James Hopper stars in this kernel of cornball science fiction as a Vietnam vet who saves the country from the dark side, it's worth a look. How about a secret agent who looks like a gingham dress. Isabell wore when she accepted the Oscar for Funny Girl, said, "I thought the movie was fantastic. I wanted to cry, but my eye-makeup would have run." Can't have our famous drag queens looking like Alice Cooper after a hard concert. Good work keeping dry eyes, Lysinka.

What else has she been doing lately? Starring in a film for HBO titled Witch Hunt. Keep an eye peeled for it in your TV (that's television) schedule and check it out.

LENIE SPEAKS: We've no longer the forgotten minority and we keep getting reminded more often every day. Jay Lenio was doing his monologue on January 26th and he started to say something about panty hose. He prefaced his remarks by saying, 'Here's something of interest to the women in the audience, and the transvestites ...' Now what talk show host would have bothered to mention us just a decade ago? First they start mentioning us in their monologues, then RuPaul shows up as a guest. What's next? I'm ready to hostess my own show, Mr. DeMille.

AND ... that's it. The end is here. Keep those cards and letters coming and don't take any wooden pantyhose. Cha, cha, cha!

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TRANSITION: MAKING IT WORK

by Christy Julian

It was early fall. In Central California, that means daytime temperatures in the high 90s ... a relentlessly oppressive atmosphere adding to tensions of a more personal nature. Many of us desire and months of planning always seems to be put to the test. Having lived in the fear of people finding out, I now faced the challenge of telling them. The cat is about to come scrambling and scratching from the bag, never to be returned. How would the employees react to a new woman as the marketing director? Especially when they had known her for the last two years as a man.

Due in a great part to invaluable resources and supportive friends and family, overall, the response was non-climactic. About every other day I ask myself why I waited so long. There were a few tense moments, yet they settled quietly into the daily routine. I believe that sharing some of the planning, pitfalls, and triumphs will be beneficial to others in the community. The key is having a personal network of support. Without my dear friend Dr. Jan Eder, who not only gave me guidance, but was there to fend off the arrows of disappointment, confusion, and disbelief, none of this could have been possible. Kym Richards, both as a personal friend and as a mentor, also played a critical role. People like Karen and Randall Larimore, being there to say "oh, yeah, that happened to me too." Some people that I've not even met and some people that may not even remember me also helped pave the way as those that have gone before. Particularly, I found great comfort in Anne Blackwood's discourses on the subject of transition.

The three most important things I can emphasize are planning, planning, planning. Of course, planning. Plan your wardrobe, plan when and how are you going to be told, plan how to minimize the impact on others and yourself, plan what you will do if it doesn't work.

My first step in the plan was purchasing IFGE's Guidance & Transition. It gave me a good foundation for the issues that needed to be addressed. It was also helpful to present the book to my employer: It helped set the stage for them, but additionally it added credibility. It was essential that they knew that they were not the first company to ever face this. One of the first realizations that you face is that there is little or no legal recourse for you in this situation should you not accept the offer. The United States Supreme Court has specifically ruled that termination of transsexuals as a 'disparate force in the workplace' is justified. You cannot force your employer to accept you. Even if you could, it would be short lived. As a friend told me early on, "if they want you gone, they'll find a way." So before you plan transition on the job, make yourself a valuable employee. Make them want you no matter what! Make sure they would feel the loss if you left.

If you are late one or more days a week, call in sick regularly, or perform only at the minimal standards, your prognosis for survival is minimal without transition in the way, and all with it. Show up early, stay late, ask for additional responsibilities. Learn your job and the jobs of several people around you. Be able to fill in for others. Make your employer see that they would be up a creek, without both oars in the water, if they let you go. When I began to tell my employer of my intent, the first thing I said was "If this is a problem for you, I will leave quietly. My concern is for the best interest of the company. I would never do anything to harm it or its reputation." Most importantly, if you say this, be honest about it and be prepared to back up your words. Combining luck, divine intervention, and design, we devised a plan to facilitate the change. I was pleasantly surprised to receive pledges of support not only from my immediate supervisors but also the company owner and all of the company management. We talked about arranging an assignment at another facility, and that was a serious consideration for some time. (Frankly, I'm grateful that we did not choose that option. I have, on a number of occasions, needed to rely upon the relationships and respect I have developed with the employees.) A person feeling to make the transition was an effort to not hide the real me. I was not ready or willing to simply exchange my male past. I'm simply not willing to live with hiding and the associated anxiety any longer.

