

CROSS-TALK

The Transgendered Community's Newsletter

AUGUST 1992

(ISSUE #37)



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"CROSS-TALK" INFORMATION SERVICES

Available to computer users on the "News Services" menu
of the "Cross-Connection" BBS, (818) 549-0529:

National Events Calendar
National Hotlines List
Southern California "Yellow Pages"
Los Angeles area groups and events

L.A. area information also available on voicemail at (818) 776-8504.

WE ARE PROUD TO INTRODUCE, beginning with this issue, the use of a Hewlett-Packard DeskJet printer which has resulted in a major improvement in our print quality. Our thanks to Trish Anderson and "Cross-Connection" for making this technology available.

LOCALS
STUNNED

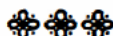
TORONTO, ATHENS,
BERKELEY, PARIS, & GENE
BOBROW WASHINGTON

SEATTLE

SAN FRANCISCO

JoAnn Roberts has been confirmed as keynote speaker for "California Dreamin" '93, according to "Dreamin" chairman Joan Goodnight. Roberts will address the convention at the Saturday night banquet and will also conduct workshops on outreach and the art of illusion.

The workshop schedule has also been expanded this year to allow for greater participation by the three main gender community organizations in the Los Angeles area. According to "Dreamin" workshop chairman Kymberleigh Richards, workshops by Janyne Cresan of the Alpha chapter of Tri-Ess, Susan [redacted] of CHIC, and Diane [redacted] of Powder Puffs have already been scheduled. "Cross-Talk" columnist Anne [redacted] is also slated to moderate an open discussion session, and the husband-and-wife team of Linda and Cynthia Phillips will preside over an expanded version of last year's workshop on wives and couples issues as part of Tri-Ess national's involvement.

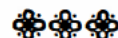


In the aftermath of the actions taken by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) Congress of Representatives at the recent IFGE convention, the IFGE board of directors has taken steps to clarify and reconcile the situation.

At its June 13 meeting, the board voted to invite the Congress to draft and submit by September 1 a protocol that establishes the purpose and goals of the Congress, establishes the internal structure and operating procedure of the Congress, and establishes a working relationship between the Congress and IFGE and between the Congress and the gender community.

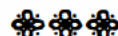
In the interim, the board voted to publish the "Update" as an in-house publication until a policy concerning the Congress can be established. "Update" had previously been published by IFGE

for the Congress to communicate with gender community organizations.



The Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess) is moving forward with plans to hold an educational conference for spouses and partners. Cynthia Phillips and Linda Peacock, co-directors for wives and partners concerns on the Tri-Ess board, are serving as coordinators for the conference, which is tentatively scheduled for early summer 1993 in the Dallas area.

The conference is envisioned as having seminars on problem-busting and relationship building, conducted by leaders and helping professionals, as well as the development of resources to meet the needs of spouses and partners. Crossdressers will be welcome to attend and participate in some of the sessions, although it is being stressed that the conference will be a non-crossdressing event.



IFGE has published a wallet-sized pamphlet on "Legal DOs & DON'Ts for Going Public Crossdressed". The pamphlet, issued by IFGE's legal & by-laws committee, is an expanded version of an article written several years ago by gender community attorney Naomi Owen, and contains ➡

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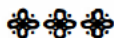
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NEWSWIRE ... cont'd.

sections on general public conduct, what to do if pulled over on a highway, what to do if arrested, and general conduct with police officers. It is available by writing IFGE.

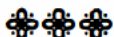
IFGE has also announced a program to place Mariette Pathy Allen's critically acclaimed book "Transformations" into public libraries. The book is being made available at a reduced price of \$15.00 (plus postage) on shipments made to a legitimate public library or learning institution. Those donating the book may have their name included as a dedication or may remain anonymous.

For information on either the legal pamphlet or the book donation program, write IFGE at P.O. Box 367, Wayland MA 01778.



The Delta Omega chapter of Tri-Ess, which has operated the "Help Me ... Accept Me" sub-group in Dallas for more than a year, has created a second such sub-group to serve nearby Fort Worth.

The new sub-group, which advertises with the slogan "Even Cowboys Want to be Cowgirls Sometimes", held its first meeting in Fort Worth on July 6. It joins other Delta Omega programs dealing with wives and partners concerns, part-time crossdressing, and the Tri-Ess "Boys R Us" program.



J2CP Information Services has shifted its focus to serving those with HIV/AIDS, according to J2CP director Sr. Mary Elizabeth SSE.

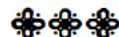
J2CP's "TerraNet" computer bulletin board has been renamed the "HIV/AIDS Information BBS", although the gender subsection of the board remains available. In making the change, Sr. Mary cited the fact that one new case of HIV infection now occurs every 13 minutes. The BBS now contains the largest AIDS-related full-text online database in the country outside of the federal government. It supports baud rates from 300 to 9600, 8N1, full duplex. The number remains unchanged at (714) 248-2836.

The BBS is an outreach ministry of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

The Powder Puffs of Orange County (PPOC) board of directors has approved the formation of a second group to serve the northern area of Los Angeles County.

The new group, tentatively titled PPOC North, will operate as a branch of the parent organization, with no separate officers or board, abiding by all policy statements and by-laws of PPOC. First meeting for the new group is scheduled for August 22.

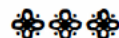
The new group, which must become self-sustaining within six months, was formed after many PPOC members living in Los Angeles County expressed interest in starting the branch group.



A new gender clinic has been opened in the Dallas-Fort Worth area by several local helping professionals.

The North Texas Gender Clinic's approach will be primarily medical and psychological, offering a full range of services and technical assistance to aid in gender transformation. The founders hope to achieve a community standing in Dallas and in the nation that will also enable them to enlighten the general public about gender issues. They hope to receive volunteer assistance for clerical work and telephone answering from the local gender community, and have also put out a call for resource material for their files.

The North Texas Gender Clinic can be reached at P.O. Box 1195, Cedar Hill TX 75104.



Catherine Rivers, who had been president of Transsupport in Maine since 1990, died suddenly at her Augusta home on May 10.

Rivers had spent a great deal of time coordinating and reorganizing the near-failing Transsupport, and also had served as editor of the group's newsletter "Trans-Talk". She also provided one-on-one peer counselling and advising.

Although she is survived by family members, a more specific listing of her survivors was not released.



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As we continue to make improvements in the quality of "Cross-Talk", we would very much like to receive your comments and suggestions. Please write us at P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365, or fax us at (818) 347-4190.



KYMBERLEIGH'S CLIPBOARD

-- *Kymberleigh Richards*

I have been sitting back and watching the debate between the various camps in the gender community regarding the apparently critical question "what should we call ourselves?" for several months now, only occasionally entering the fracas myself. My most recent contribution, a tongue-in-cheek call for a "national referendum" on the subject, was apparently taken too seriously by some, necessitating a more definitive commentary on the subject.

WARNING: I am about to sound as if I am dictating to the community from on high regarding terminology. I am not issuing a royal command, however: Like our community's best-known philosopher, Virginia Prince, I am merely going to give reasonable arguments in favor of some terms and against others. I hope that this will help to resolve this question, because I feel the debate has gone on far too long.

For simplicity's sake, I will not deal with the generally accepted terms "transvestite" and "crossdresser", as these terms are in general use, interchangeably, to mean someone who -- for whatever reason -- dresses in the clothes normally associated with the opposite sex. Nor will I deal with the term "transsexual", which in general use means someone who is either preparing for SRS or has had it. I shall deal with the remaining terms, both proposed or in conflicting use, individually for the most part.

Transgendered/Transgenderist: The debate here is whether this means anyone in either camp (TV/CD or TS) of the gender community, or someone who is living full time in a gender identity opposite to that normally associated with their sex. I have gone on record many times in the past as disliking the term "transgenderist" to describe myself, but I no longer feel that it would be a proper term to describe all members of our community. It is inappropriate to use that term, for example, to describe a transsexual, since they do not really have a "gender" problem. They have a problem with their physical sex organs. To call them "transgendered" identifies them with a condition they do not have. They are not shifting genders; they are shifting sexual identities. That same argument, however, makes the term the most logical to describe the members of the CD/TV community, since this segment of the (larger) gender community IS involved with shifting back and forth between gender identities. "Transgenderist" implies a more permanent condition, one of consistent and lasting crossing of the gender identity line. So I propose that "transgendered" be used -- as it is on our front page -- to describe a segment of the gender community consisting of transvestites/crossdressers and transgenderists, the latter term meaning, essentially, a full-time crossdresser. (NOT a non-surgical transsexual, as some have suggested.)

