

# *Chrysalis* *Quarterly*

Volume 1, No. 5 1993

\$9.00



*A Splendor of Gender*



*This issue.....*

*Valuing Diversity in the  
Gender Community*

**Surgeon General's Warning: Cigarette smoke  
may be hazardous to your transition.**

No, the surgeon general hasn't really issued a transsexual-specific warning about cigarettes, but the evidence is clear: cigarettes present a clear and present danger, not only for the smoker, but for those who are in the proximity of the smoker, increasing the risk of emphysema, cancer, heart disease, thrombosis, and other conditions. In concert with hormonal therapy and surgical procedures, the danger may be even greater. Cigarette smoke

decreases the effectiveness of hormones, slows healing after surgery, and may act in conjunction with estrogens in the formation of blood clots.

Not only that, but cigarettes contribute to premature aging. And although your non-smoking friends might not complain, you can bet that they are annoyed and inconvenienced by the odor on their clothes and furniture and the smell of cold cigarette butts in ashtrays.

If you are SRS-bound, consider this: many surgeons require to be smoke-free before they operate, and most hospitals not allow you to smoke during your stay.

If you smoke, please consider the long-term health effects. Slow down, or better yet, stop. You'll feel better, and so will your friends. Food will taste better, hormones will work better, and you just might live longer.

# Put this in your pipe and smoke it

this issue . . . . .

# Chrysalis Quarterly

Volume 1, No. 5 1993



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### About this Issue

*This issue celebrates the diversity of transgendered people, and their sense of community. The cover photograph was taken by Mariette Pathy Allen in October, 1992 at the Southern Comfort Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The phrase "A Splendor of Gender" was coined by Dr. Anne Bolin, who first used it in a speech at Fantasia Fair in 1992.*

*Anne is a member of the AEGIS Interdisciplinary Advisory Board. Mariette is author of Transformations: Crossdressers and Those Who Love Them, available from IFGE, P.O. Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778.*

*We would like to thank Mr. Karl Merris and Ms. Celeste Richard for providing the computer equipment which was used to produce this and the previous issue of CQ, and Anne Ogborn for production, assembly, and mailing.*

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(Jason Cromwell, Editor)

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**Mission:** *Chrysalis Quarterly* is dedicated to the in-depth exploration of gender issues. Our focus will be on topics which have been ignored or only lightly touched upon in other forums. Our treatments will be intelligent and unbiased.

**Submissions:** We welcome your stories, articles, letters, editorials, news clippings, position statements, research reports, press releases, poems, and artwork.

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Authors will receive a free issue of CQ.

The opinions of the various contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or of AEGIS. The editors reserve the right to refuse submissions which do not meet our editorial or aesthetic standards.

Submissions are preferred on 3.5" MS-DOS or Macintosh diskettes, in ASCII or Word-Perfect formats. A printed version should be included. Double-spaced typewritten or legibly handwritten manuscripts are acceptable. FAX or electronic transfer can be arranged by contacting one of the editors. Media will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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**I**t has been only in the past five or so years that the consortium of gender-related clubs, support groups, publishers, information services, and advocacy organizations have become common enough and have been in contact enough to be considered a community. Before then, groups were scattered and communication was limited. Many, and perhaps most transgendered persons were unable to locate the few sources of help which were available.

In their new book, *Cross-dressing, Sex, and Gender*, Vern and Bonnie Bullough trace the rise of organized crossdressing in the United States to Virginia Prince. In the sixties, and even before then, in the fifties, she labored alone, and often in the face of criticism, to help crossdressers put to rest their guilt and fear and come together for mutual support. Her outreach had two prongs: a national magazine called *Transvestia*, and a local support group called The Hose and Heels Club. The ultimate outcome of her efforts is Tri-Ess, the Society for the Second Self, a national organization of and for heterosexual crossdressers and their significant others. But Virginia's significance is much more than that: her courage in the face of adversity laid the groundwork which enabled other pioneers like Ariadne Kane and Merissa Sherrill Lynn to found, respectively, The Human Outreach and Achievement Institute (which sponsors Fantasia Fair)

and The International Foundation for Gender Education.

