

Happy Birthday Renaissance

Second anniversary celebrated this month

Alison Laing, Managing Director, has this to say, "The vision of the handful of hopefuls who met that first evening in May of 1987 has come to fruition. Yes, we've come a long way in these two dozen months but there is still a tough road ahead of us. Our goal of reaching out to the public and professional communities, as well as

Mayor's commission focuses on transgender issues

The Mayor's Commission on Sexual Minorities (MCSM) is actively addressing issues of particular concern to transsexuals and transvestites. During the summer of 1988, the MCSM formed a Transgender Issues Work Group (TIG). The TIG will help the commission identify and address problems faced by Philadelphia's transgendered citizens, especially those living full or part-time in the role of the other gender. Members of the TIG include transsexuals, gay and heterosexual transvestites, female impersonators, androgynous individuals, and professional therapists.

One of MCSM's first goals is to become educated, itself, about the realities faced by transgendered persons. At the January 24 MCSM meeting, TIG members shared their perspectives and some personal histories with the commission. Paula Sinclair, Whitney, and Nancy spoke for TIG. They presenting the current medical and psychological theories about transvestism and transsexualism. Then the TIG members talked about the discrimination transgenderists meet in their daily

lives, from the private to the public sector including the gay and lesbian communities.

Denise Szekely summed up the presentation, "Transgendered persons are discriminated against for the same reasons as gay and lesbian people: because of the general public's misunderstanding and fear of those different from them." Szekely is a MCSM member, coordinator of the TIG and a member of Renaissance.

The TIG is planning opportunities for transgendered individuals to tell the commission about any discrimination they have encountered from the gay community or when trying to get city services. After hearing from these community members first hand, the TIG will recommend actions that MCSM can take to address these issues. The first organized opportunity was held on Sunday, Feb. 12 at the *Allegro II Bar*. Dates and locations of future opportunities will be released later in the year.

Anyone wanting more information about TIG or the commission can write the MCSM at Room 143, City Hall, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107, or call 215-686-2191.

to those directly related to our unique community, has been our driving force. We have made great strides on all fronts. The challenge, now, is to consolidate, organize and stabilize our growth.

"One of the most important differences from other transgender organizations is the way Renaissance operates: sharing. This guiding principle means sharing the work that has to be done to make the organization function; sharing the leadership to assure a diverse representation in directing our activities; and sharing our lives with one another to help each of us grow in acceptance of self and others. One of our goals in sharing the responsibilities is to avoid 'burn out' of any one person and, at the same time, build a cadre of dedicated, experienced people to support continued growth.

"It would be impressive to review the statistics of these past two years; ever increasing membership; new chapter development; public appearances on national and regional television and radio; and press coverage. But what counts more is how you, the individual members, associates and friends, feel about Renaissance. My question to you is, 'Has Renaissance made a difference in your life?' I hope your answer is the same as mine."

Chapter news & notes

If no address is given for an organizer, write or call the office.

New Jersey

South Jersey: Tina Louise, chapter leader. Write c/o, Box 2, Glassboro, NJ 08028. Tina needs your help to get this group organized. If you are willing to contribute your time and energy to the group, please contact Tina or the office. Until further notice, no meetings are planned.

New York

Manhattan: Carla Miller is organizing this group. Contact her at 212-545-1206. There has already been one organizing meeting held April 21. We will keep you informed as this develops.

Ohio

Columbus area: An initial meeting was held in March and another in April. Anyone interested should contact: Forming Group, Box 287, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068.

Pennsylvania

Greater Philadelphia area: Teri Kay, chapter leader. Write c/o, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Meets third Saturday of the month at the original King of Prussia location. Doors open - 9:00 p.m.; New Member Orientation - 9:30 p.m., Main Program - 10:30 p.m.

No smoking is permitted in

the meeting rooms.

The May meeting will feature Tinsel Garland and the topic will be makeup for the stage.

Please note that the Spring/Summer starting time is in effect for the Phila. chapter.

Reading: Susan Marshall, chapter leader: Box 14421, Reading, PA 19607. Next meeting will be on a weeknight, May 10. The location is a restaurant, *This Is It*, 801 Walnut St. in Reading. If you are planning dinner before the meeting, make a reservation. Call 215-373-9601.

Harrisburg/York: Elsa Larsen is coordinating a Lower Susquehanna Valley chapter. Interested parties should write her at Box 7412, York, PA 17404.