Bigendered: Despite Virginia's recent exercise in

logic using Webster's as a guide, the term does appear likely to become (in general use) a pseudo-synonym for "bisexual", due to the general public's (and a large percentage of the gender community's) equating "sex" with "gender". Without berating the point further than it already has been, I suggest we discard the term and stop expending so much energy trying to clarify the difference. If, in our outreach, we make it clear that you don't HAVE to be homosexual to be a crossdresser (the major misconception of the public), the question is resolved. So why invent another term?

Crossgendered: This term, which appears to have its greatest fans in the South (mainly Texas), seems to me to be an extension of the logic that most used to justify using the term "crossdresser" instead of "transvestite". Since the Latin sounded too clinical, we adopted the English translation. But "crossgendered" isn't a translation of anything, so I suggest we drop it and stop confusing people. (Besides, it sounds rather silly when said out loud.)

Femmiphile: Has ANYONE used this term since FPE became Tri-Ess? Enough said ...

Gender Transient: Phaedra Kelly, who coined this phrase to describe herself, said it best in her letter to the editor last month. She's not looking for converts, so she can call herself GT and be a category of one. I don't think anyone else adopted the term, so I salute her for being an individualist and remove the term from any wider usage.

Genderist: Proposed by the Gender Alternatives League (GAL) when they drafted their "declaration of independence" last year, it deteriorated into being simply the title of their national magazine. (Come to think of it, GAL seems to have deteriorated itself in recent months. Are they doing ANYTHING these days?) Needless to say, this one doesn't go in my lexicon either.

Transvitate and Transroler: Proposed, at various times, by Anne Blackwood and Tere Frederickson, respectively, to replace "transgenderist" so that the latter could be used in a broader definition. My argument for the original term, though, negates the need to create a replacement, so these tongue

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- * After log-on, select <E>-Mail from the opening menu and send a message to user ID "Kymmer".
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If you are not a registered user on the BBS, you will have to log-on as a new user the first time you call and will not be able to upload files to us on your first call. You may, however, send e-mail to the Sysop requesting next-day access

KYMBERLEIGH'S CLIPBOARD ... cont'd.

twisters are obsolete before they even got started.

Gender conflicted: This was proposed at one point by GAL as a defining term for why we do what we do (crossdress or seek surgery). But since GAL was trying to get the DSM changed when they proposed this term, I don't think it ever left the starting gate either, much less became a contender.

I will not deal with slang terms such as "she-male" or "drag queen" as those apply most commonly in a sexual connotation, and mainly within the gay community. Nor will I bring "female impersonator" into the discussion, as that phrase properly describes a performer, not a gender community member.

And before I sum up my debate, I want to go on the record as saying that I disagree with the terms "new man" or "new woman" to describe a post-operative transsexual. What little I know about the TS community leads me to conclude that most post-ops are more interested in blending into the mainstream and getting the hell OUT of the gender community than they are in caring what the gender community calls them. But since this column is written by a transgenderist, not a transsexual, I will leave that debate (if there is to be one) to the members of that community.

Well, I think (no ... I hope) that this simplification based on general usage, based on terms we all already have been using, will make sense to enough people that we can end this debate. The final paragraph of this commentary uses ONLY those remaining terms, in the context we have grown accustomed to.

So read this paragraph, and then -- PLEASE -- stop arguing about language:

I am a transgenderist, living full-time as Kym. I arrived at this situation after several years of being Kym only part-time ... a crossdresser (translated from the Latin "transvestite"). I am not a transsexual because I know that I do not require surgery to be comfortable with myself. I am a member of the transgendered community, as are all the crossdressers I know. Our community -- with its issues and concerns -- and the transsexual

community -- with its different issues and concerns -- together make up the (larger) gender community. Is that clear to everyone? Good!

COGITO ERGO FEM

-- Anne [redacted]

In every revolution there are those who put their lives on the line, willing to make that sacrifice if necessary to make their dream a reality. Then there are those who share the dream, but risk nothing, stand on the sidelines and watch, neither helping nor harming. When the war is over and the revolutionaries have won, the meek too inherit the benefit. Do they raise my ire? You bet your ass they do.

To those of you in the closet, your life is a sham! A lie. You are as guilty of perpetuating the conditions that put you in that closet as are the people you fear. You are your own jailers. I am sick of hearing people tell me they can't do anything because: "I'll lose my job." "I'll lose my spouse." "I'll lose yadayadayada ..." You've already lost. The price you've paid is yourself.

I am cognizant of the fact that public knowledge of one's transvestism has repercussions beyond oneself. I'm not saying that you must proclaim your transvestism to the world. You need not walk up to total strangers and say, "Hi, I'm Joe Schmoe and I'm a transvestite." You must proclaim it to yourself and those with whom you share your life. You must also ask yourself, "Is what I have worth what I'm paying?" If the answer is yes, go back into your closet, lock the door and never tell me you support my cause. You don't. If the answer is no, you'll have to decide for yourself what your next move is. I'm not familiar enough with your situation to give any advice, and generalities don't apply.

If the answer is no, and you still can't bring yourself out of the closet, AND you want to risk something, help in some way. There is always a need for money (time is money after all). Can't risk a cancelled check made out to IFGE or Tri-Ess? Send it to NOW (but really, who outside of the communities knows what IFGE or Tri-Ess stand for?). See a transvestite portrayed in a bad light on television? Write the network a letter (you don't have to admit that you are one). If you read a biased article in a newspaper, write the editor, object from a human rights stand point. OBJECT to ANY misrepresentation of transvestites in the media as a decent, compassionate citizen.

Back in the Paleozoic era of the '60s and into the Mesozoic '70s there was a saying, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." At the time I sneered at the simplicity, the simplemindedness of this slogan. It is, however, quite accurate in regards to the gender movement. If you are not doing something to change the status quo, you are the status quo, and it is change that is the gender communities' goal. I personally don't believe in checkbook social action. I believe you have to get personally involved. It takes little commitment to write out a check and mail it off, and if that's as much as you care, if ➡

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that's the extent of your passion, why should anyone else care?

Another catch phrase from that era was "grassroots movement". Grassroots movements are characterized not by how much money they can muster (they generally don't muster much) rather by their appeal to the folk. We are the folk of the gender communities and it is a grassroots campaign we must wage.

This is the last time I will directly address those of you in the closet. I have other, better things to spend my energy on. Go bother IFGE. You have my sympathy, not my respect. I'm sure that I have alienated some of you by what I have said. Tough. Tough for you, tough for me. Alienation is not my intent, but when after having put myself through the trials of exposure, having found the strength in myself, with a little help from my friends (whom I wouldn't have had if I hadn't taken the first steps from the closet on my own) to come out, I find I have little patience for those who cower in the dark recesses of their closets saying, "No, I can't come out. I'll be persecuted, I'll be martyred." Or worse, you'll be ridiculed. Ultimately, my goal is to abolish the conditions that lead us to believe we must have closets to hide in. If five million transvestites came out of their closets at the same time the issue would be put to rest.

Like the late Reverend King, I have a dream. If someday I should realize that dream you will share in it. Remember, I don't do it for you. I do it for me. But perhaps the best analogy I can borrow is the one John Kennedy used in describing the kinds of people he did and did not want for the Peace Corps. Those of you in the closet look at the water glass and see it as half empty, those of us who have ventured from the closet see it as half full. Your glass will one day be dry, ours will be full to overflowing. It's your choice.

CLARIFICATION: It has come to my attention that many changes are in the wind at IFGE, certainly since the last column was written. There is a time lag between authorship and publication of this column which varies depending on several criteria. My columns are not published in the order in which they were written because sometimes I will write a more time-sensitive piece which bumps the others in the queue back. I'm not sure when that column was originally written, but likely over a year ago.

Be that as it may, it does not alter my point that we are NOT one unified community with one set of goals; and therefore, we cannot be served adequately by one organization. Now, I am essentially a Jeffersonian in that I believe that government, or in this case service organizations, is best when it is strongest at the local level and weakest at the Federal level (assuming a need for government at all). This allows for a more responsive organization.