It is a remarkable thing that in the nineties, transgendered men and women can find information and support, buy books, magazines, and specialty products, attend national conventions, and appear cross-dressed in public without fear of arrest. Forever before, there were no such options. It was the birth of community which made these things possible.

But the creation of a community of transgendered persons is not an end, but a beginning. Organization makes political change possible. It gives the consumer a voice in the surgical and hormonal treatment which is necessary for sex reassignment. It makes it possible to change public attitudes, and educate lawmakers and educators and helping professionals about gender dysphoria. It creates culture. It builds friendship and alliances.

What transgendered people do with the community they have created is entirely up to them. There is a long way to go before the societal bias and widespread misunderstanding about gender dysphoria is replaced by tolerance and understanding. Certainly, decades of work lie ahead.

This presumes, of course, that transgendered people can and will work together, putting aside their differences for the greater good.

Transgendered people are a varied lot. They come in all sizes and shapes and varieties. They have a multitude of needs, a wide range of

*A discussion of the diversity of the gender community would not be complete without a mention of the men—the female-to-male crossdressers, transgenderists, and transsexual persons. The past decade has seen them come forward in larger numbers, and it is time for them—and for that matter, for the late Lou Sullivan—to receive the recognition they deserve. See page 14.*

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*The gender community, like any other field of human endeavor, is plagued with turf wars, petty squabbles, and smoldering feuds. Organizations and individuals square off along ideological lines, attacking those with different philosophies, different sexual orientations, different lifestyles, and, yes, different colors. But the enemies of transgendered persons are not transgendered.*

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lifestyles, and all types of sexual orientations. But for all that, they are not all that common. To effect change, they must work cooperatively. Otherwise, the numbers will not be sufficient.

To obtain the needed numbers, the community will have to grow to include the full range of gender variation—the “splendor of gender” Anne Bolin talked about at the 1992 Fantasia Fair. So far, this has not happened. Whole classes of transgendered persons have not yet found their place in the community. In some cases they are absent because they have not yet discovered the community. In some cases, they are absent because they do not care for the community. And in some cases, they have received an active message from the community that they are not wanted.

The gender community, like any other field of human endeavor, is plagued with turf wars, petty squabbles, and smoldering feuds. Organizations and individuals square off along ideological lines, attacking those with different philosophies, different sexual orientations, different lifestyles, and, yes, different colors. But the enemies of transgendered persons are not transgendered. Nor are they caregivers (who have also been much-maligned). No, the real enemies are those who would deny all transgendered persons the right to exist, or, if they *must* exist, would deny them the right to dress or behave as they please. They would outlaw hormonal and surgical sex reassignment, make crossdressing illegal, force their own notions of appropriate sexual behavior on others, and otherwise impose their notions of propriety on transgendered persons. Such people are out there,

and transgendered people are on their list. If they are not yet flying in the face of transgendered persons, it is only because they have been busy attacking gay men and lesbians and attempting to criminalize abortion.

It would behoove transgendered persons to realize this and stop the endless squabbling and name-calling which characterize their community. It would behoove the community to actively recruit blacks and other racial minorities, gay crossdressers, female impersonators, female-to-male crossdressers, new men, and prostitutes in order to achieve goals for the common good.

It would also behoove the community to ally itself with other exploited and devalued minorities. Transgendered persons have much in common with gay men and lesbians. Legislation which criminalizes homosexuality or enables discrimination against gay people will have an immediate and dramatic negative impact on transgendered persons. Certainly many transgendered persons are not gay, but the general public does not understand this, and will never understand it until gay men and lesbians stand alongside transgendered men and women and say, “This is how we’re the same, and this is how we’re different.” Similarly, there is much to gain by standing with the womens’ movement. And certainly, the many professional men and women who have worked hard on behalf of transgendered persons should be considered allies, and those who do not educated so that they can better understand gender dysphoria.