Vermont

Burlington: All activity here is on hold until further notice.

General Information

The Chapter Handbook is an in depth set of guidelines to help you develop a successful organization.

For those who want to start a group but do not wish to affiliate with us, we have Community Outreach Bulletin #1, *Creating An Organization*, available for \$1.25.

is Directory Assistance has them listed under their full name not the initials. The correct number is (617)-899-2212. We regret the error and take back the award.

Correction

Last month we awarded a MONA to IFGE for having an unlisted phone number. That information was incorrect. The problem

And, don't forget about...

- The PCHA Food Bank: Please bring canned and dried food to the next KofP meeting.
- Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available.

- 3R addiction recovery support group meets at King of Prussia on third Sat. of the month.
- The Pen Pal Project. If you are willing to write letters to pen pals, please let Alison know. Write to the office, c/o Dept. PP.

Renaissance News

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For the latest information about events call: 215-640-9449, 24 hours a day.

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

Business Report Thru 31 March

Membership Count: 273

Starting Balance: \$2305.05

Income:

Dues & Donations	\$665.00
Publications	122.45
<u>From Chapters</u>	<u>692.50</u>
Subtotal	\$1479.95

Expenses:

To Chapters	\$1025.00
Newsletter	510.16
Office	50.04
<u>Postage</u>	<u>127.15</u>
Subtotal:	\$1712.35

Ending Balance: \$2072.65

Renaissance Meeting Calendar

May

- 10th Reading Chapter
- 21st Greater Phila. Chapter

June

- 10th Reading Chapter
- 17th Greater Phila. Chapter

July

- 8th Reading Chapter
- 15th Greater Phila. Chapter

Opinion - Forum - Information

Economic discrimination, real or imagined?...JoAnn Roberts

A recent issue of *Twenty Minutes*, the newsletter of the Twenty (XX) Club, carried a satirical cartoon of a boat leaving for the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) convention in San Francisco. The boat fare was shown as "\$999" and left on the dock was a suitcase labelled "transsexuals." Elsewhere in the issue, Veronica Brown laments the high cost of attending such events noting that \$999 was about one-tenth her annual income and claims there is economic discrimination in our community, particularly against transsexuals.

I set about to collect information on the various major events and the costs to attend them. The table below is the result. I had to make some assumptions for the analysis and these are clearly listed above the data. While some may not agree with my assumptions, I believe the conclusions are still valid.

The first thing I noticed was the relatively equal cost across a majority of the events, about \$300 per person, excluding air fare. The exceptions are *Fantasia Fair* and the

IFGE convention. Both events are much longer than an extended weekend, but when examined on a comparable, extended weekend basis, they are 40% to 60% higher. Are these two events worth this much more than the others?

In the case of *Fantasia Fair* there is a significant number of extra cost activities that account for 50% of the cost difference. (I stacked the deck, picking the highest cost options.) In the case of the IFGE convention it is not the extras so much as the cost of room and board that drives up the price.

But there is also a big difference between the IFGE convention and all the other events. The IFGE convention is a *working* convention. It is not meant to be a "fantasy holiday en femme", as are most of the other events. Yes, there is fun, but, from my experience at last year's convention, there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes in committee meetings and ad hoc discussions. This is typically what occurs at any type of professional conference. Similarly, the IFGE convention plans to move around

the country each year giving people from different areas a chance to attend and contribute as their time and finances will allow. For example, next year's IFGE convention will be in Boston. The cost for people from that area will be nil, while the cost to attend from the West Coast will be very high. This does not seem like discrimination to me. It seems to treat everyone fairly.

I recognize that many transsexuals are near destitute from the extremely high costs involved in reassignment. This is not the gender community's fault. In some cases, it is poor planning on the part of the transsexual. They are not, however, economically unique. There are many transvestites who cannot afford to attend these events, albeit for different reasons.

These events serve an important function in helping to create a cohesive network in the community. The promoters and producers recognize this function and, it seems to me, do all that is possible to keep the costs low.

Cost Analysis of Various Transgender Events

Assumptions & Definitions

Duration: Extended weekend, Thurs. - Sun. Some events are longer and therefore costs could be even higher than shown.
 Food Costs: Assumes \$50 for 3 meals, \$35 for dinner & lunch, \$15 for lunch & breakfast, \$7 for breakfast. No alcoholic beverages.
 Room Costs: Assumes a double occupancy with a rate of \$35 per person unless other specified in the event brochure.
 Extras: These are additional cost seminars, services or luncheons available to a participant.
 Air Fare: Assumes a uniform average cost of \$300 per person for a round trip.