It is inevitable that I will at times alienate members of the communities. That is the nature of the beast called the opinion piece. I am not a journalist, I

need not report the facts. I am a columnist, and am expressing my opinion on various issues important to the transgendered communities. My purpose in writing "Cogito Ergo Fem" is to stimulate thought and action on those issues that I address. In that I think that I am successful. --AB

VOX POPULI

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: "Kymberleigh's Clipboard" (June '92): I am somewhat disappointed at the deletion of mainstream news. It is only natural that negative aspects such as murders, bank robbers, and other social deviants that crossdress will get more attention. That are set apart from society as criminals, and then apart from their criminal cohorts by their attire. Dog bites man is not news. Man, wearing a dress, bites dog, now that's news. I believe that too many crossdressers live in a fantasy world. News from the mainstream press may serve to slap us in the face with reality. The negative overtones carried in the press can aid in our realization of just how far we have not come. Possibly the best news would be no news at all. When we have reached the point that a person's clothing is not a consideration in evaluating their behavior, it will go unnoticed. This should be about the same time that one's height, weight, sex, length or lack of hair, or color of skin are considered insignificant.

Besides, we may find positive aspects in the mainstream press someday. If we are not monitoring it, how will we know?

--Christine [REDACTED], Bakersfield CA

I know there is a lot of evil in the world, and I don't enjoy reading about it, and sometimes it is kind of fun to read those cute little articles from "Cosmo" and so on. But really, I rather appreciate and prefer getting the "bad news" along with the good.

You see, I am often in Manhattan, and I love to socialize there -- particularly, of course, in Greenwich Village. It's kind of like being in a great big closet, or in a "ghetto" that my friends and I can go virtually anywhere, without much in the way of difficulties. So it is easy to remain in benign or ➡

"CROSS-TALK" now accepts articles on computer disk in both DOS (ASCII preferred, but WordPerfect, Wordstar, Microsoft Word, or XyWrite acceptable) and Macintosh (ASCII only) formats.

When submitting articles on disk, please label if Mac format or non-ASCII (label with name of word processing program).

All submissions are property of "Cross-Talk"

VOX POPULI ... cont'd.

blissful ignorance about the difficulties that our people experience elsewhere.

It seems to me that if lots of us remain in ignorance, then all kinds of injustices can be inflicted on us. If we don't talk to each other about violence, oppression, discrimination, fraud, abuse of power, and so on, then no one will have the opportunity to care whether such things are permitted to continue.

In this age, when something happens to a person in Boston, then people in New York, Los Angeles, London and Tokyo can know about it within minutes, and can react or respond. When we know what is going on, we can then tell our elected officials what we think of a situation, and ensure that they know that we exist, that we pay attention, and that we vote. When we know what is going on, we can network, we can get involved with Amnesty International, and we can make our voices heard.

If "Cross-Talk" does not tell us the "bad news", who will? I cannot really read all the newspapers; I do not have the network that you do in terms of collecting news reports from various places. If the 1990s is our decade, as has been suggested, then we'd better do something with it.

--Lynn E. Walker, Brooklyn NY
(Ms. Walker is secretary of the Metropolitan Gender Network in New York City.)

I was disappointed that you are discontinuing your news summary feature. Don't let them kill the messenger.

--Michele [REDACTED], Long Beach CA

The big reason I subscribe to "Cross-Talk" is because it DOESN'T look at the gender community with rose-colored glasses. I am sick of newsletters and publications that never deal with the issues of being transgendered. Any kind of non-traditional gender expression is hard. Not talking about the difficulties and the unpleasant facts of life only makes it tougher and is the beginning of neurosis.

I'm probably in a minority wanting you to keep the "bad news" feature. I'd actually like to see "Cross-Talk" get even more hard-hitting. (It was such a relief, for instance, to read in the March issue an article acknowledging that surgery comes with complications and problems.) I realize that as

an editor you have to give the readers what they want, and it's better to lose one reader than ten. For myself, however, the day "Cross-Talk" becomes "Happy-Talk" is the day I'll let my subscription lapse.
--Jill [REDACTED], San Francisco CA

Re: "Terminology for the Crossdressing Community" (January '92) and Tere Frederickson's response ("Vox Populi", July '92): Several newsletters carried Virginia Prince's article advocating the use of the term "bigendered". Prince wants us to use this term when referring to the community at large. Some groups, notably (but not unexpectedly) Tri-Ess chapters, have embraced the new terminology without debate.

Tere Frederickson, disagrees with doyenne Prince, and I, for a change, tend to agree with Frederickson.

Prince's chief argument is that the prefix "trans-" (across) denotes a permanent change, while "bi-" simply means "two". The flaws in that are: (a) there is no permanency in the "trans-" prefix, and (b) "bi-" denotes two co-existing things, like bilingual. I'm sure that most transsexuals will tell you that they have only one gender identity; it's their body that has failed to measure up. They're not "bigendered" at all.

However, I do have a nit to pick with Frederickson over terminology. She uses the term "fetishistic crossdresser" for crossdressers with a "strictly male gender identity". I find this usage both inaccurate and offensive to those people who, like me, have no pretensions toward transgenderism or transsexualism.

By the way, while in Houston at the IFGE convention, two pundits concocted yet another new term to throw into the fray: "ambigendered". The best analogy they came up with would be an ambicycle, which is a unicycle that has two wheels, but you can only ride on one wheel at any given time.

--JoAnn Roberts, King of Prussia PA
(Ms. Roberts' comments are reprinted from her "Iconoclast" column in "Renaissance News".)

Re: IFGE vs. Congress of Representatives debate ("Newswire", July '92): A realistic definition of what IFGE is and what relationship the Congress of Representatives has with IFGE needs to be exactly defined.

The Congress was born at the 1989 IFGE convention. It was chartered to provide monthly reports to the IFGE "Update", keep the directory of organizations up to date, and -- most importantly -- "to represent your organization's points of view, to vote on behalf of your organization, and to present proposals and questions from your organization."

The proposed constitutional change for IFGE included language that completely altered the IFGE/Congress relationship. This proposed revision totally negated the language of the previous paragraph and made the Congress subject to the whims of the IFGE board of directors and only that body. If the reports of the political cat fight at ➡

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VOX POPULI ... cont'd.

the April IFGE convention are true, then we're back to square one: no organization.

A couple of things bother me about this scenario: The "all or nothing" attitude of IFGE, and the word "acting" that is missing from the titles of the newly-elected congressional officers. It appears that both bodies forgot one important factor in the equation -- the organizations that **SHOULD** be involved. If IFGE is going to be the "organization of organizations" then a separation between the board of directors and the member organizations needs to be accomplished. If there is going to be a Congress, then that body needs to be able to share with, propose to, and be an integral part of IFGE, not something that is dictated to by a board of directors. Total community responsibility must not be placed in the hands of the IFGE board alone.

Likewise, the new congressional "working group" must solicit the member organizations -- and all of the organizations -- to nominate a new slate of officers. These officers must be elected from the member organizations, with current IFGE board members and staff being enjoined from acting as Congress representatives. The member groups need representation -- real regional representation -- not a beauty contest election. Regional representation is not only an essential part of the Congress, it has to be a mandatory part of it if this Congress has any chance of making it.

It may come as a shock to a lot of IFGE board members (and others as well), but life as we know it **DOES** exist beyond the boundary of the IFGE convention. Wake up and pay attention: There are other people and organizations around the country with a wealth of talent wanting to be involved. Don't ignore them or pretend that they don't exist.

--Joan [redacted] Anaheim CA
(Ms. [redacted]'s remarks are edited from an editor [redacted]ing in the Powder Puffs of Orange County newsletter.)

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"VOX POPULI" is your opportunity to comment on issues of importance to the national gender community or to respond to editorials and articles appearing in "Cross-Talk".

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ERRATA: An article in the June '92 "Newswire" on the affiliation of the Heart of Texas Gender Alliance with Tri-Ess identified Linda Phillips as the new chapter's president. Linda's wife Cynthia holds that position with Eta Tau. We regret the error.

"Cross-Talk" will begin work on the 1993 edition of the Southern California "Yellow Pages" resource guide soon.

If you are aware of a community resource in the Los Angeles area that was not included in the 1992 edition, please send us information by September 30 so that we can verify the source before going to press in late December.