Being an agent, a polygraphic evaluation and supervision for several months prior to the debut of the new me, was a great way of adding credibility. I have difficulty imagining how I would tell somebody that I 'just decided to do this'. Most people need the reassurance that this is a decision backed by professional opinion. Being passable and conservative in my attire were
necessities. This is a situation where standing out in the crowd is not to anyone's advantage. People will be more accepting if they are not embarrassed by being associated with you. I would advise anyone to considerate of—and conscious of—other people's feelings. It is inevitable that someone's tastes will be stepped on. All the same, it is easier to make up people that understand that it was unintentional.

We preceded my transition with the following letter to the staff. (For privacy purposes I've changed references to the company name.) It evoked both laughter and tears, but most of all it was effective. Feel free to use any of it that you might find useful:

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#62 (December 1994): The dilemma faced by transcended teenagers; Biblical references used against crossdressing and transsexualism and passages refuting them; The fight for transgender human rights; A patron saint for drag queens; Comparing "who" to "what" you are; Review of the movie Ed Wood.

#63 (January 1995): Why defending your viewpoint may inadvertently cause pain to others; Do therapists get a bad rap?; Why educational outreach may be a side benefit, rather than the intended goal: Crossdressers admire women and want them to emulate them; Partners setting priorities and making decisions to strengthen a relationship; Skin care advice for winter; Review of the movie Ed Wood.

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To my Friends and Co-workers at XXX-Company:

After much contemplation, planning, and consultation among the management of XXX, it is necessary for me to make an announcement that should qualify as the most bizarre thing you have ever heard announced. Please understand that this is not an easy thing for me to do. I'll try to make it as short as possible.

I've truly enjoyed the last two years at XXX more than any other place that I have ever been employed. For all of my working life I've struggled to keep my private life professional and my private life private. Although, I'm certain that all of you are aware that I've always been a little (to some "very" is a better word) different. I am appreciative of your acceptance, camaraderie, and cooperation in spite of—or because of—that fact. I've been aware of how different I am since I was a small child (even before entering elementary school), I have always struggled to make my life as normal as it could be, in spite of that. In all these years, I've wanted little more than to feel or be what others consider normal. At the age of 12, I had my first counseling session for a condition that is known as Gender Dysphoria. Since that time I've tried every conceivable avenue to reach some compromise (on numerous occasions it has brought me to the point of contemplating suicide). Until the beginning of this year all of those efforts to fix the problem have been futile. Since January, I have been in counseling and treatment in preparation for what is clinically known as Sex Reassignment.

It is important that you understand what this is and what it is not. It is not homosexuality (believe me that would be much easier to deal with), it is not crossdressing or transvestism (although we all define ourselves to some degree by the clothes we wear). The latest neuro-research has shown it to be what would best be called a birth defect, resulting from exposure or lack of exposure to certain bio-chemical substances while developing in the womb. This sets up a predisposition to gender-confusion that may be accentuated by social influences. Which all simply means I did not choose this. It is a condition defined and treated by psychological and medical means. While it may be strange to know someone personally, thousands of people in this country are involved in this process of transition at any given time, with those who have successfully completed the process numberng more than 10,000.

Please understand that if it were possible, I'd go through this without exposing anyone else to the discomfort and embarrassment it might cause, either to them or me. Nonetheless, I can assure you that I will do all that is in my power to minimize the effects it will have on you. Experience has shown that the novelty wears off and things return to normal in a period of a few days to a few weeks. In reality, other than appearances, very little will change. You will see the same job responsibilities and performance, for good or bad, (sorry, there is no evidence that hormone treatments improve penmanship or spelling). Along with social and physical changes, this process includes a new name, Christine. This allows me to maintain the use of accounts listed under my initials and also maintains a summer when I say it (I was afraid that too much change would be difficult for some people to handle). Additionally, arrangements have been made for me to use the third restroom as a "gender neutral" facility to avoid any discomfort or threat to the privacy of other employees.