Days	Cost Items	Fantas Wknd	Texas "T"	Spring Poconos	TC SprFling	Be All	Fall Pocono	FanFair	IFGE
Thurs	Registration	\$49.00	\$75.00	\$250.00	\$315.00	\$190.00	\$250.00	\$240.00	\$175.00
	room	\$45.60	\$44.00	incl.	incl.	\$35.00	incl.	incl.	\$35.00
	meals	\$35.00	\$35.00	incl.	incl.	incl.	incl.	incl.	\$35.00
Friday	extras	\$10.00	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$150.00	\$25.00
	room	\$45.60	\$22.00	incl.	incl.	\$35.00	incl.	incl.	\$35.00
	meals	\$50.00	\$50.00	incl.	incl.	incl.	incl.	\$10.00	\$35.00
Sat.	extras	\$35.00	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$80.00
	room	\$45.60	\$22.00	incl.	incl.	\$35.00	incl.	incl.	\$35.00
	meals	\$50.00	\$50.00	incl.	incl.	incl.	incl.	\$10.00	\$7.00
Sun	meals	\$15.00	\$15.00	incl.	incl.	incl.	incl.	incl.	\$15.00
Totals	Event Sub-total	\$380.80	\$333.00	\$300.00	\$315.00	\$295.00	\$300.00	\$435.00	\$477.00
	Air fare	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00
	Total	\$680.80	\$633.00	\$600.00	\$615.00	\$595.00	\$600.00	\$735.00	\$777.00

Registration for all 8 events
\$2,835.80

Air fare for all 8 events
\$2,400.00

Total Cost for all events
\$5,235.80

Project Friend aims at enhancing literacy

The Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) of Philadelphia has announced a literacy project designed to meet the particular needs of sexual minority adults. MCC is a Christian church which has served the needs of the sexual minority community in Philadelphia for over seventeen years. They are expanding their ministry to incorporate adult education as a natural outgrowth of their basic mission.

"Project Friend" has a tutor staff of eighteen committed people,

trained and ready to work with gay, lesbian, and other sexual minorities who desire to improve their reading and math skills; to complete their GED; to meet some personal goal (such as passing the driver's test); or to learn English as a second language.

Each "Friend" or learner who enrolls in the program will have a chance to enhance their self-esteem and to gain access to additional learning and job training opportunities.

"Project Friend" is a joint effort

between the MCC and the sexual minority community. They need help in the form of additional tutors, but also in referring people to the program who would like to improve their basic educational and living skills.

Anyone interested in participating or obtaining more information may contact the Metropolitan Community Church, P. O. Box 8174, Philadelphia, PA 19101 or they may call the Mayor's Commission on Sexual Minorities at 215-686-2191.

Facts about lipstick

- British women invented modern lipstick in the 15th Century.
- Ancient Egyptian women were the first to use lipstick.
- Actress Sarah Bernhardt caused a scandal by applying her lipstick in public.
- There are about 2500 shades of lipstick on the market today.

- In the first century religious zealots chided women who wore lipstick.
- The all time favorite shade is Revlon's *Love That Red*.
- British women had to do without lipstick in WWII. Petroleum products used in the manufacture of lipstick were needed for the war.
- The modern retractable lip-

- stick tube was invented in 1920
- Matching lipstick and nail polish appeared in 1939.
- The average tube costs \$2.25 to buy and \$0.15 to make.
- In the 1700's British women were threatened with penalties for wearing lipstick.
- Lipstick lasts about one year. Any longer and it gets rancid.

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Paula Jordan Sinclair... **The NewsQueen**

An increasing number of television shows are based on real stories, often gleaned from court records or from the pages of supermarket tabloids. In hopes that a big name producer is reading this column, we start off this month with a selection of cases that would make fascinating scripts.

A former bus driver, Bruce Allen Lyons, 33, recently pleaded no contest in a Los Angeles courtroom to charges that he robbed 21 area businesses and forced female employees to give him their panties. But despite the embarrassment Lyons suffered from having his fetish revealed in court, he still fared better than the two men who were arrested in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, and fined by the nation's Moslem Religious Court under a law that forbids crossdressing. According to the *Kuala Lumpur Sun*, the two were wearing skirts, T-shirts and soliciting sex when officers of the country's Religious Affairs Department arrested them. The men each paid a fine of \$183 rather than spend four months in jail. They got off lightly. The law provides for fines as high as \$366 or jail terms of six months.