Send information to: "Cross-Talk"

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MS. BINTHAR DUNDAT: TIPS ON PASSING DOING THINGS THAT ARE PROFOUNDLY FEMALE

compiled by Lynette

If at anytime you find that you have been read or suspect that you have been read, one of the best defenses is to provide the reader with that little something that convinces them that you are in fact female. This little something is a display of some profoundly feminine behavior. Some of these profoundly feminine behaviors are very subtle and often go unnoticed by the conscious mind of the observer while convincing the observer, in some kind of subliminal fashion, that what they see is in fact genuine. One such behavior, although rarely noticed, is carried out by most females at regular intervals. This leads to my first tip for this month.

TIP 1. The first profoundly feminine behavior that you should display is the subtle act of slipping your hand inside your top, at shoulder level, and simply adjusting the position of your bra strap. The weight of natural breasts requires this adjustment to be carried out at regular intervals to maintain comfort. (Most women will say that this is not so, but believe me, this tug occurs and does convey subconscious female signals.) Men simply don't tug at their straps.

TIP 2. There are many other subtle but still profoundly feminine behaviors. Many of these involve using your eyes. Some of these behaviors are more effective than others depending on the situation. These include:

- * Looking straight ahead when in a difficult situation (the average man would turn his head and look straight at the problem, where as the average lady will look only when it is safe to do so). The tip here is to look for reflections or to use your peripheral vision to check the situation before turning your head.

- * Do not look the person in the eye; i.e., avoid eye contact but do not turn your head or your body away. Look at some object near the person so that you can, using your "peripheral vision", still be aware of what they are doing without looking directly at them. Women feel safe looking other women in the eye but seldom if ever will look a strange male in the eye when in an uncertain situation.

- * Do look in your bag for some item: change, a list, makeup, etc., and when you find it, simply walk

away as if to go and use it.

Some profoundly feminine behaviors, unlike those above, hit the observer like a brick bat between the eyes, because they are so unexpected.

TIP 3. This tip relates to being read while in, or avoiding being read while using, the ladies room. The tip is to have your "period" and adjust your behavior accordingly. When you enter the area look around for the appropriate vending machine (make sure that you always carry some small change) and immediately walk over and make your purchase. This will convince the most skeptical observer that you are what you appear to be. However if no machine is available, simply check your purse, find a tampon (make sure you always carry some just in case some smartie tries to test you or simply requires the assistance of another female), conceal it in your hand, and immediately enter the first available cubicle. In there you will find a sanitary disposal container, somewhat like a flip-top garbage bin, or an electric incinerator, like a small electric oven. The tip in this case is to remove a small amount of toilet paper, crumple it and then deposit it in the toilet, then pretend to use the bin or incinerator, making sure that the lid or door makes the appropriate sounds. All this should be carried out before you actually use the toilet. No further convincing will be required.

My last profoundly feminine behavior relates to a situation where you are confronted by a male and female couple.

TIP 4. In this situation you simply look closely at the boyfriend, smile and then glance down at his crouch. This is a natural female behavior that will make her forget about what or who you are and she will only want to get her boyfriend out of the situation. But what ever you do, if you try this one, be prepared to duck.

As there are many profoundly feminine behaviors that I do not know about, this is one time when I would like you to offer some other ideas. Fact, funny or fictional. Please send your ideas to: Ms. Bintahar Dundat, c/o Seahorse Victoria, Box 2337V, Melbourne 3001 Australia.

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by Roger E. Peo, Ph.D.

In the past two columns I reviewed Robert Bly's book "Iron John" and speculated that unexplored or rejected masculinity can block any real understanding of natural femininity. This understanding seems important to many male-to-female transgendered people.

Fortunately or unfortunately, any attempts to define masculinity in meaningful ways is nearly impossible. The media is not much help. Men are usually pictured as either buffoons or aggressively macho Rambo-types. Neither description fits the masculine world that most men experience.

Some of the adjectives used to describe men might be assertive, intelligent, unemotional, strong, capable, rugged, silent and single-minded. With the exception of unemotional, many men I know would probably not use many of the other words to describe themselves.

Similar difficulties arise when trying to describe men's relationships and activities. Son, brother, father, husband, good with mechanical things, good in mathematics and science, good at sports, not artistic, knowledgeable about sexuality, protector and wage-earner may come to mind. Again, many men would not be comfortable with this list.

So it is difficult to come up with a list of words or phrases that clearly describe what it means to be masculine. To paraphrase a Supreme Court justice: "I can't define masculinity but I know it when I see it!" The "state" of being masculine is a complex biological and social situation that is unique for each individual even though the person may share some of these characteristics with other people.

If it so hard to describe masculinity, then how can it be explored or accepted? If one insists on having labels with which to make this exploration, then there is probably no hope. However, the journey is really an inward one rather than an attempt to match any given set of words or social roles. In the end, each person is an individual, a human being. Because of this uniqueness, there is no one way of being masculine. Each of us has strengths and weaknesses. Most men are socialized to look at their strengths and ignore or deny any weaknesses they have. This denial can lead to an "armoring" that shuts off all contact with inner feelings.

How does this tie into what Robert Bly writes about? How does this apply to you, the crossdresser? Why should understanding your masculine aspects be useful? Bly believes that lack of "connectedness" to the inner core of masculinity that all men possess, leaves the man incomplete. His approach to regaining this lost element is the use of mythology as the guide for this exploration. Many traditional therapy approaches are directed toward uncovering repressed feelings that indirectly influence daily life and emotions. It seems that some transgendered people have repressed a central part of their identity. I think that by

accepting the masculinity that you have, you will free up an incredible amount of energy. Learning to accept ourselves, "warts and all" is an incredibly liberating experience. Using the strengths of your masculinity to explore your femininity is better than having these two parts continually in combat. It is not a case of either-or but really of both. Rejecting one part leads to alienation and loss of the other part.

[You may contact me at P.O. Box 4887, Poughkeepsie NY 12602 or by phone at (914) 851-1111.]

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Jim Bridges

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by Cynthia Phillips

Thanks to all the women out there who have contacted me with their own stories. I am happy to report not all the letters I receive are negative. Some of the marriages in this community are quite happy. To show you that a marriage between a transgendered male and a woman can be very successful and happy, my husband and I just celebrated our 34th wedding anniversary!

If we, as women, will make an effort to understand how these transgendered males feel and try to understand what makes them tick, we can have one of the best kind of relationships ever. In our support groups we see so many folks involved in relationships in which the lack of understanding has made both parties confused and unhappy.

Most of these problems stem from the inability of the male in the relationships to fully understand his feelings. He is often consumed with feelings of guilt and inadequacy, and since the woman in his life has no other information except what she receives from him, she mirrors these negative reactions.

If we, as women involved with these males, will help our mate work through this process of learning what it means to be a transgendered person, we can both understand it together. Togetherness is a key word in the relationship of the transgendered. Our men feel lost without us, their mates. One of the biggest problems he has is the desire to keep us from being unhappy with him because of this, and of course we almost always are, mainly because of his feelings of guilt and paranoia which we pick up from him.

We even have women married to crossdressers who come to our wives group meetings, while their husbands are too closeted to ever attend a CD meeting!

We have had more and more letters from women all

over the country ... women who are living with or married to a transgendered male. Most of these are from women who are confused and uninformed. I hope through this column we can alleviate some of these problems.

One of the biggest problems in these relationships is the one of sexual compatibility. The transgendered male is quite different in his sexual needs and desires than the ordinary male. Sexual matters are also hardly ever discussed in a support group meeting. This is unfortunate since these are the people who need help in these matters more than most. That crossdressing affects a sexual relationship there is no doubt. That the people involved with crossdressers -- and even the crossdressers themselves -- need guidance in sexual matters there is no doubt.

Again, let me make it clear we are not dealing with a normal male. I know this is difficult for both of you to understand. Many of these males attempt to be like "ordinary" men in sexual matters. One of the problems is they really don't know how normal men react. Imagine landing on earth from another planet; someone tells you to think and react a certain way. You would like to oblige, but your mind simply doesn't function or react the way theirs does. This is the way our mate feels. He spends a great part of his life driving down a road he has no map for! He tries to "fit in" with other males from childhood, even though he always feels a little apart from other males. He convinces himself he can function in any situation the same as they. However, since this is really not possible, he feels even more frustrated as he gets older, then sexual performance becomes almost impossible.

