

# The Femme Mirror

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE SECOND SELF, INC.



# The Femme Mirror

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1. *The Femme Mirror* will not publish the last name of any Tri-Ess member without the expressed written consent of the member, unless the surname is known to be a pseudonym.
2. We encourage all contributors to the Mirror to adopt a pseudonym when submitting articles and letters for publication. We request that you place the surname in quotation marks so that we will know it is a pseudonym.
3. We request that each contributor include her Tri-Ess number on all material.
4. Contributors should avoid use of true last names in letters or articles, and particularly in accounts of chapter activities and other events. We reserve the right to edit such material to remove surnames or other potentially compromising information.

Please help us to serve you in a professional manner.

Thank you, Frances Fairfax

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## A Note of Thanks

A note of thanks from your Mirror Staff to all of you who contribute your articles, photos, cartoons, poems, as well as your typing and envelope-stuffing skills. Your service is enriching the lives of all your sisters. This is YOUR journal. You, the readers, are the source of its contents and the reason for its existence. Ya'll are doing GREAT! Just keep it coming now, hear?



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## The Three S's of Tri-Ess

*Support - Serenity - Service*

by Jane Ellen Fairfax

"Tri-Ess!" Sounds like "3 S's," doesn't it? Actually "Tri-Ess" stands for "The Society for the Second Self." This seems a bit of a misnomer, for Tri-Ess encourages the development of an integrated, rather than a second, self. There are, however, three other S's that are of such paramount importance that they summarize what Tri-Ess is. These all-important S's are "Support, Serenity, and Service."

It is with great fear and trepidation that many crossdressers approach Tri-Ess. How often we get one-line inquiries from people too afraid to share anything about themselves or their needs! Some come into Tri-Ess to learn how to create their best crossgender image, while others join to attain confidence for going out in public. Some seek help in resolving religious or relationship issues. For others, Tri-Ess is a safe haven where they can heal the pain of rejection by friends, family or social institutions. Essentially all are yearning to achieve the self-acceptance that will unlock the door to inner peace and fulfillment. Supporting these sisters involves kindness, caring, and a lot of positive reinforcement, and in Tri-Ess that is exactly what they get!

When a crossdresser approaches Tri-Ess, he hears the following message:

"You are a crossdresser and will always be a crossdresser. The crossgender masculinity or femininity within you is a real part of who you are. Trying to deny your extra dimension robs you of your rightful joy. You are not alone! You are a worthwhile person. If you accept yourself and develop and integrate both genders within you, you will become a happier and more capable human being in many of your life roles." As soon as a crossdresser enters Tri-Ess, he encounters a menu of support services from which he can pick and choose. Even if he lives in an isolated location, or is a home-dresser, he can enjoy the one-on-one support of a Big Sister and meet other crossdressers on the CDTRIESS forum. Those fortunate enough to live near a chapter can know the exhilaration of meeting others like themselves. There's nothing like attending that first chapter meeting to realize the import of the message, "You are not alone."

Nor is his wife alone. Even if she is not yet ready to see her husband in a dress, she can experience caring support on the CDSO or TRIESS42 forums. How wonderful to find women who have faced the same issues you are facing! Need to work

on relationship issues?

Both crossdresser and spouse can gain insight from the Spouses' and Partners' International Conference for Education (SPICE), whose aim is to help the couple define a zone of mutual comfort for crossdressing in the relationship.

The crossdresser seeking support is rather like a seed pushing its first, tentative shoots above the ground. Watered by the kindness and nourished by manifold support, he begins to experience real personal growth. At this stage, however, bearing fruit is only a pipe dream. Much has to happen before he is able to nurture others.

Fed by rivers of Tri-Ess support, the crossdresser achieves the momentous goal of self-acceptance. He feels at peace with himself, and is more comfortable with the image looking back at him in the mirror. If going out in public was a goal, he now feels comfortable in his emergence. When his wife achieves a degree of acceptance, he may consider himself the luckiest of mortals. Nothing can interfere with his happiness now. "Now," he thinks, "it's time to graduate from Tri-Ess, and live happily ever after."

Such pride may foreshadow a fall. If the crossdresser pushes himself into an activity for which he is not prepared and suffers an unpleasant experience, he may lose that self-acceptance and confidence and plunge right into the denial called purging. Now he has to start all over. Eventually, confined beyond endurance, he comes roaring out of the closet. Trampling underfoot the needs of his family, he indulges in daredevil behavior that can endanger his job, social standing, and marriage. For the crossdresser, crossgender expression is like food. It nourishes and relaxes the soul as a good meal does the body. Binging and purging is as unhealthy for crossdressers as it is for bulimics.

Even if the crossdresser attains an abiding serenity, he is yet to achieve his full growth. He is like the young tree leafed out in beautiful foliage, but not sufficiently mature to bear fruit. What



Jane Ellen Fairfax



boots his inner smile if he does not radiate it to those in dark secrecy? Who is better off, except himself, for his inner serenity? Many hands reach out to him, desperate in their need. Full of his own triumph, he can not see their suffering or hear their plea for help. There is no one so blind as the person who does not want to see, no one so deaf as one who does not wish to hear. Deceived by their strong trunks and abundant, swaying foliage, some of these "graduate" from Tri-Ess, thinking themselves mature. Having stopped aspiring to new height and depth, they cannot see their stunted growth or their branches devoid of life-sustaining fruit.

That is why it is so important to complete the circle of life, to advance to that third fulfilling "S," Service. When the crossdresser starts to look outward from himself he is on his way to real personal growth that can never be extinguished. Serenity is like a lantern. Its glory comes not from the warmth within, but the light it radiates out to others. The kindness that radiates from a sister as she nurtures a struggling human being reveals an inner femininity far more noble and beautiful than the most elaborate clothes. The warmth that comes with Service confirms the worth of the helper, and inspires the downhearted sister with the heights she can reach. This inner peace never grows old; it is renewed with every act of love and caring. Truly Service complements Serenity.

After a while the crossdresser can no longer contain his serenity in his feminine side. Then new vistas open for him. Service to others knows no inner walls; it suffuses the soul and bathes it in a rosy light. Eventually it spills over into the masculine side, scouring away the crust of social stereotypes. The desire to nurture and serve pervades his masculine role. People start remarking that he has "changed." At last his loved ones understand the fruit crossgender expression has borne in his life. They accept him for who he is. Go back to denial, guilt and shame? Never! He has found joy. And he lives in that joy to the end of his days.

Accepting the challenge of service requires commitment. Now to some people, that's a scary word. It's easy for the crossdresser, who has had to endure years of guilt, to justify considering his own needs first. Such self-pity is not confined to crossdressers. Fleeing in fear from the queen who sought his life, the prophet Elijah needed support - fast! Exhausted, he lay down and prayed for an end to his responsibilities. He was really feeling sorry for himself, but God did not let him wallow in negativity. His first words to Elijah were, "Get up!" And then he gave Elijah the directions by which he would help his people.

Similarly, once the crossdresser has attained serenity, he must "get up" and go to help his people. There is not one member of Tri-Ess who lacks the gifts to complete the circle of "Support, Serenity, and Service." "But," you say, "I am just a homedresser. I don't pass. I'm ugly. All those lovely ladies at the chapter don't want me. I'll just get them read." I blush to say it, but I thought that way once. Fortunately, a kind sister told me, "You're a good person, Jane. You want to help people. But you can't help anyone hiding in that room."

Does this mean that every crossdresser should be out in public and ignore security issues that affect job and family life? Of course not! You don't need to go to work in a dress to have a heart that can care. You don't need to have an hourglass figure to have a mind that can learn, and teach and translate. Tri-Ess can send you information. Chapters can encourage you to come and meet your sisters. But only you can get up and come to a meeting. Only you can take the positive action of offering to help.

Anyone can complete the circle. Tri-Ess is set up to accommodate as many volunteers as want to serve. All our departments need workers, and our chapters cry for them. Can you write? Chapter newsletters, the "Mirror," and the "Sweetheart Connection" thirst for your articles. Do you have a nurturing spirit? The Big Sister Program needs your particular talent. Do you have special aptitude for figures, foreign language, grant writing, journalism? Your gifts can serve at all levels of this organization. Frustrated because there is no chapter in your area? Get up on e-mail to me, and we'll get started! See a service Tri-Ess should provide? Don't rail at the deficiency - help us form a team to fix it. Now I know that if all 1300 of you are so inspired as to pursue that third "S," some Tri-Ess officers and some chapter leaders are going to have some work to do. Somehow, though, I don't think any of us will mind. It will be happy work to empower each of you in the work of service!

Not long ago, a sister told me that the opportunity to serve meant a lot to her. Of course it does! For it validates who she is as a feminine person, and it completes her serenity by enabling others to share her bliss. As she has received support from Tri-Ess, she contributes it back, and makes Tri-Ess a little more able to pass it on to others. This is what it means to be a complete Tri-Ess sister!

So the three S's of Tri-Ess are Support, Serenity, and Service. Support defines Tri-Ess. Serenity makes it glow. But Service makes it live on through the ages.





# Executive Director's Message

By Carol Beecroft

I originally had planned to write about one of my favorite subjects, but during the last six weeks I have received some disturbing phone calls. They troubled me to the extent that I will hold off on that other matter.

I am going to concentrate on some phone calls I have received from half-a-dozen wives over the last six weeks. These wives were distraught and perplexed - maybe even angry.

In the past we have preached and preached to crossdressers that if they were ever lucky enough to have a wife who was "understanding," they should show this unique and special person how much they do appreciate her. They should freely express their own caring and sensitive side to the extent that their wives would feel truly loved, special, highly appreciated and most secure. Such husbands should realize how most fortunate they are to have a one-in-a-million wife who has overcome all the obstacles she faced in her quest for "understanding." Believe me, friend crossdresser, this long and difficult road to acceptance and understanding, for most wives, is rocky, emotionally draining, frustrating, sleep-depriving, questioning of her own sexuality, insecure and just plain challenging to her marriage.

Many a wife finally arrives at the end of her long and difficult journey - only to find that her crossdresser husband is still the same ole selfish individual he was when she started her journey.

Four of the wives complained their husbands still put them down as women. They expected that their husbands' supposed femininity would make them more sensitive to their wives' emotional and physical needs. But no, they were still the same ole thoughtless men they were originally.

Some wives thought their husbands would be a lot more caring once they were able to share their feminine side. But it seems that although the husband talked a lot about his feminine side, he never showed the feminine qualities the wife really expected. It was so disappointing to all the wives that they were the ones who had to do all the adjusting and compromising. One wife was in tears as she related to me her disappointment at what she found at the end of her personal journey.

A disturbing bit of information given by three of the wives was the fact that their husbands had involved themselves in frequent masturbation while crossdressing. These wives were so confused, disappointed, and sexually frustrated. Sad!

What the heck is going on? If the reader thinks these unfortunate wives are the only ones with this disturbing situation, please think again. I distinctly remember receiving a phone call some years ago when a wife, who was crying when we talked, said she was trying so hard to be the "understanding wife" her husband wanted. It was so upsetting, I almost cried while she



explained her situation. She said her husband hadn't changed at all. He was still selfish, put her down, and made her feel her efforts were all in vain. She simply didn't know what to do! I felt so bad for her! I tried to help, but she needed her husband's sympathy, not mine. That phone call is still as clear to me now as when I first received it some years ago.

We who are crossdressers like to talk about our feminine side - the civilizing side - the side which would lead us to be gentle, caring, sensitive and nurturing. But I think that, in far too many cases, it is just cheap talk by many crossdressing husbands. Such husbands make no real attempt to develop their real feminine side - a side that would allow them to be more pleasant individuals. So many men are thoughtless! And isn't that typical of most men?

Over the 29 years I have worked in the crossdressing field, I have heard from hundreds of crossdressers who said they would give almost anything, including their right arms, to acquire an understanding and accepting wife. I'm sure some of these particular individuals did find that certain understanding wife. I'm also sure many of these husbands who did succeed in acquiring that special woman found that they, too, had to make adjustments, just as their wives did. They also found, I'm sure, that they had to give up things, like their wives did. It's not a one-way road to acceptance and cooperativeness! Both the husband and the wife must make a number of changes to please the "other" spouse. Femininity involves GIVING! You simply can't ask the wife to do all the "work." You have got to make yourself WORTHY of a woman who has worked so hard to be the understanding person you have wanted. You have to be a better person, a better husband, a better father!

Otherwise, who are you kidding?

So, guys, TELL your wife how much you appreciate her! Let her know in many ways how much you love her. Spend some money on flowers and a nice dinner out! Pamper her!! Show true appreciation of all the work she has done to be "understanding." Give that "right arm" to show her how great and wonderful she is. And lastly, CHANGE yourself, if necessary, so that your feminine side will shine brightly, and then you will be the type of husband an "understanding" wife deserves!!! OK? Get to it!



## **NOTICE!**

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### **Editorial Policy**

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## Another Theory of Crossdressing

*A Response to Carol Beecroft*

by Alyce [REDACTED]

Here is another theory of crossdressing that makes more sense. You suggest that only 30% of crossdressers have been dressing before the age of 6. Well, that leaves 70% after the age of 6. Your theory would make sense for a small percentage of crossdressers, but certainly not for the majority. I don't believe for the majority of people that there is a brain that can distinguish between female and male clothing at an early stage in life. Clothing is neutral until a person can identify whether they want to dress a certain way, either male or female or both. Why is it that women enjoy dressing not only as females but as males? We are talking about crossdressing, aren't we, not a choice of gender?

If we were talking about a male or female brain, why do females love to dress as females and males? We seem to be dealing with a pleasurable response that most men seem to have who crossdress. I did not try on any female clothing until my late 30's. I had a powerful sexual response from that experience, and for 20 years I progressed until I was completely crossdressed.

Considering all these facts, I thought that since there is only about 10-20% of the brain that we know of being used, that we may have tapped into a part of our brain that women have tapped into years ago. Since it is sociologically wrong for men to crossdress, we seem to be in denial that we are any different than women. Once you have tapped into this part of your brain, endorphins in your brain release and give you this powerful response of pleasure. Remember that these endorphins are more powerful than any man made drug. As one progresses through dressing, the pleasure derived from these endorphins is so powerful that no man can resist dressing to obtain that wonderful feeling of satisfaction.

There could be millions of us out there who would just love to come out dressed, probably as many of us as there are women who love to dress. It gives them pleasure.

My theory is one that would include all men who have the nerve to try on women's clothing. Why should there be such a difference between the sexes, that women can get a thrill out of wearing men's clothing, while we should deny ourselves the same pleasure, wearing women's clothing?

I refuse to believe that for most of us, it was an accident of birth. If it were, our response to clothing would be immediate and not spread over a long period of time. My theory treats crossdressing as a gift that most men and women have, to enjoy once they have tapped into the male or female part of their brain.

## I Passed While Bearded!

By Razilee [REDACTED]

I had an unusual personal experience during the blizzard of '99. I passed while bearded!

The weather here in Cincinnati doesn't often get cold enough to use a scarf over the face, but when it does stay below freezing Razilee sometimes has gone out walking. Because it was well below freezing and icy, there were few people about or passengers on the bus, so I ventured to ride en femme for the first time. It was quite a new experience, in public and a 44DD redhead, but there was more to come.

When I got off the bus and was practicing my walk, I was stopped by a woman on the street. "Oh, no!" I thought, "I've been discovered!" Then the woman turned back to her car and got a camera. She was, she explained, from

the newspaper, and she wanted to get a picture of me. She asked me my name, and again I thought, "Here it comes. My voice has given me away before."

That had been when I had plucked and spent hours, it seemed, getting the makeup right. Still, I ventured again. I spoke softly and, I hoped, a bit higher than normal, and the photographer kept asking questions: "Is that P-U-R-D-U-E?" "Where are you from?" "Do you like this weather?" *I was passing!*

Razilee made it through the whole interview, apparently without the born woman guessing she was not talking to her own kind. Naturally, I searched the papers for the next few days for the photo, but there were so many such photos to choose from - men shoveling, cars stuck, children playing - and I'd neglected to ask which newspaper this interviewer was from - that I didn't find my second self immortalized in the press this time.

I'm enclosing, however, my own re-creation of what that unused photograph might have looked like, to remember it by. I don't think I'm likely to forget it soon, even though Razilee rode the bus, and waited at the bus stop, a couple more times while the cold lasted. Yes, I do like that kind of weather.





# Ann Landers Boosts Library Project

by Jane Ellen and Frances Fairfax

Around February 26 of this year, there appeared an Ann Landers column in which she advised the wife of a crossdresser to learn more about crossdressing by seeking information at her public library. Becky of Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter had the idea that Ann's column might help dispel the reluctance of some libraries to stock literature on crossdressing. (You know the difficulty Carol and Marlene have had getting libraries to accept the books donated through our Library Project.) It would be wonderful, and certainly in keeping with our 501©(3) status, to be able to send our books to many more libraries.

We can do this on two levels. First, each of you could approach libraries in your area, with an introductory letter about our Library Book Donation Project and a copy of the Ann Landers column. You could point out to the Librarian that while they have many titles on human sexuality and gay and lesbian issues, books on crossdressing issues are conspicuous by their absence. Armed with Ann Landers' recommendation, we could probably persuade many more libraries to accept our books, and thereby satisfy the hunger of many more people seeking knowledge about crossdressing. This would be relatively easy to do.

Alternatively, if each of you could supply contact information for your local library, especially the name of the Acquisitions Librarian, Carol and Marlene could mail them the information. Your gift of \$30.00 will enable Tri-Ess to supply the library of your choice with our book packet. Tri-Ess will even match your contribution and send a second book packet to another library of your choice.

On a larger scale, it would be very helpful if we could target our outreach to every public library in the United States. Marlene informs us that she has located (in the Tulare county library) a directory of all of the libraries in the United States, so we can pick and choose to whom we want to send our letters. Clearly we can't do them all at once (there are thousands). Highest priority should be given to cities where we have chapters, but as yet, no book packs placed in local libraries. If your chapter has not yet donated a book pack to your local library, the time is ripe to do so. High priority should also be given to the large cities where we have neither a chapter nor a book pack donation. If you live in such a city, you know "your mission, should you choose to accept it..."

To target those other thousands of libraries would require financial resources far beyond our means, both to do the initial mailout and to pay for the books.. However, there are foundations, corporations and wealthy individuals out there whose mission is to provide such financial support to educational and charitable organizations. Our

Library Project would certainly meet their criteria, but we need your help. If you, or anyone you know, are **experienced** and **knowledgeable** about grant-writing, would you please get in touch with us? This is an effort in which all of us can participate to really make a difference!

Here's the Ann Landers column from the Houston Chronicle of 2/26/99: *Husband who repressed feelings now wants to cross-dress*

**Dear Ann Landers:** My husband has been clinically depressed for most of his adult life. A while back, "Herman" began seeing a female therapist who focused on my husband's early years to see if something in his childhood caused his depression. His therapist discovered that during adolescence, Herman had been a cross-dresser. He apparently had worn women's clothing in his early teens but repressed it as an adult. Now, Herman wants my permission to express this part of his personality around the house. He says he would not go out in public.

This disgusts me, Ann. The thought of my husband in makeup, wig and high heels makes my skin crawl. His therapist told me I need to be more tolerant. She doesn't seem to think his behavior is abnormal or sick.

Herman is artistic and sensitive, a gourmet cook and an avid sportsman. More important, he is a terrific father to our two sons. I used to think he was the most masculine man alive. Now, I don't see how I can ever look at him the same way or stop wondering if he is gay. I don't want to break up our marriage, but if anyone found out about the makeup, wigs and high heels,

I would be devastated. I need your advice. - N. Carolina

**Dear N. Carolina:** You need to have a better understanding of your husband's cross-dressing. Herman is a transvestite. Some transvestites are gay, but many are not. They get their thrills from dressing up in women's clothing, but that's as far as it goes. Please go to the public library, and read up on the subject. The more you know, the less you will fear it.



# Acceptance Speech: Phyllis Randolph Frye

*Virginia Prince Lifetime Contribution Award*

IFGE Convention, March 20, 1999, Louisville, Kentucky

Ed. Note: Below is the edited text of Phyllis Frye's acceptance speech for the Virginia Prince Award at the recent IFGE Convention in Louisville, KY. Phyllis speaks to key issues affecting the entire spectrum of transgendered persons. While parts of her message may not apply to members of Tri-Ess, other parts certainly do. While we maintain our Tri-Ess identity and our focus on the heterosexual crossdresser and his or her spouse or partner and family members, we must remain aware that a hostile society makes no such distinction. Hatred, discrimination and violence against transgendered persons is our problem, too!

Phyllis says, "I want to make a few quick comments about the IFGE Convention. The Blue Grass Belles of Kentucky caught this event "on the fly" with only five months to produce it, and they did a TREMENDOUS JOB. And thanks to workshop presenters the caliber of Randi Ettner (who, by the way, has an excellent new book out; contact her at [REDACTED]), Tony Barretto-Neto, Dana Turner, Dottie Laing, Fred Ettner, Barbara Bertrand and over a dozen others, the program was very good. The next IFGE Convention is in March 2000 in the Washington DC area.

"As for IFGE, it has a new Board with many new members, a new Chair (Pam Geddis) and a new Executive Director (Nancy Cain) and lots of new ideas. Listening to them at a roundtable, for the first time in many years, I felt very positive about the future of IFGE. I foresee IFGE potentially coming around the bend and assuming a needed and strong, uniting leadership role for the transgender community. Let's wish them well and send our support ([REDACTED] or [REDACTED]). Below is the text of my speech."

— Phyllis

Phyllis Randolph Frye, aka "the Phyllabuster"

P.S. Check out my web page at <http://members.aol.com/prfrye>

As I prepared this talk, I felt very much "Academy Award"ish in the desire to thank everyone, yes e-v-e-r-y-o-n-e who was a part of this honor. You know — those folks who had been doing the work along side me, and those folks who helped me along, and those folks who had an influence on my work and who I became and who I did not become, and on and on and on. My



parents, teachers, yes, even to thank a real jerk of a teacher who made my life miserable while I was in high school because he forced me to focus on the details of planning.

Well, the list got longer and longer, just like tomorrow night's Academy Awards. When I reached 937 I knew that I'd better take another tack. You really don't want to hear 937-plus thank you's, do you? No, I didn't think so. But I did bring my best friend and legal same-sex spouse of over twenty-five years with me. Her name is Trish, she deserves lots of thanks—

I love ya, sweetie—and I hope you give her lots of hugs after this is over.

Next I considered a listing of my accomplishments that got me to this point where you honor me with this terrific award, named after the very Virginia Prince who was out and open and stirring-up-the-ants back when I was afraid of coming out in 1971



at the age of twenty-three. Thank you, Virginia, for being there back then when I was afraid.

How many of you are surprised to learn that I was ever afraid? Well, I was, and that is a point worth spending at least an hour of discussion. How did I get from being the scared and closeted person I was to being who I am? The same way that you are — learning to quiet your fears and become a proud and out person—by going one step at a time. But we don't have an hour to discuss that, and I really don't think you want to hear that tonight. Do you?

As to my political activism and as to my accomplishments, I suggest that you pull up my web page: "<http://members.aol.com/prfrye>." If you want to write that down, I'll give it to you again after the end of my talk. Or if you want to be on my transgender e-mail news list, give me your cyber-address tonight.

I do want to assert that we transgenders must continue our embrace of our lesbian, gay and bisexual friends and get over any homophobia. Even though there remain some small pockets of resistance, I feel that the remerging of the LGBT community is coming along very well.

And I want to assert that we MTF folks must continue to encourage and support our FTM brothers as they begin their transitions. They are an integral part of who we are, and I feel that this is also moving along very well.

But one area that we still need to address and become proactive in stamping out is the remaining racism in our community. For those of us who are white, and who as transgenders face oppression based solely on society's reaction to our outward appearance, we must end any racist feelings both within and without. And proactively so! Consider that people of color also face oppression based solely on society's reaction to their outward appearance. Those of us who are white and TG should be just as close and warm towards people of color as we are of the LGB community. And next year, I will pray that the award winners will not be solely white faces.

Now, I want to talk about us, about our community, and where we were and where we are. Have you ever considered the crazy circumstances that have brought us together? Sure, when we get to know each other we discover that we have things in common, like being Eagle Boy Scouts, or being in the military, or playing musical instruments, or maybe living just around the block in a town when you just knew you were the only one. Or we find other engineers, CPA's, railroad workers or airplane mechanics.

But what is it that brought us together? Think about it. We had NOTHING in common except that we have some internal feeling that was not culturally acceptable. And we came together

with a lot of fear and sometimes feelings of guilt and shame. But that was then. I assure you that if Virginia Prince could do what she did beginning back in the 1950's and 1960's, and I could begin to do what I did in the 1970's, and others have done what we have done during and since then, and we have all survived and are doing for the most part pretty well, then today, yes in March of 1999, I proclaim that there is no more time or room for fear or guilt or shame. It is time for society to get over itself as to who we are.

But what else do we have in common? What else besides some internal feeling that was not culturally acceptable? Well, our good humor, for one. Think about it, some of us have done some really funny things to learn to cope with this internal feeling that was not culturally acceptable. Yes, it is time to laugh. And as I tell you this story, think about others that are simply just too funny.

About twelve years ago, our local group was having a party at a member's beachhouse. That member also had a hot tub. Great chance for all the MTF's to wear their skimpiest swim suit and for the FTM's to finally show off their new chests and their chest hair. Right. A good friend, Vivian, was in the hot tub for a while and as she stood to get out, we noticed that her breasts were terribly misshapen. You know, after sitting with arms folded, like someone pushed a fist into a ball of mud. We started giggling and she noticed what we saw. Embarrassed, she tried to cover herself only to rearrange them even more. She got red in the face and we thought she would cry, but then she started giggling herself. She explained that for years, her breast prosthesis was a stocking filled with rice. Worked good for years until she sat for a half hour in hot water. Yes, she'd cooked her rice tits. Now what other community is going to have stories like that?

And thankfully, now in 1999, without fear, guilt or shame, we can laugh at ourselves as well.

Our community has changed in other ways. Back when, there was the notion amongst the folks doing the Harry Benjamin work, that we all had to be heterosexual. So, if you were going through with genital surgery, you had to, yes H-A-D-T-O divorce your loving spouse even if your spouse wanted to stay with you. They were destroying those marriages that we had been successful in saving. Early in this decade, myself and others began the movement to let these doctors know that if they persisted in that notion, that we would find other doctors.

Now, today, in 1999, we have many legally married, same-sex, transgender couples, in every state. Yes, these folks are now gay or lesbian and the response from them is, "So what if we are?"

What does this mean for the spouse of a non-transsexual, het-



erosexual crossdresser? It means that as more of our legal marriages become same-sexed, and as the lesbian and gay community get the right to begin a legal same-sex marriage, that the spouse of a non-transsexual, heterosexual crossdresser will feel less pressure from the parents and siblings, less pressure from their churches and synagogues and mosques, less pressure from the neighbors, less pressure from their peers, friends and co-workers, and less pressure from other social and cultural venues to divorce their husbands if their husband's crossdressing goes public. Sounds pro-family to me and deserving of a pause to reflect on the freedom these spouses of non-transsexual, heterosexual crossdressers will feel.

Our community has also changed in that genital surgery is no longer the end-all for the legal goal of correction of sex. For many years I have been about the business mostly of freeing our community from the legal NEED of the scalpel. Notice that I did not say freedom from the scalpel, I said from the legal NEED of the scalpel.

For decades, the medical community, mostly white, mostly heterosexual male, has defined our people on the basis of genital surgery. Do you need it? — then TS or transsexual. Not? — then TV or transvestite, and later CD or crossdresser. If TS, are you pre-operative or post-operative, and only if post-operative were you a "REAL" person, man or woman depending on if MTF or FTM.

Such total nonsense!

At the same time, I was taking ICTLEP, the Transgender Law Conference, on-the-road to lots of events such as this one in Louisville for legal workshops and fundraising. I met lots of post-operative transsexuals, both MTF and FTM, who told group sessions how happy they were with their surgery. Interestingly, when alone, over a drink, many - no, I do not have a statistic or a percentage and my sampling was not scientific - but many told me that their surgery was not what they had expected and they were not pleased.

Something was going on, and a lot of people, either because of peer pressure, expectations of family or friends or expectations of the medical community, or the Harry Benjamin Standards that I will continue to say were based on the need to protect doctors from malpractice, or the Diagnostic and Statistics Manual, the DSM, that still labeled us with a "disorder," or the judges who expected people to have surgery as a condition to getting a birth certificate correction — whatever — a lot was going on, and many post-ops who talked a good talk in groups were candidly, to me anyway, candidly unhappy in the one-on-one conversations of the reality of genital surgery that they were not pleased with.

Being a lawyer—and a damned good one, I might humbly add—you can laugh here if you wish—I put a lot of blame on the legal community. Think this through. If a doctor's letter was all a surgeon needed to do expensive, life-threatening, irreversible genital surgery, then why couldn't that same doctor's letter be all that a judge needed to effect a legal correction of sex on a birth certificate? And if a judge would do so without a condition that the client follow through with genital surgery, then guess what happens?

What happens?

Genital surgery finally becomes a true choice. Let me say that again, genital surgery finally becomes a true choice. So if genital surgery happens, it is because the person really wants it, and not because genital surgery is necessary to get all the legal affairs in order. And with a full and complete legal correction of sex without the precondition of ever completing genital surgery, then the hormonally altered transsexual is on equal footing, yes, is just as legally complete, as is the post-operative transsexual. So not only from a legal standpoint, but also from a peer pressure and others' expectations standpoint, they are equally complete.

So, my friends, I have freed you from the legal NEED of the scalpel, while still maintaining the availability of the scalpel if truly desired. I support genital surgery. But I have made it so that with the legal equality of the hormonally altered transsexual with the post-operative transsexual, the genital surgery is finally a true choice to be made by the individual without coercion, legal, social or otherwise. ....

Now to you spouses of heterosexual crossdressers who sit here tonight, I am certain that you secretly fear that your husband will be lured into becoming full-time and then TS and eventually have genital surgery. I say to you, that by removing the legal NEED for the scalpel to make transsexualism legally completed before and without a condition of ever having genital surgery, you need not necessarily fear your husband going from crossdresser to transsexual, because now transsexual does not automatically equate to genital surgery.....

And so I end this, I invite you to either get my web address or give to me your e-mail address, and again I say thank you.

*(Note: because time was short, here is the rest of the written speech that I did not have time to present.)*

I think that the best thing for me to talk to you about now is the work that is at hand and still needs to be done.

How many of you have a fear for losing your jobs because you are some form or variety of transgender or are the spouse or loved one of some variety of transgender? Come on, raise your hands. Should be almost everyone in this room. Did you know



that when I formed ICTLEP back in 1991, that fear that you are expressing is why I intentionally put "employment policy" into its name? Yes, that is correct—the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy. It is the fear of loss of a job or career and all that goes with such a loss that paralyzes our community. This fear completely cripples the heterosexual crossdressers and their spouses. And for those who are full-time transsexual, they can survive almost any obstacle and indignity and cruelty and ostracism if they can keep or get a job and not become homeless.

Jobs. Keeping them and getting them. They are key to our peoples' survival. Tell me if I am wrong, but if you had a law that would guarantee you redress if you were fired or not hired simply because someone discovered that you cross dressed, would you come out? Would you? No fear of job and income loss, would you come out? I believe you would.

There has been in the past United States Congressional Sessions, at least since Karen Kerin and I got involved in 1994, a bill called the Employment Non-Discrimination Act or ENDA. ... ENDA, if enacted by both Congressional Houses and signed by the President, would provide job protection, unfortunately in a very limited form, to some lesbians and some gay men and some bisexuals. If passed as it is, ENDA would not protect you and me. Nor would it protect any of our transgender sisters and brothers. Nor would it protect those lesbians, gay men or bisexuals who present in their dress or appearance or personality any variant from mainline, conservative bi-polar gender presentation.

Ever since my forming ICTLEP for effecting transgender protective employment policy, and on through all of the work that folks have done to change the mission statements of many advocacy organizations to become transgender inclusive; plus all of the many national and state and local organizations that are currently active in persuading their government leaders to adopt or consider the adoption of transgender protections in ordinances or state laws; yes, with all of this, thousands and tens of thousands of us transgender folks—even around the world, we know they are active because the internet has come alive with successes and strategies and stories of courage—yes, with all of this we are still not in the ENDA Bill that will be offered any day now to this current, two-year session of Congress that began two months ago.

And we are still not in the ENDA Bill because of two people: US Representative Barney Frank (D-MA), and US Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA).

I have learned over these years of fighting with the so-called Human Rights Campaign, or HRC, and with visits to "the Hill" in Washington DC, and with listening to them speak. These two

men are the keys and the ENDA Bills will be introduced to each House by these two men and a string of co-sponsors.

The word that I get is that if Frank and Kennedy introduce an ENDA without us, the co-sponsors will sign on. And if Frank and Kennedy introduce an ENDA with us, the co-sponsors will still sign on. So it is Frank and Kennedy.

**Write. Write. Write. Write to Frank and Kennedy** before the end of this month. Their addresses are:

**The Honorable Barney Frank**  
Representative from Massachusetts (4th District)  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**The Honorable Ted Kennedy**  
Senator from Massachusetts  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

As promised, my web page is "members.aol.com/prfrfyre."

Good night, and may God bless each of you.

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## Obituary

### *Elisabeth Saige Lake*

1951 - 1999

On January thirtieth, in the Year of Our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety nine, Elisabeth Saige Lake was called home to be with Our Lord and Savior at the age of forty seven. She will be missed by many of her sisters in Tau Gamma, Kappa Beta and Sigma Rho Delta, North Carolina chapters of Tri-Ess National. Elisabeth started her discovery of being transgendered at the age of ten years old. Like so many of us, she had to deal with the issues of being transgendered and coming to self acceptance. Within her lifetime she had overcome these issues with the help of a very loving wife and many of her Tri-Ess sisters, to the point where she was able to pass on her love and wisdom in helping others.



Elisabeth was a graduate of North Carolina State University and worked in the field of state forestry management. She met the love of her life, Deborah, and married her in December of 1978. This was a match made in heaven for the two of them. Together they were able to overcome many of life's situations through the love they had for one another. Deborah played a major key role in helping Elisabeth come to her own personal acceptance. The love they displayed for one another carried over to many others as an example of how a relationship involving crossdressing could work. Elisabeth was a lady of true inner beauty, love and dignity who reached out to all those in need. She accomplished so much in just a short period of time, and was always willing to lend a helping hand.

To her credit, Elisabeth was co-founder in the creation of two new chapters in North Carolina, Sigma Rho Delta and Tau Gamma. She served on the Board of Directors of all three North Carolina chapters: Kappa Beta as the Newsletter Editor, Sigma Rho Delta as Screening Director, and Tau Gamma as Screening Director and Expressions of Love Moderator. She also wrote articles for the Tau Gamma newsletter under the pen name "Lois Lake, Girl Reporter." Elisabeth made many contributions to the transgender community, as well as doing one on one counseling to help others. She will truly be missed by all. Her presence will always be felt in all that we do and say, from the examples she left behind of her caring love and deeds to all whom she encountered.