Earlier this year, Chinese health officials interrupted a wedding between a farmer and a former Red Army soldier and ordered a thorough medical exam for the bride. "She" turned out to be a man—Ye Xing, 26 year old. The groom also was a man.

According to reports in the *Tianjin Daily*, Ye acted just like a woman during the aborted ceremony, wore stylish women's clothes, and a lot of makeup. The heavy makeup was "her" downfall; it attracted so much attention that village officials ordered Ye examined. They then proclaimed him to be a man "without any sex change phenomena."

Ye was fired from his government job in the village of Xiangdiyuan in southern China's Fujian Province. But at last reports, he is still living with the intended groom.



Another marriage didn't end quite so well. A Tennessee judge sentenced Mark Cunningham, 27, to 35 years in prison for the second-degree murder of his wife, Regina Arlene Cunningham. He said he shot her because he believed she was cheating on him. Regina had become a woman after sexual reassignment surgery.



Meanwhile in Long Island, a man was found guilty of killing his wife, and faces a maximum penalty of 25 years to life. The jury agreed with prosecutors that Joseph Pikul, 54, a wealthy Wall Street analyst, killed his estranged wife because she threatened to expose him as a transvestite during a upcoming custody battle for their two children.

The case has caused sensational headlines since the body of Diane Pikul, an assistant to the publisher of *Harper's* magazine, was found in a highway drainage ditch last October. When Pikul was arrested a few days later, he was wearing a bra and panties. Despite the murder charges and the disclosure of his transvestism, Pikul was able to retain custody of his two children until his trial began.



Ecclesiastical cases, too, are rife with script ideas. Take the example of Susana Linares, 34, a transsexual computer technician in Madrid. After her sex change, she had all of her records changed to reflect her new gender. She even went to her parish church to have her baptismal certificate changed so she could get married by the church. And that was when her problems began.

The priest scratched his head and referred Linares to Antonio Cardinal Goiochea, the archbishop of Madrid. "The soul has no sex," the cardinal said. Once it was imprinted with the sacrament of baptism, that was that. But what about marriage, Linares asked, wouldn't it look strange for two baptized Catholics to get married if both had male names? Goiochea saw the dilemma and referred the question to Rome where it has rested for several months.

But the answer is simple, according to the Rev. William Smith, a theologian at the Archdiocese of New York seminary. "I'd tell her, 'Fine, you're baptized. So why fiddle with the books?' We don't think that surgical mutilation changes the facts." He added that the church would not perform her marriage anyway because she is a transsexual. Nor would a Catholic hospital have performed the surgery. (Thanks to Teresa in Manasquan, N.Y. for sending in this item.)



Its been almost two months since the 61st Academy Awards show, but what would you want to bet that none of the hundreds of motion picture and television producers who were watching the ceremonies have ordered scripts on the two crossdressing bits—James Stewart's supposed fear of wearing Kim Novak's high heels, and Martin Short and Carrie Fisher walking on stage in identical dresses.

While a remake of *Vertigo* would seem to be a natural for a high-heeled Stewart, we would prefer a transposed version of *Rear Window* in which Stewart's neighbors spy on him while he tries on the clothes of his fashion model girlfriend.

Short's crossdressing seems to be more public, and more of an

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On The Town with Alison

It's always "party time" at the Mardi Gras Boutique

In the most unlikely places one sometimes finds hidden jewels. Such is the case with Lee Brewster's Mardi Gras Boutique.

Tucked away in a corner loft in the meat packing district of Manhattan, Lee has created "Heaven" for crossdressers: 5000 sq. ft. of goodies. Everything you might desire to create the "perfect" woman is available here: wigs to shoes, lingerie to dresses, and everything in between (and, unlike Fredericks, in your size too!)

The boutique has been in operation for well over 10 years and Lee is somewhat of a celebrity in the community. She started by booking trips to New Orleans for Mardi Gras and eventually began providing costumes for the trip. Finding the costumes and other essential materials, like shoes and stock-

ings, soon grew into the now famous Mardi Gras Boutique.