For those of you that can find it within yourself to be supportive, understanding, or even just tolerant, I am grateful. For those of you that can not, frankly, I understand. I can only hope that in time, I will at least earn your respect.
I arranged a week of vacation to be taken at the time of transition. On the first day of that week the letter was delivered to the employees. On Friday we set up a meeting of the entire staff, including myself and Dr. Eder. The plan was to allow people a few days to chew on the thought, even if they were not ready to digest it. None of us were prepared for the reaction. I’ve never had to face such an angry mob before. They were for the most part defensive, unsympathetic, vile, and downright mean. I tried speaking to them but wound up leaving the room in tears in short order. At that time Dr. Eder took over. I can’t give you the details of what was said, but the session continued for nearly an hour past quitting time. On their way out several people found me to pledge their support. (One of the guys offered to beat up a particularly cruel woman in the group. I declined the offer.) I spent that weekend empathizing with Dr. Frankenstein’s monster. I regularly looked out my window to see if the townspeople were marching on my castle with torches. This is a slight exaggeration, but I emphasize the word slight.

I was naturally anxious on Monday morning. The first employee I met as I entered the building had not been there on Friday. I greeted him with my arms wide, a smile and saying “surprise”. He simply replied “on reading too many papers written by a social worker wife.”

First it was New Age. Now it seems every time I pick up a TV magazine I read about the Berdache and how the Noble Savage had their act together and supported crossdressing. Is there a ladylike term for “horse puckey”? Is there a proper social worker’s term for it? Do I need one? Nah. Horse Puckey!

Equine excretory expulsion for those of you who like euphonious three dollar words. Look, I’ll be the first one to admit my ancestors – White Europeans all -- exploited, enslaved, killed, maimed or mistreated just about any minority or majority group that crossed their path ... or if the bodies hanging off my personal family tree didn’t do so themselves they sat back and passively let their leaders do so while they were in turn exploited exploited. So my ancestors and probably yours were wrong, but there is not a blessed thing we can do about it but try to keep it from happening again. I can tell you one thing, though: Idealizing those we mistreated will not help.

Let’s try to keep things straight here. In just our little community we have an alphabet soup of factions; TV, TS, CD, TG and on and on. Each group has a separate identity and resents being lumped in with the others. To someone outside the community a man in a dress is an oddball, and they could care less about the differences in the community. But you care, don’t you?

I can’t even remember the name of the tribe. What I do remember is realizing the cowboys and the Indians had a lot more in common than I thought. Both sides were revisionists as the inspiration for our democracy and independence, issued an invitation to the locals to join the Confederacy. The locals declined, so the Iroquois wiped the tribe out ... to the last man, woman and child. Of course the missionaries had to cease their efforts; there was no one to convert. Memories ignored these differences.

I am a Cub Scout leader for some time, and when I took over a pack in North Central Pennsylvania I wanted to teach my den about the Indians (they weren’t ‘Native Americans’ back then) indigenous to our area. There was a nearby monument to the Moravian missionaries who tried to convert the locals, with a cryptic inscription about how they had to abandon their efforts, but no reason was given. Some research on the public library finally came up with the reason. It seems the Iroquois Confederacy, a loose confederation of several tribes often touted by historical revisionists as the inspiration for our democracy and independence, issued an invitation to the locals to join the Confederacy. The locals declined, so the Iroquois wiped the tribe out ... to the last man, woman and child. Of course the missionaries had to cease their efforts; there was no one left to convert. We know practically nothing about them and I can’t even remember the name of the tribe. What I do remember is realizing the cowboys and the Indians had a lot more in common than I thought. Both sides were human and did some reprehensible things.