## Who AM I?

by Diane [REDACTED] TX 4261 H

I am (and each of you are) a complex individual, and we are many things. Let's try to put this in perspective.

### *At Birth*

I am a boy (so saith the doctor), I am a son, I am a grandson, I am a second child, I am an Aquarian, I am a brother, I am a cousin, I am a nephew.

### *Until age 9*

I am a student, I am intelligent, I am a leader, I am athletic, I am inquisitive, I am industrious, I am responsible, I am a Boy Scout.

### *After age 9*

I am a heterosexual male, I am different, I am a grade school graduate, I am a high school graduate, I am a husband, I am a college graduate, I am an officer and a gentleman (by Act of Congress), I am a military pilot, I am an uncle, I am a father., I am a war hero (Distinguished Flying Cross, 16 Air Medals), I am a war veteran (Vietnam), I am a commercial airline pilot, I am a commercial airline captain, I am an investor, I am a speculator, I am an inventor, I am a grandfather, I am a retired airline captain.

Somewhere in this list the statement "I am a crossdresser" needs to be added. But no matter where or when it is added, just how much of my life does it affect? How important is it to "WHO AM I?"

The answer of course, is that it affects all of my life and it is very important - TO ME!

I get so tired of defining myself or being defined "as a crossdresser" as though that is all that I am.

The real question is how important this one item is to others who already know the rest of the list. Is it important enough to trash a long term relationship? A familial bond? A casual relationship?

You tell me, because the decision is yours. My arms are open to you. Are yours still open to me?



# The Plight of the Crossdresser's Wife

by Barbara F. Anderson, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.

The lot of the crossdresser's wife is not an easy one, so I'm told by my clients. In either couple counseling or individual treatment with the spouse alone, complaints include using her clothing and makeup without permission; impulsive spending on impractical items; self-centeredness bordering on narcissism; a lack of caution and respect for her wish to keep his behavior secret; alternatively, secretiveness approaching paranoia; competitiveness and even gloating when (on rare occasions) he looks better than she; lack of interest in learning skills essential to dressing and making-up such as mending and removing makeup stains; entering a period of age-regression immediately upon dressing; and selecting friends in the gender community based on appearance.

As you can imagine, some of these issues engender laughter despite the pain that provokes the complaint. Here is how I attempt to help a couple or an individual deal with the issues.

Using others' property without their permission is rude and presumptuous. If this is permitted with other than gender-related property, it will be more difficult to correct. After all, if she has been using his razor and he her deodorant without incident, a pattern has been established which gives rise to the current complaint. I ask couples to look at their boundaries and think about why are some infringements OK and others not. If this only occurs with gender-related property, issues of inexperience and embarrassment may be inhibiting the crossdresser from purchasing what he needs. Education and reassurance can go far to reestablish boundaries.

Complaints about impulsive spending for impractical items may be motivated by the couple's limited finances; unfair division of discretionary income; neurosis on either (or both) part(s); lack of information about where to shop reasonably or inexperience in what items are usable; or the crossdresser being an impulsive or impractical individual. A frank discussion of this complaint with both individuals will reveal the underlying cause and ultimately the best therapeutic approach.

Self-centeredness is a very common behavior of crossdressers, whether they are new at it or old hands. I think for many it is the attempt to deal with insecurity by an over-attentiveness to appearance. On the other hand, a narcissistic individual will be a narcissistic crossdresser as well. The therapeutic stance is to assess whether the behavior is situational or endemic to his personality. In the former case, education and reassurance can be helpful. In the latter, it will be useless. In such a situation, the big guns are necessary in the form of individual, intensive psychotherapy.

Extreme attitudes concerning caution or its absence regarding non-conventional gender behavior can cause great difficulty within a couple. Of course, "extreme" is in the eye of the beholder. Rather than getting caught up in who is right or wrong, the importance of agreeing on what

level of discretion is appropriate is the key. Therapy can be helpful in facilitating a discussion that is rational and respectful and leads to negotiating an agreement each can live with.

Competitiveness, although stressful, is natural among crossdressers. Their spouses are their models and for many men represent the ideal of femininity. However, their wives need to deflect their partners' preoccupation with comparing their appearances. Assuming this is not an acting-out of marital dissatisfaction, I encourage wives not to fall into the competitive pattern but rather, set an example by behaving collaboratively and cooperatively and giving many compliments. The objective voice of the therapist can help make the crossdresser aware of the unattractive and distancing behavior in which he is engaging.

With regard to his refusal to learn the less glamorous skills essential to a good presentation, the spouse must be firm in insisting that he take responsibility for these as well. This means facilitating his learning them and not doing them for him. This brings me to the next complaint - age regression with dressing. I think this is a real phenomenon, explained by the crossdresser not having enjoyed an adolescence in which dressing was supported or encouraged. If the wife can tolerate the immaturity that sometimes marks this period and behave firmly and with a sense of humor, this, too, will pass.

Lastly, he is said to select his friends in the gender community on a different and more shallow basis. This includes attractiveness, skill in dressing, and knowledge and resources. Again, this seems reasonable, since often the crossdresser's only common ground with his gender friends is their crossdressing behavior. However, his wife may find it tedious to socialize with people whose interests seem limited to clothing and makeup. She may also be distressed to see him reject someone who is more interesting as a person but less skilled in presentation. Again, negotiation and compromise can go a long way to resolving this issue.

In summary, it is not easy to be in a relationship that presents the aforementioned challenges. If you have attempted resolution by traditional approaches, consider a period of brief counseling where you can learn some useful strategies and get support and clarification from an objective person.

Comments, questions, rebuttals, as well as suggestions for future articles are welcomed by the author.

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(Reprinted from "Devil Woman," newsletter of the Diablo Valley Girls.)





## JURY DUTY

By Vicki [REDACTED]

I've always liked those World War II movies where an American submarine is able to sneak into Tokyo Bay, destroy half the Japanese Fleet, and get out while defeating the submarine net and all the depth charges in the world. Sometimes I want to be like that submarine. Such was the case during the first week of December of 1998. On my first day off I had to take my mother to the eye doctor. I later cut her grass and did laundry. By the time I got back to my apartment there wasn't much time to crossdress, since I would have to rise at 6:00 A. M. the next day to arrive at the jury assembly room by 8:00 A. M. I decided to get dressed and just watch TV. However, as often happens, I no sooner got dressed than I realized that I wanted to go out. I first tried a neighborhood bar close to where I live. Not much was going on there, and I went from there to The Old Heidelberg Restaurant and Bar. This has just recently become a hangout for Vicki after initially going there as a male at one of our "Boys Are Us" functions. I only stayed till a little after midnight, remembering I would have to be up early the next morning.

Surprise! When I woke up I didn't want to get out of my nightgown. Then I had a crazy thought. Most of the time I just sit in the jury room without ever seeing a lawyer. Only once in five calls for service did I ever get in a jury panel. Besides, I had what I thought was a high jury number. These thoughts weighed heavy on a mind not willing to give up its feminine persona.

It was a warm morning for December. I had to decide quickly between what a real woman would wear for jury duty and what I felt feminine in. I chose a light blue country and western skirt with ruffles at the bottom and combined it with a red blouse with matching red flats. I hate daytime makeup, but I felt happy with a dark gray/light gray over my eye lids and my usual brown eye shadow below the eye.

Arriving downtown, I really began to wonder if I was out of my mind. What would I do if a homeless person confronted me? What If the clerk asked for identification? Most of all, I had to remember that today my name was Ronnie, not Vicki, because that was the name on the jury summons. Entering the jury room, I saw one woman who was scanning me like a NORAD radar system looking for incoming ICBMs. I looked for a seat near a woman who looked like me. I found such a woman wearing a bluejean jumper and ugly sandals with no hose. Sometimes small

details can keep you from being detected. So I took out a romance novel from my purse and began to read.

When they began calling jury numbers, I noticed something strange was going on. From a range of a hundred numbers only forty to fifty perspective jurors were getting up. Where were the other fifty jurors? My eight hundred number didn't seem so safe anymore. This was not what I bargained for. I thought about developing a sudden case of bubonic plague, but a plea of illness might draw more attention than just riding it out.

There were several things in my favor. To the credit of the citizens of Harris County, who might not like losing a day of work, once in the house of justice they behaved just like they were in church. The members of the jury panel I was a part of seemed especially absorbed in the duty before them. From the assembly point we were led on a myriad path which would take us to a courtroom.

Girl, how stupid could I be! I wore both an underwire bra and a waist cincher with metal snaps. Naturally I lit up the metal detection machine like a Christmas tree on the way to the courthouse. The deputy then scanned me with a hand held device and gave me some comfort by calling me "Ma'am."

Next I would have to face lawyers and a judge. Could I get away with this scam? After all, these were men trained to argue fine points of law. Moreover, it was likely that they had some exposure to gender dysphoria somewhere in their litigating experience. To make matters worse, I was in the first row when we were finally seated in the courtroom. Suddenly I felt like a giant, because both the attorneys were Munchkins. Let me put it this way. If Phyllis Frye had been losing a case against these guys and decided to revert back to trial by combat, she would have had two heads mounted in her den.

I was on the horns of a dilemma. I couldn't serve on this jury. My femme voice is pretty good, but not good enough to pass in long winded debates. Still, avoiding my civic duty was against my principles. The handsome shrimp was the plaintiff's attorney, and he gave me the wiggle room I needed when he asked if I could be objective about the case without a police accident report, which was either lost, misfiled, or never taken. On top of that he asked if I could ignore the fact that the plaintiff was arrested for shoplifting a year after the accident. Another sore point



for me was that we were not allowed to know if any insurance money had been paid to the plaintiff.

I support Tort Reform, and so it wasn't difficult to communicate to the prosecuting shrimp that I was one fish he didn't want on his line. When it was the defense attorney's turn to question the panel, I figured that he wouldn't even bother with me, since I had alienated Hamilton Burger The Short to the point where he would rather have had the late Percy Foreman on this jury than me. Nevertheless, the diminutive defense did ask me a couple of questions. He addressed me as Juror Number Twelve. There was something comfortable about being Juror Number Twelve. No sex, no gender, and if six is the number of man according to The Book of Revelation, then multiplied by two I'm the devil. Twelve is the square root of one hundred and forty four. Twelve equals a dozen. Jesus had twelve disciples. My dress size is... Well, so much for the comfort of mathematics!

Since there was still a chance that I might be on this jury, I had to make myself just as undesirable to the pint sized Perry Mason as I had to his opponent. When he asked if I thought it were possible to rear-end a vehicle and not be at fault, I replied that while I thought it was possible to do so on a freeway (last year's personal experience proved that to me), rear-ending on a perfectly good street like South Braeswood was about as likely as me getting pregnant.

Afterwards we all waited outside of the courtroom as the lawyers made their decisions. To the credit of Row One, Jurors Three, Six and, surprisingly, Number Eleven were chosen. Early on I expected her to be picked. Late middle-aged, passive, and well dressed, she was just the type that lawyers can agree on, except that she had raised many of the same objections I had. My time to sweat was not over. When Juror Number Sixteen was called next, I breathed a sigh of relief.

Back home in the safety of my apartment, I pondered the day's events. Like Tootsie, the more I conduct myself in normal situations the more proud I am to be a woman. The problem is that as a man I can go about my business without thinking, but as a woman every movement, word spoken, and gesture must be thought out. I'm reminded of a popular early Sixties British TV series called "Secret Agent." The words of the theme song go:

"Be careful what you say.

You'll give yourself away.

Odds are you won't live to see tomorrow."

As usual I must end this article with the standard Tri-Ess disclaimer. Unless you have had hundreds of hours in public, do

not attempt this in your home town. This is not to say, "Do not go out in public as a woman," but rather a warning to match the outing with your level of experience. Moreover, you never quite conquer your fear. Like many others, my greatest fear has been getting arrested en femme. Being in the belly of the beast helped me control that fear. Going out in public dressed is very much like our judicial system. The doctrine of Political Correctness puts an even heavier burden of proof on those bent on exposing us. Like a defendant in a trial, we don't have to prove we are women, merely create a reasonable doubt that we are anything other than what we appear to be.

Are there any more mountains for me to climb? They are getting rare, to be sure. Does this mean that my next objective is to live full time as a woman? The jury is still out. Meanwhile, "Fire all torpedoes!"

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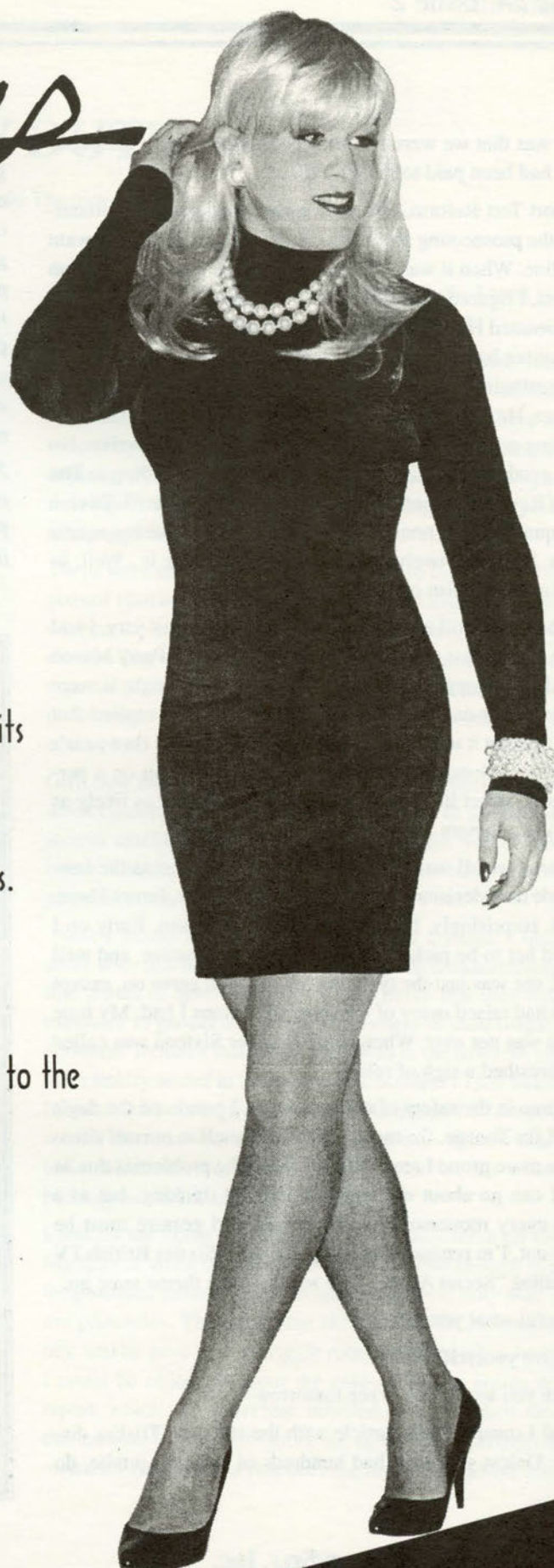
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## ARE YOUR DUES DUE?

You may have noticed something different about your mailing label. It has always listed your membership NUMBER in the upper left corner, above your name and address. Take another look at your label right now. You will notice that next to your number there is a DATE. That DATE is your dues renewal date. It is there to remind you to pay your dues. Starting this year, it is the ONLY reminder you will receive. So, if that date falls within the next three months, you should PAY YOUR DUES. Otherwise, this issue of the MIRROR may be your last, and the next communication you will receive will be a letter saying you have been dropped for non-payment.

In the past several years, Membership Director Donna Martin has spent a good portion of her time in preparing and mailing dues notices to each member scheduled for renewal in the coming month. This amounts to well over a thousand pieces of mail each year. Not only is this a considerable burden on Donna's time, it also costs money for paper, envelopes and postage, to say nothing of printer cartridges and computer-generated labels.

So, in the interest of saving both money and time, we are putting our faith in you, our sisters. We believe each one of us is a responsible member of the Society, fully capable of noticing our renewal dates and promptly paying our dues. After all, we each subscribe to other magazines, and can tell at a glance when those subscriptions must be renewed. We know that if we fail to renew our subscriptions, we will soon stop getting the magazines. Surely we can be that responsible where our own special Society is concerned! After all, Tri-Ess is far more than a magazine subscription!

Please take a look at your labels right now, and if your dues area due within the next three months, send in your contribution now. Don't risk interrupting your membership and possibly losing an issue of the MIRROR, or the "Sweetheart Connection," for that matter!

## How to Contribute to Your Chapter Newsletter and your Mirror

By Diane V.

In order to assure that your newsletter is kept productive and stays out of trouble, here is a simple instruction manual for maintaining your newsletter:

1. Pick up pen (or pencil) and paper.
2. Enter writing chamber. (Could be office, den, porcelain facility, etc. You get the idea.)
3. And speaking of ideas, engage brain (but do not clutch!)
4. Proceed to transmit signals from brain through digital process on either right or left hand with writing instrument connected.
5. Warning! Do not exceed personal limitations, commonly diagnosed as writer's cramp, or diarrhea of the pen (similar to diarrhea of the mouth).
6. Do avoid, however, another malady known as writer's block.
7. To aid in evading point number 6, a series of ideas follows: personal experiences; shopping trips; dining out en femme; embarrassing moments; fuzz busting and fuzz-busted; other busty experiences, such as stops at Jiffy Boob; recipes for almost anything; your autobiography; personal discoveries on makeup techniques, clothing, etc., worth sharing; personal triumphs and tragedies to the extent you wish to reveal them.

How about it, Gals!!

*(Reprinted from Alpha Omega's Femme Silhouette, Oct. 1966)*





# Keeping Our Community Alive

by Melanie Yarborough

It really was the best of times and the worst of times. A transgender movie had been released every year for the past 5 years. Most talk shows from Donahue to Oprah to Jerry Springer felt obliged to do segments on crossdressers or transsexuals. Ru Paul had her own syndicated show. Even New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani did drag as Marilyn Monroe at a party fund raiser. The communications revolution of E-mail and the Worldwide web gave the transgender community full access to the public. Dozens of books and videos on crossdressing and transsexualism had been published in the past 10 years. Some universities even held forums on Transgenderism as a field of study. Support groups operated in most of the 50 states, in many parts of Europe, and in other countries. The Gay and Lesbian community had accepted us, identifying itself now as the Gay-Lesbian-Bi-Trans community.

But at the same time, attendance at major support group meetings was down.

Community activities took a back seat to the fast-paced demands of society. Few stepped forward to volunteer as leaders. Those few who did found themselves overwhelmed, and quickly burned out. Why is the community seemingly in decline? It hasn't been enough just to exhort trans-people to do more. We need to figure out how and why it's occurred. A little psychology and sociology can help explain.

Turnover has always been high in our community. People enter, are active and leave, some even a little like shooting stars. Why? Psychologists have pointed out three stages of minority group identification: CONTACT, IMMERSION, AND INTEGRATION. This model can also apply to other diverse groups: homosexuals, ethnic minorities, and political groups ranging from the Christian Coalition to the Communist Party.

When a closeted person first finds a larger community, there's that intense initial process of CONTACT. The world is turned upside down by the realization, "Hey, there's other people out there just like me!" Merely seeing it through a third medium like television, movies, or books only gives a muted impact. It's much stronger to meet another transperson or a roomful of them face-to-face. This leads to accepting one's identity, and seeing oneself as part of a minority- instead of as just a single dysfunctional individual.

Next comes IMMERSION. For us, we call this Gender Euphoria. One throws off fear and bursts out of the closet. One starts to go to meetings and gender-friendly places such as Gay establishments. One makes initial purchases of an abundant wardrobe, makeup, wigs, jewelry and other female accoutrements. One starts to go out in public en femme. Depending on one's situation, some grow their hair or get their ears pierced. Some may even do electrolysis or experiment with hormones. It becomes, for a while, the center of life: "I'm transgendered, therefore I am."

Finally, comes INTEGRATION. Often, the euphoria plateaus off. One has reached one's short-term goals. One feels one can present well enough in public. Shopping or socializing en femme is no longer a fear. Being transgendered stops being a secret shame, and becomes routinized. Some find their marriage, family and job at risk if the envelope is pushed too far, and try to strike a balance. Others recognize they are transsexual and move on towards transition, either non-op, pre-op, or post-op. Still others find the self-confidence in themselves as persons in their own right, and not just as transgendered.

Most members of the transgender (and other) communities go through this dynamic. The result is generations of members who join, become intensely active for a few years, then leave. It's not necessarily about the gender community failing them or about members somehow outgrowing it. It's a social process.

Another reason for apathy is the eroticism of transgender. It's been said before that Drag is a Drug. En femme, many of us are under the influence. Focusing becomes difficult, attention spans shorten, and even physical coordination can diminish. In such an inebriated state, is it any wonder it's hard to get anything organized?

Also transgender is a highly personal thing. Most of us spend our first thirty or more years in the closet, and build our own fantasy world around it. Even when transgender is brought out into the light of day, it's still a personalized thing. Not to chastise but to illuminate: Some still see it as a private fetish, not a minority rights movement.

And finally, many of us are all too typically male, having been socialized as dominant and aggressive. Many of us have even

**Continued on page 34**



# Outlet Mall Shopping

By Rachel Rene [REDACTED]

I have never thought of myself as being much of a shopper. Certainly my male self is not. He would rather not go shopping at all, but if forced to do so, leaves as quickly as possible. He equates time in a mall with a good golf score - as low as possible.

So when one of my sisters in Chi Epsilon Sigma, Grace [REDACTED] suggested we go for a day-long shopping tour at an outlet mall, at first I had my doubts. But any outing en femme is fun, so I began to warm to the idea rather quickly.

We picked a date several weeks in advance and made our plans. My next thought was, "I have nothing to wear!" My femme clothes are all too dressy for a shopping mall. So I decided I needed some slacks, a sweater, and some flats to fit into the shopping scene. I purchased my shopping outfit, but as it turned out, I didn't wear it after all. I wore a green corduroy skirt and matching sweater, which turned out to be very acceptable. Grace was the consummate business woman in a blue/gray/green plaid skirt, a gray turtleneck, with a blue blazer and low heeled navy shoes. We were shopping in the middle of the week, so we looked like we professional women stopping by the mall on our way to or from work.

We met about 9 a.m. and drove the hour and a half to the outlet malls in Lancaster PA we wanted to explore. By the time we arrived, our first need was to find a ladies' room. No problem. Being midweek the mall was not crowded at all, so we didn't encounter anyone in the ladies' room. However, shortly after we left the ladies' room, we were standing in the hallway outside looking at a map of the mall when a maintenance man opened the ladies' room door and asked if anyone was inside before he entered. Neither of us have passable voices, so we weren't sure how we would have answered had we been on the inside when the maintenance man arrived.

We began to systematically go to each of the ladies' wear, jewelry, and footwear stores in the mall. We started at one end of the mall and proceeded to each and every store. That seemed to me to be a rather "male" approach to shopping, but it ensured we didn't miss anything.

We were always greeted in each store. "Hello, Ladies. Can we help you with anything?" was the usual greeting. There were no untoward remarks. We were surprised when one sales lady said, "You ladies certainly are quiet." Being conscious of our not-to-

well disguised voices, we were talking to each other in low tones, or not at all. The sales lady was used to women shopping in pairs talking a lot about their finds. After that, we talked more freely. I'm sure we weren't fooling anybody, but as long as we acted like ladies, we got treated like ladies.

Grace made the first purchase, some lovely lapel pins. About the same time I found a watch that I needed. Both of us have credit cards in our femme names, so we whipped them out to make our purchases with great confidence.

Before we knew it, it was time for lunch. Back in the car, we drove down the road to Miller's Smorgasbord, a landmark eating establishment in the heart of the Pennsylvania Dutch country. We were greeted and served with the same courtesy as any customer. We made numerous trips to the smorgasbord tables, totally enjoying our ability to do so without any apparent notice by the other customers. We had a lovely lunch, and a delightful time being there.

Then it was back to the mall for some more shopping. We were busy comparing the styles and prices in the various dress stores. Like most crossdressers, we are mostly catalogue shoppers, and we tend to look for values. We enjoyed the freedom to look through the selections in the stores at our leisure, comparing styles and prices. We decided that we didn't care much for the designer label stores, like Pendleton, Talbot's, etc. Too expensive for someone who doesn't wear a dress every day. We tended to like what we found in stores like The Dress Barn, and Westport for Women. Of course the challenge was finding things that were pretty, in our size, and in our price range. We never knew the process could be so much fun.

Some of our best buys were made at Westport. Grace found a long black skirt that she needed, and several blouses. I found a dress in a floral print with a white short sleeve jacket that seemed just right for me. I asked the sales lady to try it on. She said that she admired my choice and showed me to the changing room. I slipped into the dress, and it was a perfect fit. I went back out into the store to show Grace, and another of the sales ladies said, "Oh, that looks very pretty on you.!" Well, they really know how to use flattery to increase sales! Out came the credit card again!

We finished the day by going back to the Aigner shoe store that

Continued on page 59



## Tri-Ess Library Book Project

*My Husband Wears My Clothes*

by Peggy Rudd

*Understanding Crossdressing*

by Virginia Prince

*Crossdressing, Sex and Gender*

by Bullough and Bullough

*Crossdressers & Those Who Share Their Lives*

by Peggy Rudd

Wouldn't you like to see these books in YOUR local library? Remember how you could never find any information about crossdressing when YOU were looking for it? Well, now YOU can do something about it!

The Tri-Ess Library Book Project is a long-term Tri-Ess effort to educate the public, including crossdressers, wives, therapists, teachers and the general public about crossdressing. Our goal is to place a packet of four good books in public and college libraries across the country. Here's how YOU can help:

- 1) Send us the complete contact information for the Acquisitions Librarians of TWO libraries you wish to supply with these books. Carol Beecroft will contact the libraries and determine whether they will accept the books.
- 2) Send us the money to purchase ONE book packet. By special arrangement, the cost of each packet is only \$30.00. The great news is that Tri-Ess will match your gift to a local library, in full. That means you can place books in not just one but two local libraries because of the matching gift from Tri-Ess.
- 3) Follow up with the libraries a few weeks later to see whether the books have been added to their catalog and placed on display. Carol will work with the donors of the packets and the libraries to make sure the books are available to the public.

This is a wonderful and inexpensive way to reach sisters still in secrecy, plus their family members, educators and helping professionals, and the general public. And do remember that in each book we are placing a special notice that the book has been donated by Tri-Ess, with our national address and phone number.

Why not make this a priority project of YOUR local chapter? You'll never know how many of your sisters will be glad you did!

## S.P.I.C.E.

*Spouses and Partners International Conference for Education*

*SPICE - It's not just for cooking anymore!*

by Bev

SPICE is designed to help the wives and partners of crossdressers find balance within their relationships. Programs will help participants build emotional strength, self-esteem and self-respect. The focus is upon sharing special moments with others who have experienced many of the same frustrations and joys. Presenters will guide participants, both men and women, in their quest for confidence, the wholeness of being in a meaningful relationship and the joy of living a life to the fullest. SPICE offers the ultimate safe environment. (FOR THE COMFORT OF THE WIVES, THERE IS NO CROSSDRESSING ALLOWED AT SPICE)

....that's the "official" definition... Now, what does it mean to those that have attended?

I, personally, was impacted by a variety of things. The seminars were presented by professional, well qualified and practicing therapists, psychologists, marriage counselors, and gender experts. They knew their stuff!... They were open and available for one-on-one conversations, and were quite willing, even eager, to have small groups for a more detailed discussion of the issues that were of concern to the wives (and husbands!) that attended.

The seminars were presented in "women only" or "men only" groups. That gave the attendees the opportunity to discuss and question some specific items that, perhaps, would not have been discussed in a "mixed group."

Besides the professionals, it was the friendliness and warmth from other women .... other women who were facing, or had faced, the same types of emotional turmoil \*I\* was facing...that was so wonderful.

I will be happy to answer any questions I can about SPICE. Just email me at [REDACTED], and visit the SPICE home page at: <http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/SPICE.html>

So maybe you're wondering what "cdso" is?...Well, just go to the CDSO home page at: <http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/CDSO.html>

...and it wouldn't hurt to check out Tri-Ess Guestbook on the Tri-Ess Resources Page at: <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Stonewall/6801/>



## Announcing the TRIESS42 Couples' Online Forum!

Over the last year, Tri-Ess leaders have been discussing the possibility of an online forum for couples. While we saw many potential advantages, we also had some questions. Would crossdressers and wives be able to relate on the same forum? Would the crossdressers dominate the discussion, causing the wives to be silent, as has happened in some settings? Was a couples' forum really needed?

For this reason, Tri-Ess inaugurated a forum where crossdressers and wives could relate in the safe, intellectual setting of an online book club. The pilot program was to terminate April 1, after which we would evaluate the need and desirability of another, permanent forum for couples.

We are happy to report that the book club was a success beyond our fondest dreams! Cross dressers and wives on the forum enjoyed many deep discussions. Wives and crossdressers participated freely in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy. In short, it worked!!!

Toward the end of the forum, there seemed to be an evolution away from strict adherence to discussion of a given book and toward topics of mutual interest. While crossdressers and wives had some differing issues, it seemed that everyone really listened to and accepted one another. When some started to designate themselves as a "crossdresser" or a "genetic woman," we learned that it is helpful to know whether one was coming from the viewpoint of a crossdresser or a wife. The spontaneous trend of the CDbookclub forum toward a couples' forum indicates a clear need for such a forum.

Therefore, as of 12AM April 18, Tri-Ess will be putting a new forum online. TRIESS42 will be a forum for Tri-Ess couples. The rules will be approximately the same as those for our other forums. Participants on both the CDSO and CDTRIESS forums have a long record of mutual respect and positive discussion, and this will be the standard for TRIESS42 as well.

The forum will be moderated by Cat, who has been a member of the CDSO forum almost since its formation. Her kind, empathic spirit, dedication and gentle sense of humor will make her an outstanding Moderator. She will be the Mama Kitty of the forum, and we'll all get familiar with those perky, upturned cat ears that are the hallmark of her postings.

To subscribe to the TRIESS42 forum, e-mail Bev at:

██████████. You will need to supply the Tri-Ess membership numbers for both partners, read the protocols and e-mail Bev your intention of abiding by them. Then we'll be off and running!

Finally, we would like to thank all of you who participated on the CDbookclub and made it such a success. TRIESS42 will be a new, permanent support program. It is your love, caring and willingness to positively reinforce one another that has made the new forum possible. We really appreciate all of you so much, and look forward to yet another successful online program.

### *TRIESS42 Protocols*

Membership in Tri-Ess is a requirement for participation in this forum. Please read this carefully and in its entirety. If you feel you can abide by our rules and participate in the spirit of our list, please send an e-mail with your agreement to Bev.

This list has been created to bring together those men and women of TRIESS in life relationships, in order to discuss ideas, offer and receive support, share insights, and further our education about crossdressing and its impact on relationships. Because of varying experiences, we will have our disagreements, but courtesy is an absolute requirement.

- #1. No flames... If you disagree with an opinion please do so with courtesy and respect. Don't attack the person. Sarcastic, caustic, and hostile remarks directed toward a list member will be considered flaming. ANYONE who tries to create a hostile atmosphere by inflammatory postings will be immediately and severely sanctioned by the Supervisory Board.
- #2. Those of you with strong, militant transsexual attachments, please move on. This list is not for you. For the purposes of this list, those with "militant transsexual attachments" are defined as those who actively promote transsexualism. If you'd like to E-mail Bev privately, she can pass on to you several addresses for support and discussion lists that include transsexualism as a topic. Our focus is small by intent.



# Passing

by Sally [REDACTED]

As crossdressers, most of us feel compelled to "PASS". When we venture out in public dressed as women the natural desire is to blend in. Personally, I go to great lengths to look as ladylike as possible when I'm out and about, as I'm sure most other "girls" do. It's probably unrealistic, however, for me to think that I am never going to be read as a man in a dress. In fact, I'm read more often than not. I have to face the fact that I just don't possess enough feminine features to always pull it off. Unfortunately, many "girls" become obsessed with passing, and because of this, they miss what is really important about expressing their femininity in public.

Most of us don't have the looks to pass as genetic females; we do, however, all have the capacity to present a very ladylike appearance. We should concentrate on expressing our femininity, and not worry so much about passing ourselves off as genetic females. Passing has so much more to do with how we feel inside than how we look on the outside. Passing is a state of mind more than it is a state being or presence.

Of course looking good is important, but looking good and passing as a real female are two different things. How you feel about yourself is really the key. If you feel good about yourself, and if you show a high degree of self-confidence, you are always more easily able to pass. More than any other attribute, self-confidence has the most effect on our ability to blend in. Self-confidence lends itself to personal comfort, and a comfortable crossdresser is less visible than a crossdresser who is nervous or edgy. A nervous crossdresser is usually easy to spot. They tend to look out of place, so they attract attention. In fact, even a non-crossdresser is often read as out of place if they appear nervous or uncomfortable. If you walk through the mall like you belong there, you won't draw unnecessary attention to yourself, and most people simply won't notice you. If you sneak through the mall; however, trying to avoid being seen or trying to minimize your presence, you will stick out like a German Shepherd at a cat convention.

For those of you who have yet to try expressing your femininity in public, take my word for it; self-confidence really makes the difference. A year ago I would never have dreamed of going shopping dressed as a lady, because I was always so worried that I might be read as a man in a dress. Now, however, I always take advantage of the opportunity to venture out in public. I no

longer worry about someone reading me. I feel good about myself, I feel feminine, and I know I am presenting a positive ladylike image. And because of my self-confidence, I really believe I am read as a man less often than before. I'm proud of my femininity, and I enjoy showing it off. The old hang-up about passing is no longer an issue with me. I have realized that if I present myself in a feminine ladylike fashion, in spite of my biological sex, everyone treats me like a lady. As long as the general-public treats me like a lady when I am dressed en femme, I have achieved my objective. With such positive public interaction, I no longer much worry about passing.

*(This article first appeared in "The Southern Belle" newsletter of Sigma Epsilon Chapter.)*

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- #3. No advertisements! If you are in doubt about the acceptability of something, please forward it to a member of the supervisory board.
- #5. No postings of PHOTOS, CHAIN LETTERS, VIRUS WARNINGS, or INTERNET POSTCARDS. NO exceptions.
- #6. No posting of addresses of web pages or web sites without prior approval from the Supervisory Board. NO exceptions.
- #7. If you disagree with or have a comment to make regarding any disciplinary action taken by the Supervisory Board, please contact a member of the board directly and by PRIVATE e-mail. The list is not the place for a debate about the rules and regulations. They are in place, and they will be enforced.
- #8. This forum is for the honest and open sharing of feelings and mutual support. Any publication without permission of anything posted here will be treated as a violation of security and punished by permanent expulsion at the first offense.
- #9. Offensive, hostile, derogatory remarks, and/or flaming by EITHER the crossdresser or the wife/girlfriend will be cause for BOTH to be removed from the list.
- #10 Because the forum is primarily for couples who are members of TRIESS, subscription requests by "single" crossdressers who are members of TRIESS will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

As a courtesy, and because some couples use the same e-mail address, we would like to suggest a designation such as "CD" after the name of a crossdresser, and "GW" as a designation after the name of a spouse/girlfriend. (i.e.; Bev (GW)). This is not mandatory, just offered as a suggestion to "keep things straight."