The original location at 10th Ave. and 42nd. street is still in operation as a book store. The book store carries one of the most complete selection of TV/TS publications anywhere. Materials range from the typical "adult" mags, to popular books (e.g. *Art & Illusion: A Guide to Crossdressing*) to clinical texts (e.g. *Transsexualism and Sex Reassignment*).

The main store is now located at 400 W. 14th St., at 9th Avenue. You will not, however, see a great picture window display as you approach. Rather you will notice a large, dark grey door with "400" painted in big white numerals. (This is a warehouse district you know.) Positioned to the right of the door is a small speaker housing

and a buzzer button. Press the button and announce yourself. An elevator will descend to greet you, replete with a shop employee to be your guide. Upon arriving at the third floor, you will be greeted, usually by Lee herself, and shown around the store. Tourists are advised not to drool over the stock. Lee carries most every item in every size possible.

The best part of the store is Lee's policy of quality goods at reasonable prices. The best buys are wigs and shoes. A wig that might sell for \$50 to \$75 elsewhere can be purchased for \$35. The shoes are fabulous. Sizes start at 10M (mens) and go up to 13W. The average price for a pair of 3" heels is about \$50. Lee also sells jewelery, hosiery and cosmetics. Stop and say "Hi" next time you're in the Big Apple



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5th anniversary celebration set for commission on sexual minorities

Looking for a gala event where you can wear your most glamorous evening clothes, have a fabulous banquet, dance until midnight and still help a good cause? Well, the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Sexual Minorities is holding *the* affair of the season on June 3.

The banquet will mark the fifth anniversary of the commission which was created to champion the issues associated with sexual minorities. The commission works for transgendered people as well as for lesbians and gays. Its Transgendered Work Group has been in operation for nearly a year.

The Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance protects sexual minorities from discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations. Yet sexual minorities occasionally encounter difficulties not covered by the ordinance. This is especially true for transgendered persons.

In addition, not all sexual minorities understand the difficulties faced by members of other groups. "Sometimes, the diversity among sexual minorities brings divisiveness," said Paula Jordan Sinclair who helped organize the commission's Transgender Work Group. "Discrimination against transvestites and transsexuals is just as onerous as discrimination against homosexuals. But through cooperation, exemplified by the commission's activities, we can end this horrible practice."

Echoing this encompassing theme to the commission's work, Shirley Chisholm will address the fifth anniversary banquet which will be held at the Wyndam Franklin Plaza Hotel in Philadelphia. Her keynote address will be "Unity In Diversity." Chisholm was a New York State representative in Congress and several years ago became the first black woman to run for president.

The banquet will begin at 8 p.m. followed by dancing from 10 p.m. until midnight. Before the banquet, there will be a reception with Ms. Chisholm, the members of the commission and other leaders from city government, the lesbian and gay community and the transgendered community.

While Renaissance is not primarily involved in the climate for transgendered people in Philadelphia, the organization has worked closely with the commission in the past and will continue to do so. For example, several Renaissance members are active in the Transgendered Work Group. This cooperation is important because the board and various members hope that any advances in civil rights for transgendered people in Philadelphia—the fifth largest city in the nation—may be repeated in other cities.

"We have real hope that the commission will be able to make some big differences in the lives of transgendered people," said Alison Laing, managing director of the national board. "That is why we must show our support for this commission and its anniversary celebration."

Separate tickets are available for the individual events of the evening. The cocktail reception is \$50 per person. The dinner, which includes the address by Chisholm, is \$50 per person. The dance following the dinner is \$10 per person. A ticket for all of the evening's activities is \$75.

A portion of the money will be used to support the commission's activities because it receives no city funding for that purpose.

Renaissance member Denise, who is also a member of the commission, has tickets. Show your support. Call her at 215-790-0793. Or you can call the commission at 215-686-2191.

New board members elected for IFGE

The International Foundation for Gender Education has announced the election of seven new members to their board of directors. IFGE, based in Waltham Mass., is the publisher of the *TV/TS Tapestry* and the organizer of an annual convention for the transgender community.

Elected to the IFGE board were Karen Baumgardner (CGS), Eve Burchert (Chi-chapter Tri-Ess), Betty Ann Lind (Outreach), Rupert Raj (Gender Worker), JoAnn Roberts (Renaissance) Maureen Taylor, and Samantha Walls. The new members will serve three year terms.