Speaking of research, I tried to do a little about the Berdache, but found remarkably little information. Granted, puritanical anthropologists of the time would not be exactly eager to write about gender bending among the Indians, and the Indians wouldn’t exactly welcome a curious anthropologist, so there is not much information available about what really happened before the Europeans got here. What little I could find suggests it was a rare religious practice in a few tribes and had nothing in common with crossdressing (continued on page 33)
WHATS ON THE TV TONIGHT? by Christine-Jane Wilson

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Tasha's World by Tasha Barnard

"Now that's why Harold's sales are up and you guys are down. He'll do anything to capture a sale!"

The Passing Scene by Kay Lightner

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THE BEARDED LADY... continued from page 31

... as we think of it today.

So what's the point of all this? To not get carried away with trying to prove what we do is right or normal by grabbing and misusing something out of context from another culture. Your need to dress in feminine clothing is based in your culture and your psyche. It's interesting to know what others do and feel, but let's keep it in perspective. We are all human and all have the same old mixture of good and bad in us. We need role models and inspiration, but idealizing the Noble Savage is not the way to do it.

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GREAT MOMENTS IN TV HISTORY
from the archives of Ralph Judd

W11l1ams and Penny Marshall on

The discussion took place last September, in the aftermath of several "TS dykes" being allowed to enter the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival for the first time in MWMF history. It is adapted here in "roundtable" format; that is, responses by a list participant to another's comments have been inserted to appear in proper context. Participants are identified only by first name, except where a last initial was necessary to further differentiate. The only significant editing of this transcript was to eliminate "off-topic" side discussions, to correct spelling and to expand Internet "slang" into full definitions. Where a contributor preferred the term "womyn", it has been left intact.

Mary Ellen: While I agree that a MTF transsexual is a woman and should get into MWMF like any other woman, this brings up a point about the rhetoric of the debate about transsexuality that rubs me the wrong way -- the assumption that all transsexuals are MTF. There are plenty of FTMs out there, too, and many if not most of them go through a period of living in the lesbian community before they begin their transition.

Debra: You make an excellent point. I have no figures on the number of FTMs out there, but I am told it is more than is generally assumed. I think we should include FTMs in the discussion, because it shows how lopsided the whole debate is. The bottom line is not about admission to certain events, but whether we define a person's gender by their anatomy, or how they function in society, and what is meant by "sex change". We don't talk about whether FTMs should be accepted in "men's space", but that is important too.

Linda: Men's space? Is FTM access to men's space an issue? Is there a men's space that FTMs have been denied access to? Honestly, I don't know ... I'm asking since I've never heard of such a thing.

We had a FTM who came to our TG support group in Santa Cruz for a while. He existed in lesbian separatist space for a long while before transition. He said he could be as butch as he wanted as long as he identified as a womyn, but he said he was quickly rejected by many of his former friends in the community when he came out as TS. This was eye-opening to me, since Santa Cruz is known for some lesbian separatists who also strongly reject MTFs. Seems like the discrimination axe swings both ways.

Mary Ellen: As far as the MWMF debate goes, what about our "sisters" who are born women but are really our brothers? Apparently they pass the test and can attend if they would want to.

Ralph: I'm sure that depends on the amount of hormone therapy and surgery that they have had. Testosterone is very powerful stuff and changes the looks immensely. Most of the FTMs that I know that have had hormone therapy for any length of time and the bilateral mastectomy would be immediately identifiable as men and not allowed in, in my opinion.

On the other hand, the majority of the FTMs that I have talked to said that they would not want to attend the MWMF because they would not feel comfortable in an all-womyn environment.

Karen T: Leslie Feinberg considers herself transgendered, she no longer has female breasts, and her voice is permanently lowered from hormones. How does the lesbian community take that?

Karen F: I don't know about MWMF, but at Powersurge this year there were a number of FTMs who clearly live and identify as men ... have full beards, male appearance and were generally being referred to as "he". While I knew about their histories, I still found it odd considering that Powersurge is a woman-only conference.

At the same time, they only this year began to allow bisexual womyn to attend. They also allowed TS womyn to attend, but still barring pre-op womyn from dungeon parties. So it has seemed to me that while some self-identified men were allowed full access to the conference, there were definite limitations imposed on participation by some TS womyn especially those who were pre- or non-op, despite the fact that the handful of such womyn present clearly identify and live 100% as womyn and as lesbian.