This list is new. Things may change along the way. We will strive to keep this a safe place for both men and women to be open, honest, and caring of one another.

Thank you,

The TRIESS42 Supervisory Board

Jane Ellen (CD), Mary Frances (GW),

Kathleen/Corky (CD), Bev (GW), Cat (GW)

## Tri-Ess E-Mail

For identification purposes, when communicating via E-Mail to any Society leader or Society member, include as the FIRST item in the 'Subject' line of your E-Mail either "SSS:" or "Tri-Ess:," then follow with the usual brief description of the content of your E-Mail. This will immediately alert your recipient that this is Society material, and not just some unwanted 'hard-sell' or pornographic material that we all receive on a daily basis and usually trash before reading. E-Mail communications are becoming a most important part of quick and immediate Society contacts, so a method of identifying that an E-Mail is from a Society Sister is becoming more-and-more necessary.

## Game?

by Lynda Frank

Having just read "The Mother Game" in the last issue of the "Sweetheart Connection," I am reminded that when people who are not crossdressers write about us they sometimes miss some very important situations.

Marilyn and I have been working very hard at having an "adult-to-adult" relationship where it involves the crossdressing issue. It is not an easy situation to come to terms with and there has to be ongoing compromises to make it work. She has in the process of raising her children been accustomed to setting limits, boundaries and discipline, but should be sure it doesn't carry over to her spouse.

Now the problem that develops is that they each have different goals. His being to dress as often as he can, in a way he finds exciting, and to go out to dinner, movies, shopping malls, and or meetings and parties. Her goal on the other hand is to keep his dressing down to a minimum, tell him what he can and cannot wear (that skirt is too short), and where he can and cannot go (we know people who sometimes go there).

She will sometimes get even more involved with the crossdressing community than he does. In some cases the husband will sit back and bask in her glory, but in others he may harbor a deep resentment.

The one common goal to strive for is each other's happiness.



## Another Closet

by Julie Freeman

Once the crossdresser has come out of the closet, so to speak, to his significant other, many significant others report that they now are walking into a closet - a closet called SECRET.

The burden of secrecy, significant others say, has shifted. The secret kept so many years by the crossdresser (fearing he might lose his family, friends, etc.) now is OUT. The significant other now feels the burden (fearing she might lose family, friends, etc.)

The secret permeates her life! Does she tell her friends? Does she tell her co-workers? What about the children? What about parents, aunts and uncles? And let us not forget the neighbors, of course. Should she see a helping professional to make sense out of this? And where can she find a helping professional who has knowledge of gender issues? Simple things such as going out at night become complex when dealing with leaving the house without the babysitter noticing. Going to gender conventions may involve lying to friends and relatives about where they have been. "Oh, we went to a computer convention for a few days." The truth? "We went to California Dreamin' in San Francisco."

The crossdresser in her life, feeling relief, may desire to tell everyone. After all, the most important person in his life (his significant other) now knows! And wasn't that the main stumbling block?

But his significant other may not be ready for YEARS to tell others. She, trying to understand crossdressing, certainly does not understand the repercussions involved when telling others. Some wives make decisions on a "need to know" basis. (Does her colleague at work really need to know??) Others feel they need to share this part of their lives with friends and make decisions based on how they believe the friends would react.

I have told a few friends, all of whom have been supportive, but I knew they would be, and I did not tell them until I was comfortable about telling them. But many significant others have told me they lost friends over this. Perhaps they were not really friends, after all. And we all know horror stories of crossdressers who were OUTED by "friends" and lost promotions, even jobs!

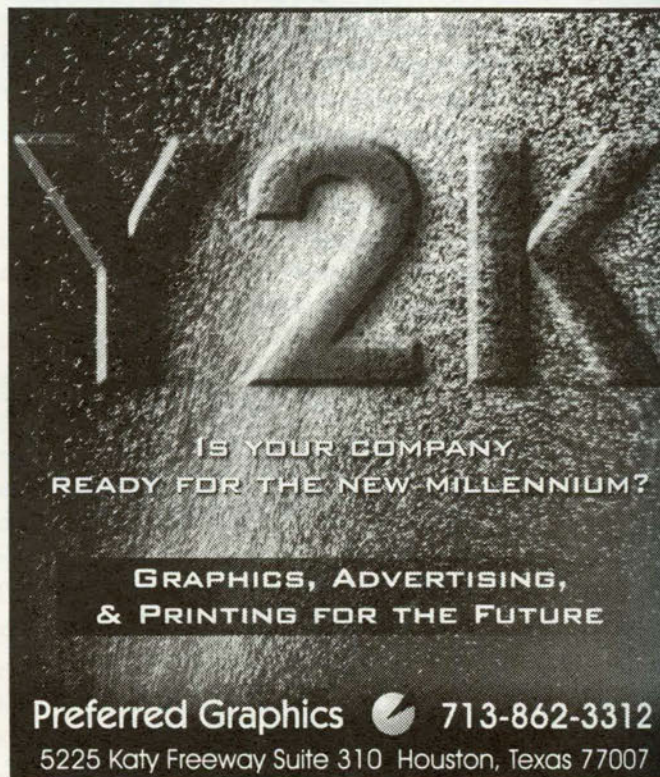
What is important is that the crossdresser realize the burden now being put upon his significant other, and help her deal with it. He needs to realize the importance of communicating on the issue of whom to tell. Both need to know whether the persons

told will be understanding (to the best of their knowledge), whether they will be hurt by the knowledge (does an 85-year-old parent really need to know?), whether they will be burdened by the knowledge (does an 8-year-old child need to worry about whom and whom not to tell?), and whether they might use the knowledge in some negative way (a colleague who becomes disgruntled).

Crossdressers do not like to lie or keep secrets but have been forced to. Now their families may also be forced into lying also, simply because we are not yet living in a world where alternate lifestyles are accepted, but in a world of hate and aggression towards those who are different.

We can only hope there will come a day when NO ONE has to keep a secret. Until then, both the crossdresser and his significant other have to communicate clearly on the issue of secrecy. It cannot be ignored, unfortunately; it is a part of our world.

*(Reprinted from "Devil Woman," newsletter of the Diablo Valley Girls.)*



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#### **A Wilderness Adventure**

Discovering that one's husband/partner is a cross-dresser is somewhat similar to being cast unexpectedly into the wilderness and made to navigate oneself back to the normal and ordinary place one had always been, but in an unsteady vessel you don't know how to operate, over un-known waters in uncertain weather, ill equipped and quite unprepared for such a wilderness adventure.

Metaphorically, the discovery of his crossdressing is somewhat like finding yourself in the middle of a Boundary [less] Wilderness without a paddle or a guide.

At S.P.I.C.E. VII, you will find yourself in the company of experienced guides who will help you find your way through your wilderness adventure. They will help you learn to paddle, to find the portages, how to shelter yourself in the storms and how to navigate your way back to civilization.

If you have found yourself on such a wilderness adventure without a guide, come to S.P.I.C.E. VII and learn how to make your experience benefit your life and relationships.

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# The Lawyer Who Wants To Be A Lawyeress

*(This is a copy of the text that was published in issue number 49 of "Monarch, Canada's Transgender Reader" magazine. I was the covergirl of this issue with a reproduction of the front page of the "Journal de Montreal." - Micheline)*

Xpressions member Micheline is currently embroiled in a legal battle to legally add her feminine name to her birth certificate. After many run-arounds and conflicting statements from the authorities, Micheline decided she had to go to court. As a result, she has appeared on the cover of several newspapers and been interviewed for radio and television numerous times. The following article appeared in the large circulation newspapers *Journal de Montreal* and *Journal de Quebec*, written by Michel DuFour.

"I am a normal woman born in the body of a man. A male lawyer who wants to be a female lawyer. I am as normal a woman as any other. The only difference is that I was born in the body of a man. I am neither homosexual nor perverted. I feel like a woman, and I want to live who I am."

Micheline Montreuil did not really wish to come out from the shadows. It was over a dispute with the Civil Registry Office concerning the legal recognition of his feminine name that has thrust her into the public eye. Micheline Montreuil, her feminine name, addressed the Superior Court on Monday to have her name on her Birth Certificate changed. Micheline stated that she had used her first name, Micheline, since 12 years of age. Ms. Montreuil wishes to add the first name "Micheline" to those names already inscribed on her birth certificate, but does not want his legal gender changed.

## A Question of Gender

Ms. Marie Rinfret, lawyer for the Director of the Registry Office, states that it is in the custom and tradition of Quebec that a person's first name is either masculine or feminine. The civil law permits a change when a person has successfully undergone all the steps of a complete sex reassignment.

"Coming out of the closet was not easy, especially for my spouse, owing to the need to confront prejudices she encounters every day. But I think I am in a good position to explain the situation to the general public," said Micheline.

## Mockery and Prejudice

Many transsexual people are poor and without resources. They

are also very vulnerable to the prejudice and mockery of the public. With her status as a lawyer, Micheline Montreuil feels better placed to fight the prejudice and mockery, and, in particular, overcome the legal barriers that can present themselves along the way to others like herself.

"It's a question of the personal freedom of choice that one must respect. I know it's not easy. One day my sister said to me, 'I might disagree with your choice, but the first person that speaks out against you, I'll punch out!' On the train between Montreal and Toronto I was chatting with some women when a man approached. He said that I would never be a man and I would never be a woman either. I just answered, 'It does not bother me; do you have anything else to add?' Everyone laughed, and then I realized that they were laughing at him, not at me."



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# The Difference

by Ricky

Sometimes I wonder if the entire world is crazy or if it's just me. For quite some time now I have been staying home unemployed while my wife goes off to work or school. Being unemployed is not the greatest thing in the world, but it has given me a great deal of time to be dressed, and therein lies the source of my bemusement. Tuesday to Thursday I get up after everyone has left, Ricky gets dressed, and she is alone until shortly before the school bus arrives in the afternoon. I am a solitary dresser; I'm not used to having anyone around when I wear a dress. A while back I joined the local CD club and attended a few meetings until circumstances forced me to drop out, but it's not the norm.

But now Mondays are different. On Monday my wife goes off to school. We rise and get dressed together, and that still seems strange. Not that we haven't done this before, but for 22 years of marriage we have assumed our public gender roles along with our clothing. On recent Mondays we have both assumed the feminine gender and it still seems a bit odd.

We both start out the same, in our skin, and don bra and panties. We both shake and shimmy to fit our breasts into the cups, and we laugh at this little dance. I can't help but notice my brassiere is about 4 times larger than the wisp of cloth that is so sexy on her, and my panties could be used as a sail on a small wind powered ship without anyone being the wiser. Why do I feel so feminine at these times? As we are ap-

proaching old foghood we both favor plain cotton panties that allow air circulation at the cost of pretty fabric, and neither of us wears bikinis anymore.

Then the differences start to manifest. I raise my arms and shrug into a slip; she puts on her long underwear. (Remember - we live in the North, not sunny California.) I snap up my garter belt and roll on stockings; she puts on socks. I self consciously select a blouse and skirt, hoping my color and style combinations are acceptable; she dons a shirt and pants. I choose a pair of matching high heels; she puts her feet into sneakers. A quick brush of her short hair, no makeup to apply, and she is ready for the world.

Get the picture? Many of today's women have abandoned the trappings of femininity that masculine designers had decreed for them, and have opted for practicality. While I have not undressed any women on the street lately to verify this, it seems my wife is not that unusual in her choice of apparel. I must specifically exclude the worlds of high fashion and suit-and-tie corporate business; those types live a fantasy beyond the dreams of any crossdresser. It seems the only people who still wear slips and garters and corsets are crossdressers.

How did this come to be? As we sat down to breakfast this morning my wife commented on our apparel, noting just these incongruities. Struggling to keep breakfast crumbs off my bosom, I found I had no answer, but it started me thinking. When we were married she would have been expected to dress much as I was now dressed, and to have long hair groomed and makeup on before appearing in public. Could it be that women's perception of what is feminine has changed over the last 20 years, while our masculine perceptions have stayed fixed? Perhaps as a result of women's liberation, the average woman has learned to trust her own judgment, not some external notion of fashion. Or is it that this frilly, lacy, impractical version of femininity has been reserved for special occasions? When was the last time you saw a genetic female wearing skirt, stockings and garters outside a blue movie theater? And don't try to convince me you haven't secretly peeked above the knee when the opportunity presented itself - you would know if those were pantyhose or stockings!

It's not that my wife or most of the other women I know never wear skirts or makeup or heels. Even in pants and a T-shirt my masculine side has no trouble appreciating their femininity. I guess I'm stuck with the idea of femininity I absorbed from my mother's lingerie drawer and the secret copies of Playboy in my friend's garage. Or perhaps the practical side of clothing doesn't affect me as much because I only wear feminine garb a few hours at a time. But as Ricky I still tend to dress in more traditionally feminine apparel than my wife. 'Tis a strange world we live in.

*(Ed. Note: This column first appeared in the late lamented "Cross-Talk" magazine, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)*

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## About Our Cover Girl

In one sense, Phyllis Frye is so well known to the transgender community as a longtime activist for our civil rights that she hardly needs an introduction. But we would be doing a disservice to our readers if we spoke only of "Phyllis the Phyllabuster." Here in Houston we know her as an "out" transgendered professional person, a trial attorney who practices in the areas of criminal defense, divorce, wills and probate, and on the cutting edge of transgender law. She also continues to practice civil engineering as a licensed professional engineer. She was the overturner of our local "anti-masquerading" ordinance in 1980, for which we are all very grateful. But more than that, we also know her as a good neighbor, friend and fellow Tri-Ess member, a true transgenderist in the Virginia Prince tradition.

As a young child in Texas, Phillip, as she was called then, tended to studies and was an Eagle Scout with the God and Country Award and Order of the Arrow. In high school she worked on the school newspaper, sang tenor in the A Capella Choir, co-starred in the Senior Play, earned two Rifle Team Letters and was Cadet Colonel of the ROTC unit. Phyllis then went to Texas A&M on four scholarships, sang tenor in the Singing Cadets, received her two degrees in Engineering as a member of the Corp of Cadets, and upon graduation became a member of the US Army. Shortly thereafter, she received an honorable discharge

as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. This was the beginning of her "out" transgender journey.

In 1976, Phyllis began living as the woman she always had been, but that society tried to make her bury. She had already lost one spouse, and in coming out had also lost her military career and her job as an engineer. Her current spouse, however, did not go away, and they have since

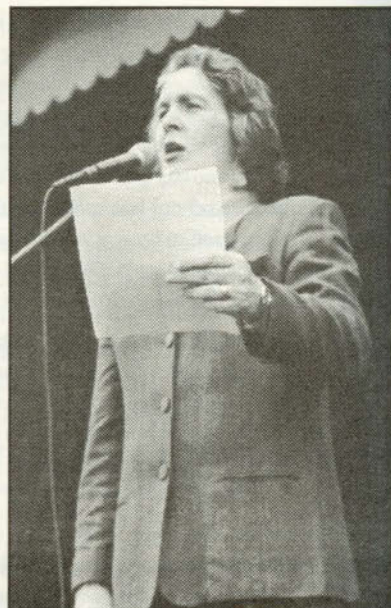
celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary as a legally married same sex couple.

Following her coming out, Phyllis and her spouse endured several years of severe underemployment which reduced the family income by two thirds. Phyllis then went back to college in order to collect GI benefits and also earn MBA and law degrees. During this time, she lobbied every elected official in Houston to get rid of the city

ordinance against crossdressing that made her subject to arrest on a daily basis. Her spouse experienced the daily stress of not knowing if Phyllis would come home for supper or be jailed.

Phyllis and her spouse became active members of the Houston LBGT Community and supported many local functions. Phyllis also screened candidates for office who wanted gay votes. On the personal side, Phyllis became ostracized by her family. Her spouse was constantly pressured to leave Phyllis in order to keep her family ties. They also were subjected to hatred and property damage in their own neighborhood by those that could not understand either Phyllis' change or simply saw them as a lesbian couple. They began to feel abandoned by their Republican friends and at the same time felt welcomed into many Democratic circles. In 1979, 81, 83, and 85, Phyllis was elected to be an open and out TransGender Delegate to the Texas Democratic Party Convention. She was instrumental in bringing the Gay Rights Plank into the Democratic Party Platform in 1983.

In 1981 she obtained her MBA and Doctor of Jurisprudence. This enabled her to not only be an engineer with an advanced degree, but also to practice law in Texas as the only "out" transgender lawyer in the state. (Recently in November 1999 a second transgender woman has been sworn in as an attorney







and is also "out.") Interestingly, she is well respected in her field of law. Once about ten years ago, a local columnist wrote a column attempting to ridicule her, speaking of her "working out of the closet" at the court house. Phyllis, upset about the matter, xeroxed the column to every court in the county with a letter saying it was not fair. The result was that the columnist in question was not given the easy access to these courts that he had previously enjoyed.

Not all judges, nor lawyers, like Phyllis. Even fewer may understand what she has gone through and still continues to go through. However, many judges and lawyers do understand. Those who do not still respect her for her accomplishments and skills, treat her and her clients with the respect due her competence, and concentrate solely on the merits of the cases that she brings before them. She has a good track record of normally winning her cases, and has no problem discussing her own or her clients' sexual orientation or gender identification with juries.

Phyllis many times tells anecdotes of District Attorneys who have not run across her before and think that because she is transgendered or her client is transgendered or gay, they have a walkover. Phyllis ran into this on her first criminal jury trial. After explaining to the jury that she was transgendered and that her client was gay, and asking if that was a problem, she then went ahead and won the case three

days later. Phyllis has represented all facets of the LGBT community in probate, in family courts, in criminal courts, and in civil courts. She has worked in large urban areas and also in small rural towns. Most of the time she either wins or gets a favorable ruling.

During the last 23 years of being out, Phyllis has done many things with many organizations. Her name has become very well known throughout the state and nation for her activities involving the advancement of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and TransGender Rights. In 1991 she created the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy (ICTLEP) and held the first of what was to be six annual conferences in Houston. The Proceedings of these conferences have found their way into many law libraries and remain the definitive material on the subject. Thanks in no small part to her efforts, transgender issues are now included not only in the Lavender Law Conference but even in the Conference of the American Bar Association.



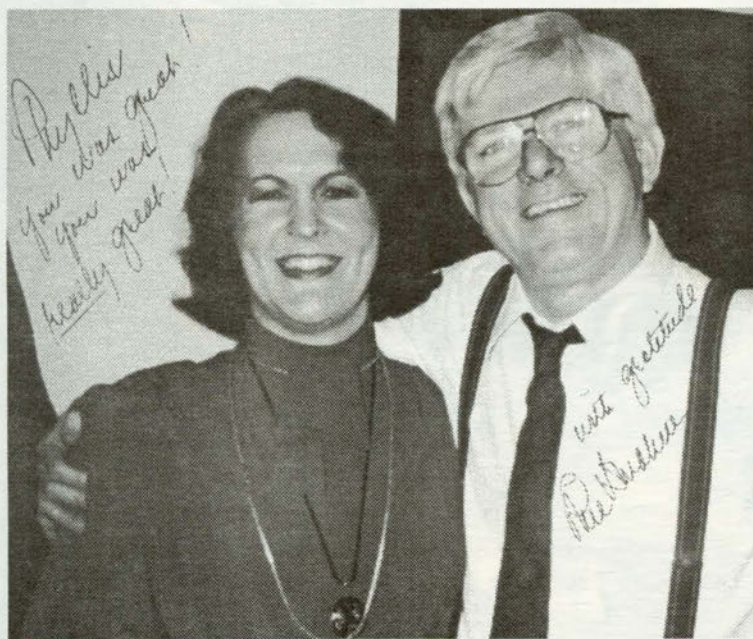


At the same time Phyllis was busy lobbying, marching and demonstrating in Austin, Washington, and New York City for transgender civil rights. She made sure transgenders were included in the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Stonewall. She led the very first transgender lobbying effort in Washington D.C., and laid the groundwork for subsequent efforts. She continues to press for transgender inclusion in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Back on the home front, Phyllis has learned to stop and smell the roses (and the tomatoes!). Resigning as Executive Director of ICTLEP, she has passed the reins to others. A whole new generation of activists has learned from her example and is ready to carry on the struggle. Those of us who have come to know the real Phyllis Frye behind the legendarily ferocious exterior are glad to see her relax a bit. She has given herself more time for reading, vegetable gardening and bicycle riding, and has been playing the guitar. Why, she has even been known to attend a Tau Chi Chapter meeting without making a speech!

Most recently, Phyllis was honored by the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE) with its highest award, the Virginia Prince Lifetime Achievement Award. A true transgenderist in the Virginia Prince tradition, Phyllis richly deserves this recognition. We are pleased to honor her as our Cover Girl for this issue of the Femme Mirror.

*(See excerpts from Phyllis's Virginia Prince Award acceptance speech, elsewhere in this issue.)*



### Continued from page 20

had to overcompensate masculinity to offset the shame of wanting to feel female. This shows up in many not-so-nice ways. We compete to see who can be the "more femme than thou." We adopt the most stereotyped sluttish images of women. We feel we know what's best for the group and have contempt for others whose opinions are different. We form cliques, and look down on the newcomer who doesn't present as well as we feel we do.

Part of the solution seems to be consciously recognizing these forces, and working with them, not against or in spite of them. We need to intervene gently in the CONTACT-IMMERSION-INTEGRATION cycle. For those in initial contact, we need to make it as pleasant and educative as possible for them. Newcomers have their hearts on their sleeves, and their feelings can be easily bruised. They need to be nurtured. For those in immersion, we need to constantly reiterate in word and deed the ideas of moderation and balance. And for those in integration, we need to consciousness-raise and emphasize the community as a whole. And sometimes, to groom and support their leadership.

The erotic and personal components of transgenderism can't be wished away. We need to confront these feelings through group and individual discussions. Perhaps our community mental health professionals can teach us ways to temper these inclinations. And moderating those brawny masculine tendencies should be a priority. Again, this requires discussion as well as eternal vigilance. Self education helps. This can involve reading or studying feminist issues. Spouses and partners of the transgendered can be of immense value here, advising us what being feminine really is. And it's more than just a short skirt and high heels.

Many different communities have historically ebbed and flowed. These include the anti-slavery and alcohol temperance movements. Or the Black Power and Gay Rights struggles. Or Labor Union organizing and Women's Suffrage. The Transgender community is also subject to these same ebb and flow forces. Our job is to keep our focus while we adapt to new realities.



# Control Group

by Ricky

I have been indulging in a solitary vice again, but don't worry, I mean reading, not what you thought. While perusing the Skeptical Inquirer I came across a review of an odd little tome of pseudoscience called, "Dressed to Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras." Now really, what would your average brassiere obsessed crossdresser do but immediately sign on to the library computer and get a copy delivered to the local library to find out what's going on here. You didn't think I would pay for the thing, did you?

The authors, Sydney Ross Singer and wife Soma Grismaijer, have a theory that wearing a bra so tight it makes red marks in the skin, or wearing one for more than 12 hours a day, restricts the lymph system and thus causes a buildup of toxins in the breast that in turn cause cancer. Unfortunately, the book is so riddled with contradictions and inaccuracies I can only assume the publishers were after the big bucks with a controversial topic. While there is much good information in the book, there is no way to tell what's true and what's speculation.

To give you some idea of their scientific leanings, when Soma discovered a lump in her breast they decided to seek alternative cancer treatment without even getting the lump diagnosed as cancer. They developed their theory with no testing of lymph function, and their sole research was a poorly constructed and poorly controlled survey. It should be no surprise they made no effort to confirm that their cancer group actually had been diagnosed with cancer. Oh, what fools these mortals be! (Thanks, Will.)

In response to all this, a spokesperson for the American Cancer Society Institute stated, "We look forward to the publication of the 'Bra and Breast Cancer Study' in a peer reviewed scientific journal, where the study results can be properly evaluated."

Hmmm... they seem to think a properly controlled scientific study would carry more weight than speculation and surveys. If you are aware of how scientific studies are conducted (pay attention here; the latest survey revealed 60% of you haven't a clue), you will know there are two or more groups studied. One is the group you want to test for the phenomena you are investigating, and the other is a control group to make sure the results do not reflect some unexpected effect. Well, my sisters, that's where you and I come in. Can you think of a better control group for this study than a group of men dedicated to wearing bras?

Just think of it! By becoming a volunteer in the cause of science, you will be able to go to work next Monday morning wearing your favorite black lace bra, as long as you cinch it up nice and tight. I can just see it now. You walk in the door and take off your coat, and one of your co-workers in the machine shop strikes up a conversation:

"Hey Earl, I notice somthin' different about youse dis morning."

"Yeah, Sam, I'm doin' my bit for science. I'm in a scientific study. Da Doc says I gotta wear dis t'ing for the next six months. 12 hours a day, seven days a week. It's real important. It could mean life and death for some broads."

"Ya don't say, Earl. That's very selfless of youse. I'm sure da boss will

want to promote someone who is so giving dat he will make such a sacrifice for da cause of science."

"Youse may be right, Sam, but I just hope I don't louse up da shop safety record if I get dese hooters caught in da lathe!"

Or perhaps you're a high school science teacher. The scene would go something like this, about three seconds after the end of the first period, when the Principal invites you to his office:

"Mr. Smith, several of your students have commented on your latest lab session. I must admit I have never considered using the Victoria's Secret catalog as a source for experimental materials."

"Why, Mr. Jones, I have always subscribed to the principle that scientific inquiry must be completely unfettered, although I will admit this piece of apparatus about my pectorals is rather constricting. It did serve as a good starting point to explain the fundamentals of dynamic tension."

"Fascinating, Mr. Smith. Could I inquire if this, uh, experiment was part of the syllabus?"

"Why, no, Mr. Jones. I have been selected to participate in a scientific study on the relationship between brassieres and the incidence of breast cancer in women. Needless to say, I'm in the control group."

"So I see, Mr. Smith. May I inquire as to the extent and scope of this experiment?"

"Of course, Mr. Jones. Because of encouragement from the rest of the staff, we have expanded it to include an animal study. In a stunning show of interdepartmental harmony, Mrs. Wilson of the home economics department has her students sewing little bitty bras for several rats. They did quail a bit at the thought of designing brassieres with six cups apiece, but we realized each rat could serve as its own control by using only two breasts for testing."

"Brilliant, Mr. Smith! I assume the Biology department supplied the, uh, test animals."

"No, Mrs. Tweed of the cafeteria staff had a far better supply of rats than the biology department."

"A fine method of saving the taxpayer's money, Mr. Smith. How long is this course of experimentation to last? I will need time to prepare proper explanatory materials for the students and their parents if it is to be lengthy."

"Six months, Mr. Jones. I would be pleased to prepare abstracts of the study for the staff and conduct an extracurricular briefing on the results of the Study."

"Wonderful, Mr. Smith! I'm sure the PTA will be pleased by your exemplary attitude toward volunteerism."

So I urge you to call Mr. Singer as soon as possible and volunteer your services. You'll be glad you did, and the world will be a better place for your sacrifice!

*(Ed. Note: This column first appeared in the late lamented "Cross-Talk" magazine, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)*



# Take the Next Step in Fighting Employment Discrimination Against Transgenders

by Phyllis Frye

Much has been going on to get Barney Frank of the US House and Ted Kennedy of the US Senate to introduce the next ENDA bill with transgender inclusion. PFLAG has become a very major ally in this struggle and deserves our appreciation. So has the NGLTF Task Force and they deserve our thanks and continued support as well. Many lesbian and gay and bisexual activists and national organizations have made phone calls, written letters and sent e-mail in support of transgender inclusion. Yes, many transgenders from around the nation and especially in Frank's and Kennedy's home state of Massachusetts have been active.

Believe it or not, as of yesterday, from all of the reports that I have received, the main resistance to putting transgenders into the ENDA bill has finally boiled down to one main issue.

Guess which one it is.

The issue that is being raised to keep transgenders from being fired from their jobs is bathrooms and showers. Around the nation transgender inclusive employers have worked out the bathroom and shower problem, and yet, that is the reason that we are being told that transgenders will not be in the next ENDA.

Let us discuss bathrooms for a bit. When I was a child in the 1950's in Texas, I remember seeing at filling stations and restrooms three bathrooms—Men, Women, Colored. To continue discrimination, employers and business people had no problem whatsoever building a third restroom. And yet today with the goal of removing discrimination, law makers will not require the same installation.

As to keeping the sexes apart for privacy, the discriminators had no problem with colored men and colored women using the same restroom.

Later when the Equal Rights Amendment was seeking ratification, the biggest fights centered on the incorrect argument that the ERA would require unisex toilets. The ERA was not ratified and yet today we see many instances of "one-holers" that are simply marked with a sign that says "Restroom."

One of the arguments against the Americans with Disabilities Act was that it would require employers and business people to build special ramps and special restrooms. The ADA passed and most ramps are in place, curb cuts continue to be installed and restrooms for the handicapped continue to be built. Usually they are unisex one-holers.

During the gays in the military struggle of 1993, much of the fight was over requiring straight men to be in the same showers as gay men. It seemed that the same straight men, who liked to ogle women on the street corner, could not cope with even the thought that another man might possibly look at them in the same fashion.

As absurd as it seems, our Congress does a lot of fighting over restrooms and showers. What is the solution for transgenders? Mostly common sense. Usually employers tell the transgendered employee which restroom to use, and anyone who has a problem with that can use all of the others. Sometimes it is convenient for most, usually it is very inconvenient for the transgender. When I am called for legal advice, I always give the "three flights of stairs" rule. If they have to go further than that to use the restroom it is too far and time to bring OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the US Department of Labor, into the action. Other things have been done such as a lock on the restroom door for those employees who just cannot stand the idea of sharing with a transgender, each behind a locked stall door. Still another is the post-it note on the door to alert the weak-of-heart that the transgender is currently within and to enter as you choose. Usually after a few weeks or months the whole thing dies down, and everyone decides that it is just no big deal.

The shower situation can be similarly handled. Many, many, many employers are doing it. Creative solutions can be found that are short of causing someone to lose their job.

Often the cost of job loss for the transgender is not put into the calculation. When a transgender is in transition and does not "pass" very well, a loss of job usually puts that person on welfare and possibly on the street. From a cost standpoint, which is more efficient? Putting a lock on the door, or using the post-it note on the door, or telling everyone to play nice-nice for a while until everyone gets used to the idea that nothing bad is going to happen in the restroom or shower? Or having the taxpayer pick up another welfare tab for at least a full year?

But let us go back to the OSHA connection for a moment. Did you know that you do have the right to go to the restroom at work? Yes, you do. Now an employer may not want to let you use the restroom of your new gender presentation, but they have to let you use some restroom. I wish I had thought of this in 1976 when I was fired. The restroom issue came up. The man-



ager who was about to fire me—even though I had not yet transitioned at work—said that I could not use the women's restroom. And now that everyone knew, the men would be very uncomfortable if I used the men's. So I was fired. And in 1976 I went to EEOC, who told me that Title VII did not protect transgenders. Maybe what I should have done, and maybe this is what all of our people who get fired need to do, is filed a complaint with OSHA that I was fired for wanting to use "a" restroom and follow up the same allegation with EEOC that I was fired in violation of OSHA Regs.

The last comment on this before I suggest what we can do about this in relation to getting ENDA introduced with transgender inclusion is this: maybe we should call their bluff. Employ what I call the "zizzz-zizzzz" factor. In other words, if the employer resists our being able to use the restroom of our new gender presentation, then we must insist that we still be able to use the previously used restroom. (Let us be practical; we do have to relieve ourselves.) And then proceed to use it. I remember after I was fired and I went full time, I used to go to local professional engineering meetings as a way of trying to get work. Everyone knew who I was, and I was trying to follow the rules and not be arrested—for using the wrong restroom. So in full Phyllis, I entered the men's restroom. Instantly, I heard lots of "zizzz-zizzzz" along with a few "Yipes!" followed by a quick stampede of all the men out of the restroom. I did not push it, it was 1976 after all, but I would imagine that a few such episodes would give an employer a good reason to work out a compromise.

As to getting transgenders into the next ENDA, I am going to suggest the next step. The next step is to contact the local office of your US Congressperson and, if close, one or both of your US Senators. The local office is the one in your neighborhood or certainly within a short drive, and usually reachable with a local phone call. Contacting your Senator is optional right now; do it if you can. But what is mandatory is to contact the local office of your US Congressperson.

Before some of you panic out there, this is 1999. We have put transgenders into their Washington offices many times now. And I know from all the e-mail that I receive, with all of the work that I read about in small cities and large around the USA, there are several of you in EVERY district. And when we add in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and straight folks who support us and agree that transgender should be in the next ENDA, there is no reason that each Member should not get contacts on this issue.

Call and ask for the staff person who deals with employment discrimination. When you get him or her, ask if their boss is a past sponsor of the Employment Non-Discrimination Bill, called ENDA, that will prohibit discrimination against some but not all lesbians, gays and bisexuals. (Note: the "not all" is because any

LGB that is gender variant is not, not, not covered, period, end of statement.) If they say no, then ask for an appointment to come and talk to them about it. Press the part that you are a constituent who lives and votes in that district. This is a good way to educate them on ENDA. (ENDA is a good bill; if it were transgender inclusive it would also protect the gender variant LGBs.) And because of your work, their boss might not offer as much opposition to its passage someday down the road. Besides, it is good practice and you will feel better for it. And you will also be more skilled for the next time you need to work on a political issue. Follow up with a request for an appointment to meet the Member the next time she or he is in the District.

If they say yes, then ask for an appointment to come and talk to them about it. Press the part that you are a constituent who lives and votes in that district. This is a good way to educate them on ENDA not covering all LGBs and not covering the transgenders. Ask them, very pointedly, to ask their boss to contact Barney Frank and withhold or withdraw her or his sponsorship of the new ENDA bill until it is transgender inclusive. (Now before I get beaten to death on this, let me say that we are talking about sponsoring, not voting. Barney Frank and Ted Kennedy losing sponsorships because gender variant LGBs and transgenders are not covered, is a very strong message.) They probably will not do this, but they may call Frank's aides and Kennedy's aides and begin a press of their own. Follow up with a request for an appointment to meet the Member the next time she or he is in the District.

This must be done SOON! This is something that each of you can do. There is still one final card that has not been played very well. We have not gotten the National Organization of Women (NOW) moving on this yet. Two years ago, NOW came out with a very strong convention resolution that was transgender inclusive. Each of you needs to contact your local or state NOW to ask why NOW is not pushing Frank and Kennedy to include transgenders in the next ENDA.

Let us look at what happened when National PFLAG got active. PFLAG is pushing hard for transgender inclusion. PFLAG simply went around the HRC bump in the road and took it directly to Frank. NOW can do the same thing and go around that same HRC bump in the road, but each of you have to do the grassroots work to ask NOW to follow through with its transgender inclusive commitment.