The best way for us to handle sexual compatibility problems in our relationship with our transgendered mate is to start from scratch. Let's throw out all the preconceived notions we have about sex and COMMUNICATE with our mate! Let's not disregard any feelings or thoughts either of us have about sexual matters. Above all, please, please, keep an open mind. This is probably the most important factor in any relationship, but it is imperative in a transgendered one. Remember, anything a couple does in the privacy of the bedroom that makes them happy is the correct thing to do. There are no "rules" or "standard practices" involved in mutual loving.

Remember, if you have any specific questions you would like discussed, or if there is anything you are unsure or confused about, please write me for a personal reply. If you would feel better talking about anything, please give me a call.

[Cynthia Phillips is co-director for wives' and partners' concerns on the Tri-Ess board of directors. You may write her at P.O. Box 17, Bulverde TX 78163, or phone her at (512) 438-7604.]

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by Ricky

I don't know about you, but I love reading those snippets that Kym digs up for the TV news each month. I have sometimes questioned her sanity because no one could read all those supermarket newspapers and pretend to any vestige of normalcy, but then whoever said we were normal? But no lesser source than the Canadian Broadcasting Commission, that venerable institution of truth and integrity, aired an interview with one "Raven", a resident of Reno, Nevada, one evening. (That's February 7, 1991, by the way. Just in case you want to check.)

It seems Raven is suing management for sexual discrimination. As an employee of one of those "900" sex talk phone services, Raven has been burning up the wires for the past two years. Seems the callers were really turned on by the little girl voice of this half Irish, half Cherokee bombshell, and so was management. In fact, management used tapes of Raven's conversations as training for the new girls. Not a bad record, you might think, but

Raven has been refused promotion to supervisor, and I will not comment on what a supervisor of a sex talk service might do, thank you.

You see, it seems Raven is really Darrell Malone, an ex-Marine and father of four, and management didn't want the other girls to know they were being outclassed by a male. It seems Darrell had been unemployed, and his wife was working for the service. She had heard his female voice and convinced management to give him a try, and the rest was history.

It really seems a bit unfair. I mean here we put hours and hours into perfecting our version of femininity, and good 'ole Darrell has 'em waiting in lines with voice alone. But then again, maybe it means there's hope yet for those of us who will never pass. Talk about your interesting part time jobs!

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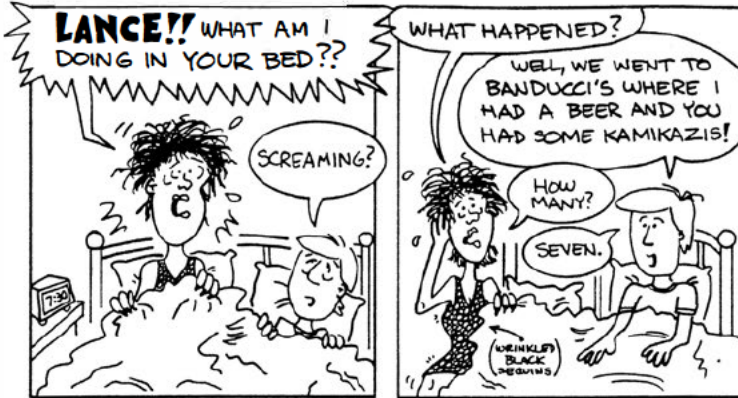
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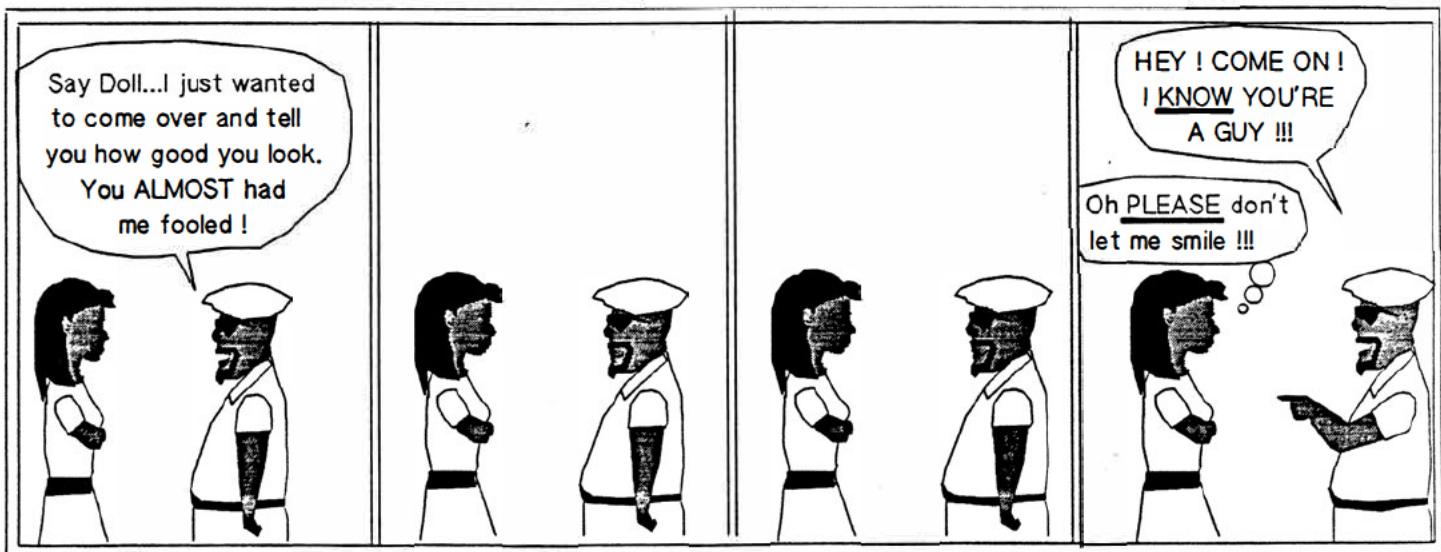
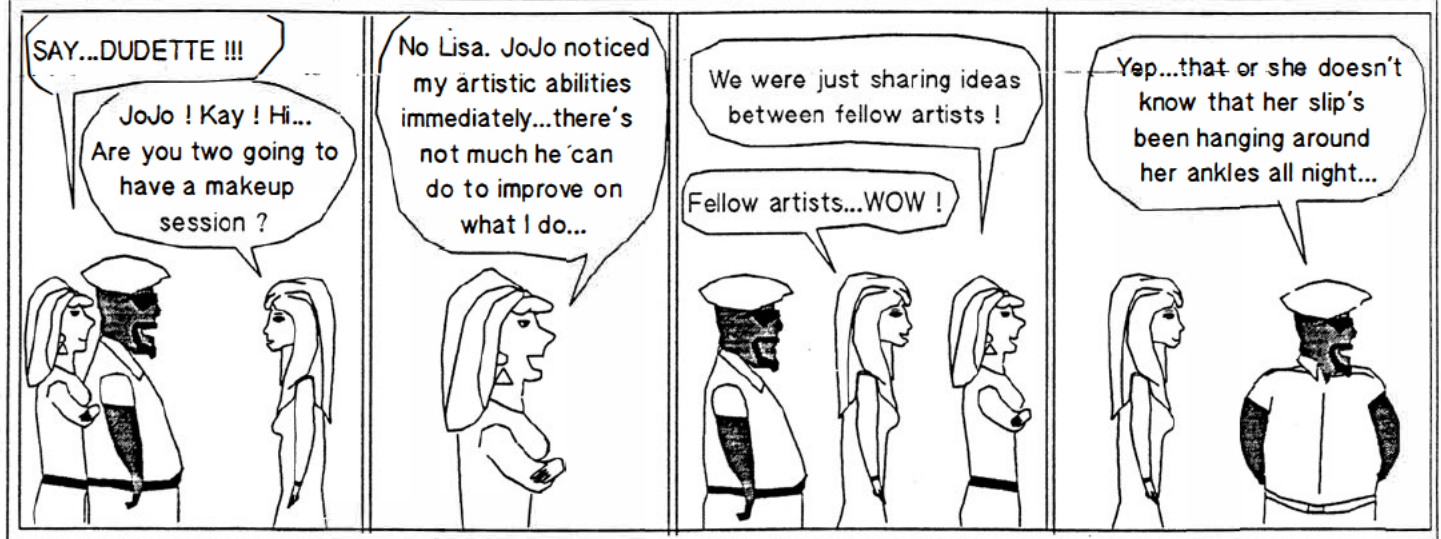
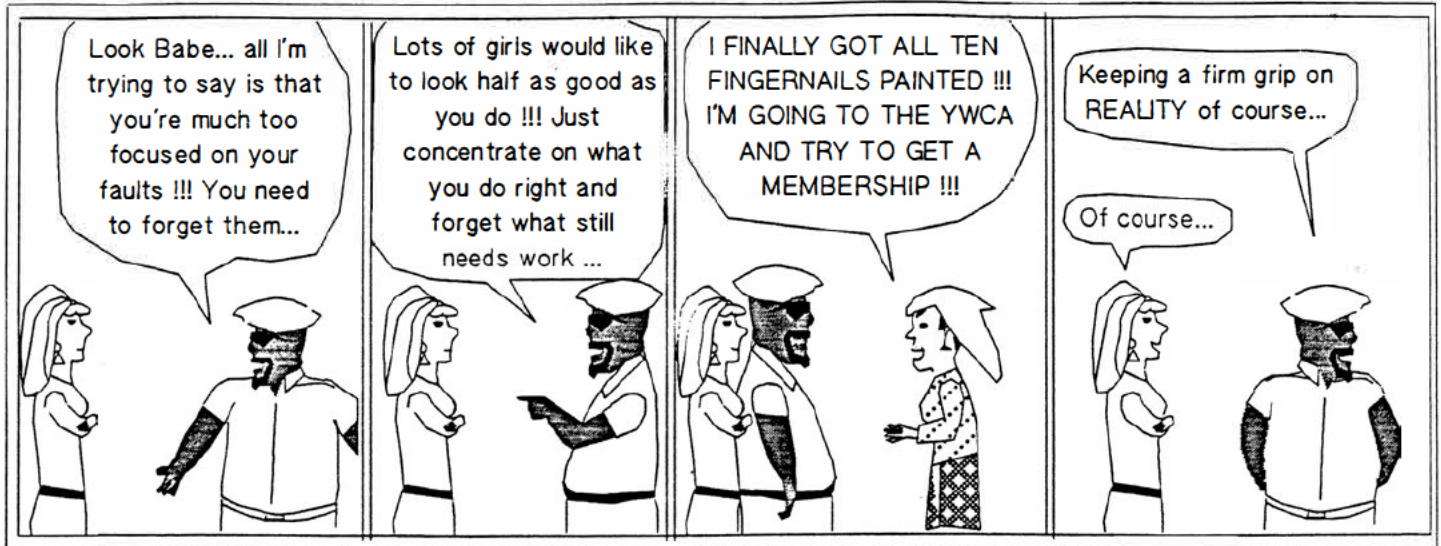
"THE PASSING SCENE" by Kay