Kathryn: I recently read Kate Bornstein's book, Gender Outlaw: on men, women and the rest of us. I agree with her contention that, in fact, gender is somewhat of a choice for some people and also that in an absolute sense it is limiting for TS womyn to say that they are "really" women trapped in men's bodies. It keeps the two gender systems alive and admits no possibility of multigender systems.

So any possibility for change rests with the post-ops. And for even post-ops, it's scary. Coming out can't be taken

Part Three
Edited by Kymberleigh Richards

This month, we continue the transcript of a discussion of transsexual lesbians which took place on the Internet woman-only mailing list.suppl.

Cross-Talk continues the transcript of a cyberspace discussion among lesbians on the concept of lesbian transsexuals.

Edited by Kymberleigh Richards

Participants are identified only by first name.

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lives. It is probably the easier row to hoe. Being out and silent. I couldn't believe their logic. They had to fight for stolen goods. This year, they came back still griping about the "men" who want into the festival, but this time, I wasn't

Jeanne: Two summers ago some separatist acquaintances

Robyn: I recall when I first came out, and for a time after that, people saying to me or about me, "if only you were gay...", as if, or their acceptance of me, would somehow be easier. Yes, I was referred to as 'he'. I still get referred to as 'he' sometimes. It disappoints me, but I try to be good natured about it.

Kathryn: I was at a gallery showing a few months ago. Several friends of mine had work on display. One of them is transsexual. There was an older gay man there who also had work on display who referred to my friend as 'he or she'. Maybe he's trying, but I found it trying. This man can probably refer to a bitchy, campy gay man as 'she' but he can't call my friend, who looks very feminine at 6'2", 'she'. The point is that why should a post-op transsexual woman or man come out even when in lesbian space they'll be trashed? Where's the point when it seems that the mountain is as tall as the moon and as sheer as a glacial crevasse?

I think it's totally admirable that there are TS women and men who have come out and survived and who are changing the ground on which this battle must be fought. But much more change will be necessary before many transsexuals will feel comfortable coming out. For starters, there hasn't been a lot of feeling of community among post-op transsexuals. The general attitude has been that pre-ops have the transition in common but afterward two TS women have nothing more in common than any other two women.

Robyn: The 'battle', as you call it, is fought in small steps. If I can change one person's mind about transsexuals in a week, I suppose I have made progress. Because the battle is mostly fought one person at a time.

Jeanne: Transsexual separatist acquaintances returned from Michigan with TS buttons, brochures and other stuff that they ripped off of a TS woman... I don't remember who it was. These are highly PC women who uphold the PC-est of PC standards in our lesbian community. I had a picture of TS in my mind, so I said nothing as they laughed and displayed their stash of stolen goods. This year, they came back still griping about the 'men' who want into the festival, but this time, I wasn't silent. I couldn't believe their logic. They had to fight for their rights as dykes. But those "men" step in and lay claim to 'their' territory? Shool.

Robyn: I can't disparage post-ops for getting on with their lives. It is probably the easier row to hoe. Being out and working for transsexual rights and acceptance can leave one severely vulnerable. I imagine it can be hell on relationships since the partner must of necessity be the object of speculation/rumor/criticism/whatever from time to time.

Kathryn: Well, those who are lesbians might have something else in common and that's the exclusion by elements in the lesbian community. I've noticed that most of the out TS activists are lesbians or lesbian identified bi women... or Leslie Feinberg. It seems that one goal of the emerging TS community might be to foster that spirit of community and identity. A post-op TS identity, what a concept...

Michelle: I read Gender Outlaws about a month ago. I agree to a great extent that the male/female dichotomy is almost totally a cultural dichotomy; i.e., it's all in our heads. I do not accept that women are inherently spiritually, mentally or emotionally different from men. Society has created a set of characteristics associated with maleness or femaleness and that folks may identify with one set of these culturally defined sets more than the other.