That seems like a lot, but it can all be done locally, within short driving distances and with very few long distance calls. There are simply too many of you out there to let this opportunity pass.

Love to you all, and, by the way, please check out my web page!

Phyllis (Phyllis Randolph Frye, the "Phyllabuster" <http://members.aol.com/prfrye>)



## The Adventures of Laura - #1

by Laura CA-3738-P

Since this is my first article, with more planned in the future, I'd like to tell you about myself. I'm married with children, 52 years old and work full time. My wife is wonderful, but prefers being with my male self; which I think is understandable - that's who she married. Like many of you, my crossdressing time is very limited. So, when I have a chance to dress, I like to make it count and make it as exciting as possible. I have lots of outside hobbies and interests. When I'm all dressed up as Laura, my hobbies and interests don't change! Which brings us to the reason for this article and future ones. What would be more fun than dressing up and doing something you enjoy so much?

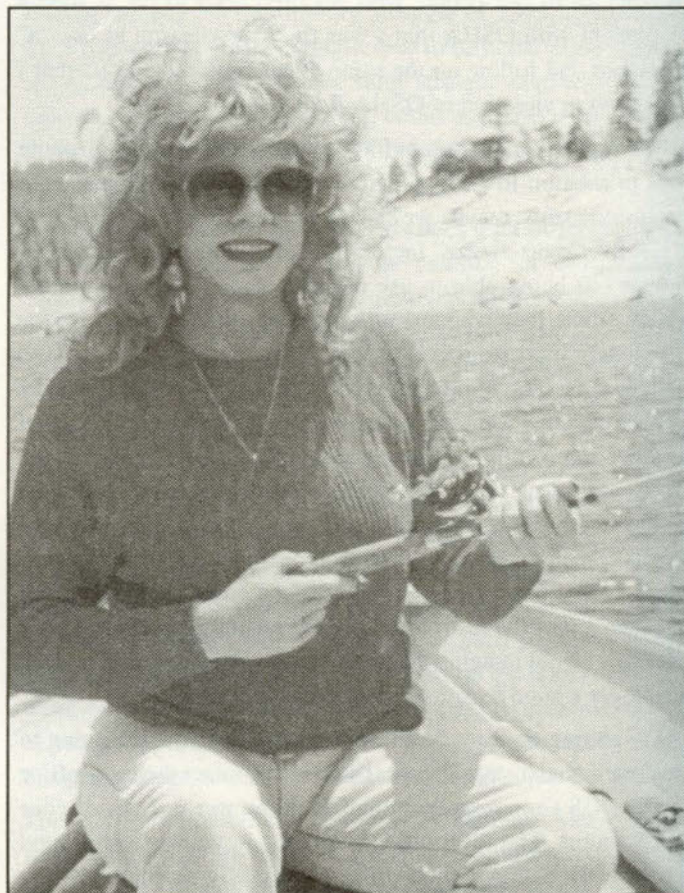
"Fishing en femme? You got to be kidding!" My closest crossdresser friend, Marlene, said she would accompany me on our fishing trip as his male self. I set the alarm for 4AM on that Saturday morning, got up and showered and shaved real close, for this was an all day trip. Marlene is single, so off to her house I went to get femmed. Women's Levi's, sweater and tennis shoes seemed to be the appropriate outfit for this excursion! We packed a lunch in our Igloo and off we went. We stopped at McDonald's drive-through for breakfast and headed off to my favorite mountain trout lake.

Two plus hours later we arrived, got all our fishing gear together and walked down to the marina to rent a boat. I asked how the fishing had been lately. The attendant said, "On the slow side." But I wasn't worried; I'd fished this lake for over 20 years and knew where every rock was. We put all our gear in the boat and set up our trolling outfits with my secret lure! We started trolling right from the docks, but 30 minutes later, still had no strikes.

Then we headed into one of my favorite spots with lots of rocks and rock shelves. In no time we had our first rainbow trout, and they just kept hitting. A man in another boat moved in closer to see if he could get some of the action. He didn't catch a thing. Maybe he didn't like a female out fishing him!

Well, two hours later we both had our limit of five trout each. Marlene had never trout fished before and seemed to really have a good time. I didn't tell her that it's usually not that easy! Maybe it was beginner's luck?

We headed back to the marina with our limits of trout and



still had half the day left. While unloading the boat, other fishermen were asking where and how we caught the fish. I was mostly truthful. (Ha!)

We drove off and soon stopped at a small stream and cleaned the trout. There were still some patches of snow left, so we could pack it around the fish in the now empty Igloo. We stopped and had lunch in a small mountain cafe and then got home early.

To the best of my knowledge, no one read me, which makes the adventure even more rewarding. I really appreciate Marlene helping carry out my fantasy! I had a blast! Until next time.....





# To Pass Or Not To Pass - That Is The Question!

by Jean [REDACTED]

I would like to share a true story with my sisters with the hope that it may help one or another in their attempt to take the first step to go out "en femme." The question, of course, is: "But will I pass? - What if I'm read? - Will I be found out?" Well, you'll never find out until you venture out.

Many of us novice crossdressers have made the mistake of going out around midnight and driving around in a car in a shopping plaza or secluded area, trying to build up the courage to step out and walk around in 5" high heels and mini skirts. Many of these first attempts are frightening and discouraging.

It would be far safer and more enjoyable to join a local club where "birds of a feather can and do flock together." There are many crossdressing gatherings all over the USA, from local dinner/dance parties and crossdresser club functions, to large crossdressing conventions. They provide a venue for us to dress up with other individuals much like ourselves. These events are a good first step in venturing out and accepting our second self.

However, sooner or later the desire to go out "en femme" to public places, restaurants, bars, shopping malls, etc., etc., will undoubtedly get hold of us. The inevitable questions again arise: "Can I pass in public? What if I'm read? What if Mother Nature calls? Can I - should I - may I - use the Ladies' Room?"

Well, here is another true story of what happened to Jean "caught in the act" or "accused" of using a public Ladies' Room. On the way home from a trip to New England, dressed en femme, I stopped at the Danbury shopping mall to pick up a birthday gift for my wife. A week earlier my wife and Jean (my femme name) had picked out a nice topaz finger ring, but it required size adjustment. The ring wasn't ready when I got there to pick it up, and the jeweler said to come back in an hour. So I had time to shop around and try on some clothes.

Then the urge to go the bathroom came. What now? I was dressed elegantly but not conspicuously, and seemed to have passed at the jeweler. The ladies' room and nursery was packed, so I thought nobody would pay any attention to a nice "girl" like me. I made sure my shoes pointed in the right direction. I was in and out in no time. My rushing alerting a security lady. Minutes later, while in a Dress Barn store checking out some nice evening gowns, a male security officer cautiously approached me. He was staring at me from all angles before addressing me:

"May I see your identification?"

"Anything the matter?" I asked politely.

"Just let me see your I.D.!"

"Sure, no problem," I said, digging into my purse and presenting my femme I.D. as Jean Taylor. The picture showed a young blond "chick" with a D.O.B. 1935 (then 59 y.o.) but now wearing a dark wig. On the back of the I.D. it states: *"The person carrying this ID is so dressed pursuing her own lifestyle preference, and is not so dressed to engage in any illegal activity."*

The sales lady, whom I knew to be familiar with crossdressing, had realized what was going on. The officer, a male chauvinist macho, informed me that cross-dressing and using a public wash room in a shopping center was in violation of a legal statute in the State of Connecticut.

I played ignorant at first, but then was ordered to leave the mall immediately and without any commotion. I was escorted to the mall entrance. A security woman followed me to the door and motioned me over to tell me that the sales lady at the Dress Barn wanted to let me know that it was not her that called Security and that she was sorry for the ordeal I was put through.

I must admit, I was crushed, and my ego was beaten. I still did not have my birthday gift for my wife. I pondered if I should simply go back in the mall through a different entrance. However, the security guard had warned me that if I were to be seen again dressed as a woman, I would be fined, picked up and turned over to the police. At that time I wasn't ready to challenge the ordinance.

I went back to my car and drove to the far corner of the parking lot and changed back to my male self. This was not so easy a task in broad daylight, but I managed. I then went straight back to the Dress Barn where I was "picked up." I looked at the salesgirl and inquired about the price of the dress I was about to try on a little earlier. She obviously did not "read" me as the girl from a half-hour ago. I wanted her to know that I got her message and told her that I was the "girl" who had been escorted so unceremoniously from the mall by Security. I told her that everything was all right.

She didn't believe me at first, but was happy that I had returned to identify myself. "It is so incredibly nice of you to come back and tell me," she said. She felt so bad for me but was glad that I had not resisted the security guard.

From the Dress Barn I went to the jewelry store to pick up the finger ring for my wife. The lady there seemed to be perplexed that only a short while later the husband would come to inquire about the same ring. She obviously did not realize that the two people were one and the same.



This incident was on my mind for a while and almost made me go back in the closet. But then I decided to go out & try it again no matter what.

A few weeks later in a neighborhood shopping mall a similar situation happened, but with an entirely different outcome. This time I was accompanied by my darling wife. After a short lunch we both needed to use the ladies' room. I must admit, I felt much more relaxed in the company of my wife. After washing my hands and applying fresh lipstick and powder, I joined my wife who had been waiting in the hallway outside the washroom. As I walked towards my wife I noticed, as did my darling wife, that a security lady had followed me who was trying to get my attention. Finally she said, "Excuse me, lady, may I ask a question?"

Pretending I didn't hear her, I kept on walking down the hallway, still pursued by this security lady. When she caught up with me, I turned around as she looked at me. She was speechless at first as her eyes moved up and down, examining me from head to toes. Realizing that she was facing a crossdresser, she shook her head in disbelief. Eventually she said, "You know, you look so damn beautiful, I can not believe it! You look great, dear!"

She looked at my heels, my legs, stockings, skirt, blouse, my makeup and my hair. Again, she exclaimed, "You look so very beautiful, but you should not use the ladies' room, you know!"

I explained that I simply had the urge and needed to go. Then I asked her if I should have used the men's room. Looking at me in astonishment, smiling all over her face, shaking her head, she said, "No! Not really, not the way you look. That would present a much bigger problem. I can't get over it! You look absolutely great!"

I held her gently by her arms and thanked her for the compliments and her understanding. "You know, on second thought, it's perfectly OK for you to use the ladies' room!" she stated and walked away.

My wife, who was waiting for me down the hallway, had observed the tail end of the episode. She wanted to know with whom I had been chatting. She was afraid that someone from the office or our neighborhood had recognized me. I felt such a "high" because of what the security lady said. Even though I was "read" I felt good about it.

PASSING OR NOT PASSING is not really THE IMPORTANT QUESTION but, more importantly, what we make out of it and how we accept ourselves or react in a given situation. Looking back on both experiences and many others that followed, I have come to the conclusion that going out in public is a learning process and a matter of building self-confidence.



## Big Girls' Underestimated Advantages

by Melanie Yarborough

On a recent episode of The Drew Carey Show, Drew's brother "Steve" came out as a crossdresser. It was a sincere and credible depiction of us, but also significant was the fact that the overweight Steve actually presented well as plump "Stephanie". There seems to be a stereotype in the gender community that one has to be petite or have feminine features to be credible. Yet interestingly, a number of full-figured crossdressers have presented convincingly as.....full-figured women. Why?

Significant body fat, it seems, tends to androgynize. It softens facial features. Men's visages are often angular and hard; but extra fat can actually make it softer, rounder, more feminine. Also, men are broad in shoulders, heavy in waist, and narrow in the hips. Women are narrow in shoulders, flatter in waist, and wider in the hips. But heavy women are round everywhere, and heavy crossdressers are round everywhere. Make sense?

Heavy women also have an advantage in that they aren't necessarily scrutinized as much by passersby. Our society devalues obesity and idolizes anorexia, and people are more forgiving of a chubby woman's imperfections. In fact, they give her much less of a glance than they give to other women. This actually works to the heavy crossdresser's advantage; they're taken for just another overweight woman.

As it happens, older age also tends to androgynize people. Senior males and females have similar creased skin and worn features, and are also overlooked by people. I've seen a number of older crossdressers who presented very well as elderly women.

Corpulent women also tend to wear looser, more flowing clothes. These have the advantage of further hiding masculine body attributes. Being a "Big Girl" means one can also wear bigger jewelry and more makeup. There's more body surface to cover; it's more proportional. And the good news is that more and more plus-size boutiques are springing up, catering to larger women.

However, a warning: just being more fleshy does not in-and-of-itself convey automatic femininity. One still has to pay attention to female voice, mannerisms, language usage, social cues, appropriate dress, and so on.

*(Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in the Neutral Corner newsletter, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)*



# Micheline in the Media

by Micheline :-){8-<==

As you know, I live usually under my name of "Micheline Montreuil." However, I wish to inform you that many things have happened in my life since November 1997.

In November 1997, I tried to modify my birth certificate by asking the Registrar of Civil Status to add the first name "Micheline" on it. The Registrar said "No" and told me some legal reasons. One was the fact that my driver's license & my passport were under my male name.

So, I asked for a new passport and a new driver's license under the name of "Micheline" and I succeeded in obtaining them. After that, I again asked the Registrar of Civil Status to modify my birth certificate to add the first name "Micheline" on it. He answered me "No" again, for the same reasons.

Meanwhile, the office in charge of issuing drivers' licenses had decided that its employees had made two errors when they issued a driver's license under the name of "Micheline" because my birth certificate had not been modified.

So the question was : Who must modify my documents first, the Registrar of Civil Status or the office in charge of issuing drivers' licenses? It is a bit like the question, "What came first, the egg or the chicken?"

Finally the Superior Court of Quebec decided in September 1998 that the office in charge of issuing drivers' licenses was right to change back my driver's license and that the Registrar of Civil Status must modify the birth certificate first. He added that he did not have the power to force them to modify my driver's license first.

This judgment was published in the two biggest newspapers in Quebec City and I became the local media star. During the following hours, I was interviewed live on three radio networks and three television networks about this fight. Every reporter in Quebec City wished to talk live with Micheline.

I was the only guest on a live public affairs program during a 40-minute broadcast from coast to coast in Canada on the French network RDI (the equivalent of CNN in the U.S.A. or CBC Newsworld in English Canada). I was on for 10 minutes live on the prime time news of the French Network TQS (the equivalent of Global in Canada and CBS in the U.S.A.) and 5 minutes on the prime time news of the French Network TVA (the equivalent of CTV in Canada and ABC in the U.S.A.). Obviously, I was dressed in one of my beautiful but very classic dresses, like a business lady.

I was also the only guest on a live program during two hours on the prime time news of the French Radio station CHIF-FM, and I answered live many questions from people across the province of Quebec. I will tell you something: there is a huge tide on the ocean of transvestite and transsexual people since these events.

Now, many things are moving very fast around me. If you wish to know

my feelings, I am now like the captain of a beautiful dismantled sailboat with torn sails on an ocean with 30-meter waves, a wind of 200 kilometers and some water in the hold. Nevertheless, I am still holding the helm and I am trying to pass through this difficult situation.

Trust me, it is not funny, but because it is now so public, I have decided to continue this battle in public with all my energy and my legal knowledge. So, the next step was to contest the decision of the Registrar of Civil Status. When I pleaded in front of the Superior Court of Quebec for my change of name, the attorney for the Registrar of Civil Status said to the court that the court must reject my appeal because "Micheline does not exist, the court has no real power to change the decision of the Registrar of Civil Status, and anyway, the Registrar of Civil Status can do no wrong." This is like the old proverb, "The King can do no wrong."

Anyway, the judge overruled some of the objections raised by the attorney for the Registrar of Civil Status and he decided that the court has the power to change the decision of the Registrar of Civil Status, and that the Registrar of Civil Status can do wrong.

However, the judge did not allow me to add the first name of Micheline on my birth certificate, even though he recognized that I use it daily and that I use it for all my official affairs, because he has decided that a first name has a sex: male, female or ambiguous. So, I have decided to go to the Court of Appeals because it is written nowhere that first names must have a sex.

After this decision, I again had full coverage by radio, television and newspapers, and many interviews across Canada. I also had the full front page and a full inside page in the Journal de Quebec and in the Journal de Montreal, the two greatest newspapers in Quebec City and Montreal. Furthermore, I have appeared on all the main talk shows or public affairs programs in French on all networks, at least one time a month since September 1998.

Since November 1998, I have had my own program on radio every Saturday morning from 9:00 to 10:00, entitled "Les Refrains de Micheline," and one every Friday evening from 21:00 to 22:00 entitled "Plus ça change, plus c'est pareil". In these two programs, I speak for one third of the time and two thirds of the time is music: French songs on Saturday morning and English rock and metal on Friday evening. So, I am now a real cover girl.

Many other girls have called me to support me. I ask you to excuse me if I do not add more details, but it is now an open fight between Micheline and the government and its agencies. For those who know me as the "Daughter of the Dragon" or the "Dragon Lady Herself", you may guess that I have begun this fight to win the final battle. Just wish me "Good Luck." It is certainly not the end, nor the beginning of the end, but it is certainly the end of the beginning.



# To The Wife Who Has Just Found Out

by Frances Fairfax

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My heart goes out to you, and to every wife who has just found out! You are right in feeling betrayed, shocked, angry, grieved, and afraid for the future. All these emotions and more will carry you on a wild roller coaster ride for a while yet. And all this is compounded by the fact that you've just given birth and are likely under the influence of postpartum depression. Been there, done that, but no one's made that particular T-shirt!

While my husband had begun dressing in a quiet sort of way, not keeping it a secret, some years beforehand, it was just after the birth of our second son when he announced he wanted to join a support group and meet others like himself. This escalation to a whole new order of magnitude was very threatening to me, with a newborn and a two-year-old in hand!

In our case, we decided to tell our children early on, in terms they could understand. It was a decision we weighed very carefully, and we have not had cause to regret it (they are high-schoolers now), but every family's situation is different. My husband and I have written an article on the subject, which I can send you by e-mail if you like. The bottom line is, the needs of the children must come first. In the case of your preschooler, I would hesitate to complicate the situation any more than it already is.

In trying to cope with this new situation, you must insist upon time for yourself to adjust. We can recommend books and send you articles, but you must be allowed to read them at your own pace. This is a major life trauma, akin to a serious illness, death of a close relative, loss of a career or an extramarital affair. It is natural and normal to go through the classic stages of denial, anger, bargaining, grieving, and degrees of acceptance. Give yourself time for these stages.

Right now you are grieving your loss of that image of your husband you thought was the whole picture, and with it that vision of a "normal life" you had carefully constructed together. In its place, however, is the same husband you had before, the same man you fell in love with and married, but now with an added dimension. You have your children, and you all have your whole lives ahead of you as a family. There's just this new wrinkle.

It may help to think of it in terms of one of you unexpectedly being diagnosed with some chronic illness, something that will impact day-to-day living and won't go away. Right now I'm sure this sounds like the "worse" and the "sickness" in the "for better, for worse, in sickness and in health" part of your marriage vows! You may not be ready to hear that his crossdressing can be anything positive, a personal growth opportunity for both of you, even a "gender gift." That's OK!

All I can say is, we decided early on that whatever problems came up in our marriage, we would tackle \* together.\* When he discovered his desire to wear feminine clothing, we worked through all stages of "her" development together, and came to a mutual comfort zone. It was bewildering, frustrating, frightening at times, but each of us and our marriage has benefited in ways we never would have imagined.

If you're not interested in helping him with clothes and stuff, that's quite understandable! You have every right to take this at your own pace! You just found out last week!

As for telling friends or relatives, don't, at least not just yet! Almost everyone operates on a "need-to-know basis" when considering whether to tell a particular individual. Once the cat's out of the bag, she can't be stuffed back in!

Counselors vary considerably in their understanding of crossdressing. Most learn very little about it during their training, and most of what they are taught is highly suspect, especially if it was more than a few years ago. There are those who'll try to "cure" what isn't a disease! On the other extreme are those who'll label him "transsexual" and fast-track him toward reassignment. A counselor's chief value, in my mind, is in helping a couple sort out their issues, separating the crossdressing-related things from all the other issues every couple has. There's a destructive tendency to make the crossdressing issue the lightning rod for all your other relationship static. Try to avoid this.

If you are anywhere near a Tri-Ess Chapter, I would suggest you and your husband get in touch with them. They are very nice, ordinary people, with whom you and your husband will have many things in common besides the crossdressing. They may be able to recommend therapists they themselves have found helpful. More than that, usually the wives are actively involved in the chapter and could possibly correspond with you, or talk with you by telephone. There is more I could share with you, but this is enough for now. Please feel free to contact me privately if you like.

Love, Frances Fairfax



## The Moth and The Cocoon

A man found a cocoon of an emperor moth. He took it home, so that he could watch the moth come out of the cocoon. One day, a small opening appeared, and he sat still, watching for several hours, as the moth struggled to force its body through the little hole.

Then, it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no farther. It seemed to be stuck.

Then, the man in his kindness, decided to help the moth. So, he took a pair of scissors, and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The moth then emerged easily.

But, it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the moth, because he expected, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time.

Neither happened! In fact, the little moth spent the rest of its life, crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly.

What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was, the restricting cocoon and the struggle, required for the moth to get through the tiny opening, were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the moth into its wings, so it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Freedom and flight would only come after the struggle. By depriving the moth of a struggle, the man deprived the moth of health.

Sometimes, struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, He would cripple us. We would not be as strong, as what we could have been.



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## Tri-Ess Pen Pals

Many sisters have written over the years to express their disappointment in not receiving replies to their letters to other Tri-Ess sisters. It seems that while some sisters are wonderfully prolific pen pals, others (for a variety of reasons) are not. To assist those who would like to receive lots of letters, we have compiled a "Pen-Pal List". All you have to do is promise to reciprocate. Just fill out and sign the form below and send it to:

**Carol Beecroft**  
**P.O. Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275**

*"I promise the courtesy of a reply to  
 all correspondence from my Tri-Ess sisters."*

Femme Name \_\_\_\_\_

Code Number \_\_\_\_\_

Here's how to write a Pen Pal through the Forwarding Service:

- 1) Write your letter to your chosen Pen Pal. Include your picture if you wish. If you choose not to include your own return address at first, be sure you include your own Code Number in your letter.
- 2) Place your letter in an envelope, affix correct postage, and lightly pencil in the name and Code Number of your Pen Pal on the front.
- 3) Place this envelope inside another envelope and address this outer envelope to:

**Tri-Ess Forwarding Service**  
**P.O. Box 194**  
**Tulare CA 93275**

- 4) Include your return address on the outer envelope and be sure to apply correct postage. Once received at the Forwarding Service, your inner envelope will be properly addressed to your Pen Pal and sent on its way. If or when you and your Pen Pal choose to exchange letters directly is up to you. Have fun, Sisters!

If you wrote us asking to be placed on the Pen Pal List and your name does not appear above, please write us again. We are sorry, but sometimes we do "drop the ball." (Or, in this case, the name!)

NEW!!! We have a sister who wants to be a Cyber-Space Pen Pal. Kimmie (FL-4532-D) says she loves answering her E-mail and would like to have you visit her Web Site, too. Her E-Mail address is: [REDACTED] Her Web site is at: <http://members.aol.com/kimmiecd/index.html>

## List of Pen Pals

Now, here are the Pen Pals:

AL-4940-H  
 AZ-3954-B Rebecca  
 CA-3800-M Charli  
 CA-1282-V Fran  
 CA-3354-N Michelle  
 CA-4249-F Shirley Louise  
 FL-2520-B Joan Ann  
 FL-3720-R Karen Rose  
 FL-4046-J Rita  
 IL-3623-G Nancy  
 MN-3996-L Carla  
 NC-3723-C Sherri  
 NJ-3818-L Carol Ann  
 NY-3433-T Donna  
 NY-3717-P Tammie  
 NY-4892-D Jackie  
 OH-1617-H Razilee  
 PA-3961-G Jayne  
 [REDACTED] (E-Mail only)  
 PA-4046-J Rita  
 TN-1230-H Rita  
 TX-4820-W Irene  
 VA-2642-I Madelyn  
 VA-3401-W Samantha  
 WI-4864-S Kathy  
 IN CANADA  
 PQ-4457-M Micheline  
 IN MEXICO  
 MX-4626-C Mariana



## Tri-Ess Helpline!

Do you have a question about Tri-Ess? Do you need help regarding media outreach in your area? Tri-Ess Executive Director Carol Beecroft may be reached at the Tri-Ess National Office in Tulare, California at:

**(209) 688-9246**

Carol is often available to speak to radio audiences via long-distance telephone hook-up, and she is compiling a list of members who are able to appear on radio or television, or speak before college classes.

Do you have a question about the Femme Mirror or other Tri-Ess publications and services? Tri-Ess Chair of the Board Jane Ellen Fairfax and Mirror Editor Frances Fairfax may be reached at:

**(713) 349-8969**

Are you interested in starting a Tri-Ess chapter? The new Tri-Ess Liaison for Chapter Support and Services, Judy Daniels, may be reached at:

**(903) 813-3398**

Does your local chapter have a Helpline? Ideally, each Tri-Ess chapter should operate a Helpline and list the number with the local Crisis Hotline, Gay Switchboard, Mental Health Clinics, etc. The expenses involved would vary with local phone rates and installation charges. As a second, unlisted line in a sister's home, a Helpline does not take a lot of money. What it does take is considerable dedication on the part of the sister volunteering to answer the Helpline. How about it, ladies? Does your chapter have a Helpline yet?



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# To Share or Not To Share. Is That Your Question?

by Rachel Miller

It was primarily through my connection with other crossdressers that I finally came to understand and accept myself. Eventually I stopped viewing crossdressing as a dreadful secret to guard. Still, the nearly unanimous advice of my correspondents was to never tell anyone. Their reasoning was that I would lose everyone and everything dear to me.

I had started the correspondence because I couldn't stand the pain and hypocrisy of hiding my true self. My marriage was built on trust and open communication, yet I found myself withholding a significant portion of myself from the person I loved most. That situation could not be allowed to continue if my marriage was to be rich and fulfilling. So, for me, there were no options. I had to tell, the only question was how?

I felt compelled to understand and accept myself before unveiling my feelings because I was too uncertain of myself to proceed. I was afraid that if I told Marsha when I felt badly about myself, I would communicate those misgivings and she would likely view this as a very negative situation. So, I had to understand my feelings before I could consider sharing them. It required over a year of reading, correspondence and introspection before I was ready to talk. Meanwhile I was very careful not to be discovered while crossdressed because that would have been nearly impossible to explain.

Once I became comfortable with my feelings, my focus shifted to looking for the right time, place and manner to tell. During a casual conversation, the speech that I had been planning came tumbling out. This unrehearsed event turned out to be the right time, place and manner for me.

I explained that cross-dressing has been a part of me since childhood and cannot be set aside. I explained that it is related to the softness and gentleness she finds desirable in me. We talked often after that to help her understand and to calm and dispel her fears. Yes, I will remain your husband, not become your girlfriend. No, I won't do anything to jeopardize our existing lives. Yes, we will agree in advance about any steps I wish to take. No, I am not attracted to other men. Mostly, I just confirmed that I loved her with all my heart and that our marriage is so important that I will do whatever is necessary to protect it. Freely sharing our innermost thoughts and fears allowed us to resolve the issues.

Even though we have a strong bond, working through the issues was difficult. It was an intense, arduous struggle. Sometimes it seemed easier to stop talking, but success requires a never-ending willingness to be open and discuss all the questions. We continually relied on our love, friendship and open communication.

For all the hard work, the benefits are incredible. I finally stopped hiding, stopped pretending and started being myself. It was the greatest period of personal growth I have ever experienced.

Telling my wife turned out favorably, but the process is not without risk. Successfully sharing important news requires a strong commitment to each other. If love and commitment are present, there is a willingness to work out problems. A nurturing relationship is a partnership, where both members help each other, where nothing is off limits, where no problem including crossdressing is out of bounds and where anything can be handled in a win/win fashion.

If the relationship is in trouble, it needs work before discussing this subject and you might consider professional marriage counseling. Don't make the mistake of proceeding if your foundation is shaky because the revelation of transvestism can provide a convenient excuse to break the relationship.

Caution and thoughtful action are imperative so you might want to consider some questions:

*What is the emotional impact on yourself and your relationship of continued hiding?*

*What happens to your self-esteem if you do or don't tell?*

*How important is it to be loved and accepted by a few people who truly know you compared to being superficially "accepted" by many?*

*How is trust, caring, commitment and personal growth involved in this question?*

Assuming you understand yourself and have a strong relationship, sharing your crossdressing story can work if you personally believe it is the right thing to do. You must be convinced that the potential value outweighs the risks. If you have lingering doubts, clarify your feelings. Consider professional help if necessary, but don't let anyone force you into a decision. Listen to my wise old buddy Davy Crockett, "Make sure you're right, then go ahead!"



## Another Win for Tri-Ess

by Dana D.

Thanks to Judy Daniels and the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) convention that Tri-Ess got involved with some time ago, I had another opportunity to get in front of the young adults of our college family.

This time it was Professor Phil Atkins who found the Tri-Ess booth while he was visiting the NCFR conference. He talked with Judy and myself for some time about giving speeches in front of his classes up in West Virginia. I told him about the classes that I had been to at North Carolina's ECU and told him to get in touch with Dr. David Knox who could connect with him on a professional basis.

Soon I was invited for a presentation. After we settled on a date, my adventure started. Knowing how the weather could play a part in this trip I wanted to let Phil know that we would shoot for March 8 and 9.

Of course, all you ladies out there know what you must go through to prepare for a trip. In my case, I had to shove everything, wigs, makeup, clothes, magnifier mirror, shoes, purse, etc., into one suitcase. In my one carry on, were a lot of tapes and flyers for the staff. Thanks to Mary Frances and Jane Fairfax, the heavy books had been sent directly to West Liberty State University.

I flew in on Sunday to Pittsburgh and was met by Phil. We had a good time driving to the college. He told me the schedule was on the heavy side but figured I could keep up. **BOY, WAS HE RIGHT.**

Starting Sunday night I had a class on diversity and met a professor from Nigeria. He was very impressed and wanted to have his class come to participate in the next day's activities. Starting fresh Monday morning, I was handed off from one class to another class. Phil had made packets for each Professor so the information was at hand for the start of each class. (If you wonder about your money going into Tri-Ess, think about sending so many Femme Mirrors to these colleges!)

I also was in front of doubled classes just to save some time and hope that the weather would stay good for the next day. Around noon, I met with all the heads of West Liberty to have a round table discussion about the crossdressing community. I also met a gay guy who was introduced to me because he was involved with the school paper. We really connected, and after the meet-

ing the information about Tri-Ess was to be included into a school packet to give to freshmen.

That evening the weather report was not good. A big storm was fast approaching from the west and the area was to get up to 15 inches of snow. I called Phil and we decided to blow out Tuesday and for me to get off the mountain ahead of the storm. He promised to let the classes know why I cut the trip short.

I was sorry to have cut the trip short, but Phil called me the next day just to say that I did the right thing because he had no classes on Tuesday and was looking at 10 inches of the white stuff out from his window. He also talked about Tri-Ess giving speeches in the other seven smaller colleges around the area, and wondered how our organization could be reimbursed for the shipment of books and also for the books themselves.

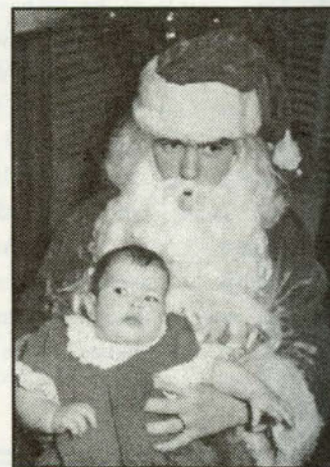
Just think! Just in this small area how many folks would like to connect with us, and we all do not have enough time or resources to get to every place in the country! I can tell everyone out in transgender land that we are a big hit at colleges and the subject is very much in demand.

As a matter of fact, I will be going to University of Wisconsin at Green Bay the end of this month to give the same speech to many more young adults. This is truly an exciting time for me and also for Tri-Ess.