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"Well, don't blame it on me!" the boy's mother snapped. "If I've told him one, I've told him a thousand times not to wear his father's clothes!"



by Kym & Beppi





TO BE CONTINUED!

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TRANSSEXUAL THEATRE

by Sarah Seton, M.D.

(Courtesy J2CP Information Services)

PART 6 - DENOUEMENT & L'ENVOI

What are the alternatives? On the one hand, transsexuals can continue to behave like Dr. Pangloss with one another, dancing through the gender programs, conventions, newsletters and magazines with their meat-markets declaring to each other "Isn't life wonderful? I'm fine. I'm peachy. I'm glad I don't have your problems!" Thereby, transsexuals can continue to be their own worst enemies. Or, on the other hand, transsexuals can break the No-Talk-Rule with themselves and be real with one another. They can admit squarely and without denial that the manifold of their personal reality exists. They can explore and deal with the ideas and issues outlined here in order to gain acceptance of themselves. They can be mutually open to one another and see that the other's personal reality is his/her own too. They can realize that this is the best of all possible worlds yet that does not make it good. They can express the pain, the self-contempt, the shame, the grief, the distrust, and the guilt to one another and let go of it. With self-acceptance comes a more tolerant acceptance of societal intolerance; in the same way, many people will have less trouble with transsexuals if others are accepting of themselves. It is a myth to believe that if you have no trouble with yourself then others will not have trouble with you -- this is simply an application of the No-Talk-Rule. As for the public who will never accept, the trade-off is between what the transsexual needs from others in comparison with what he/she is willing to give up to them -- the old zero-sum game.

These points are vital to the pre-op transsexuals. They should use the trial period in group and private therapy working on issues and feelings instead of just marking time with the professionals who monitor the referrals to SRS. Pre-ops will save themselves a big mistake post-operatively -- even suicide -- if they openly deal with the unpleasant realities of their life situation. It has been reported unofficially by gender clinics over the years that as many as nine post-op transsexuals have requested surgery to change them back to their original sex. In the Gender Dysphoria Program of Orange County, 96% of the candidates decided before surgery that SRS was not for them. However, it is not certain how many of these clients went elsewhere.

What I have been writing about in this article advocates the setting of priorities. It is healthy to have "feel good" gatherings across the country; it builds networks and has a salutary effect on people's morale. But such activities should be done in the context of a political consciousness. Transsexuals absolutely must make the personal political, because surely if transsexuals don't hang together, they will all hang separately.

Here are some suggestions for what the gender community can do for itself right now:

1) Establish a national twelve-step recovery program called "Transsexuals Anonymous" for the purposes

of providing support for recovering transsexuals based on principles and not personalities. This will assure that the locus of control for therapy is within the gender-community but not in the hands of personality cults created by certain transsexuals in domineering positions. Presently some leaders are unqualified to give advice or therapy.

2) Create a national ad-hoc medical committee on gender identity consisting of physicians and surgeons who are gender-conflicted. This committee would meet regularly in confidence to protect the professional identity of its members. Its tasks would include: a) physician peer review of unethical or unprofessional treatment of transsexuals by other physicians, b) liaison with state boards of medical quality assurance to enforce sanctions, c) publishing anonymously under the committee name of scientific papers related to gender and position papers regarding treatment of gender-conflicted professionals as "consumers" by other professionals and other professional issues.

3) Create a national legal defense committee on gender identity consisting of attorneys who are gender-conflicted. This committee's task would be to take under advisement cases of abridgement of the civil rights of the gender-conflicted, prepare anonymous defense briefs, and hire pro se litigants to represent the committee in court on behalf of the defendants.

4) Create a national ad-hoc committee on gender and the media consisting of gender-conflicted entertainers, writers, producers, and publicists, to prepare public service announcements on national prime-time television and radio to educate the public about gender dysphoria syndrome and the people who suffer with it. ➡

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TRANSGENDERISM: THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE

by Lauren Hotchkiss

We've all been brought up to believe that there are only two gender presentations allowed to us in this life, and that they are inextricably tied to the genetic sex into which we are born. We come into this world as either "little boys" or "little girls" and are expected to live the rest of our lives in strict accordance to the narrowly defined gender roles that society has "assigned" to each sex. This is all very fine, in theory anyway, were it not for the reality that it just is not that simple.

All of us, men and women, have both the feminine and the masculine within us, to varying degrees, and so it follows that there must be a vast blending ground between the diametrically opposed, stereotypical concepts of man and woman; and yet the myth persists that there is not. No wonder that the two "sexes" often have such difficulty understanding each other when society has cast them into the role of "opposites." Our language, too, is full of terminology that tends to divide the concepts of male and female, and us along with them. Even in this "enlightened" age where sexual

reassignment has become a fairly commonplace occurrence, there is still the expectation that one is supposed to trade in one set of behavioral and dress standards for another.

Within our own community as well, I have noticed that there is a tendency to divide the male from the female; and whether it is the transvestite path of bouncing back and forth between genders (a sort of conscious schizophrenia), or the transsexual path of surgical transformation, still it is an either/or equation, rather than a true integration of masculine and feminine qualities.

There is, however, a third alternative, which until comparatively recently has seldom been considered; the transgendered lifestyle.

Such a lifestyle is, admittedly, not necessarily the right agenda for everyone in the gender community; many crossdressers have no desire to further expand their curious "hobby", and for members of the transsexual community there is a different path to be followed. For the individual who is drawn to this lifestyle however, there is afforded a rare opportunity to integrate the hitherto separate halves into a cohesive oneness, and so reach a wholeness of being.