Roberts, a founding member of Renaissance, has been critical of IFGE operations in the past. She says, "I'm looking forward to participating on the IFGE board. I see my election as a mandate from the community to help IFGE set clearly defined and achievable goals. My primary interests are education and communication. I think my skills are best applied in those areas."

The full IFGE board meets each year during the annual convention. This year, the board will consider a proposal made last year by Roberts and Alison Laing to create a gender group congress.

The Renaissance proposal suggested a congress of representatives, one representative from each gender group, elected/selected by that group, to voice that group's special views or needs and to help IFGE set policy and goals.

Merissa Sherrill Lynn, Executive Director of IFGE was initially opposed to the congress saying it had been tried before, unsuccessfully. Lynn apparently reversed her decision later in the year and requested groups to nominate a representative. (Laing is the official representative from Renaissance.) It is expected that the board will approve the proposal.



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NewsQueen from page 5

enjoyable activity. He certainly has great legs and didn't mind showing them off.



Now, from matters of art, we turn to matters of science. In a new surgical procedure, doctors at the University of Chicago Medical Center are using skin from the forearm to fashion a new penis for men who lose their organs to accidents or diseases and for female-to-male transsexuals.

The technique uses a flap of skin and fascia—the fibrous tissue under the skin's surface that encloses muscles—taken from the underside of the forearm. Skin taken from this part of the body has the same degree of sensitivity as the skin covering the penis, said Dr. Lawrence Gottlieb.

Details of the procedure as it would be used on transsexuals were not reported. But when employed to reconstruct the penis of male accident victims or disease sufferers, the new technique can produce a phallus that is so sensitive to the touch that ejaculations are sometimes possible. In addition, the report said, male patients can have their urethra extended to enable them to urinate "while standing."



From the latest advances in science we move to a latest trends in pop culture—an attitude set to music called "voguing." It combines the look of runway modeling with a bit of gymnastics, a touch of ballet, and a bit of break dancing. Voguers also have the soul of a drag queen, which isn't surprising seeing as how voguing began in the mid-'80s in uptown New York's black and Hispanic drag clubs.

Voguing takes its names from the fashion magazine *Vogue*, and started as a parody of the angular strut runway models use to show off couturier fashions. Practitioners soon began aping the atti-

tudes of other characters, such as Marines, yuppies, or street gang members. The goal—if only for the time you are voguing—is to be the role you are projecting, not just *do* the role. Because most of the roles are archetypical individuals, voguing is done solo, and many devotees don't vogue themselves, but cram the downtown Manhattan clubs to watch the big names literally strut their stuff.

While voguing has moved away from its roots in the uptown drag clubs, voguers still have a lot in common with crossdressers. For example, voguers say that realness is of paramount importance; the movements, the clothing, the accessories the attitude all have to be authentic. Then there's what one voguer called the "expression of self-appreciation." Recently the magazine *Artforum* took a look at voguing and noted that voguers are "members of a despised subcult (who) convert the hostility of the church, the homophobes, the middle class and their families into self-love."



In addition to being the newest in pop culture, drag has also made it in the highest academic circles. For those who worry about such things, the term "drag queen" is now properly a part of the English language. With the publication this past March of the newly revised, 20-volume second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*O.E.D.*), "drag queen" takes its place among the nearly 60 million words and terms that have received the imprimatur from the last word on words.

The *O.E.D.* not only lists words that are generally in use throughout the English-speaking world, but tells when they were first written. However, the dictionary is as conservative as it is comprehensive. For example, neither "transvestite" nor "transsexual" were

listed in the *O.E.D.* until supplements were published in the early '80s. However, the first edition *O.E.D.* lists "transvest" (to clothe in other garments, e.g. those of the opposite sex) as being used as early as 1652.

But as we say, better late than never. Or, in the precise words of co-editor John A. Simpson, "I like to think *O.E.D. 2* is the dictionary of record of every aspect of human emotions."



Speaking of dictionaries and definitions, a lot of transgendered people object to being described as "abnormal" because of the connotation that their difference is a deficiency. But in fact, abnormal only means outside of the norm. Now, thanks to some recent polling, we can see just how abnormal (or normal) we are:

- 41% of all Americans believe it is important to be well dressed at all times;
- 60% do *not* spend a lot of time on their personal appearance;
- 67% believe secret files are being kept about them for unknown reasons;
- 68% do not like other to notice and comment on their appearance;
- 94% of American men would change something about their looks if they could;
- 97% of all Americans think their spouses are honest with them about anything really important most or all of the time; and
- 99% of American women would change something about their looks if they could.