Maybe in the future we all could figure out how to cover all the events and also how to cover the important conventions that occur throughout the year. **TRI-ESS IS ON THE MOVE!**

***Who Is  
This  
Santa?***

***Answer on  
page 32***





# TRI-ESS Chapters and Forming Chapters

## Region 1 (New England)

### New York City Metro Area

#### CHIDELTA MU

P.O. Box 1, River Edge, NJ 07661-0001

Contact: Susan [REDACTED] NJ-4142-W

Phone: 1-800-[REDACTED] (Code 4985)

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Web site: <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/7396/>

### Albany NY Metro Area

#### LAMBDA CHI LAMBDA

P.O. Box 97, Ilion NY 13357

Contact: Evelyn NY-3277-H

## Region 2 (Middle Atlantic/Ohio Valley)

### Trenton, NJ Metro Area

#### SIGMA NU RHO

PO Box 9255, Trenton NJ 08650

Contact: Pat NJ-3524-H

Voice Mail: 609-[REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Castro/3774>

### Northern Pennsylvania

#### Endless Mountain Girls

#### EPSILON MU GAMMA

P.O. Box 4, Three Bridges NJ 08887

Contact: Alice [REDACTED] NJ-4160-H

24-Hour Voice Mail: 717-[REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

### Gouldsboro, PA Metro Area

#### FORMING CHAPTER

c/o Tri-Ess PO Box 194, Tulare CA 93275

Contact: Sue PA-2164-C

### Northern Ohio, Western PA Area

#### ALPHA OMEGA

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Sheffield Lake, OH 44054-0053

Elaine Lee OH-9034-B:216-[REDACTED]

E-mail(Lisa): [REDACTED]

<http://www.triess-alphaomega.org/>

### Lansing, MI Metro Area

#### LAMBDA MU

P.O. Box 246

Moline, MI 49335-0246

Annette MI-4290-B 616-[REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Web site: <http://www.lambdamu.com>

### Baltimore, MD Metro Area

#### CHIEPSILON SIGMA

P.O. Box 505

Brooklynville MD 21022

Contact: Grace MD-1856-R

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

[http://members.tripod.com/~Chesapeake\\_Tri\\_Ess](http://members.tripod.com/~Chesapeake_Tri_Ess)

## SECTIONS:

### Phildadelphia PA -

#### Wilmington DE Area

#### PHI LAMBDA SECTION

Contact: Tammy and Sandy [REDACTED]

PO Box 1674

Media PA 19063

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

### South Central PA Area

#### CHI PIALPHA SECTION

Contact: Yvonne and Linda

PO Box 3469

York, PA 17402-3469

E-mail: [REDACTED]

### Northern Virginia Area

#### PI OMICRON TAU SECTION

Contact: Joan [REDACTED]

PO Box 1728

Herndon, VA 20172

E-mail : [REDACTED]

### Richmond VA Metro Area

#### RHO IOTA CHI SECTION

Contact: Lucy [REDACTED]

PO Box 382

Norge, VA 23127

E-mail: [REDACTED]

## Region 3 (Southeast)

### Charlotte, NC Metro Area

#### KAPPA BETA

P.O. Box 12101, Charlotte, NC 28220

Phone (Sherri): [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Web site: <http://www.kappabeta.org>

### Raleigh/Durham, NC Metro Area

#### SIGMA RHO DELTA

P.O. Box 61406, Raleigh NC 27661

Beverly NC-4268-B: 919-[REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/6299>

### Greensboro/Winston-Salem Area

#### TAU GAMMA

P.O. Box 25282, Raleigh NC 27611

Contact: Melissa NC-4534-E

E-Mail (Heidi): [REDACTED]

<http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/park/1628>

### Atlanta, GA Metro Area

#### SIGMA EPSILON

Box 272, Roswell, GA 30077

Contact: Lauren GA-3390-H: 770-[REDACTED]

E-mail (Karen): [REDACTED]

<http://pages.prodigy.com/kerricd/sigep.htm>

## Region 4 (Mid-South)

### Houston, TX Metro Area

#### TAU CHI

8880 Bellaire B2 ,#104, Houston TX 77036

Contact: Jane TX-1757-M: (713) [REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

E-Mail (Brandi): [REDACTED]

### Austin, TX Metro Area

#### ALPHA TAU

P.O. Box 1398, Georgetown TX 78627

E-mail (Heather): [REDACTED]

E-Mail (Lee): [REDACTED]

E-Mail (Robie): [REDACTED]

<http://www.angelfire.com/tx/atau/>



**South OK / North TX Area**  
**TAU OMEGA FORMING CHAPTER**

P.O. Box 1922, Ardmore OK 73401

Judy Daniels::903-[REDACTED]

Michelle: [REDACTED]

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/2258/>

**Region 5 (Mid-West)**

**Chicago, IL Metro Area**

**CHI Chapter**

P.O. Box 40, Wood Dale, IL 60191

Shelly: 708-[REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

<http://members.aol.com/chitriess/trisss/chimain.htm>

**Minneapolis, MN Metro Area**

**BETA GAMMA**

PO Box 49522 Minneapolis, MN 55449

Contact: Karen MN-4807-P

1-877-[REDACTED] or 1-877-[REDACTED]

(Toll-Free in MN, ND, SD, IA, WI)

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Web site: <http://www.tri-ess.com>

**Southern MN- Northern IA Area**  
**PITHETA FORMING CHAPTER**

c/o K. Morgan

PO Box 74, Kensett Iowa 50448

Contact: Kandice MN-4554-G

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

<http://www.mwpcdir.com/ptg.html>

**Wausau, WI Metro Area**

**FORMING CHAPTER**

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Phone: 715-[REDACTED]

**Springfield, MO Metro Area**

**SIGMA MU**

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Springfield MO 65801-6187

Contact: Rachel [REDACTED]

Hotline (Riki): 417-[REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Website: [http://members.tripod.com/~Sigma\\_Mu/](http://members.tripod.com/~Sigma_Mu/)

**Region 6 (Mid-Continental)**

**Denver CO Metro Area**

**DELTA**

P.O. Box 11504, Denver, Co 80211

Contact: Diane CO-2387-L

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

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**FIESTA CHAPTER**

8200 Montgomery NE #241

Albuquerque, NM 87109

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**Region 7 (Northwest)**

**Grants Pass, OR Metro Area**

**Rogue Valley Girls**

**RHO GAMMA**

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Grants Pass OR 97527

Contact: Lori OR-4319-L

Edward: 541-[REDACTED]

Lori: [REDACTED]

**Eureka, CA Metro Area**

**FORMING CHAPTER**

c/o Tri-Ess

PO Box 194, Tulare CA 93275

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**Moscow, ID Metro Area**

**FORMING CHAPTER**

520 S. Hayes St.

Moscow ID 83843-3424

Contact: Laurie Wolf ID-1704-W

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E-Mail: [REDACTED]

**Region 8 (Southwest)**

**Los Angeles, CA Metro Area**

**ALPHA**

Box 411352, Eagle Rock Station,

Los Angeles, CA 90041

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Janyne: [REDACTED]

Stacy: [REDACTED]

<http://www.3dcom.com/tg/alpha/alpha.htm>

**Fresno, CA Metro Area**

**TRI CHI**

P.O. Box 26593, Fresno, CA 93729-6593

**Fresno Area and North:**

Karyn CA-4273-H: 209-[REDACTED] or

Angela CA-4750-P: 209-[REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

**Visalia Area and South:**

Carol CA-1012-B: 209-[REDACTED],

Marlene: [REDACTED]

<http://www.psnw.com/~huckfinn/index.html>

**Phoenix, AZ Metro Area**

**ALPHA ZETA**

Box 1738, Tempe, AZ 85280-1738

Cindy N. AZ-2817-N: 602-[REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

[http://tri-ess.org/alpha\\_zeta.htm](http://tri-ess.org/alpha_zeta.htm)

**Tucson, AZ Metro Area**

**TAU UPSILON**

8802 E Broadway Blvd.#145

Tucson, AZ 85710

Contact: Rebecca AZ-3954-B

Phone: 520-[REDACTED]

Rebecca: [REDACTED]

Robby: [REDACTED]

<http://members.aol.com/tauupsilon>

**Las Vegas, NV Metro Area**

**THETA UPSILON GAMMA**

P.O. Box 42401, Las Vegas, NV 89116

Contact: Rosalind Doyle NV-2474-P

Phone: 702-[REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

<http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/park/1880>

**Region 9 (Florida)**

**Orlando, FL Metro Area**

**PHI EPSILON MU**

P.O. Box 3261, Winter Park, FL 32790

Contact: Alexis FL-3077-E

Phone: 407-[REDACTED]

E-Mail: [REDACTED]

Web Site: <http://www.horizon-usa.com/misc/fem.htm>

Continued on page 53



## Tri-Ess-Sponsored CDSO Online Forum for Spouses and Partners of Crossdressers Signs 100<sup>th</sup> Subscriber!

Our subscription list for support of crossdressers' wives and significant others has signed its 90<sup>th</sup> subscriber! Operated by a wife, Beverly, the listserv is a forum for all genetic women involved with crossdressers. Subscription is free. It is not limited to spouses or partners who are members of Tri-Ess. However, it is "for women only" as there are many, forums available for transgendered men.

Now, a few words from Beverly:

Hi! Welcome to our very own support list for wives and/ or SO's of crossdressers. Just a few rules here....

1. NO postings, and NO subscriptions from crossdressers. Not your husbands or your boyfriends. This is for US.
2. No flames. If you disagree with an opinion please do so with courtesy and respect. Don't attack the person.
3. Those of you with strong, militant transsexual attachments, please move on. This list is not for you. If you'd like to E-mail me privately, I can pass on to you several addresses for support of SO's of transsexuals. There are many out there.
4. No advertisements! If you are in doubt about the acceptability of something, please forward it to me.
5. Many subscribers to this forum are uncomfortable seeing people crossdressed. For the comfort of all, transmission of crossdressing photos on the forum will not be allowed. Such transmission can be done by private e-mail, among consenting parties.

That's just about it for now. This list is still new. The rules may change along the way. If so, I will post a general announcement. If you have any suggestions, comments, or just want to talk.....feel free to E-mail me at [REDACTED]

Regards, Beverly

**To subscribe to the list, send e-mail to:** [REDACTED] with <SUBSCRIBE CDSO first name last name> as the message. You will receive confirmation from the listserv with complete instructions. Then, you may send a message to all the people currently subscribed to the list, by sending mail to a single address. **It's simple! It's fun! SIGN ON NOW, AND HELP SPREAD THE WORD TO ANY OTHER WIVES/SO'S YOU KNOW!**

## Chapters On Line!

Does YOUR chapter have an e-mail address? We are receiving an increasing number of inquiries in response to Tri-Ess's Internet presence as well as to ads in gender community publications. Whenever possible we refer inquirers to the nearest local chapter. A Helpline or an E-Mail address makes the referral process much more efficient. To list your chapter's local E-Mail address or Helpline number, contact Jane Ellen Fairfax at [REDACTED]



## Tri-Ess World Wide Web Sites

**Alpha's (Los Angeles CA)**  
<http://www.3dcom.com/tg/alpha/alpha.htm>  
**Alpha Omega's (Cleveland OH)**  
<http://www.triess-alphaomega.org>  
**Alpha Tau's (Austin TX)**  
<http://www.angelfire.com/tx/atau>  
**Alpha Zeta (Phoenix, AZ)**  
[http://tri-ess.org/alpha\\_za.htm](http://tri-ess.org/alpha_za.htm)  
**Beta Gamma's (Minneapolis MN)**  
<http://www.tri-ess.com>  
**Chi Chapter's (Chicago IL)**  
<http://members.aol.com/chitriess/triess/chimain.htm>  
**Chi Delta Mu's (New York City NY)**  
<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/7396/>  
**Chi Epsilon Sigma's (Baltimore MD)**  
[http://members.tripod.com/~Chesapeake\\_Tri\\_Ess\\_Judy\\_Daniels/](http://members.tripod.com/~Chesapeake_Tri_Ess_Judy_Daniels/)  
<http://www.angelfire.com/ok/judytriess/index.html>  
**Kappa Beta's (Charlotte NC)**  
<http://www.kappabeta.org>  
**Lambda Mu's (Lansing MI)**  
<http://www.lambdamu.com>  
**Phi Epsilon Mu's (Orlando FL)**  
<http://www.horizon-usa.com/misc/fem.htm>  
**Pi Theta Chapter's (Southern MN- Northern IA)**  
<http://www.mwpcdir.com>  
**Sigma Epsilon Chapter (Atlanta GA)**  
<http://pages.prodigy.com/kerricd/sigep.htm>  
**Sigma Mu (Springfield MO)**  
[http://members.tripod.com/~Sigma\\_Mu/](http://members.tripod.com/~Sigma_Mu/)  
**Sigma Rho Delta's (Raleigh/Durham NC)**  
<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/6299/>  
**Tau Gamma's (Greensboro/Winston-Salem NC)**  
<http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/park/1628>  
**Tau Omega's (Ardmore OK)**  
<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/2258/>  
**Tau Upsilon's (Tucson AZ)**  
<http://members.aol.com/tauupsilon>  
**Theta Upsilon Gamma's (Las Vegas NV)**  
<http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/park/1880>  
**Tri Chi's (Fresno CA)**  
<http://www.psnw.com/~huckfinn/index.html>  
**Tri-Ess International**  
<http://www.firstnethou.com/brenda/tri-ess.htm>  
**Tri-Ess Resources Page**  
<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Stonewall/6801/>  
**Tri-Ess Traveling Girls' Directory**  
<http://www.mwpcdir.com>  
**SPICE**  
<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/SPICE.html>  
**CDSO**  
<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/CDSO.html>  
**Holiday En Femme 1999**  
<http://www.firstnethou.com/brenda/holiday.htm>

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# Chick Like Me: Boy Meets (Transgender) World

by Melanie Yarborough

"It's too bad that guys and girls expect different things from dates," Debbie complains. Shawn, a typically mystified teenage boy, asks her what exactly girls want. Debbie replies that they want good conversation, and to feel they've connected with someone. Girls may or may not want sex, but shouldn't have to feel it's expected. Shawn is dumbfounded, asking, "But how are guys supposed to know this?" Debbie replies that girls send out signals, and it's not their fault if guys can't read them.

An episode of the ABC Friday night sitcom "Boy Meets World" once took a walk on the transgender side. Shawn (Ryder Strong) went undercover as a girl for an article for the school newspaper "The Patriot Spirit." Transgender themes are popping up everywhere, and this one was designed to educate young people. But there was a message for older transgendered people as well.

"Why don't you write your column about why guys are such jerks on dates?" Debbie complains to Cory, the would-be journalist at John Adams High. Later, in English class, he gets his inspiration. To research his book, "Black Like Me," author John Griffin had his skin colored so he could experience life as a black man. "Hey, that's it!" Shawn tells Cory. "To understand how girls feel, you have to live as a girl!" When Cory balks, Shawn appeals to the journalist in him: "Hey, you're writing a real article."

Cory enthusiastically agrees. He comes home with store-bought frilly lace-collared play dresses, announcing, "I'm going to be a girl!" His female friend Topanga chidingly tells him, "Not in that dress!". Like many guys, Cory equates femininity with playful frocks, not regular everyday girls' clothing. It takes Topanga, a real girl, to show him how girls really dress.

He still doesn't get it right. He reluctantly comes out of the bedroom closet (there's a subtle metaphor for you) in a dark brown dress with blue denim pockets, mismatched brown hose, and (gasp!) white pumps. His makeup is inexpertly done, his boobs are too big and placed too high, and he's visibly uncomfortable. He shuffles in an ungainly way, and when he tries to walk like a girl, it's with wildly exaggerated motions.

His friend Shawn shows him how to do it better, with a more understated, graceful walk. "I know girls," he proudly admits. Cory and Topanga then look at each other: A star is born.

Next, Shawn is nervously peeking around the corner at school, noticeably tense and self-conscious at being dressed as a girl in public. "Why is everybody staring? What are they looking at?" he asks. Cory replies admiringly, "Shawn, don't take this the wrong way, but you're kind of a babe!". Shawn is dressed like any typical 17-year-old girl

nowadays: black turtleneck with dangling silver heart necklace, a red belted miniskirt, black boots.

"My name's not Shawn," he tells Cory and Topanga, to show he's getting into the spirit. "Do you have a name?" they ask, and he shyly nods, "Veronica." "You've thought about this before, haven't you?" Topanga asks slyly, revealingly. Perhaps she perceptively sees the latent fascination many boys have with the idea of experiencing life as a girl.

Shawn's new role is soon put to the test. Tall crewcut macho Gary asks him out, and a date is set. "How is it someone like you doesn't have a boyfriend?" Gary asks insinuatingly on their date at Chubbie's Restaurant. Shawn replies in well modulated if slightly husky female tones: "I'm having a little trouble breathing, you're crowding me". Gary gets closer, touches "her" knee. Shawn finds himself echoing Debbie's words from their argument the day before. "You're not listening to me! You're too busy planning your next move!"

Gary invites him to play a game of table-foosball. As he shows Shawn how to play, he grabs him from behind, fondling him.

"What are you doing?" Shawn asks.

"Just teaching you how to play."

"I already know how to play the game."

"I could tell by the way you're dressed," Gary acidly replies,

noting Shawn's dark blue velvet minidress.

When Shawn rebuffs him, Gary becomes incensed. He accuses Shawn of being one of those girls who likes girls. "As a matter of fact, I do," Shawn says, and lands Gary with a punch. "That's for every girl I know". He walks out triumphantly arm-in-arm with Topanga and Cory.

Shawn learned that being female isn't just wearing dresses and being admired. It also means fending off unwanted advances and feeling like you're not being listened to or taken seriously.

Many transgendered people also don't know or appreciate the difficult day to day realities of being a woman, such as being seen as an object and not a person. They focus on the more visual aspects of feminine appearance. They only know what they like to look at, and want to look that way themselves.

The message is clear: transgendered people need to get serious about understanding the very real realities of the opposite sex. If we hope to be taken seriously as a social movement, we have to have genuine TRANS-gender empathy.

*(Ed. Note: This article originally appeared in the Neutral Corner newsletter, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)*



Continued from page 49

**Tri-Ess Chapters (cont.)****Fort Myers, FL Metro Area****GAMMA CHI BETA**

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**Overseas Coordinator**

Eve Burchert

574 Golfview Dr.

Barrington IL 60010

# Big Sister Report

by Marlene

*I get about a dozen requests for a Big Sister each month. I currently have 57 Big Sisters corresponding with about 100 Little Sisters.*

AK 4320 A JoAnn	MO 1823 M Diana
AL 4005 J Sarah	MO 4760 H Rachel
AZ 3954 B Rebecca	NC 3734 C Sherri
AZ 5041 L Lacy	NC 3743 H Elizabeth Ann
CA 3413 C Pricilla	NM 4717 S Terri
CA 4273 H Karen	NV 4222 B Robyn
CA 1397 L Judy Ann	NY 4846 S Jessica
CA 3738 P Laura	NY 3717 P Tammie
CA 3592 S Tommie	OH 4850 D Susie
CA 1282 V Fran	OH 2751 M Gloria Sue
CA 4346 Y Julie	OK 2222 R Regina
CO 3869 H Angie	PA 2164 C Sue
CO 2446 W Billie	PA 4046 J Rita
FL 2520 B Joan	SD 4384 W Brennda
FL 2383 L Catherine	TN 1230 H Rita
FL 2565 P Joan	TX 3179 Brenda
FL 3433 T Donna	TX 4261 H Diane
FL 4859 W Donna	TX 1441 W Brandi Ann
HI 4503 J Elise	TX 1669 M Vicki
IL 3416 M Candace	VA 1304 M Andria
IL 1172 S Marilee	VT 4336 S Stephanie
IN 3637 K Teddy	WA 2835 Q Kristal
KS 4719 B Robyn	WA 3308A Allison
MA 4619 C Rose	WI 2729 L Kathy
MD 4883 A Terri	WI 4148W Frances Ann
ME 2461 Betsy	WI 4816 S Charlette
MI 2948 T Marcia Ann	WI 4864 S Katherine
MN 1875 Z Lynda	WI 2729 L Kathy
MN 3264 G Sofronia Ann	

## WANTED: BIG SISTERS

MARLENE, your Big Sister Program Coordinator, needs your help. Your new sisters need your help. All it takes is a little sisterly compassion, and the willingness to spend a few minutes writing letters. New sisters are joining all the time. Few things are more rewarding than welcoming them aboard and supporting them in their first year. Won't you write Marlene today, and see for yourself?

**MARLENE, PO BOX 4067, VISALIA CA 93278**



## Samantha Says

A Commentary on Dr. Kate Thomas' Presentation

by Samantha VA-3401-W

I enjoyed Dr. Thomas' presentation at the Chi Epsilon Sigma meeting last month, but when she had finished, I was just a trifle disappointed - in a way. Somehow I had thought that she was going to tell me why I crossdressed, but she really didn't. What I thought she was saying was that each individual is different from the next and there are many reasons for crossdressing, some of which might apply in a particular case and some might not.

Surely her thesis is valid in general, but it does not really answer the question each of us would like to have answered - That is 'Why Do I Crossdress?' Well, I have given a lot of thought about my particular case over the years, and particularly since I have come out of the 'closet' and can think and even talk about it more rationally and without excess guilt and emotion. In fact I have come to the conclusion that I now understand most of the reasons that apply in my particular case.

Perhaps it would be of interest to some of you if I should give you the benefit of my thoughts. It all goes back a long long way, probably before I reached puberty. Way back there was an event that may have been partially responsible - I was briefly dressed in my sister's clothes as a punishment for some now unimportant reason, and I still remember the occasion although I couldn't have been more than seven years old. Some few years later I discovered self sex, and some time after that I found that every time I saw or even thought about a boy dressed as a girl, I would get an adrenal rush and a sexual urge which very strongly made me want to indulge myself to relieve it. This was not a little rush, it was a great big one and if I was not careful it would almost overwhelm me.

How this effect came about I do not pretend to understand, but it was a very real effect and very important with respect to my desire to crossdress. I can only assume that I had somehow misidentified the sex object with her clothing or something like that. An ordinary man may become sexually aroused by an attractive woman and may indeed get a similar sexual stimulation. Nature has arranged it this way in order that the race may be propagated and survive.. However, as I said, I was having this reaction just thinking about women's clothes and much more strongly if I thought about some other man or myself wearing them.

Nonetheless, when I got older and started dating and the girl was sexually attractive, I wanted to carry out the usual hetero-

sexual procedures. Generally I did not, however, because such activities were not acceptable and very serious consequences might result. But all the things that a heterosexual man wants were there and I wanted them as much as any other male - maybe even more. As a result, after we were married, my first wife and I had three children in a very normal way. In fact, as an aside, even before that I became close to becoming a father, and if the particular girl who wanted it rather badly had played her cards right, it might well have happened that way and my life could have been quite different! Just for your information, she let me wear some of her clothes!! However this is a big secret and I have not mentioned it to anyone who counts because it happened a long time ago and in those days nice girls and boys did not do such things - at least not in the circles that my family moved in.

Yes, but as I was saying, even with all this natural growing up and all, that extremely strong sexual urge would return every time I even thought of myself or some other man wearing female clothes - and often I had to do something about it right then. So how did I handle the situation? Generally I kept as distant as I could from such thoughts. I never went to a play or movie where crossdressing was involved if I possibly could avoid it, and I kept the whole matter in the background and under cover. After all, I had to do my work and make my living and bring up my children and I could not let that almost uncontrollable sexual imperative interfere with the more important things in my life.

Well, so it was, and I didn't realize until years later that sexual compulsion was behind all this, and I believed that it was not anyone else's business but my own. However, as with many of us, when my wife was out I would practice trying on some of her things. And what fun it was; particularly since it was such a secret just between me and my sexual organ. This is what we modern crossdressers call being in the 'closet'!

Oh, from time to time I would beg a chance from my wife to try on her panties or a nightgown or something like that, and sometimes she would let me do it but usually not. I expect that many of us have done the same thing with more or less success. As a result she had some idea of what was going on, since she was far from a stupid woman, However many years later when I heard about and joined a crossdressing group and told her about it - I never believed in not being honest with her - she admitted that



she had long been aware of it but that she had thought that I had put it behind me. Clearly she did not understand the long term permanency of the desire to cross dress in a male!

Well that's a different story, and that's where each of us is different, as Dr. Kate Thomas said. Sometimes there is real love between a man and his wife, but that had not been true with us for thirty years or so - if it had even been true at all. I rather believe that her principal objectives in marrying me were to have children and a good life - and that love played a minor role if any, especially after the first several years. Anyhow, that is a different story and she got her freedom, which was what she wanted, after our three children and their seven grandchildren were largely grown up. Mind you., I don't regret the first 52 years. We had fun lots of the time even if there was no real love between us most of the time.

The extraordinary result is that I now have had a second wife for the past five years and not only does she condone and even encourage my crossdressing, but she really knows what love is all about and gives me all I can ever hope for. This is just about ideal even if it didn't come until just a little late in my life.

My goodness! how I have wandered off the subject!! Getting back, I told you about this misidentification of the clothes and the female sex object and how that lead to crossdressing for the sex relief. Also it was secret and not the right thing to do, and that increased the thrill. However, after the sex act was consummated the whole thing evaporated and everything returned to the ordinary routine.

This is the way it was until one day in 1991, when I read a full page article about 'Virginia's Secret', a club where men meet and dress up and enjoy themselves in so doing. I realized that these were ordinary men like myself and that the door was opening. I immediately joined the group and learned a great deal in a very short time. I learned how to dress and to appear as a woman and even to be able to 'pass' as such in public on occasion. This may seem a long way from the old closet sex and dressing that I have told you about, and indeed it is. The sex drive is there, but if you can dress up, at least in semi-public, it is not such a big thing any more. Other people know about it and so it has a social aspect, and if you can get away with it and pass dressed as a woman, that's exciting in itself and lots of fun. After all, when you have reached my mature age, the sex urge is not frequent any more, and to keep it going there are all these other fun things you can do like meeting other 'girls' and telling them all about it and going out with your wife as two 'girls' and fooling everybody (mostly!) ; and in fact the other men who have had the same old guilty times are kind of fun to get to know and understand.

Well, that's what I am. An old fetishistic crossdresser who has learned to get more fun out of it than just the old sex impulse. When I say fetishistic I do not mean out of control. It has to be under control or it can drive you and change your life and you just simply cannot let it do that. It's like gambling or drinking or smoking. Either you are in control or it is ; and, as for me, I have always had sufficient strength of character to remain IN CHARGE of my life, and I intend to keep it that way. That's my story, for what it's worth, and it is the result of a good bit of thinking and self-analysis and some self honesty which was not the easiest thing to come by!

Say, do you know what? When she said that we are all different and all that, maybe Dr. Kate Thomas wasn't far off after all!!

## Boy Gets OK from School Officials to Wear Gown to Prom

By Associated Press, 03/24/99

PIERSON, Fla. (AP) - School officials reversed their decision and will allow a teen-age boy to attend his high school prom in drag.

Charles Rice plans to wear a red, floor-length evening gown, red satin shoes, gloves and matching rhinestone jewelry to Saturday's prom.

Last week, Principal Peter Oatman told the 18-year-old Taylor High School senior he would be refused entrance to the prom if he showed up in drag.

Oatman backed down after conferring with Superintendent Bill Hall and school district attorneys, as well as reviewing news accounts of his initial decision.

Hall said Rice gets to don his gown for the prom only because the principal let him wear skirts and dresses to special events in the past. Because of these prior episodes, the school system would have had a weak case if the matter had gone to court, Hall said.

"I should have the freedom to express myself," said Rice, who is gay.

*(Ed.Note: If Rice can do this, why not any boy? After all, girls are wearing tuxedos these days!)*



## *"Simply Because He Plays With Dolls Doesn't Mean Son Has A Problem"*

By JOHN ROSEMOND

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*I wish that the writer had included a transgender comment, but the article is simply too good to pass up. This was in the Houston Chronicle, March 17, 1999. - Phyllis R. Frye.*

Q: Much to our chagrin, our 6-year-old son Robbie has always preferred to play with dolls and other "girl" things. He also prefers playing with girls because boys, he says, play "too rough."

We recently went to a therapist who wanted Robbie to be present at the first appointment. I felt this was unnecessary, even humiliating, so we went by ourselves. The therapist accused us of not only being "resistant," but also "enabling" Robbie by, among other things, letting him play with dolls. At that point, my husband and I walked out, but now I'm worried that perhaps the therapist was right. How serious is this sort of problem, and do you think we're enabling?

A: Let me answer the first half of your question by asking: If Robbie was a little girl named Roberta who preferred playing with boys and doing boy things, would you be worried? I'll just bet your answer is, "Of course not!"

My point is, your anxiety over Robbie's play preference reflects a knee-jerk cultural bias. Unfortunately for boys, it's generally regarded as OK, even admirable, for females to do traditionally masculine things, but a male who prefers stereotypical feminine things is generally looked upon with suspicion, to say the least. You neatly avoided any mention of your real worry, which is that Robbie's preference for "girl things" presages adult homosexuality. The fact is, masculine play preferences for boys do not guarantee heterosexuality any more than feminine play preferences foreshadow homosexuality, and that's equally, but oppositely, true for girls.

I can't guarantee that Robbie won't, as a young adult, announce that he's gay, but I can assure you that whether he plays with dolls or toy guns at this age will have nothing to do with his later choice of sexual partners.

Are you enabling Robbie's preference for "girl" things? My dictionary defines enable as "to make possible," so in the strictest sense of the term, the answer is yes, you are definitely enabling, but so what?

If Robbie was my son, and he wanted to play with dolls, I, too, would make it possible for him (i.e., enable him) to play with dolls. If, however, the therapist was using enable in the pejora-

tive, psychological sense, to mean you are aiding and abetting improper behavior, then my answer is "hogwash." In the first place, Robbie's play preferences are not improper, much less pathological. In the second, it would be highly improper of you to force Robbie to play with things he doesn't enjoy.

In answer to "How serious is Robbie's problem?", I don't see that he has any problem at all, outside of the fact that his parents think he might have a problem.

If he hasn't already, Robbie will eventually pick up on your anxiety, which will cause him to feel self-conscious about something that is really quite innocent. (In this regard, I approve of your decision to leave Robbie out of the appointment with the therapist.) Which is why it's so important that you stop worrying and enjoy parenthood. You'll only get one shot at it, you know.

When all is said and done, this is a matter of Robbie's personality. You didn't cause Robbie's personality, and you can't change it. You can, however, make him feel as if there's something wrong with who he is, in which case Robbie may never become the person God intended for him to become. And I suspect God doesn't like us messing with his creations.

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## E-Mail Etiquette

*A Time to Remember*

by Dana D.

Not too long ago, before the age of the computer, people had only some ways to get in touch with others. Sending mail and using the telephone was the popular way to connect with people you knew. Using the telephone was like the Internet, but had that ability to let both parties hear one another and in doing so, put some human feeling into the conversation. This is an instant kind of way to communicate with others and lets you use more of your senses to feel what the other person is trying to convey to you.

In the snail mail mode, the information takes a little longer to get to others, but like the voice on the phone, the letter has some human content with the handwriting on the page. In both types of connecting with others, these two modes still have that personnel touch.

In pops the new age of E-Mail and all of a sudden we have the ability to connect with people instantly and with no human content. There is no voice or handwriting. There is only the typewritten words coming out of the word processor. Of course this leads to a form of communication that can be very cold when it comes to sending someone a note for the first time. Also, if you are trying to introduce yourself to someone new, that other person may get the wrong feeling as to what or how you are. And, of course, there are some folks who use this form of communication to bash or degrade others, and really should have kept that note private.

The Internet should be a great place to connect with others, not to bring out some ugly point between two individuals. Also, there are laws out in cyberspace that can go against a person if a practice like this continues.

I am glad to use the new technology in today's world, but if there is some question in my mind concerning an individual, I will resort to the good old ways to get the story straight.

## BOOK REVIEW

By Phyllis R. Frye

***GENDER LOVING CARE*** A Guide to Counseling Gender-Variant Clients, by Randi Ettner

This is a new book for the therapists who need education about transgender issues. Randi is a therapist whom I trust. She has written a book for all of the therapists out there who want us to pay them by the hour to educate them on our issues. Tell those folks to get Randi's book.

Transsexuals, cross-dressers, and other gender-variant clients are frequently misunderstood and, therefore, inappropriately treated by clinicians. The condition is often inaccurately diagnosed as a sexual identity issue, further obscuring effective interventions. Furthermore, the options of recommending hormonal and surgical treatments often cast the therapist in the unfortunate position of gatekeeper.

To this confusing and emotionally charged topic, Randi Ettner brings a deeply humane and thoroughly authoritative voice. She shares stories from her clinical practice, letting readers hear the struggles and turmoil of gender-variant individuals. She provides both an overview of gender identity and practical advice on counseling. *Gender Loving Care* is the first book to combine theory and application to assist professionals working with the transgendered.

"...Throughout this book the reader is treated to compelling case examples from the author's wealth of clinical experience in this field. These cases serve to electrify key teaching points in a way that will be memorable for readers...Arguably, the most potent sociopolitical point repeatedly hammered home by Dr. Ettner is the observation that 'In this age of political correctness, it is still okay to mock the transgendered.' This theme resonates like a sentinel bell in the night to wake up those who would knowingly, or unwittingly, participate in this embarrassing anxiety-provoking sport. The book is timely, unmatched by any other work in the current literature...well researched, bold in presentation, and a delight to read."

-George R. Brown, M.D.  
*Professor of Psychiatry*  
*East Tennessee State University*

"In physical size, Dr. Randi Ettner is a small, in fact petite, woman. But in empathy for and awareness of the continuing trials and struggles of transsexuals, she is a giant. Her intelligence and insight, as expressed in this book, are what professionals need to experience. In fact, all society should be listening to what she tells us. This book is must reading for everyone."

-Sheila Kirk, M.D.  
*Transgender Surgical and Medical Center*  
*Pittsburgh*

*Gender Loving Care* ISBN 0-393-70304-5  
\$25.00 W.W. Norton 1-800-233-4830  
Randi Ettner is at [REDACTED]



## Our Presentation at Florida University International

by Fran [REDACTED]

My wife and I were vacationing in Florida this February when we and two other gals were invited to make a presentation before a graduate level Psychology class at Florida University International. This took place on a Thursday and was very successful. I thought I would share some of the day with you.

Our group consisted of Rhonda from West Palm Beach, a friend of ours who is a divorced and single crossdresser; Lorie who was visiting the area, and who told the group she is single and exploring the transsexual route; and my wife Anne and I. I presented myself as a heterosexual male who has been married 42 years and remains in a traditional relationship. At this point Anne sat in the audience, unnoticed. I also stated I was a member of the board of Tri-Ess and explained our purpose and philosophy. I prepared and distributed handouts from our web site on "What is Tri-Ess." After our initial introductions, we opened it to questions and answers and received the usual inquiries. I made an effort in my responses to clarify the range of transgenderism and I believe perhaps our group kind of revealed that.

We believe we were exceptionally warmly received. When the class of 40 graduate students left, each of them shook our hands, and/or hugged us, as they vacated the classroom. I was especially touched by several Hispanic males, whom I did not expect to be so open.

Rhonda looked great in her business suit... Lorie was dressed in slacks, scandals with bare feet and a shirt top and new red short hair, and Fran in a business outfit.

Anne, for the first part of the session, sat in the audience, then later, after feeling comfortable, gave me a signal and decided to participate also. Half way through the session, she gave me the OK sign and I introduced her, after which she was greeted by the class with roaring applause.

They of course immediately asked Anne some questions about her reaction when she learned of this, and she made such wonderful comments I was very emotionally moved. "What a woman!" She balanced her comments with the positive side of this and how it also is occasions of fun and satisfaction. Following her remarks and the questions about how we manage to "pull this off so successfully," I spoke to the issue of **balance, good communication between us, respect, and the Spouses' Bill of Rights.**

Their questions were very good and they could see no reason

why anyone should even hassle or bother anyone like us. I took the opportunity then to point out it is not all fun and games. I gave examples of the Brandon Teena murder, the transsexual in Washington who was refused emergency treatment, known incidents where crossdressers lost their jobs, were treated badly by friends and family, etc. It was a wonderful opportunity to further educate these young professionals-to-be; many will be clinical therapists.

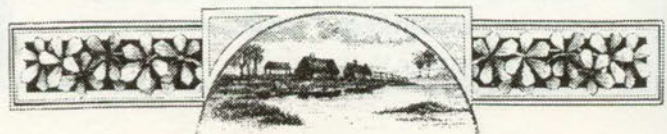
I tend to use humor as often as possible and find it is effective. I told the that class progress in acceptance is being made and we owe a lot to St. Donahue. They got it!

Perhaps my best line of the day followed one of Lorie's. She had just told the class she was on hormones and has decided to explore the transsexual journey. I followed up by saying, "I think you see here how much of a continuum this gender thing is. Lorie is on Estrogen and I am on Viagra." It really "brought the house down."

When we returned in the evening to our apartment the four of us went over to the small Mall opposite where we stayed for dinner at Pescatore Two, dressed, of course. It's a nice upscale restaurant and is always busy. Anne and I had been there three times before during our stay, and we went as Fran and Anne. That night when the four of us walked in, the woman manager came over and greeted me and said she was sending over a shrimp appetizer with her compliments. She did. The bar-tendress came down and greeted us and I got a hug and a kiss.

Anne was amazed at the day, and when I told her I was sharing this with you, said to me, "It was wonderful!" (What a woman!) It sure fortified Anne's feeling of security and acceptance by others.

All this reinforces my belief that if you feel O.K. about what you do and who you are, and dress and act appropriately, the public almost always is kind and accepting. I almost think the world is ready for us, and it breaks the boredom of life so many are experiencing. That is the feeling I get when I encounter the public and have a receptive encounter.