Perhaps, for some of us who are moving toward a transgendered or androgynous existence, there is a reason why we were born into male bodies. Possibly it is to explore the integration of female energy on both an outer and inner manifestational level; to experience, in the body of a "man", what have up until now been considered feminine feelings.

In my own life, though I was born male, I never did feel like a "man". I've always felt more comfortable around women than I have around men. Somehow femininity always seemed more natural to me; it was masculinity that I had to "learn", and it always seemed forced. I realize now that I've always had a deep need for feminine expression, and now that I've opened myself up to expressing it, I feel I have become a more complete and open person; more at peace with myself, and more able to be of service to others.

I feel a deep commitment to my lifestyle of choice, as well as to the gender community as a whole; a sense of life purpose and spiritual path beyond anything I've ever experienced.

I have noticed a difficulty however, now that I have swung so far in the female direction, in accepting the male component of my psyche. My goal is to be able to accept both; the male as well as the female.

Transgenderism is not always an easy path to follow. It is often fraught with challenges of self-acceptance and the perceived judgments of others, as well as difficulties in finding and maintaining relationships, but though some may regard it as a choice of loneliness, I feel that for those of us who feel guided to this lifestyle, it is a choice for freedom.

[This article originally appeared in the ETVC newsletter.]

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TRANSSEXUAL THEATRE ... cont'd.

5) A regional and national political action committee for the purpose of advising and lobbying legislators on legislation of interest to the gender-community.

6) Revision of the HBGDA Standards of Care to extend to the pre- and post-operative period in order to guarantee continuity of medical care.

There is a vast pool of talent amongst transsexuals. Psychological assessments indicate that as a group transsexuals have superior intelligence. The trend with SRS is toward older, mature candidates who have already established themselves as physicians, surgeons, lawyers, judges, political leaders, media professionals, scientists, engineers, educators and business executives. The power is there to harness, the question is: does the transsexual have the courage to do what it takes to survive? They must use that talent now before there is no one left to speak up.

TRANSSEXUALS vs. GAYS & LESBIANS: THE GREAT DEBATE

by Jill [redacted]

Earlier this year, the "Bay Times", a local lesbian/gay newspaper in the San Francisco area, had a debate (of sorts) going in its letters section about transsexuals in the gay and lesbian community.

It began in the January 2 issue, with "An open letter to the gay female community" from a transsexual lesbian about the prejudice she and her girlfriend received from other lesbians. She ended the letter ended by telling people to at least mind their own business.

This prompted a number of responses. One, from a transsexual in Santa Cruz, was marred by her anger at past hurts by gays and lesbians. Another transsexual lesbian wrote and said that, despite all the intolerance she faced from gay women, the lesbian community was her community, too. One final letter supporting transsexuals appeared at the end of February. Nothing has appeared since but the issue hasn't gone away.

What struck me throughout all this was that all the letters supporting transsexuals as part of the gay and lesbian came from transsexuals. There was not a single letter from a gay, lesbian or bisexual.

That says a lot. I think it's fair to say most gays and lesbians don't want us as part of their world. When gays and lesbians do accept transsexuals, it is on their terms, not ours. Acceptance comes at the expense of denying our identity. For M2Fs at least, this means being treated as and expected to act like a drag queen. There is no acknowledgment of one's female identity.

I have known transsexuals who considered themselves part of the lesbian/gay community. Yet watching the interaction between them and their gay and lesbian friends was always depressing. The transsexuals were scorned and ridiculed -- sometimes openly so. Numerous insulting and hurtful remarks were constantly made, no one took them seriously, and the transsexuals themselves acted oblivious to it all, either because of denial or just plain stupidity.

This issue of being part of the gay and lesbian community is a difficult one. Many transsexuals have come from the gay and lesbian community and retain strong ties to it, while many would like to belong to it. Most of us have good relationships with individual gays and lesbians. But most of us have had enough bad experiences with gays and lesbians to be ambivalent about the community as a whole.

People are working to bring the two communities closer together and it will be interesting to see what happens from these attempts. At the moment american society is becoming increasingly atomized and the zeitgeist is against coalition-building. In the meantime, my own personal wish is for all transsexuals to respect and assert our own unique identities, and not let anybody sh*t on us.

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TELLIN FRIEND

by Renee

A lot has been written about telling people about your crossdressing. I am no expert, but I have a bit of practical experience and I hope that someone will possibly gain something from my experience.

First of all, I have gone through three major purges in the last seven years. I have looked at myself many times and felt that I must be sick; I look stupid, silly, sad. I hated myself because I had a large portion of my personality that I had to hide from even my closest friends. They never really knew the full me.

After the third major purge (and there had been countless minor purges as well, but major purges are when you destroy or dispose of hundreds of dollars worth of clothes and other female type materials in the belief that it is going to go away), within a week or two I was purchasing things again. I decided that this was not going to go away. I had read all the books I could find and I had talked to a few professionals. I knew more about the conditions associated with crossdressing than any of the professionals that I talked with, so I knew enough to accept that it was time to accept me, enjoy it, and perfect it. I'm not going to bore you with how I did this, but I will bore you with the reasons why I told some people and how I told them.

The first person that I selected was an old girlfriend. She is a very liberal person. She has an engineering degree and an MBA and she has had no family since she was a teenager. She has seen a big chunk of the real world as she has lived in New York City for two years and she has shared an apartment with a gay male for a year. (Some people might say she was a bit of a "fag-hag".) We were really quite close and we both shared an absence of family in our lives. She had often used me as a solid shoulder when she needed one.

When I told her, she immediately decided that I must be gay and then she just started talking about

her money problems again. She was very surprised and would have never suspected me, of all people. How often you will hear this, we are almost overly defensive and secretive when we keep our ourselves in the closet.

The moral of this story is: You really cannot predict the people who will accept it and the people who will never understand it. When we mention it these days, I tell her how I am enjoying myself by getting out and being me. She's very happy that I can do this, but she still can't understand how a man can crossdress and not be gay. Incidentally, she does not want to see me dressed.

The second victim that I selected was a mere male. I decided that, looking at a worst case scenario, if anything should ever happen me like a run in with the law, it would be a good idea to have one friend that could help me in times of crises and not have the shock of meeting Renee for the first time.

Fred is a little bohemian anyway so the news did not upset him. His only experience of this sort was with a personal friend who used to get beaten up by her husband and this same wife beater enjoyed wearing women's underwear. (I have a little bit of work to do in order to break the mind set of "hear crossdresser, think pervert.") It helped a lot when he met the wonderful people at Cross-Port. Mind you, a little incident in Perkins that involved the police and someone who comes to the meeting but refuses to wear a name tag, did nothing for the public relations. But up to that point, Fred was ready to hop into bed with her anyway, he could not believe that she was anything but a girl that likes to show off and loves attention. (Enough said.)

Fred also said, of all the people that he knew, I would have been the last person he would have ever suspected to be a CD. Fred had the balls to take Renee for a beer before he met other CDs. He arrived, took me out, and acted as relaxed as he would if he had a rattlesnake out on a date. But he did it and I know very few men that could do that. Fred is very comfortable with who he is and he is able to show some traits that may be considered feminine in our culture and he is not afraid to do it. A lot of us, when we are regular guys will not do this as we are acting macho and fitting in with society's rules.

Then I told my roommate. I had been sharing a house with a young couple; she was still a student, a very young 23-year-old. I had a lock on the trusty closet and sometimes you could feel the tension in the house. It was a horrible place to live, the quality of life was very low and I had really got my self into a horrible rut. Then Pat got a job in Chicago. God is good... thank you God.

Sheryl and I sat down and agreed to work to make each other more comfortable and within a few days life was beautiful. Within a few weeks, it was like we had been friends all of our lives. So I decided to truly enjoy myself and live the way I really wanted to. Telling Sheryl would either do one of two things, result in a reaction that would make me leave

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TELLING A FRIEND ... cont'd.

and move on, or she just might accept it and life would be even more beautiful.

One Saturday morning, I sat her down and handed her a piece of paper that said something like: "I, Sheryl promise to never reveal to any person other than Peter ... the secret that he shared with me on (date) at (address). He in return will always be willing to discuss this secret at any time I may wish, that is convenient to both parties. I understand that this agreement carries no legal liability (She loves money more than anything in the world and the thought that she might lose any amount of money for any reason would have blown the whole deal, so this escape clause was necessary.)."