Suppose that we lived in a society where the set of culturally defined gender sets were reversed; i.e., everything we believe spiritually, mentally, and emotionally about women was assigned to men and vice versa. Would you still consider yourself transgendered? What would be the basis of your gender dysphoria? Feelings that you should have different genitalia or feelings that your spiritual, mental, and emotional self is more aligned with what society or you defines as the other sex?

From my point of view, all that is said to make a person a "woman" on the inside is gender-specific. I consider all that "inside" stuff to be a cultural byproduct. I feel that the "inner sex" could be an example of that.

Debra: Heck, Karen, I'd be in shock to see a penis on a woman! Of course, that is precisely the problem that is driving me to seek surgery. Imagine what it would be like to have to live with an unwanted penis. The cultural Transsexuality isn't a political issue. It is in no way infringes upon the rights of women or lesbians, unless of course you are talking about those who would seek to hurt others. I wouldn't ask you to accept me in my present condition in the situations such as Michigan. Just realize that I don't like the contradiction either.

Linda: I'll second that. I used to be fairly body comfortable -- it was the body I had. I used to be fairly body comfortable -- it was the body I had. It wasn't until I started transition that I started developing a larger amount of body confidence. When I am feeling male, should I be excluded from showers and the women's locker room/showers.

It seems that by the original postulate. In my mind, the "women-born women" sets up the idea that things are, and dare the reader to prove them wrong. The more points you make that undermines their original "definitions", the further they retreat into their own "previously non-stated side definitions". It sets up the discussion with the mirage of a "universal truth", one that is only "universal" in the mind of one of the participants.

I don't think we, as queers, have to prove why we are worthy of space and rights. I don't think we, the TS community and its supporters, have to prove why we should be included into space for women. I think if discrimination is practiced, it is up to the discriminators to prove why they feel they are justified. All arguments that I have as to why post-ops TS women should be excluded from space for women are based on a faulty definition of what constitutes a woman. Not once has an advocate for "women-born women space" said that she would allow post-op FTMs who have had transition undergone surgery, into their own space, previously, "transsexual" or "before". We need to counteract false assumptions and false statements of "truth", but we also need to recognize when we are being sucked into a game we cannot hear in, due to the dynamics of the original setup.

Spelling is not the point. We are talking about those who would seek to hurt others. I wouldn't ask you to accept me in my present condition in the situations such as Michigan. Just realize that I don't like the contradiction either.

Michelle: I don't accept the cultural definition of gender, but rather only a scientific one. I don't consider my spirituality, mental life, or emotions to be "female". I consider them to be "human" well, they are "female" in the sense that I, a woman, have them, but I believe that this exact same "inner self" could be exhibited by a man. I don't deny that the cultural gender definitions are powerful, pervasive, and have a large impact on how we feel as persons and how we live. It would be silly to deny this. People of one physical gender who identify with the other gender as culturally defined may well be better off taking that label and, in many cases, having surgery to better resemble that sex. After all, our society places a heavy penalty on those whose physical gender is opposite their cultural gender and on those who don't fit the XXXY dichotomy. Given the rejection that lesbians and gay men feel when this dichotomy is enforced, it does not surprise me at all that we have many transgendered people.

Chris: I always wanted to be a boy because of all that they got to do, and in fact, until I was about 12 I played with boys somehow. Girls just didn't fit in either camp, boy or girl. Once I hit 12, I was not allowed to play football or baseball. These boys didn't exactly want me around so much either. I remember towards the end being told by one boy that I could not go hiking and looking for arrow heads because I was a girl. I pointed out that I was tougher than one of the boys. I fought him and won. The other boys wanted me to really beat him up, but I do not understand the need for brutality and I just couldn't.

Karen: We need to be forced into thinking about gender outside binaries, and pre-op Ts seem to be illustrating that most effectively. I have yet to say that if I was at Michigan taking a shower, and a pre-op woman was showering from across me, I would be disturbed to see a penis, because a penis is something that I associate with men. The cultural Transsexuality isn't a political issue. It is in no way infringes upon the rights of women or lesbians, unless of course you are talking about those who would seek to hurt others. I wouldn't ask you to accept me in my present condition in the situations such as Michigan. Just realize that I don't like the contradiction either.