Like 61 percent of all Americans, Miss Sinclair reads the daily newspaper. But unlike 56 percent of her countrymen who are at their best in the morning, she often forgets the things she reads before noon. So if you see an interesting article on those who transvest, clip it and send it to her at the Renaissance office. Be sure to note the name of the publication and date.

National Gender News

from around the TV/TS community

Atlanta Tri-Ess, *The Dixie Belle* - Angela reports on a club in Tenn. called New Beginnings which she and her spouse have been frequenting. The club has two FI shows and Tuesday night is Amateur Night. Sounds like good fun. The club is located at 2910 Bristol Hwy., 615-282-6881.

We also like the Belle's idea of contacting public officials about ordinances against crossdressing. So far the responses have been positive in that no state (Ala.) or county laws prohibit such activity. They do caution that some cities may have laws which supersede the county's. Good work, girls.

NGN

The XX Club, *Twenty Minutes*, Springfield, Mass. - Veronica Brown continued her tirade against TVs in the ladies' loo. This time, Brown caroms back and forth, in a near hysterical frenzy, over a variety of issues. One gets the distinct impression that she not only dislikes TVs, but all men in general.

Brown likes to quote extensively from Harry Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* and

tries to use the quotes as substantiation for her issues with TVs. One observer likens Brown's quoting from the 23 year old text as "transsexual fundamentalism."

Ironically, Benjamin believed that transvestism and transsexualism were part of a spectrum of gender issues.

NGN

City of Lakes Crossdresser's Club, *CLCC News*, Minn. - Seems like CLCC is having an identity crisis (aren't we all?) They're wrestling with a name change to better reflect their purpose. The proposed change, City of Lakes Cross-Gender Community, does maintain their acronym. While the name may be cumbersome to pronounce, they feel that it will project their image as an education and support group rather than a social club. Whatever name they choose, their goals are on target with us. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." And speaking of a rose ...

NGN

A Rose, *A Rose News*, Scottsdale, Ariz. - In the Feb. issue Wendi Pierce writes of a personal conversation with Dr. John

Money, affectionately known in sexuality circles as "Dr. Kink." Wendi questioned Money on the relationship of sex and gender.

There are many in our community who believe that sex and gender are not linked. Money does not agree, and further, feels that since he coined the usage of gender role/identity, he has the right to include sex and gender in his definition.

In reading the literature and in our personal conversations with many counseling professionals, the prevailing thought links sex role and gender role/identity. Indeed without that link there would not be gender dysphoria.

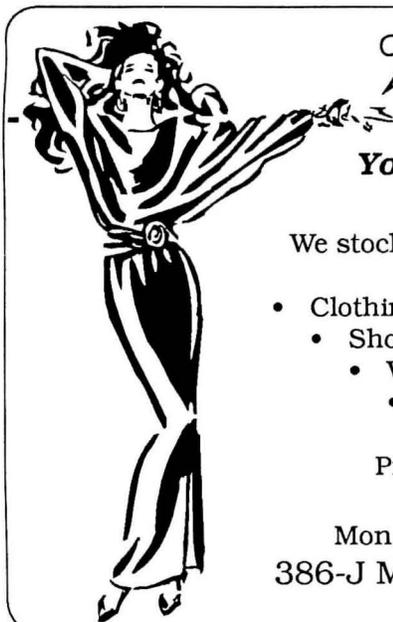
In the Mar. issue, Pierce labels herself a transsexual and takes up the issue of "historical baggage" for transsexuals. She is not buying Veronica Brown's sob story. While Pierce agrees that women, in general, do experience economic discrimination, she does not believe that women, or transsexuals for that matter, must bend to the yoke of mediocrity. Pierce has made her transition on the job and now lives and works full time as a woman.

NGN

Chicago Gender Society, *The Primrose* - CGS tells us of a new group being formed in southern Illinois. The *Chameleon Club* will be an open group based in Springfield. Gwen Ferguson is the organizer. We'd like to welcome Gwen et. al. to the community. For information write to her c/o 505 W. Vine St., Springfield, IL 62704

We guess that the *Primrosers* heard what the *Belles* were doing in the political arena and didn't want to be left out. The Chicago ladies contacted the state Attorney General's office to support an expansion of Illinois "hate crime" laws to protect sexual orientation. A legislative liaison officer con-

continued page 11



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NGN...from page 10

tacted CGS almost immediately and expressed a high degree of interest in our community. It was reported that he was quick to see the difference between sexual orientation and gender preference, a mental feat one does not expect from a civil service employee.