I had two copies and a place for her to sign and a place for me to sign. I told her that it would explain a lot about some of my mysterious movements and it would make life in the house even more comfortable. She was terrified, she said "your not going to tell me that you want to run around the house naked are you ?" I assured her I was not and she very hesitantly signed the forms.

It was worth it. Her reaction was really marvelous, she said that she thought it was a compliment to women that any man would want to look like a woman. She gave me clothes and she wants to take me shopping. It is our little secret to enjoy and she sees all the advantages of having a girl friend in the house. Of course, I hear all the problems. The first time she met Renee, she rushed up and gave her a hug, she never gave Peter any hugs! She even gave me her good purse because she didn't like mine. She is a great critic and adviser.

It could have gone the other way; she is young and has not been out in the big bad world. She might have totally flipped, labelled me as pervert and made my life a hell. I took a calculated risk based on the knowledge that she had grown to trust me and used me as someone to tell her problems to in the past. Even when life in the house was uncomfortable, we often went for walks together and I would patiently listen to her. I don't think that

anyone has ever taken the time to listen to her before, so I had earned some major brownie points for something I like to do and can do reasonably well. I listen, it's actually relatively easy, yet very few people ever try to do it.

So, to sum up, let me try and give my two cents worth of analysis.

Our good friend Gina once said to me, "telling people gets easier and easier". Take a warning from this, it is true. Only tell someone if there is some identifiable advantage to be gained for either party. Like your wife is going to divorce you because she is sure that you are seeing another woman.

Do not tell a female friend and expect that she will be delighted and want to take you shopping and dress you up. She likes you the boy, she is comfortable with you the boy and she has no desire to turn you into a girl. If she does, she is possibly kinky.

Remember that you are trying to accept this for most of your life. If it has taken you this long, it is most likely going to take your friend a little while to understand what you are saying, never mind trying to accept you.

Don't ever expect a good reaction, everybody carries around a bunch of problems. The last thing in the world they need are your problems, the last thing in the world they want are more problems.

Be ready for that person to tell at least one person about this piece of NEWS in strictest confidence, be ready for that person to tell at least one other person and on and on. It's hot, it's different and it's even got a touch of sex and scandal buried in it. People can't keep that sort of news in. (Thanks Yvonne for this point, I would have not seen it.)

So, there you are, that's my two cents worth. It has certainly improved the quality of my life. I consider myself very lucky, it could have gone very sour on me. The one thing that drove me is the knowledge that the one constant in this ever-changing world is Renee. She's here to stay, and I have to make room for her. She's not going anywhere except out on Saturday nights. I better get used to it.

[Reprinted from "InnerView", Cross-Port]



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MEASURING TIPS FOR SHOPPING

by Eryca

You know there are so many of us that are lucky enough to fit into a standard 9/10, 13/14, etc., but there are also many of us that would just like to find something off the rack. The problem is that even though we may wishfully struggle into our latest fashion line, the truth may be we bought it and committed the one unforgivable sin of shopping by failing to ... get a receipt? No, no, the other sin ... that's right, try the garment on! Wait a second, did we get that right? Yes, try the garment on. I know that for many of us this is simply out of the question, so what answer is available for us?

Well, the first step is to be sincerely honest with yourself. Take a tape measure -- preferably not the one that stretches to make you think that you have a 26 inch waist -- and do a truthful evaluation of yourself. Remember, the clothes you are looking for are for you, and if you buy it an inch too tight, it will look too tight.

Now that you've measured your figure, you can then find your true size. We won't go into what styles to buy or colors or anything else in this article. Now, before you forget them (or decide that you could force yourself into a size smaller), write them down.

If you have a Sears catalog look in the center red pages. There is a section of the book that covers proper fitting. Now when you go to the stores and look for something, you can be reasonably sure it will fit.

Now for the real reason for this article.

Have you ever gone to the thrift stores and found the one article of clothing that just seems to sing at you? Then when you look inside to determine the size, someone has cut out the label and the size tag? I can't think of anything more frustrating than that. Here you have this ravishing blouse that just seems to cry out at you, and the size is gone.

Well, what you can do is this. The easiest answer is to simply try it on. However, not having your inserts or a bra might make trying on a blouse very difficult. So about the only recourse is to buy it, take it home and then try it on. Problem: What do you do with all of the garments you wishfully took home only to find they didn't fit?

Well, let's look at a solution that saves money and

also lets you know if that blouse fits or not.

Let's take out that tape measure again. This time we will be measuring a different part of the body.

Take your hand and open the fingers wide ... really wide. Be sure that you don't strain them; you simply want to find out the distance between the ball of your pinkie and the tip of your thumb. This measurement varies between people, but should be approximately the distance between the base of your neck and the outer edge of your shoulder. If you double that measurement, you'll get the distance between each shoulder. Now you can write that measurement down, and anytime you find a doubtful blouse you can just remember that it took two hand spans. A tape measure is obnoxious to carry around with you, but your hands stay with you (they're basic equipment) and they're good for measuring.

Now, for those of you who found that your shoulders were a little but longer than two hand spans, let's take another measurement. First make a "thumbs up" sign. Now open the fingers up. Measure from the base of your hand directly opposite your thumb up to the tip of your thumb. Call this an extended or "long hands" breadth. While you are at it, measure your hand again from the bottom of the hand to just above the index finger base joint. This is a hand's breadth. Lastly, determine the width of your thumb.

Now use these new measuring tools to determine your blouse's shoulder to shoulder length. Remember, once you know that it takes two hand spans and three thumbs to go across your shoulders, you'll be able to spot a good blouse even without the size tag. Skirts? get a skirt that you know fits you well, then measure it seam to seam at the waist, the hipline, and the length ... but remember to use your hand tools! With a little bit of research you'll be able to find just about any item of clothing you need. One special note, however: Remember that the measurement across your breasts should be a little longer than actually measured ... otherwise you will be looking for a minimizer bra, or buying new inserts just to fit into the blouses you buy.

[Reprinted from Northwest Gender Alliance (NWGA) newsletter]

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by Selena Anne [REDACTED]

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I dreamed I caught a whopper the size of a house boat in my Maidenform Bra

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NATIONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

August 14-31, 1992: "High Sierra Femme Fling V", Lake Tahoe NV. Sponsored by Joan [REDACTED], P.O. Box 6541, San Jose CA 95150-6541. Telephone information: (408) 723-2579.

August 26-30, 1992: "International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy", Houston TX, sponsored by Gulf Coast Transgender Community. Details from Phyllis Randolph Frye, 5707 Firenza, Houston 77035.

September 6-13, 1992: "Dignity Cruise" to Alaska, sponsored by Dr. Peggy Rudd. For details, contact Cruise Ahoy at (713) 556-1513.

September 10-13, 1992: "New Woman Caucus", Essex MA. Sponsored by IFGE, P.O. Box 367, Wayland MA 01778. Telephone information: (617) 894-8340.

September 17-20, 1992: "Paradise in the Poconos", Canadensis PA. Sponsored by Creative Design Services, P.O. Box 61263, King of Prussia PA 19406-1263. Telephone information: (215) 640-9449.

September 30-October 4, 1992: "Southern Comfort", Atlanta GA. Sponsored by the Montgomery Institute, P.O. Box 33311, Atlanta 30033.

October 16-25, 1992: "Fantasia Fair", Provincetown MA. Sponsored by the Outreach Institute, 405 Western Ave. #345, So. Portland ME 04106.

November 11-15, 1992: Tri-Ess "Holiday En Femme", Atlanta GA. Hosted by Sigma Epsilon, P.O. Box 7241, Tallahassee FL 32314-7241.

November 19-22, 1992: "Fall Harvest '92 Weekend", Kansas City MO. Sponsored by Crossdressers And Friends, St. Louis Gender Foundation, Iowa Artistry, River City Gender Foundation, and Wichita Gender Alliance. For details, write Fall Harvest, P.O. Box 35061, Overland Park KS 66214-5061.

March 14-21, 1993: International Foundation for Gender Education "Coming Together" convention, Philadelphia PA. Details from IFGE, P.O. Box 367, Wayland MA 01778.

April 28-May 2, 1993: "California Dreamin", Burbank CA, sponsored by Powder Puffs of Orange County in association with "Cross-Talk". Details from P.O. Box 1088, Yorba Linda CA 92686.

(Please send information on national gender community events to "Cross-Talk", P.O. Box 944, Woodland Hills CA 91365.)

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