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These hotlines are run by non-profit organizations, and may not be available at all times as a result. Listing followed by % are for primarily TS-oriented groups; listing followed by @ are for heterosexual TV/CD only. Most other listings are for "open" (both TV/CD and TS) groups. While we make every effort to keep these updated, phone numbers may change without notice. If you find an incorrect listing, please let us know!

NEW ENGLAND/NORTH ATLANTIC REGIONS:

Cross-Talk, Texas Ass'n. of Transsexuals, Houston: (713) 827-5913
TS Peer Support, Houston: (713) 333-2278
Ingersoll Gender Center, Seattle: (206) 329-6651
Androgyny, Santa Monica: (213) 467-8317
Rose City Gender Center, Portland: (503) 230-1036
PACIFIC NORTHWEST:

Swan's Inner Sorority, San Jose: (408) 297-1423
Salmacis Feminist Social Society, Eugene: (503) 688-4282
Transsexual Lesbians & Friends, Seattle: (206) 292-1037
F.A.T.E., Vancouver: (604) 254-9591
Emerald City, Seattle: (206) 284-1071
Gender Identity Center, Denver: (303) 202-6466
GeoTrans, Dallas: (214) 416-9532
Transpitt, Pittsburgh: (412) 231-1181

The Transsexual Dyke Issue...

Karen K: Safe space equals "away from men". Many women who want to exclude TS women say that they are bringing a maleness into women's safe space. Kim: The confusion that we see go on: "no white women", "no men", "no transsexuals", etc. -- isn't usually an attempt to use power to deny someone the privilege of being part of certain space. It is more often an attempt to protect something that feels special or sacred. Unfortunately, people who formulate our list rarely have the latter without always being willing to reexamine the parameters. I wish "safe space" could be so simple -- i.e., "if everyone around me could be just, I will feel safe". To some degree, that is reasonable -- we check out people who can validate us and understand us without questioning, doubting, or denying us who we are. We expect that people who are like us will be most able to do that, don't we? I would love to have a single equation I could follow for what is safe, not just a single "just" but a fair but. Is that possible? How do people get into trouble with most organized religions? They are seeking some black-or-white, clear-cut directions on how to live their lives, and end up living by human-made rules rather than living anything even approaching spirituality or faith, let alone thinking and growing.

How do we find ways to feel safe and also live in the gray area? How much of our safety depends on the "know" and the "don't"? How much can we push our boundaries to grow so that those are not the only things that give us a sense of safety? How can we find ways to allow ourselves to keep thinking and feeling and adapting as we've faced with new issues, new people, new concepts? How do we create the political and social arena which we desire without hurting and excluding those who they feel should belong in that space also? How do we find ways to talk about what issues are really underlying the surface-level politics and semantics?

For the past several months and at this point, I think it is clearly not applicable to the situation with Camp Trans at the WMFF. A transsexual going in either direction literally puts everything they are and own on the line in order to transition and be as close to their correct gender as they can. Most of us lose most of our possessions, friends, family and our careers in the process. That is very, very different from a group of men pushing the aspect of male privilege that supposedly gives them the right of access to womyn in all settings. You are comparing a group of TS womyn asking for inclusion by their own to this. I think once you focus in on the difference you will see that this just isn't the case.

Karen K: I have another concern which has to do with attention: Similarly men often seem to me in mixed groups to want to claim a space for men, and be as close to their correct gender as they can. Most of us lose most of our possessions, friends, family and our careers in the process. That is very, very different from a group of men pushing the aspect of male privilege that supposedly gives them the right of access to womyn in all settings. You are comparing a group of TS womyn asking for inclusion by their own to this. I think once you focus in on the difference you will see that this just isn't the case.

Events Calendar

For information on national transgender community events to Cross-Talk, P.O. Box 944, Woodlands Hills CA 91365 WSAs must be accompanied by a written authorization by an officer of the sponsoring organization or by listed in their group newsletter. Information will not be accepted via e-mail.

(Continued next month.)
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