# Debbie's Mental Doodles

by Debbie [REDACTED]

As Valentine's Day approaches, I find myself thinking about love, relationships and loneliness. A day that focuses on love and couples can be difficult for many single people. Unfortunately, most transgendered people are single, and many are very much alone. Most of us are acutely aware of the difficulty of finding a significant other who is willing deal with the many issues facing a transgendered couple.

One of my favorite pastimes is dancing. Many would consider me a fanatic because I dance three to four nights a week. It is a wonderful activity because it provides me exercise and female companionship. When dancing I get to cuddle a woman in my arms and move with the music. It is magical. Yes, I get to touch and be touched by a woman without the risk of being intimate. I don't have share my transgendered secret and take the chance of being rejected or scorned. Dancing fulfills one of my basic needs ... human touch.

Yet the lack of intimacy has a downside. It has always amazed me just how lonely I can be in a room full of joyful people and friends. For example, since my divorce I spend every Christmas with my two sisters, their husbands, kids and my dad, a group of people who love and care for me very much. But I always feel the most alone during that holiday season. Because I left my hometown and family twenty-eight years ago and until recently only returned for a visit every three to four years, my sisters and dad have no idea who I am. They remember the young boy who left many years ago. During the four days I visit each Christmas, I play a well rehearsed role. I keep them at an arm's length. I'm afraid to risk their love!

I was in a divorce support group last week and one of the divorcees made a statement that stuck in my mind. "How can anyone love you, if they don't know you?" The group was talking about intimacy. "How can anyone love you, if they don't know you?" I think It's a marvelous question because the answer is so simple and straightforward - they can't. They can only love the facade. It is no wonder I'm lonely and feel distant. I don't share the real me with anyone—not even my closest transgendered sisters. The fear of rejection and the associated withdrawal of affection is very powerful.

I'm lost, befuddled and confused. I'm locked in a vicious circle—I can't win. I desperately want intimacy. I want me to be loved for who I am. I want a soul-mate. But, history has shown time

and time again—it takes a very special and rare person to love a transgendered individual. Life as a transgendered couple is difficult and raises many unique issues.

Intimacy is required for love, but intimacy risks the very love that is sought. A dichotomy at best and a recipe for disaster at worst. As for me, it is not surprising but I'm still lost and puzzled. Afraid of the thing I want the most. My biggest fear in life is that I'll be alone for the rest of my life while my second biggest fear is that I'll fall in love again and have my heart broken once more. So for now, I'll continue to dance until I find someone who I love so much that I'll be compelled to take the risk.

## Continued from page 21

we had visited early in the day. Grace had seen some shoes there that she liked. So we went back and she bought three pairs. While paying for her purchases, the man waiting on her addressed her as "Sir," then had a puzzled look on his face when he saw her femme name on her credit card. But that was the only time all day that anyone addressed us or treated us as anything other than the ladies we were trying to be.

At the end of the day we had arranged to meet one of our other sisters and her spouse for dinner. We met at Bube's Tavern, an historic former brewery in Mt. Joy, PA. We knew the restaurant to be gender friendly, although by then we were accustomed to going just about anywhere we wanted to! We had a couple of drinks in the bar, and then a lovely dinner in "The Catacombs," underground vaults that were once used in the brewing process.

I have always been puzzled by how women relate to shopping as entertainment. To me, it has always been a chore that has been done, but not necessarily enjoyed. But after this day, I am beginning to understand the lure of shopping. The challenge of finding just the right combination of style, color, size, and price is exhilarating! I may not have been born to shop (or born female), but I'm learning how!

Rachel can be reached at [REDACTED] Reston, VA 20190 or [REDACTED]



## Caution, Nails Ahead

By Mickey, AZ-9279-N

In the Winter 1998 edition of the "Femme Mirror," an article appeared in which the author had gone to a salon for a set of nails. She was very satisfied with the results, and then she went on to describe the problems she encountered with their removal.

Please allow me to present some of my experience here so that others will not find themselves in the same predicament. I have been doing nail enhancements professionally for over 20 years and I am a certified and licensed Creative Nail Master Technician, so I do have a bit of experience in this field.

First, acetone based polish remover will not remove any nail enhancements. Each manufacturer has a nail remover (not polish remover) that is to be used with its product. Pure acetone will (usually) work, but it must be cosmetic grade, not the kind from the hardware store. Note here that acetone based polish remover and pure cosmetic grade acetone are not the same thing. Hardware store grade acetone is hazardous because it can be absorbed through the skin and cause a multitude of problems.

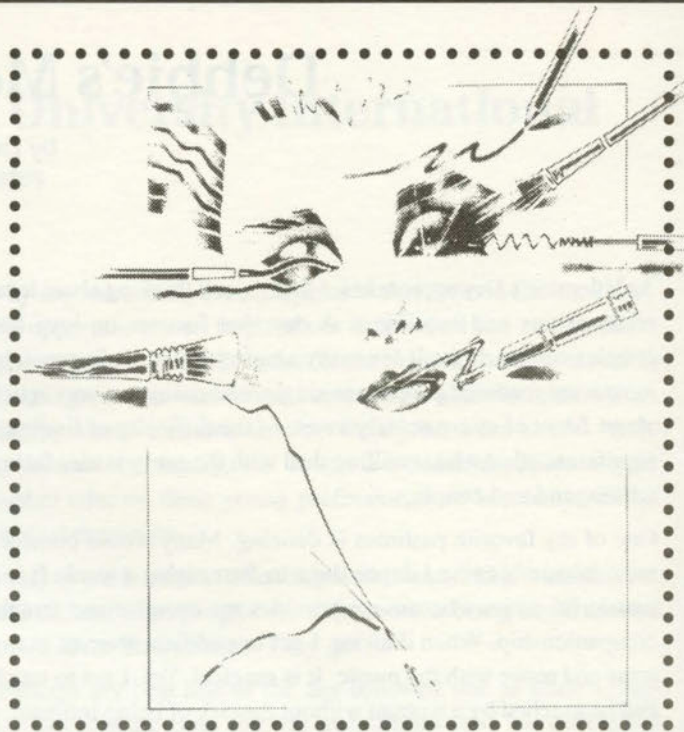
Second, it is well known in the trade that some of the budget nail salons are using a chemical that has proven to be hazardous and has been banned by FDA since 1972. This chemical is MMA or methyl methacrylate. Reputable shops are using approved chemicals which cost more, and this makes it difficult for them to compete with the \$12 set of nails. This \$12 set of nails, which uses MMA, may look fabulous, but when removal time comes, they are difficult, if not impossible, to remove. The MMA Controversy is a real issue and a portion of it is reprinted at the end of this article.

Finally, there are many types of nail enhancements. The most popular are: Fiberglass, Acrylic, Silk, Linen, Gel.

"Silk nails" are the easiest and quickest to remove. Silk nails come off rather easy if you soak them in cosmetic grade acetone.

On the other hand, acrylic and gel nails are chemically bonded to the nail. They are not easy to get off. Many crossdressers are surprised by how strong the bond is! If one is pulled off, it will be sure to take many layers of nail with it.

Nail glue and over-the-counter Cyanocrylate (aka super glue) are not the same thing. On many tubes of "super glue" the manufacturer warns that it is "not for fingernails." This is for safety reasons. "Super glue" is not cosmetic grade, and if there is a cut



in the skin an infection can start, or the body can absorb dangerous chemicals through the skin.

Nail length is also an issue. It is not advisable to make nails any longer than twice the length of the nail bed (the area from the cuticle to the free edge). If someone hits their nail enhancements, they can actually break their own nail. Believe me, that can be very painful!

With a new set of nails one must be cautious. They should be treated as if they are freshly polished and wet until you are accustomed to the new reach with the nails. The nails will feel very strange, and it will be hard to pick up things or button your clothes. They will also feel heavy. Newbees are always playing with their nails like new toys.

**Nail Removal (acrylic, silk, linen, or fiberglass only).** First put Vaseline on the skin around the nails. Take cotton pads (2x2's or circles) cut in half, soak one with cosmetic grade acetone and place it on the nail. Do the same for the other nails. (It may be wise to do one hand at a time.) Wrap each finger with Reynolds Wrap and keep these on for about 15 to 20 minutes. It is amazing when the Reynolds wrap is taken off and the acrylic can be pulled off like a piece of rubber. The heat from the fingers reacts with the acetone and softens the acrylic quickly. The Vaseline keeps the acetone off the skin.





## Catty

by Ricky

Good Grief, can it really be? Charlie Brown and Snoopy have just turned 40.

I mean, it was a shock when I recently turned 40, but how can Snoopy be 40? Even if you count in dog years it seems incredible. I mention this because I have had an image of Snoopy in my mind lately. The image is the one where old Snoops is clinging to the roof of half a doghouse, the lower half having been swiped away in one snarling swat by the cat next door.

This image was conjured by the behavior of some of my sisters. While most of us who are part of the crossdressing community strive to create a feminine identity based on harmony and friendship, some of our sisters seem to have developed their feminine identity from "Dynasty" or "Dallas" or some other damn fool adolescent fantasy of power, sex and money. If we are going to emulate the feminine to satisfy our inner needs, why the devil do we have to pick the catty, bitchy side of that nature? Could it be a way to let off some of the macho steam pressure that has built up inside? Perhaps this nastiness is how some genetic female in the crossdresser's life behaves, or perhaps it's just fun to be nasty.

I have wondered on and off about this for some years, but in a very detached way. I read of chapters torn apart by infighting, and sisters making fools of themselves both in public and private. But I suppose it had to happen eventually, and I ended up on the receiving end a while back. As one who is compelled to put my thoughts on paper and show them to the world, I expect critics. After all, maybe the critic has the same need as I do to flaunt her words in public. The funny thing is that I agreed with almost every point this critic made about what I had written. She was obviously informed on the subject. What rankled was the tone of the criticism. The catty, hair-pulling, nasty image of femininity that was presented reminded me of the old *Lucy Show* where such cat fights were portrayed as the essence of femininity.

I guess it's human nature, divorced from notions of male or female, that we need to feel superior to someone else. But please, let's stick to the higher ground. Go ahead and feel superior if you have to, but superiority is not achieved by chopping the doghouse out from under the dog next door. Use your superiority to build your own house, and stay in it if you can't be kind to your neighbor.

## Telling the Children

by Lynda Frank

In searching the web for information about children of heterosexual crossdressers I have found only two articles, and they both present the same information, opinions and recommendations. There is, however, another scenario that my wife and I have followed with great success. There appears to be no right or wrong, but rather a variety of ways to handle this particular situation.

I have always felt my crossdressing activities were part of my personal makeup, a part of me that was intrinsic and private. To involve my wife seemed like a necessity to achieve the total relationship that a marriage entailed. With our children, however, we have used the "need to know" philosophy. Do they need to know how often I have sex, or what manner of sex I engage in? I don't think so.

Having been brought up to put the welfare of my wife and children before my own, it appeared important for my wife to know so she could better understand me. But I could see nothing to be gained by giving this information (or information about my sex practices) to my young children. When my three children were all grown and married with their own families, it became important for them to know so they could better understand where I am coming from. And at that time we told them all, explaining as best we could what it was all about. We felt also that at this time they would be able to fully comprehend the crossdressing.

When they were young and growing, looking for and building their own identities, it didn't seem like something they needed to know. Their father was doing something that certainly appeared anti-social. We would not want them to discuss it with their friends, fearing that their friends might tell their own disapproving parents. To involve them in something like this seemed like an additional burden to put on them. It certainly was not easy for me in those years with the limitations I placed on myself, but I felt it my duty to protect my children from something that might be unpleasant.

In retrospect this worked out very well for our family.

Continued on page 63



# Hey Good Looking!

## MMA Hazardous to Health

by Suzette Hill

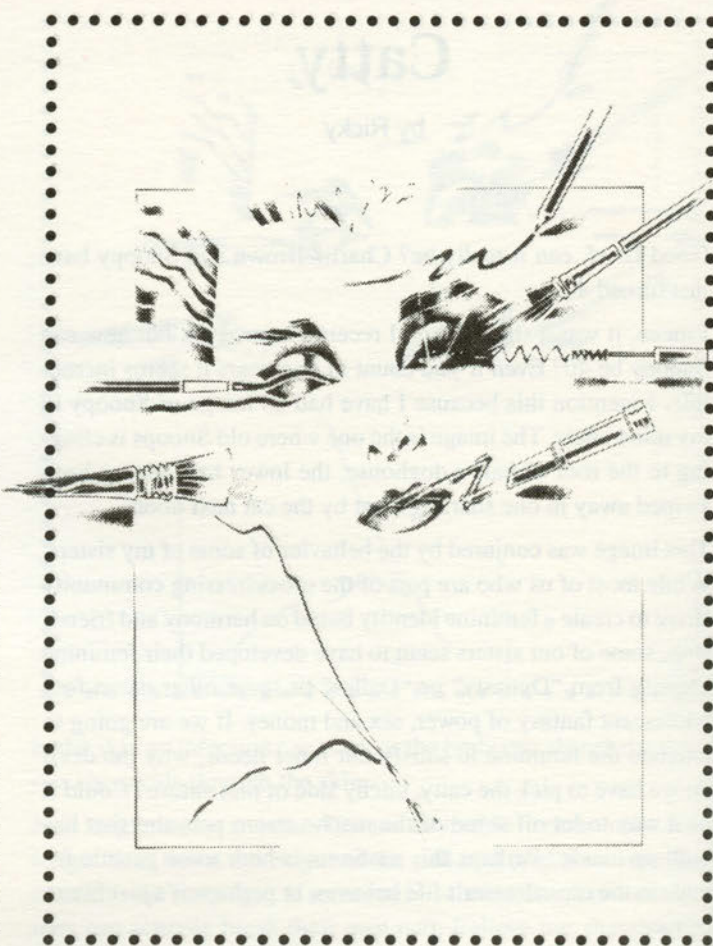
The nail industry is beginning to understand the dangers of methyl methacrylate. But more nail technicians need to take action. At a recent trade show, attendees were invited to try a new acrylic system by an exhibitor. "It's great!" they were told. "It stays on the nails; your clients can go weeks without lifting. At least one nail technician (who asked not to be named) tried it and agreed. "It was one of the best products I've ever seen. The nails were beautiful, and they stayed on great," she says.

They stayed on so great, in fact, that even when one of her clients jammed a nail, the product held fast, causing the natural nail to tear across the nail bed. "I couldn't get the product off. I tried soaking it off, and it didn't even get gummy. That's when I realized the product must be methyl methacrylate. I finally got it off with a really coarse file. The nail was a bloody mess," she says. "I can't believe no one is doing anything about it," she complains of methyl methacrylate (MMA).

Her complaint is echoed by nail technicians across the country who are frustrated by the use of MMA monomer. And for a long time, no one did anything about the use of MMA in nail salons, mostly because not very many nail technicians were using it, and they were obtaining it on the "gray market" - through dental suppliers or the back doors of unscrupulous suppliers.

Not anymore: Today, MMA can be found next to ethyl methacrylate on the shelves of some beauty suppliers, and it's been seen (although not labeled as such) at a few major beauty shows. Sue Sansom, executive director of the Arizona State Board, even suspects people have used it in the state board exam. "Our examiners have complained of a very strong smell and of headaches and dizziness," she says. "While acrylic liquids all have an odor, the odor they've complained of is very distinct."

Although no one has statistics on how many nail technicians are using MMA and how many clients have been injured by it, there's no question it's out there and causing problems. It does remain to be answered if the industry can get it out of salons and off clients' nails.



### It's Back, Big Time

In 1972, MMA gained notoriety when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) deemed it a "poisonous and deleterious" ingredient when used in liquid monomer form, and got a court-ordered injunction prohibiting a particular nail product manufacturer from selling MMA monomer. While the injunction didn't stop manufacturers from distributing it in the nail industry, the FDA then seized MMA products from several manufacturers and asked others to recall it. While the FDA's actions didn't drive MMA out of the industry, it sent it underground.

MMA remained underground until the Asian salon segment - the predominant user of MMA - experienced explosive growth, and along with it grew the use of MMA. "It has become a major product in our industry again," asserts Doug Schoon, chemist and director of R&D for Creative Nail Design (Vista, Calif.). Even state boards, who maintain painful neutrality on ethnicity, say MMA is mostly found in Asian salons. "We've found that the Vietnamese salons are mostly the ones that use it," says Larry Perkins, director of enforcement for the Texas State Board.



MMA is popular in the Asian community because it sets up fast and adheres like no other product can (or should). Above all, it's popular for its price - about \$15 a gallon versus about \$215 a gallon for a name-brand ethyl methacrylate monomer. "I think that most of the people using it don't know it can injure them or their clients," says Schoon. Tony Cuccio, president of Star Nail Products (Valencia, Calif.), agrees. "An Asian distributor told me Asian technicians think it's a ploy by the white establishment to get more money for products. They don't think it's really a health hazard."

"Lots of manufacturers make methyl methacrylate for the Asian salons because it works faster and it works better," explains Peter Ha, owner of East West Beauty Supply (Fall's Church, Va.). "Not too many of them know of the problems because the suppliers don't tell them because they don't want to lose business."

MMA can cause serious skin reactions and permanent nail damage, including actual nail loss. On the nail technician's part, long-term exposure also can cause permanent damage to the respiratory system and the liver. Serious health concerns aside, MMA nails bond so well to the natural nail and are so rigid that instead of snapping harmlessly off the natural nail when jammed or caught, they hold tight, causing painful breaks and tears of the natural nail.

"Until the FDA acts to eliminate MMA at the manufacturer and distributor levels, it's up to state boards to stop salons from using it." Nail technicians using the product risk increased liability for injury to their clients. MMA monomer is so inexpensive, say Schoon and Larry Gaynor, president of Nailco Salon Marketplace (Farmington Hills, Mich.), because it's not backed by research and development, education, advertising and marketing, and product liability insurance. "The risk of using MMA exceeds the value," Gaynor adds.

### Removing MMA Nails

Nails applied with MMA monomer are easy to identify because they're almost impossible to remove. "That's how you tell they're MMA nails," says Doug Schoon. "You can't soak them off."

"The only way to remove MMA nails is to file them down with a 60- or 80-grit file. And even then you're looking at almost an hour to get them off," says Rima Kitsko, owner of Spoiled Rotten Nail Studio in Indianapolis. In fact, after encountering several clients with MMA nails, she set a new policy to not book appointments for new clients who already have artificial nails until they come in for a consultation. During the consultation, Kitsko inspects the nails and if the acrylic layer is thick she suspects MMA and schedules an extra hour for removal. If she suspects MMA was used, she explains that it's not good for the nails and encourages them to have the nails removed.

Because MMA bonds so well to the natural nail, Schoon recommends against filing off all the product. "People curse the nail technician who put them on, but the damage comes in taking them off. I recommend filing them down so that just a very thin layer is left and then applying a new nail over it. There's more risk to removing the product entirely than there is in leaving a thin layer on. "If filed very thin, it's unlikely the nail plate itself will break if the nail is caught or jammed," he adds. If you or the client is determined to remove all the product, Schoon recommends filing it down to a very thin layer and then soaking the nail in acetone. "Try soaking for awhile and then scraping the surface with a cuticle stick," he says. "That will help break the bond."

### How Can You Tell It's MMA?

It's usually not difficult to tell that a product contains MMA. Here are three simple things to watch for:

Unusually strong or strange odor that doesn't smell like other acrylic liquids.

Nail extensions that are extremely hard and very difficult to file, even with coarse abrasives.

Nail extensions that will not soak off in solvents designed to remove acrylics.

Information provided by the Nail Manufacturers Council. For a copy of the NMC's brochure "Update for Nail Technicians - Methyl Methacrylate Monomer," call (312) 245-1595.

(Reprinted from "The Cactus Flower.")

### Continued from page 61

We were able to arrange a deliberate time and place to discuss it with each one individually. Acceptance, but at different degrees, since they are different people, was a real joy to me. I still do not dress when my children are around (or discuss my sex practices) but they see pictures of me dressed with some of my friends, have met a number of them, and can have fun with me discussing some situations I get involved in.

Has my sacrificing paid off? In my case it has, to the extent that I can now dress and come and go as I please and my family is all okay with it. Will this work as well for everyone? I don't know, but it is another way to live happily with being a crossdresser.



# The Further Adventures of Diane and Desiree'

by Diane [REDACTED]

For those long term readers of the Femme Mirror who may follow the escapades of one Diane [REDACTED] as she travels hither and yon, here is another adventure.

As you may remember, in October 1997 our erstwhile heroine got stranded for four days in Colorado Springs, Colorado, by an unusually early snowstorm. Everything worked out well and she made it safely home only after having to survive one more shopping trip the day after the roads were cleared.

The current trip actually sprouted in Atlanta, Georgia, at SPICE 98. The Strongs and the [REDACTED] met and hit it off. The Strongs invited the [REDACTED], Diane and Desiree', to come to Minneapolis during October 98 to see the change of colors, see the site of SPICE 99 and visit and have fun.

The invitation prompted all sorts of ideas, and a two week trip finally materialized. Here is what actually transpired.

How do you pack for a two week driving trip when you will be driving between areas with temperature extremes from the high of 95 in one area to highs of 65 in the other? To take the "required" clothes, how do you fit them into one car?

Diane and Desiree' settled on their "small" steamer trunks while Dave got one tiny suitcase. It was amazing that after they were all packed, they actually did fit into the car's trunk - but only if they were all positioned in the "only acceptable position". There was room for NOTHING else in the trunk of the car.

It hadn't rained in Fort Worth for months. The day of our departure, the skies opened and the windshield wipers could barely handle the flow. We made it all the way to the other side of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex and stopped to have a late breakfast - and watch the water pour down. You know the feeling - this is just a shower and it will soon go away. Well, it didn't, so we finally paid the tab, bit the bullet and got underway. We drove all the way to Branson, Missouri, that day, most of the way with rain of varying intensity.

We arrived in Branson about 10PM and, surprisingly, didn't have any trouble finding our motel. We got all of our possessions to our room and then collapsed.

The following morning, Saturday, we were refreshed and ready to begin our adventure. The first order of business was to select the appropriate wardrobe for the day. Diane chose a navy blue

silk blouse and a royal blue plaid skirt and navy hose. She also wore a pearl necklace, pearl earrings, assorted rings and her gold watch.

Desiree' chose a red and white checked skirt and blouse with a coordinated white tee top.

The motel had a continental breakfast in which we participated, took a picture or two to prove that we were really there, and then started out.

The traffic in Branson is horrible. There is basically ONE street which

is only TWO lanes wide (one in each direction). You get in line and then CRAWL the length of town or to your destination - whichever comes first! If you try to take a short cut you get lost, lose your place, have to get at the end of the line and do not pass GO!

Our first, and primary, destination was Andy William's Moon River Theater. Our objective was to obtain tickets for that night's performance. Following directions from the preceding paragraph, we finally arrived in Andy's parking lot. Diane and Desiree' took turns taking pictures of each other around the theater exterior. We decided later that Andy had the prettiest exterior display in town.

We then proceeded into the theater to check on tickets for the evening performance. Diane was just so excited that she had to visit the ladies room. It was soo big! and it was soo empty! Lest anyone should doubt the veracity of this account see the picture Desiree' caught below of our heroine's return to mixed company.

We exited the theater with tickets for the evening performance in hand and, stopping for one more picture, were off for our next destination.







Choosing to ignore the directions paragraph above, Diane chose to try a shortcut [according to a map] to get to the lake south of town. After about 10 minutes of making turns onto streets with no street signs and weren't listed on the maps anyway, she found herself one block south of the Andy Williams Theater parking lot ready to rejoin the only street in town. Refer to directions: end of line, don't pass Go!

We now proceeded to the lake, found much vacant parking and departed the car for the lake front park and the river (lake?) boat.

Of course there were the requisite shops and eateries at the shoreline. Diane was captivated by a lady hand painting parasols in front of one shop. She went over and looked at each one, trying to find the perfect match of color and design. There were no prices listed so she went into the store to find out the cost. No information in there so she went over to the lady doing the painting. She would paint any of the designs available in any color and on any color parasol which she had in stock. She would also paint your name on each alternating panel of the parasol -all for only \$XX.XX. (Well, a girl has to have some mystery about her to keep things interesting!) Diane and Desiree' both decided that there were two poor little parasols just crying for a new home and we couldn't deny them.

Standing under her parasol, Diane then shot a picture of the "Branson Belle" showboat. The showboat has several different types and lengths of cruises including moonlight and dinner and dancing cruises. We chose not to try this adventure this time and headed back to the car so that we could return to the motel to rest and freshen up before returning to see Andy Williams that evening. Following the driving directions, we made it back to the motel uneventfully.

We took a short nap at the hotel, freshened up and left early. Our plan was to park at the theater, walk to some place to eat a lei-

surely dinner and then walk back over to the theater for the show. It was a good plan; however, it did have its flaws. The parking lot was full up close because the matinee show was still in progress. Because we had to park farther away, we had a VERY steep hill to climb to get back to the theater. Once arriving back at the main drag, there didn't appear to be any NICE eating places within walking range unless you happened to be a long distance walker acclimated to mountainous terrain. We finally settled on a place we saw across the street about two blocks up the road. It turned out to be primarily a buffet restaurant catering to the tours being shuttled from show to show. The food wasn't all that good. Diane did get her share of looks as she stood in line and going to and from the line. That's OK; Diane had her share of comments about them too. After dinner, we headed, downhill, back to the theater. We arrived early so we explored the theater, visited the ladies' room again - this time it wasn't empty - and were shown to our seats.

Diane has been a lot of places but they were always stores, malls or outside. Never had she been in a "captive" setting such as a theater where she would be sandwiched between strangers for an hour or more. It was interesting! Desiree' was seated on Diane's right and next to Desiree' was a lady who wanted to talk. The seats on my left were initially empty, but finally a couple occupied them and the man sat next to me. In true male fashion, he claimed the arm rest! I can't say whether he didn't find me attractive, or was afraid to talk to a strange (!) woman with his wife seated right next to him, but he didn't present any prob-





lems. The show was announced as lasting two hours with no intermissions and everyone was advised to attend to their need before the performance began. Half way through the performance, Diane's needs asserted themselves and she caused several people to have to make way for her to get out of the row and eventually back in. She doesn't know what she expected, but in any case it turned out to be a non-event (the ladies' room journey).

Then show was over and everyone exited, completely ignoring Diane, and everyone headed for home. Two tired girls found their motel, removed their clothes and makeup and jumped in bed so that they would be ready for the next day's adventures.

#### IT RAINED ALL NIGHT

On Sunday most of the theaters don't put on morning or matinee performances so there is only one thing left to do -shop! Branson does have about four different mall areas. Since Diane had experienced Branson yesterday, Dave would get to see it today. This also allowed some picture taking to prove to friends and family that he was really on this trip.

After another continental breakfast our shoppers headed for the mall. As usual, the journey required getting on the one street and following it to the point where there was a turnoff for the mall. We parked on the east side of the mall, got out and walked around the corner and there was a HARDWARE store! If a clothing store will always catch the eye of a lass, there is no more sure-fire store to catch a guy's eye than a hardware store. The window was chock full of items that screamed, "Come look at me!". However, since this was just the start of the day, Dave decided he would shop here last so he wouldn't have to carry any purchases all day.

Diane and Desiree' had decided that they would be cheerleaders for Halloween and were looking for a gold top to wear under the uniform white vest. That would be the main object of the day. Our stalwart shoppers visited every apparel shop at the mall, both men's and ladies', but couldn't find the item for which they were looking. They did stop at one store which had bracelets which had magnets in them. The sales pitch was that the bracelets promoted healing and cured aches and pains. Dave found one that was a man's bracelet but could be worn by either Diane or Dave, so he bought it. Dave has since received many compliments on HIS bracelet as has Diane on HER bracelet.

It was now getting late and our shoppers were getting hungry. There was one last stop to make, however - the hardware store. The first item of interest was pre-made joints made of metal. They were used for erecting buildings more quickly and easily. Dave studied them for a while but then passed them up. He did take the name and the address of the manufacturer, however.

Dave has been looking for a windmill for a long time. This hardware store just happened to have a 7' tall windmill. That purchase was predestined. They even shipped it home for him so we didn't have to lug it around in the car for the next two weeks. That store had more neat things than any other single store Dave had ever visited, but Desiree' finally managed to get him out. It was a good thing she did. His credit card was melting!

They got in the car and headed back to THE STREET. They had thought about going to see Bobby Vinton that night, if there were tickets, so they drove along the street until coming to the Bobby Vinton Theater. There was a nice little restaurant right beside it that advertised a live singer, so they decided to have dinner there. The singer played the guitar and sang "oldies." The food was good, the entertainment was good, and our tired shoppers spent a quick two hours enjoying. Desiree' went to acquire tickets for the Vinton show while Dave saved their table. After her successful ticket trip, Desiree' returned to enjoy more singing. Soon it was time to leave for the evening Vinton show.

The show was good and lasted about two hours. Bobby Vinton had his whole family involved. Two daughters sang. Two sons were business managers. His wife was the producer and his mother sang and danced.

One thing we did learn about Branson was that an individual cannot buy a good seat to any show. The best seats at all theaters are packaged for the tours. At the Andy Williams show we purchased our tickets that day and ended up sitting right next to people who had purchased theirs a year ago.

We had seen Branson and were ready to leave. Back to the motel, repack and jump into bed ready to resume the trip in the morning.

Morning came and the nightly rain forgot to stop. Today Diane and Desiree' planned to drive to Meramec Caverns outside St. Louis. The rain was not part of the plan but it poured on our travelers all the way from Branson to Meramec Caverns. The tour was not very large since it was a raining Monday afternoon but that didn't dim Diane's excitement at going on her first tour en femme.

Diane had chosen a black and white plaid pleated skirt and vest outfit for the day. She also wore a short sleeved, high necked eyelet blouse with black hose and black flats. A gold necklace and gold leaf shaped earrings and pin completed her outfit.

Every time Diane took a step, the heels of her flats echoed off the stone path. She spent most of the tour trying to be inconspicuous by walking toe-heel instead of heel-toe. The tour was two miles long and took about 1 ½ hours. Diane and Desiree' were ready to continue their journey as soon as it was over. A



quick stop at the ladies room, a fast dash through the rain to the car and our duo was again on their way.

They drove toward St. Louis, bypassed the city and headed toward Hannibal, the birthplace of Mark Twain. They spent the night en route and continued to Hannibal the next morning. Arriving in Hannibal, they stopped at a chamber of commerce building to find what attractions were available. The friendly people advised them of what there was to do and to see and sent them on their way for the only river boat tour of the day, which started in about an hour. We arrived at the landing with plenty of time to get cameras, check the gift shop and board the boat. The tour was very interesting and the captain's dialogue was very informative. Desiree', a history buff, ate it up. From the boat we drove to the main part of historical Hannibal. Dave had

toured it before so he people watched while Desiree' toured Mark Twain's boyhood home, Becky Thatcher's parents' Tavern, Mark Twain's father's law office and observed the famous "White picket fence" that Tom got the local boys to pay him for the privilege of painting.

Our travelers spent the night in the "Tom & Huck Motel". The next morning the plan was to visit the Mark Twain Cave and visit the museum. The day was beautiful but the temperature in the cave is always about 55 degrees. Diane chose a white silk top and a royal blue straight skirt with "barely there" color hose and red flats and took her red car coat.

The girls arrived a little early for the tour so they spent some time in the gift shop and taking pictures. Finally they just mingled with the other people waiting for the tour to form. This was the second cave tour for Diane in two days. She was becoming an old hand at this touring business.

The tour finally formed up and got started. It was interesting but basically a cave is a cave. When the tour was over, the guide asked, "Would you two ladies like to have me take your picture by the entrance?". We accepted and followed him through several groups of people, back out the door and to the cave entrance. Everyone watched us like we were celebrities - and we were! They just didn't know why.

They left the cave area and stopped at Lover's Leap, a bluff overlooking the Mississippi that they had seen from the river boat yesterday.

They then returned to the museum for a last look at Samuel Clements nee' Mark Twain and then were on there way to Minneapolis, Minnesota!

Desiree' saw cornfields for 12 hours. She was never so glad to stop for the night as that night, only two hours from our friends,

the Strongs, in Minneapolis. Diane did fine. She spent twelve hours dressed traveling across the heartland of our country.

Diane and Desiree' were now in Minnesota in October. IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE COOL!! Why is the temperature in the eighty's? Because of the warm temperatures, the color change is late this year!

Our pair got settled in a motel, unpacked and then called on Robert and Onnalee. Onnalee is the assistant executive director of SPICE and the editor of the Sweetheart Connection. We chatted while Robert prepared a gourmet delight meal for us that evening.

Plans were made for a journey to the north the next day to see the changing colors. Diane chose a pleated plaid skirt with black, red and white lines running through it, a white nylon short sleeved blouse and a red cardigan sweater for her leaf-looking trip. She also selected black hose and black flats.

The drive north was pretty as we visited and looked at the scenery. We turned off of the interstate at the proper time and somewhat later the "fit hit the shan." Doesn't everyone know that there is NOTHING worse than a pilot trying to find his way on the ground? Here we had one pilot, Sofronia, giving directions to another pilot, Diane. When you have a crossdressed male, do





you stop to ask directions or not? And if you stop, who asks - the male or the femme?

We stopped and Desiree' got to go ask! We only passed the entrance we were looking for twice more before finding it. We then drove back into the woods and came to a boat launching ramp where we parked and got out.

Our explorers resumed their journey to find the main entrance to the intended park and were successful. They parked outside a ranger's building and walked out onto a deck overlooking many beautiful views. Our four girls just stood, talked, and visited with each other. Eventually a ranger informed them that it was closing time and they would have to leave.

Robert was getting paid to be Sofronia the next day (Saturday) and be on a gender panel for an instructional seminar. Onnalee, Dave and Desiree would go see an exhibit of Onnalee's watercolors which were on display. Then Onnalee took them to the site of the Wednesday's activity for SPICE 99 - a state park just off the end of the runway at Minneapolis Airport. Stay tuned for more information on SPICE 99 in this magazine.

They then went back to the motel, got some rest, changed clothes and the four girls: Sofronia, Onnalee, Diane and Desiree' plus another Beta Gamma girl, Sharon [REDACTED], were going out to DINE!

Diane choose a blue and creme checked suit with a white nylon blouse to wear for dinner. It was the only semi-dressy thing she had brought. We arrived at the restaurant and were ushered clear across the center of the floor to our table. All eyes were upon us. I say us but I really think they were on Sofronia, Onnalee and Sharon: all women over six feet two. Diane and Desiree' both measure five foot eight or less. We had a grand meal and a wonderful time. We chatted as if no one else existed - and they didn't. The clue to having fun dressed en femme while out is to ignore everyone else and be yourself.

On Sunday, Onnalee and Robert took Dave and Desiree' to the Lincoln Deli for brunch and then on a driving tour of Minneapolis. They hit every spot of interest in Minneapolis. Robert and Onnalee then went home to catch up on things that had been piling up awaiting their care and Diane and Desiree returned to the motel to rest and plan the attack on the Mall of America (locally known as HUGE-DALE) the next day.