We strongly support any activity that brings the proper political attention to our community.

NGN

Some of our readers may remember a TS support group called **The Gathering**, based in New York. We thought they had folded shop, but we were wrong (the first time this century.) They have resurfaced with new leadership. Anyone interested in attending their meetings should contact them c/o David E. Tolbin, Box 29, NY, NY 10021

NGN

Transsupport, *Trans-talk*, Portland, Maine - Another group has surfaced in the New England area. *Transupport* has been around for 17 months, but they just got around to writing their first newsletter. They are an open group for both TV and TS people. Anyone from that area may contact them at Box 17622, Portland, ME 04101, 207-854-3528.

We gleaned this tip from their missive. To make pantihose or stockings last longer; first put them in the freezer overnight, then wash and dry them. Miriam swears her hosiery lasts ten times longer. We have achieved similar results with just the washing.

NGN

F₂M, *Rites of Passage*, Tenafly, N.J. - This is one of the more interesting newsletters we've received in a long time. It is unique in two respects; it is entirely hand lettered (quite neatly too), and it is for female to male transsexuals and crossdressers. Curiously enough, we've been discovering more F-t-M transgenderists lately.

We chuckled at the article on

making a realistic phallus and urinating while standing up. We were sure that only male TVs were interested in such matters.

NGN

L.I.F.E., *L.I.F.E. newsletter*, L.I., NY - Looks like we aren't the only ones to question what national Tri-Ess does for its chapters. LIFE member Beth had been pushing for affiliation with the national group, but has since changed her mind. The reasons? She says, "Although Tri-Ess was not able to deliver the magazine (*Femme Mirror*) or help us to contact new members, they were able to send out dues notices, on time. They were also able to send me a letter which insisted that all members of LIFE must be Tri-Ess members. I cannot ask people to join an organization which does not keep its commitments to either individual members or affiliated chapters."

No further comment required on that, but we can't pass up this item. LIFE is one of those groups that uses the "cut 'n paste" method to create their newsletter clipping articles and cartoons from other publications. So, it is a little foolish of them to include a copyright notice with their newsletter.

NGN

IFGE, *TV/TS Tapestry #53*, Waltham, Mass. - This "quarterly" has slowed down to a semi-annual; one pre- and one post-convention issue. At least they are being honest about the reason — no capital.

It also seems they don't have the original contributions they used to have. Better than 50% of the editorial material in the issue came from previously published sources. Three articles from this newsletter were reprinted. Almost half the magazine is commercial and personal ads.

We note that the editors must think that "widows" and "orphans" are women whose spouses have died and children without parents.

NGN

TransEssex, *Narcissus*, Basingdon, England - Stacy Novak, group coordinator, has totally revamped *Tweenie*, the group's former publication and renamed it *Narcissus*. The new publication is a mini-magazine, done on slick paper, with an international distribution inherited from *Chrysalis International*. We plan to exchange articles with *Narcissus* in the near future.

NGN

Emerald City, *Emerald City News*, Seattle - We apologize for the snide remark last month about this newsletter turning to "fluff." It hasn't, although the ladies of the great Northwest are not above a little fluffery for fun. They are planning the "Lavender Valley High School Spring Prom." Sounds like a lot of fun and the cost of \$15 is very reasonable. This is an idea that could catch on with other groups around the country.

NGN

Indiana Crossdresser's Society, *IXE Newsletter*, Indianapolis, Ind. - We noted the business card of the Indianapolis Police Department's Police-Community Relations officer in the IXE newsletter. That is a great step toward fostering a better understanding toward our community.

NGN

En Femme Publications, *En Femme magazine*, Trenton, N.J. - Robyn Ann Dormer writes to tell us that *En Femme* is also celebrating its second anniversary with issue #12 this month.

Dormer, who is the chief editor, artist and publisher, says that she now has access to desktop publishing technology and we can expect some dramatic changes in the magazine, including off-set reproduction. We do hope that the photo quality improves. This would put the icing on an otherwise nicely executed periodical.

NGN

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