Other than the fact that the mall had a whole amusement park INSIDE in the middle of the mall, it is just another mall. It has more stores than most but I don't believe a wider selection. We walked the obligatory walk around each of the mall's three levels, got a bit to eat and were ready to leave. We did eat at the rain forest restaurant. We unfortunately got a bad table location and

so didn't get to see much of what the interest in the restaurant was about. We did purchase a thank you gift for the Strongs which we delivered that evening. If you are interested, you might ask Robert what they got and why they got it.

We said our good-byes as we planned to leave the next morning. Robert suggested that we take Rt.. 61 to La Crosse, Wisconsin, for an excellent view of color changes and scenery. We said that we would consider it and were on our way.

The next morning we loaded the car and decided to take the scenic route. The ride was beautiful and we took a lot of pictures. Only much later did we find out that the film was not firmly engaged on the takeup reel and we actually didn't get one single picture.

It was a beautiful ride and we could see where the inland sea shores had been one time millions of years ago. They were now bluffs sticking up many miles apart.

When we arrived in La Crosse, we decided that since we were only a few hours from Dave's sister's house that we might as well go drop in on them. We did and spent a couple of days and then drove down to visit Dave's mother.

New Salem, Illinois was the next stop on the agenda. New Salem was the town in which Abe Lincoln spent about six years before entering politics. It is a restored village with volunteers dressed in period costumes telling the story of each particular building. This was more history and Desiree' just ate it up.

We had made motel reservations for Joplin, MO, that night so we had to get on the road. We had to cross all of Missouri in just a few hours. Upon arriving at the motel, a security man asked if we had reservations. We said yes and he said, "Its a good thing. The place is oversold!"

We got situated in our room, cleaned up a bit and went next door for a late dinner. We then returned to the room to prepare for the final leg of our journey - back to Fort Worth. We watched the weather channel to try to decide on a route and discovered that just as it had on the day we left, we were to be greeted back by a full day of driving in the rain. In Oklahoma City we stopped to get gas and it was raining and blowing so hard that we just had to sit in the car and wait.

We did make it back, tired but happy. We had traveled over 3000 miles in 14 days and we were still speaking to each other in a civil voice.

Once we got all of the washing, ironing, cleaning, etc., done, we only had a week or two before we embarked on the Dignity Caribbean Cruise, followed by another week of fun and sun in Orlando, FL. This life of the retired is a tough, wearing job - but somebody has to do it. *At least that's what Desiree' tells me!*



taken up residence in the hospital room so she could comfort her child. After a particularly difficult and painful surgery the doctor explained that it had been ineffective. The problem had persisted, and they would have to operate again when the child regained its strength. The doctor held out little hope that the series of problems would ever be resolved.

In the middle of the night the child awoke and cried softly in obvious pain. The mother cradled her child in her arms and rocked and sang to him while she sobbed. With over a year of continuous treatments and no hope for improvement, grief for her poor child overwhelmed her. Finally, with great clarity, she realized that she could not put her child through any more torture. She picked up a pillow, placed it over his head and pressed down while she cried. Her child was finally at peace.

Every spiritual principle said that her action was wrong, yet instead of feeling angry, all I could do was cry. The pain and suffering of the mother and child were incredibly intense, and I had only read about them in a story. How could I possibly condemn or judge her? What would I have done if it had been my child? I couldn't answer. I couldn't even imagine her experience. All I could feel was love and compassion. I wanted to reach out and comfort her.

From then on I could no longer sit in judgment of others. Everywhere I looked, I found painfully clear messages with my name on them. We are all guilty, because I am guilty. No one is righteous, because I am not righteous. It said that God will judge everyone, and He is perfectly capable of doing that without my help. He tells me to worry about my own shortcomings, not those of others.

Jesus loved tax collectors, prostitutes and poor people. His love for society's outcasts helped me to understand that God loved everyone, including me. He loved me enough that He sent His only Son to cleanse me of my sins. He didn't condemn me for my sins, not even the ones I continued to commit after I accepted Him. He kept on forgiving me. Since He did that for me, how could I do less for others? I felt terribly ashamed. I realized that what God wanted most from me was to have my heart filled with love for every member of His creation.

I also realized that I needed others to love me as I am, not as I tried to appear. Outwardly I was an upstanding member of the congregation. I came to church regularly and actively participated. I tithed. I attended Bible study groups. I treated other members of the congregation with dignity and respect. Inside, however, there was something that I had kept carefully hidden.

What would your reaction be if I told you that I am a transvestite or cross-dresser? For some, the first reaction would be to look for a Biblical prohibition and use it to condemn me. That's what

I used to do. There is one verse that might be used in this case, but it takes stretching and twisting to force it to fit and requires ignoring adjacent verses to avoid self-incrimination. However, for some that's all the justification that would be needed to slam the door.

In [http://members.aol.com/rachelmill/ogf\\_14.htm](http://members.aol.com/rachelmill/ogf_14.htm), I mounted a strong argument in defense of cross-dressing and, since no one refuted it, I could even claim victory. But Jesus taught us to turn away from a legalistic approach. So, for now, I want you to assume that cross-dressing is sinful. Given that assumption, how should a Christian, a follower of Christ, respond to a cross-dresser such as myself? Are you to condemn me or love me?

This is an open book test, so to find the answer, read the Gospels where Jesus' words and actions are recorded. There are even versions that show His words in red for easy recognition. As you read, notice how often He talked about love. Notice how He treated sinners. After digesting the Gospels, the key question to ask yourself is—Can you pass God's love test and love others as He loves you?

# Notes

Philip Yancey's incredible book, "What's So Amazing About Grace?" convinced me that grace is the ingredient that will enable us to love those we consider unlovable. He said, "Grace is the church's great distinctive. It's the one thing the world cannot duplicate, and the one thing it craves above all else—for only grace can bring hope and transformation to a jaded world." He sees legalism as the greatest threat to grace and envisions churches as places where grace is "on tap" and readily available to everyone who needs it. Isn't that what Jesus would do?

For those seeking more information about spiritual issues faced by cross-dressers, the Grace & Lace Newsletter (Keyword to: <http://hometown.aol.com/gnlnews/index1.html>) is an excellent source. Church leaders willing to open their hearts to cross-dressers and other transgendered people can contact: Diane A. Zahn, P.O. Box 2176, Monroe, MI 48161 or email: [REDACTED] (Keyword to: mail to [REDACTED])

Diane is working with the International Foundation for Gender Education (Keyword to: [www.ifge.org](http://www.ifge.org)) to assemble a list of empathetic churches, pastors and religious organizations willing to work with members of the transgender community. You can help break down the walls that separate many of us from a relationship with God.

Rachel Miller

%Opportunities for Improvement

P.O. Box 31475, Oakland, CA 94604, U.S.A. (925) [REDACTED]

<http://members.aol.com/rachelmill>

(Keyword to: <http://members.aol.com/rachelmill>)



# Our Gender Family #15 - April, 1999

*Can You Pass God's Love Test?*

by Rachel Miller

Jesus was busily turning the world of His day upside down. He hung with a "bad" crowd, did things that seemed to go against the Scriptures and often acted as though He were God. None of this endeared Him to the religious leaders of the day. They engaged in many verbal battles—the leaders trying to trap Him into saying something outrageous, and Jesus calling them hypocrites for their pious external actions that masked an unappealing interior. Another attempt to trip Him up occurred after a teaching session when they asked Jesus what was the most important commandment. They hoped that His answer would get Him in trouble, but His reply left them with no rebuttal, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matthew 22:37-40.

Those words seem straightforward enough that no interpreter is needed. Love God. Love your neighbor. Do those things and you'll find that you are doing the others. Versions of that simple message appear repeatedly throughout the Bible. No legalism, just practical Christianity applied to our everyday actions.

Some people view love as the bond between husband and wife; others as the affection shown between family members. Some see it in the broader sense of caring for our Christian brothers and sisters as part of our extended family. While it is important to demonstrate love in each of these situations, God's intention is not to specify a limited group of people to love. His challenge is to love everyone just as He does. God didn't send His Son for a chosen few but to draw everyone, including sinners, to Him. Actually, the only reason for sending Him was because of our sins.

Most of us love our spouse, family members and even other church members, but loving those who aren't close to us proves more difficult. The Good Samaritan story is an excellent example. A group of thieves stripped a man, beat him severely and left him to die. A priest and a socially prominent man both walked by and offered no aid. Finally a Samaritan, considered an outcast by society, stopped and felt compassion for the man. He cleaned up his wounds, took him to an inn, cared for him and left money for continued help in his recovery. Jesus said that we should show similar mercy even to those we might not recognize as neighbors.

Religious issues were a major struggle for me until I had a spiritual encounter that made God tangible to me. Then I started going to church, reading the Bible and attending fellowship groups because I wanted to, not because I had to. After a period of positive spiritual growth I began to change almost imperceptibly. I learned Biblical quotes to fit every situation. I became very self-righteous and found myself using those quotes to condemn the actions of anyone who didn't put God first. Everything was either black or white; there were no gray areas. I was right with God and could see clearly how others were not. I was beginning to believe that I had all the answers.

One Sunday our pastor discussed a couple who came to him for help. They were caught up in a sinful situation and sought his counsel. The pastor told them that until they repented and got right with God there was nothing he could do for them. The couple left with their issues unresolved, and I cheered the pastor's stand.

At church I learned that we were all sinners, but it was implied that our sins weren't as bad as those of others. I found myself thinking; of course I'm a sinner, but I don't do any really bad things. Others are alcoholics, drug addicts, criminals and wife beaters. Their sins are repulsive and worthy of condemnation. My sins are minor and of no concern.

I also heard that we don't hate the sinner; we hate the sin. Although that approach sounded good in theory, I found it virtually impossible to make that distinction and ended up vigorously condemning sinners.

Even with all of this reinforcement, my new coat of self-righteousness didn't fit well. No matter how I tried to justify my actions, I couldn't sleep peacefully. One day I was mindlessly saying the Our Father when a booming voice climbed into my head and shouted at me, "And forgive us our debts, just as we forgive our debtors." Ouch! I was asking God to forgive my sins in the same manner that I forgive the sins of others. Did I really mean that? When the magnitude of those words soaked in, I was scared and began some serious worrying about my intolerance.

A few months later I read a magazine article that demolished the remnants of my neat little black and white world. It was a true story of a woman whose child was born with a multitude of physical problems. The baby was in and out of hospitals for one surgery after another for the first year of its life. The mother had



## CALENDAR OF TRI-ESS EVENTS

### JULY 99

14-18 **S.P.I.C.E. VII**, Minneapolis, MN. SPICE Registrar, Beta Gamma, Box 8591, Minneapolis MN 55408, E-Mail: [REDACTED] Phone: Mary Jane (Central) (918) [REDACTED], Evelyn (Eastern) (215) [REDACTED], Fax: Peggy (Central) (281) [REDACTED]

### NOVEMBER 99

10-14 **HOLIDAY EN FEMME**, Houston, TX. Brenda Thomas, 14601 Bellaire #334, Houston TX 77083, E-Mail: [REDACTED]

14-21: **HOLIDAY AT SEA/DIGNITY CRUISE #11**, Houston, TX-Calico-Cancun-Cozumel-Roatan, Honduras-Houston, CRUISEONE, INC., Anne McLaughlin, 1-800-699-6631, International 281-679-1399

CHAPTERS! Planning an EVENT? Send your information to:

*The Femme Mirror's Calendar Of Tri-ess Events* and put your EVENT on the MAP!

## Got A Question About Your Tri-Ess Membership, Publications, Or Programs?

*Here's How to Get ANSWERS BY E-MAIL*

You might appreciate knowing the e-mail addresses of various Tri-Ess officers with whom you might wish to make contact for certain needs.

Questions about membership fees or membership status, or notifications of change of address, go to Membership Director Donna [REDACTED] at: [REDACTED]

Questions about the Big Sister Program or the Mail Forwarding Service go to Marlene at: [REDACTED]

Questions about SPICE, or wives' and partners' or couples' support, go to Peggy Rudd at: [REDACTED]

Questions having to do with chapters go to Director of Chapter Networking and Support, Judy Daniels, at: [REDACTED]

Anything having to do with the crossdressers' online forum, CDTRIESS, goes to Sofronia Anne Strong, its Moderator, at: [REDACTED]

Anything having to do with the spouses' online forum, CDSO, or the couples' forum, TRIESS42, goes to Beverly at: [REDACTED]

Anything having to do with "The Sweetheart Connection" goes to Onnalee, its Editor, at: [REDACTED]

Questions about the "Membership Directory" should be addressed to Denise [REDACTED] at: [REDACTED]

Questions and comments about the "The Femme Mirror" and materials for publication should be sent to Frances Fairfax, its Editor, at: [REDACTED]

Requests for information on joining Tri-Ess, questions about the Holiday En Femme, Tri-Ess Outreach or the workings of Tri-Ess, plus those you are not sure how to direct, should be sent to me at: [REDACTED]

We and the rest of the Tri-Ess Staff are here to help you get the most out of your Tri-Ess membership. Help us to better serve you by routing questions to the correct department. The only "stupid" question is the one not asked.

Your sister, Jane Ellen Fairfax, Chair



# What a Halloween!

by Pamela Ann MI-3205-M

It all started back in July of 98 when I decided to go shopping at a local Bridal Shop for a Halloween outfit. After I had spent some time looking at dresses, the sales clerk came around to help me. I explained what I was looking for, and she picked out three dresses and sent me to a booth to try them on.

Talk about being in a sweet shop! Before I knew it, she had brought another dozen dresses over for me to try one. Wouldn't you know, the first dress I tried on was the one! As it was a little small, she offered to alter it. It was long all around, so I asked her to raise the front hem to the knees, which gave enough fabric to fill in the sides.

After a 30-day wait, a final fitting was in order, complete with heels, wig and all. (Great!) Next was the long wait til Halloween, time to get accessories, etc. My dear wife said I was to be gone before 2:30 PM when she came home from work. Heck! I was out by 10 AM that day!

Visiting my first wife's grave and laying a live rose bud there, turning the urn over, etc., started my day. I had told some of my customers what I was doing that day, and was asked to stop by. So I was off to the bank, framing shop, etc., and stopped by a few friends' homes. One gal still had big flowers by her walkway, and wanted to take pictures. I spent some time with an elderly gal, her daughter and her sister. Three hours later we parted, knowing the great acceptance of the girls. I found acceptance with most everybody that day. What a great feeling!

In the evening my sister and girlfriend took me to supper at a local restaurant, where I had another great time. We left there and went to the Cinema 12 Theaters and rode the carousel horses, twice! I saw an old friend, a retired cop, and he said to me that when you lose the kid in you, you die. I went to the bar down the road. The gal who runs it had loaned me her mink stole for the evening. All the gals had to come over to pet the mink, and one guy came over and tried to date me. In my male voice, I had to tell him to go back to his table and get a life. I won the Third Place prize of \$10 and a picture of the Chicago Bulls.

Having spent 14 hours in heels and a dress, I woke up the next morning with no stress, aches or pains. All in all, I had



the best time ever. By the time Monday came, however, all the stress, etc., was back.

For a little while Pam was in wonderland. The following Sunday I took a nice relaxing walk on the shores of Lake Michigan. A couple of weeks later I took a crosscountry skin run through the local park. I've enclosed a picture of me on the carousel having my fun. I'll write again later, girls. I would like to hear from gals in my general area (Muskegon, Michigan).



## Disclaimer

The opinions and views expressed in the Femme Mirror are those of the respective contributors and do not necessarily represent the views or official policies of The Society for the Second Self, Inc., its Officers or Board Members.



# Cindy Goes Postal

by Cindy N.

*Tuesday, Jan 12, 1999*

Dear Jane: Received your request for more pins today. Your last order depleted our supply and the mold is worn, but I can check with our source. Maybe we can make a final run on it. Cindy N. (& Mickey too!)

*Sunday, Jan 17, 1999*

Dear Jane Ellen, I went back to our supplier on Saturday and found out that he had held back a small stash of Tri-Ess pins. I can ship all 35 pins, via insured mail, to Donna on Monday. Cindy N. Alpha Zeta

*Monday, Jan 18, 1999*

Dear Cindy, Excellent! Go ahead and ship to Donna. Love, Jane

*Saturday, Feb. 13, 1999*

Dear Mickey and Cindy, Donna [redacted] writes that she is unable to pick up the package, which identifies the sender as "Nichols/ Alpha Zeta." She assumes this is the package of pins, but since it is "Insured," and she has no legitimate ID as "Donna [redacted]" she cannot pick it up! She e-mails us advising, "Have them send it back to me by First Class or Priority Mail, and I should not have any further problem." Love, Jane

*Thursday, Feb. 18, 1999*

Dear Jane Ellen: Received your message about the pins several days ago and as yet have not seen the pins returned to us. However, here is the situation as it now stands: Towards the end of January, we paid the Post Office Box rental. I sent in a check for \$52, the same as in 1998, for the rental fee. I had lost the franked envelope, so I sent it regular mail. About the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, Michelle, our mail ma'am, informed me that the box had been locked shut. After a frantic call to the Post Office, I was told that the box fees had been raised to \$57 and according to "POSTAL REGULATIONS" they don't accept partial payments! So on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, I drove an hour and a half down to the Post Office in Tempe to personally drop off a \$57 check in their mail slot.

On February 16, Michelle informed me that the box had been unlocked, but there was only one lonely piece of mail in it! Another frantic call to the Post Office was made and I was informed that according to "POSTAL REGULATIONS", on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, like clockwork, without fail, all mail from the closed boxes is returned to sender! So if the pins were "Returned to sender" from Donna to Alpha Zeta any time between the 28<sup>th</sup> or so of January and the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, they were again returned to sender, whoever that might be.

So it appears that the pins are now in Alice's limbo land of "POSTAL REGULATIONS". To further complicate matters, if the Post Office required identification for Donna [redacted] in Chicago, they might also require identification for Cindy [redacted] in Tempe. Since the envelope also had Alpha Zeta on it, I believe I can convince the Postal Gestapo to release the package, if they can find it!

But there is hope on the horizon! The package was insured and has a registration number on it! The bad news is that I lost the receipt with the magic number on it. The good news is that all I have to do is fill out a Form 1510, according to "POSTAL REGULATIONS", send it to the main Post Office, and they will put a trace on the package.

To help me out in tracing this, can you please tell me when the package was sent back to us? It was a manila 8 x 10 envelope.

Looks like the Post Office doesn't operate with same set of rules that sensible folks like you and I do.

Thanks for your patience. Cindy & Mickey

*Friday, Feb. 19, 1999*

Dear Donna, I just got a very patient but frustrated e-mail from Mickey and Cindy of Alpha Zeta, which I am including in its entirety below. Could you please help Mickey and Cindy out about the actual dates of non-delivery? The package was insured, and they are going to have it traced. Bureaucrats seem to operate without turning on any brain centers higher than the brain stem! Damn gummint! Love, Jane

*Friday, Feb. 19, 1999*

Dear Jane, Mickey, & Cindy, I received a copy of the 02/18 e-mail from Mickey/Cindy to Jane, along with an explanatory cover note from Jane, which brought me "Up to speed." If this entire situation wasn't so absolutely serious and frustrating, I would be 'rolling in the aisle' about the total Comedy of Errors described!

As 'History': The original material was received at my local P.O. on January 26, and a 'Yellow Notice' placed in my Box. I attempted to retrieve it, but was told by the Postal bureaucracy that even though the P.O. Box was in my (legal) name I had to either have 'Donna [redacted]' personally come-in and sign for the item along with her personal identification, OR bring her signed authorization on the Yellow Postal notice along with 'her' photo I.D. They refused to give me (the 'Boxholder') any info about the article, the sender, etc. Obviously, either of the suggested methods of retrieval was impossible, so I told the P.O. to just return the item to the Sender right-away since it couldn't be picked up.

Last Saturday (02/13/99), I received a "Final" yellow notice in my P.O. Box, which finally listed the 'Sender' as Alpha Zeta (so I immediately recognized that the material in question was the 'pins'), and the notice indicated that the article would be returned to the sender on February 16<sup>th</sup> if it wasn't picked-up before then. (Hello, P.O., you don't listen so good, do you?).

I again returned the Yellow Notice to a P.O. counter clerk, and told her to return the material without further delay. The 'package' was probably placed back into the mail for "Return to Sender" on or about 02/16/99. With the current "Postal efficiency" (sic), it might show up some-



time back at the point of original mailing sometime in the next 30-45 days. I hope by that time a method to retrieve it will be established by Cindy/Mickey. Regards, Donna [REDACTED], National Membership Director

**Friday, Feb. 19, 1999**

Dear Jane: Well, I hope our mail can be reclaimed. I don't have any Cindy Nichols ID, only male ID. Maybe if I go down to the Post Office armed with the male ID, sample newsletters, brochures, and several 8 x 10 glossies with circles and arrows and a description on the back of each one describing what each one is, possibly the clerk will understand that this is not a conspiracy to steal THEIR mail from them. Thanks for your patience. Cindy & Mickey

Saturday, Feb. 20, 1999

Dear Mickey & Cindy, Damn gummint! Hope you'll be able to reclaim the package, Cindy! Can you prove through valid ID that you are **really** Cindy [REDACTED]? Those pins could be lost in Limbo forever! & :-)  
Love, Jane

**Saturday, Feb. 20, 1999**

Dear Jane Ellen & Donna: Well, sort of good news today. After I saw that the package might have been returned after our box was reopened, I rushed down to Tempe through the snowbird traffic and checked the mailbox. Hallelujah! There was the "little yellow notice", the PS Form 3489, indicating that there was a package waiting for Cindy [REDACTED]!! So I rushed over to the counter area and, lo and behold, they were closed! Shuttered! Locked down tight! Gone fishing for the day! The PS-3489 indicated that they were open from 10:00 A.M. til 1:00 P.M. on Saturday, and here it was 10:30 A.M. on a beautiful Saturday morning. But, alas, the sign in the window indicated their hours were "9:00-5:00 M-F". Hope that means Monday through Friday! Maybe, according to "POSTAL REGULATIONS" they can set their hours to anything they jolly well please. Change them at will, if you will, and they will, and they did!

OK. Next move. Call the USPS on Monday, that's the United States Postal Service, (Service? What Service?) and find out what it takes to get the pins released from their custody. Perhaps an Act of Congress? Perhaps an Act of God? Maybe if Cindy herself goes down there and cries a lot we can get the sympathy of the clerk. Whatever it takes!

Cindy & Mickey

**Monday, Feb. 22, 1999**

Dear Jane & Donna: Now on to the final Chapter: On Monday I left work an hour early to make the trek to the downtown Tempe Post Office. Traffic was slow, but steady, and I had a lot of time to fume about all the things that could possibly go wrong. Well, I arrived there without any major incident, but when I turned into the Post Office parking lot, it started. All 8 spaces were taken and several goons had parked sideways and partially blocked the access. Well, I wheeled around them and parked a block away at one of the municipal parking lots. I carefully noted my space number and proceeded to pay the fee at the central parking meter machine. I deposited my 75 cents for an hour's worth of time, and the machine scrolled across its display that I should keep

my receipt. The machine clicked and whirred, swallowed my 75 cents, but issued no receipt! I just knew it had to be downhill from there!

When I entered the Post Office there were about 20 college students waiting in line. So, I waited patiently in line, clutching my form PS 3489, the filled out form PS 1510, a copy of the Fall 1998 edition of the Femme Mirror with a photo of Cindy on the front cover, and several other items of supporting documentation to prove that I was indeed, without a doubt, one of them there transvestites.

After what seemed to be a terribly long wait, it was my turn. I approached the clerk and handed him the yellow PS 3489 and said we may have some difficulty with this. Without even a grunt of acknowledgment, he took the slip and disappeared into the back room. He found the package very quickly and returned to the counter. I then said to him, "I know the return address says Cindy [REDACTED], and I don't look much like a Cindy." I then placed the Femme Mirror on the counter, the one with a picture of Cindy on the front cover, and announced "This is Cindy, but if you look closely, you will see that it is also me." He said, "I don't have any problem with that, do you have any identification?" I pulled out my Tri-Ess identification card, one of the few items that identifies me as Cindy Anne. He took a cursory glance at it and without further conversation he said, "That's good enough for me."

I signed "Cindy [REDACTED]" on the PS 3489, he handed over the package and I was on my way.

Wow, what a wasted mad! Here I was, all set for an argument, ready to do battle with the USPS, even put fresh nitro tablets in my necklace just for the occasion! And all I get is a "That's good enough for me?" God, these people are perverse and unpredictable!

Twenty minutes spent at the Post Office, and yet another hour and a half to go through rush hour traffic to get home.

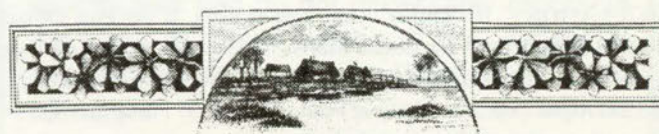
So, I finally have the pins and they will be winging their way to Donna real soon. Shall I address them to Occupant this time? Cindy & Mickey

This true story certainly demonstrates the problems in sending Insured/Certified/Registered material via the U.S. Postal Service to crossdressers; in most cases, an appropriate/legal photo "I.D." for the femme-person just doesn't exist! A large number of our current Society membership utilize P.O. Boxes, with a separate 'mailing name' (in addition to their 'legal' one as the Boxholder), in an attempt to keep their crossdressing activities completely separate from their various personal/family situations.

Donna

As a Postscript, yes, the pins finally made it!

(Reprinted from "The Cactus Flower," newsletter of Alpha Zeta Chapter.)







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8880 Bellaire B2, Ste. 104

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Tri-Ess members deduct 20%  
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## **Newsletter Editors**

Please send a copy of each edi-  
tion of your newsletter directly  
to:

**FEMME MIRROR**

c/o Frances Fairfax,

8880 Bellaire B2 Ste.104

**Houston, TX 77036**

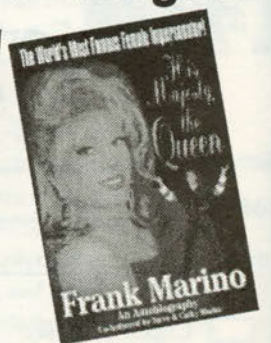
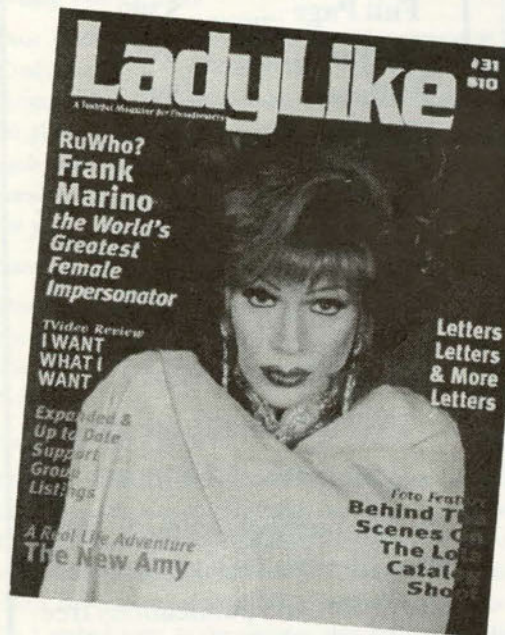
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FEMME e-mail boxes \$12 per year.

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Also Wanted: Articles written by our wives for posting

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For More Info Contact Candy at: [REDACTED]

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Rural America, P.O. Box 266, Albert Lea, MN 56007





Yes! I would like to join in supporting Tri-Ess, *the Society for the Second Self, inc.*

Please select one of the categories and levels of suggested minimum supporting memberships shown below:

All Tri-Ess supporting members receive - Membership Card and *The Femme Mirror*, our quarterly magazine, along with special discounts on selected products and services. Life Members receive special recognition and additional valuable membership benefits. Crossdressers will also receive the Tri-Ess Membership Directory, its supplements, and a free personal listing in the Directory. Supportive Wives who join with their crossdressing husbands in the "Couple" category receive the quarterly newsletter, the *Sweetheart Connection*, and early registration discounts for SPICE, the annual spouses' conference. Wives and female partners may also join in the "Individual" category to receive their own copies of *The Femme Mirror*.

*Take advantage of the special savings with the discounted, 2 Year Option\**

"Individual" Supporting Membership categories  
Intended for Crossdressers only (see definitions)

\_\_\_ Annual Member \$36 per year or \$60 for two years\*

\_\_\_ Life Member \$500\* one time payment  
(\$600 effective January 1, 2000)

"Couple" Supporting Membership categories  
For Crossdressers and spouses or female partners

\_\_\_ Annual Member \$48 per year or \$80 for two years\*

\_\_\_ Life Member \$700\* one time payment  
(\$840 effective January 1, 2000)

\_\_\_ Other, Please specify your optional or additional gift amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the appropriate statements: \_\_\_ I am - OR \_\_\_ I am not - over eighteen (18) years of age.

\_\_\_ I am -, OR \_\_\_ I am not - A CROSSDRESSER; - defined as an individual, typically a heterosexual male, who occasionally chooses to make a social role presentation considered appropriate for persons of the opposite genetic sex, for the purpose of personal expression, without the intention of entering a program leading to sex reassignment surgery, and without attempting to attract a partner of the same genetic sex. Note: your femme signature is satisfactory.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Options: \_\_\_ Enclosed is my Check or Money Order payable in US Dollars to "Tri-Ess"

**Credit Card Payments only:**

\_\_\_ Charge my membership to \_\_\_ VISA or \_\_\_ MasterCard or \_\_\_ American Express

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

If paying by credit card, please enclose a separate sheet of paper showing (1) your name as it appears on the card, (2) the billing address, and (3) your credit card signature. This information is confidential and secure. Your credit card statement will indicate PM Publishers Inc, Katy, Texas, and show the payment amount you have indicated above, plus an additional 5% donation.  
(\$36=\$37.80, \$48=\$50.40, \$60=\$63.00, \$80=\$84)

For your security, The Society makes every effort to protect the confidentiality of all contributors, members and applicants. Your true identity, personal check and credit card information are safe with us.

\*One time payment in full is required for these categories. Crossdressers financially unable to afford the minimum annual contribution amounts shown above should write for optional payment plans, reduced payments or waiver.

[The terms used herein assume the Crossdresser is male. Female Crossdressers are also welcome. Please write Tri-Ess for detailed information.]

*the Society for the Second Self, inc.* 8880 Bellaire Blvd., B2, Suite 104, Houston TX 77036-4621  
Tri-Ess E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Tri-Ess Telephone Helpline: 713-349-8969

Please mail this completed  
form and payments to:

Donna \_\_\_\_\_  
P.O. Box 597859  
Chicago, IL 60659-7859

Donna \_\_\_\_\_s E-mail:  
\_\_\_\_\_



### Tri-Ess Supporting Membership Information - also complete reverse side

For privacy and security purposes, Crossdressers and their wives, and other members, may wish to use assumed names. Most Crossdressers adopt a feminine name. If you do not have a name, have fun! You might select one that is similar to your real name - 'Sam' becomes 'Samantha', 'Donald' can be 'Donna', or choose one that defines your femme personality; 'Hillary', 'Mae', 'Dolly', 'Marilyn', your first girlfriend or favorite movie actress. You can use your true surname, or choose a modification of it. However, it is usually advisable, and we recommend, that you create a completely different femme surname. Choices of your name(s) should be made thoughtfully to meet your personal security needs and preferences. Even your mailing name may be another pseudonym. For additional security and convenience, we encourage Crossdressers to use a US Post Office Box or similar commercial mail receiving service. Simply rent the box in your true name and list any other names, including your femme name and your mailing name, as authorized to receive mail.

If you have been a former member of Tri-Ess please give your membership number, if possible, state of residence at the time, and the femme name used for your previous membership

Previous Tri-Ess number \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ For "Individual" Crossdressers ( Wives may also join as an 'Individual')

\_\_\_ Check here to have a Tri-Ess "Big Sister" contact you by mail

Femme Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Check here to indicate a wife joining as an Individual

Mailing Address Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Please give the membership number of your Crossdressing partner \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Check here if you wish to be contacted by the nearest Tri-Ess Chapter

\_\_\_ For "Couples" (Crossdresser and spouse or female partner)

Crossdresser's femme name \_\_\_\_\_

Optional: Telephone Number in case we need to contact you \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Partner's name or other adopted name to be used \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Ask for: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Optional: Secure E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

The "Friends of Tri-Ess" Supporting Membership categories below are intended for non-Crossdressers; individuals, organizations, vendors and other entities that support the educational aims and purposes of The Society. "Commercial" Members receive discounted advertising rates and other important benefits; write for complete details.

\_\_\_ Friend of Tri-Ess "Annual" Membership

minimum contribution \$24 per year

\_\_\_ Friend of Tri-Ess "Commercial" Member

minimum contribution \$48 per year\*

\_\_\_ Friend of Tri-Ess "Benefactor"

minimum contribution \$100\*

Please Specify \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name (If applicable) or

Business Name (Commercial Members) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Name of Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_





# Milicent

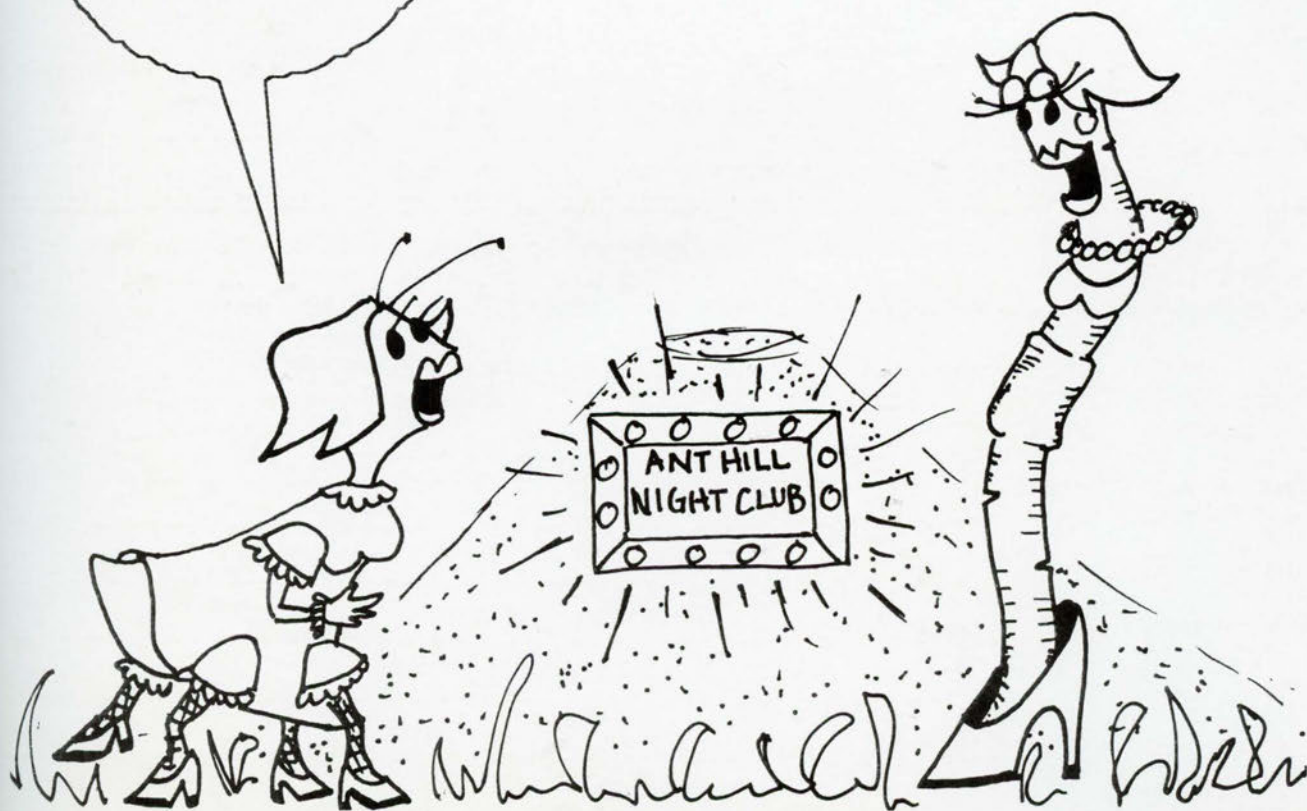
## The Cross Dressing Worm

By Melissa Ann Hadley

### Milicent & Antie Mae

It gets real  
expensive having  
to buy 2 pair of  
heels for every  
outfit.

Be thankful your not a  
cross dressing Centipede !.







## - ANYWAY -

People are unreasonable, illogical and self centered.

LOVE THEM ANYWAY

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.

DO GOOD ANYWAY

If you are successful you win false friends and true enemies.

SUCCEED ANYWAY

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

DO GOOD ANYWAY

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

BE HONEST AND FRANK ANYWAY

People favor underdogs, but follow top dogs!

FIGHT FOR THE UNDERDOGS ANYWAY

People really need help but may attack you if you help them.

HELP PEOPLE ANYWAY

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

GIVE THE WORLD THE BEST YOU'VE GOT

## - ANYWAY -





Grace [REDACTED] MSN MBA  
P.O. Box 226  
305 Hahani St  
Kailua, HI 96734



# *the Society for the Second Self, inc.*

"TRI-ESS" THE INTERNATIONAL NONPROFIT EDUCATIONAL AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATION FOR CROSSDRESSERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Tri-Ess International Office: 8880 Bellaire B2 Ste.104, Houston TX 77036-4621 Phone/Fax: 713-349-8969 E-Mail: TRIESSINFO@aol.com

## *Support, Serenity, Service*

**Jane Ellen Fairfax, M.D.**  
**Chair, Board of Directors**  
The Society for the Second Self, Inc.  
8880 Bellaire B2 Ste.104  
Houston TX 77036-4621  
Phone/Fax: 713-349-8969  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]

May 22, 1999

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Your Society has had another glorious quarter! Membership has hit another new high. Late last year, an editor of Playboy wrote asking for information that could be used to help a wife who had written in. This developed into a very positive article, which spread the word about various Tri-Ess services, SPICE, and our online forums. We are still getting inquiries from that outreach. One of our dear friends has just given an interview for Marie Claire magazine. While not everyone can afford to be visible, each of us can in some way be a ray of sunshine, whether we are interviewing, writing articles, or giving one-on-one support and T.L.C. to a brother or sister in need. One sunbeam may not seem like much, but many chase away the darkness!

What is really remarkable is not only the numbers of folks who are joining Tri-Ess, but their desire to get involved. One western sister is really encouraging others to become involved in her area. She wants a chapter, and will not settle for less! A Texas wife is working hard to develop a local chapter, too, and meanwhile is doing all she can to promote the nearest existing chapter. The entire eastern seacoast is becoming a hive of Tri-Ess activity, with new chapters in the works and ideas for dynamic new programs. People are volunteering, laying the building blocks for sustained growth into the 21st Century.

There is an old myth that Tri-Ess supports only male crossdressers. Not only is this not true, but one of our brothers is vigorously working toward a cooperative Tri-Ess community outreach in his state. As time goes on, more FTM brothers will be participating in Tri-Ess. It is for each one of us to be receptive and supportive in every way to our Tri-Ess brothers.

Finally, I would like to remind those who are changing addresses to notify Membership Director Donna [REDACTED]. Every quarter a few Mirrors come back, undeliverable. Unless we know the new address, we are powerless to reach these members with our services. There is also a problem with sending Certified or Registered Mail, insured packages or shipments that require a signature and proper identification from the recipient. This presents real security and logistics problems if addressed to the femme name! I would very much appreciate your understanding in these matters.

Love to all of you,







# VII

Spouses'/Partners International Conference for Education

Sheraton Airport/Mall of America  
I-494 and 24th Avenue  
Bloomington, MN 55425

Telephone: (612) 854-1771

## JULY 14 - 18, 1999

### Minneapolis, MN



## A Wilderness Adventure . . .

Feeling up the creek? Not even sure you have a canoe, much less a paddle? Come to **S.P.I.C.E. VII**, outfitters supreme for the Wilderness Adventure of your life. Learn how to read the maps of trans-genderism, plan a safe and even enjoyable trip through the wilderness; how to find and negotiate those difficult portages and rapids of life; develop good survival skills and learn what it takes to make a "happy camp".

Our experienced and professional "guides" will be lead by Walter Bockting, PhD., and his staff of PHS of the University of Minnesota.

Our leading keynote speaker will be **Charles Prince**, formally known as Virginia, the co-founder of Tri-Ess and a major support of the idea of **S.P.I.C.E.**

Men who are crossdressers may attend, but — for the comfort of the women attending, **NO CROSS-DRESSING IS ALLOWED.**

going to S.P.I.C.E. was the hardest thing I ever did. Also the smartest. Minam C.

S.P.I.C.E. was created by wives and loved ones in relationships with transgendered men; . . . this conference can help relationships with understanding, love and compassion. . . . Larry H.

I felt a bonding that only come from sharing your innermost thoughts and feelings. It is important for wives and partners to come together and be united as we are our best support. Stephanie J.

The capacity for **S.P.I.C.E.** to work wonders is dynamic. I will tell clients more than about **S.P.I.C.E.**, I will strongly urge them to GO!

Walter Bockting, '97



### VII REGISTRATION Please PRINT

### July 14 thru 18, 1999

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Male partner's name \_\_\_\_\_ Attending? Y N Support group name? \_\_\_\_\_  
Check the package you want with number attending Circle One^ (If any ^)

\_\_\_\_\_ Wednesday thru Sunday (July 14-18) \_\_\_\_\_ Thursday thru Sunday (July 15 -18) \_\_\_\_\_ Thursday & Friday(July 15 & 16)  
\$172 00 per person(Picnic/Recep + 6 meals) \$147 00 per person (6 meals) \$115 00 / person (4meals)

\_\_\_\_\_ Friday & Saturday (July 16 & 17) \_\_\_\_\_ Any One Day (Specify Date \_\_\_\_\_) \$80 00 (2 meals )  
\$115 00 per person (4 meals)

\_\_\_\_\_ Single Lunch \$20/person (Specify Date \_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Single Dinner \$40/person(Specify Date \_\_\_\_\_)

Make check payable to **S.P.I.C.E.**

To CHARGE to a credit card, see and fill out other side of this form



It all began *before* that July in Dallas, 1993.

That hot week found many women at the first **SPICE**, raising questions and objections, voicing fears and concerns, forging new friendships and a network of capable, caring people who were dealing and working with the problems and issues of crossdressing.

The conference's first goal was and is to offer sympathetic comfort to women distressed by what they perceive as a threat to their marriage. It is true that many problems can be complicated still further when an unforeseen or unusual change occurs. **S.P.I.C.E.**'s major goal is to help people to reasonable solutions that will work by offering education. Asking focused questions can lead to productive answers:

1. *What's going on here?*

Much research has developed an impressive understanding of what crossdressing IS and is NOT

2. *Who's in charge, anyway?*

Focusing on who is trying to control whom or what; getting this one sorted out is sometimes a nearly life long effort.

3. *What do you want?*

many have trouble allowing themselves to want something of another to say nothing of articulate ing that want.

4. *Where do we go from here?*

When the first three question are truly and honestly answered, the answer to this one becomes clear.

Each couple's circumstances are unique and deserving of the special attention **S.P.I.C.E.** attendees give and get; it is awesome what a group of women who have a mutual problem can accomplish when each learns that she is NOT alone; there are others who can and will help.

The conference is open to all women who are partners or wives of heterosexual, gender-gifted men. The programs are designed specifically to help build self-esteem and self-respect; to help you deal with the many issues inherent in a gender-influenced relationship. Well known, skilled and compassionate professional counselors will present programs as well as leading wives and partners from local and national support groups.

**S.P.I.C.E.** has literally changed the lives of many attendees as we are dedicated to providing a wide array of topics with a highly qualified faculty and abundant amounts of peer support.

As all work and NO fun makes for a dull conference, opportunities have been planned to participate in small groups to tour, shop, [at *Mall of America, one block away*] or play in addition to the conference.

Each year, more have come early to join in the distinct pleasure of meeting socially with old and new friends before getting down to serious work. This year, you have the option to include a casual, relaxed afternoon into evening of swimming, hiking and canoeing which will culminate with a Shore Dinner at the historical site of Fort Snelling State Park, where the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers join and the state began. Transportation to and from the park is included.

"Chief guide" is **Walter Bockting**, PhD, whom many met at **S.P.I.C.E. V** in California. **Diane Stelrecht**, PhD, **Meg Striepe**, PhD and **Bean Robinson** will be joined by **Peggy Rudd**, Ed.D., **Desiree [redacted]**, **Onnalee Graham**, **Evelyn Kirkland**, **Mary Frances Fairfax** and **Bev [redacted]**; all of whom are married to crossdressing men, been through the emotional "whitewater" and not only survived, but *thrived!*

Special **S.P.I.C.E.** room rate: \$82./night, single or double. Free airport shuttle for registered guests. Attendees must make their own hotel reservations directly with the hotel.

To get our special rate, be sure to state that you are attending **S.P.I.C.E.** If you would like to share a room, indicate this on the registration form. Our block of rooms will be guaranteed til July 1. After that date, rooms may not be available and our special rate may not apply. Telephone: (612) 854-1771

**COSTS:** Registration for the full four day conference is \$172.00 per person. This includes all programs and entertainment, as well as the beach-picnic reception, six meals (lunch and dinner each day). See Registration form for other options. Complete that form, clip and mail with check or money order payable to **S.P.I.C.E.**, mail to **S.P.I.C.E. Registrar Box 8591,**

**Minneapolis MN 55408**

---

Mail to **SPICE, Box 8591, Minneapolis MN 55408**

Charge to: *circle one*

Discover      MasterCard

I would like a Room mate: YES   NO   NA

American Express Visa # \_\_\_\_\_ Expires: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Billing address **MUST** be the same as appears on registration.

Donation of 4% of total billed requested: OK : \_\_\_\_\_ <Initial





# SPICE VII

## PROGRAM

### WED. JULY 14

**CHECK-IN** at Sheraton and with SPICE Registrar "Outfitters"  
**3-9 PM Beach/picnic** @ Ft. Snelling Park...social get-together with swimming, canoe lessons and Shore Dinner under a beach-side pavilion tent. Beta Gamma Chapter hosts.

### THUR. JULY 15

**7:30AM** Wake up exercises

**8 AM** Registration at "Outfitters"

**9-10AM Keynote speaker** Charles Prince: "Finding Your Way Out of the Wilderness" from the log book of the pioneer

1. Destination (Where are we going)

2. Knowledge (How are we to get there)

**10-10:30 BREAK**

**10:30-12 Bonding Circles**

Women: Evelyn Kirkland

Men: Gil Fairfax

**12-1:30 LUNCH**

Women Only: Hostess- Onnalee Graham

Women and Men: Hostess- Desiree [REDACTED]

**1:30-2:30 Women:** "Setting your Canoe Compass"-

Sara Mize, PhD: Assessing your situation, identifying feelings about crossdressing, sharing.

**1:30-2:30 Men:** "Canoe Launching; Wet or Dry?"-

Walter Bockting, PhD: Assessing your crossdressing, taking responsibility, its impact on relationships

**2:30-3 BREAK**

**3-4:30 Women:** "Finding the Portage"- Sara Mize PhD: Clarify your needs and goals, get a perspective on crossdressing, new visions

**3-4:30 Men:** "Finding the Portage"- Walter Bockting PhD...Face shame and set boundaries, find balance and renewal for relationships

**4:30-5:15 General Assembly:** "Crossing the Portage"- Group exercise to go beyond personal agendas to working together

**5:30-6:30 Wine & Cheese Reception**...Hosts: P.H.S. & Beta Gamma Chapter

**7:00 DINNER**...Speaker: Dianne Stellrecht PhD(c), L.P.  
"Canoeing through rough waters" or "How to handle the jealousy factor"

### FRIDAY JULY 16

**7:30** Wake-up Exercises

**8:00** Registration at "Outfitters"

**9-10AM General Assembly:** "Steering Your Canoe; the 'J' Stroke"-Sex and Sexuality...Walter Bockting, PhD and Meg Striepe, PhD

**10-10:30 BREAK**

**10:30-12 General Assembly:** "Stern and/or Bow Steering: the 'J' Stroke"...Enhancing sexual communication skills... Walter Bockting, PhD, Meg Striepe, PhD

**12-1:30 LUNCH**

Women only = Hostess- Cat [REDACTED]

Women and Men = Hostess-Mariam [REDACTED]

**1:30-2:30 Women and Men:** Healthy Relationships...Gil Fairfax, Suzanne [REDACTED]

**2:30-7PM FREE TIME.**

**Excursions** with Beta Gamma Host/Guides:

Mall Of America; Minnesota Arboretum; Historic Fort Snelling; Minneapolis Park System with Minnehaha Falls & Mississippi River Locks; Minnesota Zoo, Walker Art Center; Guthrie Theater/Sculpture Garden

**7:00 DINNER**...Speakers: Robert & Onnalee Graham  
"Whereda Hegahwe"

### SATURDAY JULY 17

**7:30** Wake-up Exercises

**8:30** Registration at "Outfitters"

**8:30-10AM Women:** "Seeing the Hidden, Hearing the Silence"...Bean Robinson PhD & Children's Panel

**8:30-10AM Men:** "Paddling Your Own Canoe"...Walter Bockting, PhD & Dianne Stellrecht, PhD... "Is jealousy or low self-esteem your dragging anchor?"

**10-10:30 BREAK**

**10:30-12 Women:** "Paddling Your Own Canoe"...Walter Bockting, PhD & Dianne Stellrecht, PhD... "Is jealousy or low self-esteem your dragging anchor?"

**10:30-12 Men:** "Seeing the Hidden, Hearing the Silence" Bean Robinson PhD & Children's Panel

**12-1:30 LUNCH**

Women only = Hostess; Evelyn Kirkland

Women and Men = Hostess; Mary Fairfax

**1:30-3 Women:** "Reading Lake Maps"...Taking risks to get a different perspective....Walter Bockting, PhD

**1:30-3 Men:** "Reading Lake Maps"...Taking risks to get a different perspective....Dianne Stellrecht, PhD

**3-3:30 BREAK**

**3:30-5 General Assembly:** "Making a Good Camp"... Putting it all together...Dianne Stellrecht, PhD

**5-7PM "Last Paddle"**...Trading Post OPEN, swimming pool, etc.; S.P.I.C.E. VIII Planning Board Meeting


**7PM BANQUET**... "Celebrating Our Wilderness Adventure" Speaker: Dr. Peggy Rudd

**Awards and Entertainment**

### SUNDAY JULY 18

**Farewell Breakfasts** ..On your own option

**10:00AM Interfaith Service:** "Return to Reality...Or Leaving It?"...Gil Fairfax



**A Wilderness Adventure**



# Announcing Holiday En-Femme's Early Registration Package.

Houston's Tau-Chi Chapter of Tri-Ess presents  
"WHERE WE'VE COME FROM AND WHERE WE ARE GOING."

The Holiday En-Femme 1999

**NOVEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> THRU THE 14<sup>TH</sup> 1999**

IN THE HOUSTON WESTCHASE HILTON



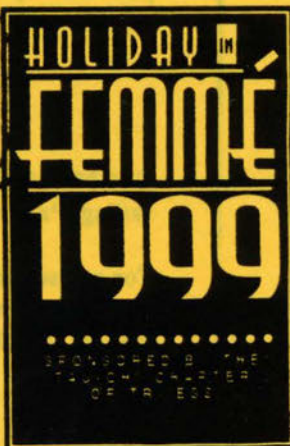
For details write to:

Brenda Thomas  
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Houston, Texas  
77083  
or email:



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# **HOLIDAY AT SEA**

## **CONTINUE THE FUN**

### **FROM THE HOLIDAY EN FEMME**

**DIGNITY CRUISE 11**  
**WITH PEGGY RUDD**  
**AND THE GENDER GIFTED**  
**aboard the beautiful**  
**NORWEGIAN SEA**

**November 14-21, 1999**

**Roundtrip from Houston, Texas**

**Visit Calico, Cancun, Conzumel, and The Bay of Islands with optional tours  
to Tulum and Chiche'n Itza'**

**FINE DINING, PAMPERED SERVICE,**  
**SPECTACULAR SCENERY PLUS THE FREEDOM**  
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<u>Category</u>	<u>Rates (Cruise Only, Per Person, Double occupancy)</u>		
	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Port Chgs.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Inside Cabin	\$576.00	\$128.00	\$704.00
Outside cabin	720.00	128.00	848.00
Owners Suite	1800.00	128.00	1928.00

**Single Occupancy 150% of selected category, plus port charges**

Also available: Low cost air fare, shuttle service to the ship and from the ship to the airport, and pre and post-cruise packages at the Westchase Hilton. For reservations call the hotel directly (713) 974-1000 and ask for the Holiday en Femme special rate of \$79.00 per room.

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**TERMS:** \$200 per person deposit with reservation secures cabin and rate. Balance due 70 days prior to sailing. Payment can be made by check made payable to CruiseOne, Inc., or with any major credit card.

For cruise reservations call CruiseOne, Inc. Anne Mc Laughlin, 800-699-6631, 281-558-2799 or fax 281-558-2795. You may send an Email to Anne to [REDACTED] or you may contact the cruise leaders, 281-347-6563, fax 281-347-8747, E-mail [REDACTED]



## Registration Form

14601 Bellaire #334, Houston, TX 77083 Phone (281) 495-8009

1. <b>Fem Name:</b> (first) _____	(last) _____
2. <b>Mailing Name:</b> (first) _____	(last) _____
3. <b>Mailing Address:</b> _____	
4. <b>City:</b> _____	<b>State:</b> _____ <b>Zip:</b> _____
5. <b>SO Name (if attending)</b> _____	
6. <b>Banquet Sat Night Special needs or meals:</b> _____	

7. <b>Pricing Packages</b>			Prior to 1/30/99	2/1/99 8/1/99	After 8/2/99
<b>Thursday Through Sunday</b>	Thur - (entire event)	11/11/99 - 11/14/99	198.00	233.00	255.00
	Fri - (all day Fri-Sun)	11/12/99 - 11/14/99	168.00	203.00	225.00
	Sat - (all day Sat-Sun)	11/13/99 - 11/14/99	128.00	163.00	185.00
	Sun - (breakfast only)	11/14/99	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Daily Pricing</b>	Thurs. (includes day trip to Museums and Dinner)	11/11/99	N/A	N/A	40.00
	Fri (includes all sessions, lunch, light buffet, and theater tickets)	11/12/99			55.00
	Sat (includes all sessions, lunch, banquet dinner & dance)	11/13/99			160.00
	Sun (breakfast only)	11/14/99			20.00
<b>Activities Pricing</b>	Thursday trip to museum	11/11/99	N/A	N/A	20.00
	Friday trip to the theater	11/12/99			30.00
	Saturday Banquet & Dance	11/13/99			60.00
	Any day - Sessions only				25.00
	Lunches Daily				30.00
			Sub Total		
			Less Lifetime Member Discount 10%		
			<b>Total Due</b>		

<b>8. Payment Methods</b>	Credit Card	Money Order	Check	Make Checks Payable to Tri-Ess
If by Credit Card, MC Visa - Card # _____				<b>Return this forms with payment to</b>
Expiration Date _____				<b>Brenda Thomas</b>
Printed Name as it appears on card _____				<b>Holiday En Femme - Registration</b>
Signature _____				<b>14601 Bellaire #334</b>
				<b>Houston, TX 77083</b>

<b>9. Refund Policy:</b>	Full refunds are offered prior to Sept 15 <sup>th</sup> , 1999
	50% refunds are available until Nov 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1999
	No Refunds after Nov 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1999

<b>10. Hotel Arrangements:</b>	Please make all Hotel Arrangements directly with the Westchase Hilton, 9999 Westheimer, Houston Texas 77042 – Phone 1-713-974-1000 FAX 1-713-974-6866 – Rates are <b>\$79.00</b> P/night – Single – Double – Quad
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# Tri-Ess Holiday En-Femme 1999

## Registration Form

14601 Bellaire #334, Houston, TX 77083 Phone (281) 495-8009

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING REGISTRATION FORM

**Fem Name** Fill in the name you wish to go by during the Holiday. We will make proprinted named tags for each attendee – color coded to the number of days in attendance

**Mailing Name** Name and address that you wish all correspondence to be mailed to.

**SO Name** Include your wife or partners name (as you wish it to appear on their name tag) if they are attending

**Sat Night Special Meals** If you need anything such as *Special Diets, Vegetarian Meal, etc.* please let us know.

**Packages** Please indicate the package that you are making arrangements for, and include the appropriate fees. Please pay attention to the deadlines, and the full description of the package.

**Total** Please total up the packages that you are making arrangements for and total the amount and include it in this box, *if you are a lifetime member, be sure and take your discount.*

**Payment Method** Please indicate whether or not you are paying by credit card, and what card. Be sure to fill in all information regarding the card, expiration date, name and signature.

**Hotel Arrangements** As indicated please make all room arrangements directly with the hotel.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS REGISTRATION FORM PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL ME AT 1-281- (AFTER 7PM). OR YOU MAY E-MAIL ME AT YOU MAY ALSO WRITE TO ME AT –**

**BRENDA THOMAS**

**14601 BELLAIRE #334**

**HOUSTON, TX 77083**



# Have you seen THE Monthly Magazine for the Transgender Community...

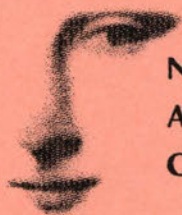


## Transgender *Community* NEWS

The only monthly magazine for and about the transgender community. With columns by Dr. Sheila Kirk, JoAnn Roberts, Dr. Barbara F. Anderson and many more, TCN brings you 40 pages of information and entertainment every month. Stay on top of the latest fashion trends and news about the TG community, and... Let's not forget shopping tips from Jessica Brandon. It's all there in your mailbox every month for only \$40! Check out our website: <http://www.ren.org/rnv.html> or send \$4 + \$1.25 for shipping and get a sample issue.

Transgender Community News is a publication of The Renaissance Transgender Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to education for the TG community and the general public. To subscribe fill out the form below and return to the address at the bottom.

.....



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

A check for \$40 is attached \_\_\_\_\_ Charge it to my Visa or Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_

Visa/MC number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp.: \_\_\_\_\_

Return completed form to:

Renaissance, 987 Old Eagle School Road, Suite 719, Wayne, PA 19087



## Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a study that I am performing towards completion of my doctoral studies at The Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco. You are invited to participate because you have self-identified that you cross-dress.

This study addresses the topic of cross-dressing in males and females, through which I hope to increase understanding and acceptance by those who do not cross-dress to this expression of inner self by those who do cross-dress.


Your participation is voluntary and should you decide to participate you are free to discontinue participation at any time. Once you have read this letter of Informed Consent your return of the completed questionnaire implies your voluntary consent to participate in this study.

There are no risks involved to participation in this study. The questionnaire does not require your signature, so the information obtained from the questionnaire cannot be identified to you. I will adhere to the strictest confidentiality in all aspects of the study process.

Should you agree to participate in this study, completion of the questionnaire takes approximately 30 minutes.

Thank you for your participation in this study. I am hopeful that the information gleaned will change current perceptions held by many about those who cross-dress.

*Many thanks ,  
Grace Blodgett*





### Cross-Dressing: A Questionnaire

Thank you for giving of your time and sharing your knowledge and experiences as they pertain to cross-dressing. Please answer each question as thoughtfully as you can.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Please circle the response that best describes you:

1. My age in years is:

Under 21   21-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61-70   71-80   81-90   91+  
 Congratulations!

2. My ethnicity is:

Afro-American   Asian   Caucasian   Hispanic   Native Hawaiian  
 Native Indian   Pacific Islander   Other

3. My highest level of education completed is:

None   Below 6th grade   7th-8th grade   9th-11th grade  
 High school   Some college   Bachelor's degree   Master's  
 degree   Doctoral degree   Other

4. My occupation category is:

Homemaker   Clerical   Professional   Food service  
 Unemployed   Military   Artist   Health field  
 Management   Executive   Technical   Public service  
 Other (Write in ) \_\_\_\_\_

5. My religious affiliation is:

Protestant   Catholic   Jewish   Buddhist   None   Other

6. I currently live in:

Alabama Alaska Arizona Arkansas California Connecticut  
 Colorado Connecticut Delaware Florida Georgia Hawaii  
 Idaho Illinois Indiana Iowa Kansas Kentucky Louisiana  
 Maine Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Mississippi  
 Missouri Montana Nebraska Nevada New Hampshire New  
 Jersey New Mexico New York North Carolina North Dakota  
 Ohio Oklahoma Oregon Pennsylvania Rhode Island South  
 Carolina South Dakota Tennessee Texas Utah Vermont Virginia  
 Washington West Virginia Wisconsin Wyoming



7. I have a current partner(s) with whom I am sexually active:

No    Yes, one    Yes, 2 or 3    Yes, 4 or 5    Yes, six    More

8. My marital status is:

Single    Married    Divorced    Separated

9. I have/never have had a child:

Have    Never have had

10. My self-declaration of sexuality is:

Exclusively heterosexual    Predominantly heterosexual

Occasionally heterosexual    Bisexual

Occasionally homosexual    Predominantly homosexual

Exclusively homosexual    Transsexual    Intersexual

11. My physical body is that of a:

Male    Female    Intersexual

12. My inward perception of my body is:

Male    Female    Intersexual

### CROSS-DRESSING HISTORY

13. I started to cross-dress at the age of:

Under 4    5-8    9-12    13-16    17-20    21-24    25-28    29-32    32+

14. The number of my friends who cross-dress is:

0    1-3    4-6    7-9    10 or more

15. The number of my acquaintances who cross-dress is?

0    1-5    6-10    11-15    16 or more

16. The number of people who cross-dress in my family, in addition to myself, is:

0    1-3    4-6    7-9    10 or more



17. Others were aware that I cross-dressed at my age of:

Under 4   5-8   9-12   13-16   17-20   21-24   25-28   29-32   32+

18. In my family, the following, indicated by a check, either know, suspect or do not know that I cross-dress:

	Knows	Suspects	Does not know	N/A
Husband				
Wife				
Daughter(s)				
Son(s)				
Mother				
Father				
Brother(s)				
Sister(s)				
Aunt(s)				
Uncles(s)				
Cousin(s)				

19. The following people, indicated by a check, know, suspect or do not know that I cross-dress:

	Knows	Suspects	Does not know	N/A
Employer				
Male co-worker				
Female co-worker				
Male friend(s)				
Female friend(s)				
Neighbor(s)				



20. Do external stressors precipitate you to cross-dress?

Yes, work related    Yes, self-related    Yes, family related    No

21. Are you happy that you are a person who cross-dresses?

Yes            No            Unsure

22. Do you think you would be happier if you did not cross-dress?

Yes            No            Unsure

23. Do you ever wish that you do not have the inclination to cross-dress?

Yes            No            Unsure

24. Has being a cross-dressing person adversely affected your family life?

No    Yes, a little    Yes, some    Yes, quite a bit    Yes, a lot

25. Has cross-dressing positively impacted your family life?

No    Yes, a little    Yes, some    Yes, quite a bit    Yes, a lot

26. Have you ever seen a counselor or psychiatrist because you cross-dress?

Yes            No

#### ATTITUDE BY OTHERS TOWARD THOSE WHO CROSS-DRESS

27. Would there be difficulties at work if people found out that you cross-dress?

No    Yes, small degree    Yes, some degree    Yes, large degree  
Yes, I might be fired    Yes, I would be fired

28. Do you think that people would break off social relationships with you if they knew that you cross-dress?

No    Yes, a few    Yes, some    Yes, many    Yes, all

29. How do you feel that most people feel about people who cross-dress?

Disgusted    Dislike    "Live/let live"    Some liking    Like



30. Do you feel that most people would make life difficult for you if they knew that you cross-dress?

No      Yes, a few      Yes, some      Yes, many      Yes, all

31. How do you think each of the following persons would or did react to finding out that you cross-dress? Check the word that best describes.

Accepts      Understands      Tolerates      Rejects

Mother

Father

Son(s)

Daughter(s)

Brother(s)

Sister(s)

Aunt(s)

Uncles(s)

Co-worker(s)

Employer

Friend(s)

Neighbor(s)

32. Do others make you feel you are outside the "mainstream" of society because you cross-dress?

No      Yes, a little      Yes, somewhat      Yes, mostly      Yes, always

33. What responses have you received when people in general have learned that you cross-dress?

Acceptance      Derision      Awkwardness      Anger      Laughter      Surprise  
Understanding      Tolerance      Pity      None of these      Nobody knows



34. Has anyone ever been violent toward you because you cross-dress?

Never      X 1      x 2      x3      X4      x5      Greater than 5 times

35. Have you ever been violent toward another because of his/her response to you cross-dressing?

Never      x1      X2      X3      X4      X5      Greater than 5 times

36. Have you ever been arrested on any charge while cross-dressed?

Yes      No

37. Have you ever been arrested on any charge while not cross-dressed?

Yes      No

38. Have you ever lost your job because it became known that you cross-dress?

Yes      No

**GENERAL FEELINGS WHEN YOU ARE NOT CROSS-DRESSED**

39. When you are not cross-dressed, circle the one word that best describes your feelings that lead you to cross-dress.

Inner turmoil    An urging    Anxious    A yearning    Unrest

Sexual tension    Physical tension    None of these    Other \_\_\_\_\_

40. When you are not cross-dressed, circle the word or words that best describes the thoughts that you have about the fact that you cross-dress:

Happy    Guilty    Ashamed    Accepting/resigned    Positive

Accepting/OK    Depressed    Anxious    Unhappy

41. When you are not cross-dressed do you feel things are more difficult for you because you cross-dress?

Yes      No      Unsure



42. When you have not cross-dressed for an excessive period of time would you describe yourself as being more:

Angry    Moody    Depressed    Aggressive    Unsettled    Violent  
Ashamed    Unchanged    OK    Other    No more anything

**GENERAL FEELINGS WHEN YOU ARE CROSS-DRESSED**

43. When you are cross-dressed, circle the word or words that best describe your feelings:

Fulfilled    Peaceful    Calm    Sensual    Natural    Angry  
Unsettled    Happy    Unchanged    Aroused    Other

44. Do you have an increased sense of well-being while you are cross-dressed?

Yes            No            Unsure

45. Are you less likely to become angry, upset, moody etc. while you are cross-dressed than when you are not?

Yes            No            Unsure

46. When you are cross-dressed, do you feel you are the sex you have cross-dressed to or your bodily sex?

Cross-dressed sex            Bodily sex

47. When you are cross-dressed, do you sexually fantasize?

No    Occasionally    Sometimes    Almost always    Always

48. When you are cross-dressed do you masturbate?

No    Occasionally    Sometimes    Almost always    Always

49. Does cross-dressing result in penile/lubrication for you?

No    Occasionally    Sometimes    Almost always    Always

50. When you are cross-dressed, do you relate in the sex of your cross-dress or your bodily sex?

Cross-dressed sex            Bodily sex



51. When you are cross-dressed, how many articles of clothing of the opposite sex do you wear?

One      A few      Some      Many      All

52. Are these articles hidden, partially hidden or in full view?

Hidden      Partially hidden      Full view

53. How often do you cross-dress?

Less than 1 x week    1 x week    2 x week    2 x month  
1 x month    Less than 1 x month    Infrequently    Rarely

54. How long are the periods you cross-dress?

1-2 hours    3-6 hours    7-12 hours    13-24 hours    24+

55. Do you derive pleasure from seeing yourself cross-dressed in the mirror?

Yes      No      Unsure

56. Do you share your pleasure while cross-dressed with another(s) or experience the pleasure alone?

Alone      Share with one      Share with more than one

57. Is your urge to cross-dress greater than your sexual urge?

Yes      No      Unsure

58. Does your urge to cross-dress feel like a sexual urge?

Yes      No      Unsure

59. Is your work ability enhanced when you cross-dress?

Yes      No      Unsure

60. Is your personal life enhanced when you cross-dress?

Yes      No      Unsure

61. Does your perception of the world change when you cross-dress?

Yes, better      Yes, worse      Unchanged



**SPECIFIC FEELINGS OF THE PERSON WHO CROSS-DRESSES**

**Self-Acceptance:**

Agree      Unsure      Disagree

- 62.I feel I have many good qualities
- 63.I feel I am a person of worth
- 64.I feel I am a failure
- 65.I do things as well as others
- 66.I do not have much to be proud of
- 67.I take a positive attitude toward myself
- 68.I wish I had more self-respect
- 69.I think I am no good at all
- 70.I feel useless at times

**Acceptance by Others**

Agree      Unsure      Disagree

- 71.I feel others who know I cross dress accept me
- 72.I feel others who do not know I cross-dress accept me
- 73.I feel that if others knew that I cross-dress they would not accept me

**Stability of Self-Concept**

Agree      Unsure      Disagree

- 74.My ideas of myself change rapidly
- 75.Some days I feel good about myself, other days I feel bad about myself
- 76.I feel that nothing can change my opinion about myself
- 77.My opinion about myself changes a good deal



**Depression**

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

78. On the whole I am a happy person

79. I get a lot of fun out of life

80. I am not as happy as others  
seem to be

81. I feel in low spirits most of the time

82. I often feel downcast and dejected

83. I am never happy

**Feelings of Guilt**

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

84. I feel guilty when I think about  
cross-dressing

85. I feel guilty when I cross-dress

86. I feel guilty after I cross-dress

**Loneliness**

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

87. I feel lonely often because I have  
an unsharable differentness

88. I feel I have enough friends

89. I feel I am alone more than others

90. Even when I am with others I feel alone

**Interpersonal Awkwardness**

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

91. I often feel very self-conscious

92. I tend to be a shy person

93. I do not often feel ill-at-ease  
with others94. I have a harder time than others  
making friends95. I have no difficulty making friends