This issue of CQ is a reminder to all of us that transgendered persons come in all flavors. ☪

I often get behind in my reading, so it was only recently that I found the time to read the Winter 1992 edition of *Cbrysalis Quarterly*. Because I am a therapist who deals with transgender clients, I understand first-hand the issues and concerns that most face. The articles in this issue clearly demonstrate that many clinicians simply do not have the necessary training in human sexuality that would allow them to adequately and appropriately deal with gender issues. In fact, from studies I have read, most clinicians get virtually no training in even the most basic aspects of human sex/gender issues. So, in many instances, these professionals have no more understanding of these intricacies than the average person. In my opinion, the basic tenet of any therapist should be, "First of all, do no harm." Following from that is the crucial need for the therapist to understand his/her own biases so that they do not "get in the way" of treatment. Unfortunately, egos often get in the way of treatment with the effects so vividly described in your article, "The Politics of Diagnosis and a Diagnosis of Politics."

I do not, however, subscribe to the theory that anyone who wants hormones and/or genital surgery should get them. I do believe that such interventions are often appropriate given the right circumstances. There are equally many horror stories that demonstrate the problems that occur when persons get hormones or surgery without appropriate evaluation.

One of my suggestions to your readers would be to ask any clinician what specialized training in human sexuality they have had. Look on their bookshelves and at their certifications. Ask what professional organizations they belong to. Ask them if they follow the Standards of Care of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. While negative answers do not necessarily mean they are not qualified, I would suggest that the client be wary of the approaches used. Lastly, keep in mind that you are the customer. If your therapy is not achieving your goals, then attempt to modify them. If that goes not work, go elsewhere.

— Roger E. Peo, Ph.D.

*We are hardly proponents of surgery or hormones on demand, and have in fact warned against such in the public service advertisements which have appeared in the inside front covers of CQ. We believe that the HBGDA Standards of Care safeguard both consumers and caregivers, and should be strictly adhered to as minimal guidelines for hormonal and surgical treatment. We agree with you that many therapists are not trained in transgender issues and that the consumer should shop carefully for help. However, we also believe that historically, some caregivers who have held themselves forth as experts on transsexualism have been needlessly obstructionistic and have done considerable harm by filling the professional literature with pejorative descriptions of transsexual persons. The reason for "The Politics of Diagnosis," however, was that the university-affiliated gender clinics saw themselves, generally speaking, as the vanguard in the treatment of transsexualism, and yet failed, by their insistence that they were research centers, to meet the human needs of the majority of the transgendered persons who came to them for help. By taking the clinics to task, we did not mean to imply that hormones should flow freely, or that surgery should be done on demand. Obviously, medical consumers need safeguarding, and the caregivers are sworn to do no harm, and must give careful consideration to any form of medically intrusive treatment. We believe that the proper balance of power between caregiver and consumer has yet to be struck.*

*To be fair, we must admit that twenty or so years ago there were no specialized training programs in human sexuality and especially, in transgender issues. Experts were self-taught. We are fortunate that in these modern times there are therapists, like yourself, with specialized training, and we certainly feel that transgendered persons should follow your guidelines for finding knowledgeable caregivers — Ed.*

*Concluded on page 7*

P.O. BOX

# Gender Happenings

The following appeared on 10 October, 1992 in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution

## Teenager Missing School Because He's Not Allowed to Dress as a Girl

by Pat Burson

A Tri-Cities High School senior fighting for his choice "to be a girl" has remained away from school for nearly three weeks because of an impasse with Fulton County school officials, who have ruled that he cannot come to school anymore dressed as a girl.

Principal Herschel Robinson recently informed Nicholas Ricks, 17, who has been cross-dressing since last spring and considers himself a pre-operative transsexual, that he "would have to dress appropriately until the medical and legal documentation came in to state that he was a girl."

Dr. Herschel Robinson said provisions have been made for Nicholas to use restrooms in the administrative suite and to use the coaches' office to change if he takes physical education. However, the principal said, the student will be allowed to dress as a female only if he has the medical and legal documentation.

Meanwhile, Nicholas's mother, Kathleen Baber, is irate with Dr. Robinson and other school officials for not responding to her pleas for help last spring, when she first discovered her son was dressing as a girl at school.

She is still distraught. "It's like watching your son die, and nobody will help you," she said, crying.

Nicholas says he wants the freedom to express himself as a female, especially now that he is undergoing hormone therapy, altering his physique and voice.

"I feel just like a girl," he said during an interview Friday at his family's home. "If I'm not going to be a boy for my mom, I'm not going to be a boy for anybody else, and I'm sure not going to be a boy for the public school system."

He considers himself a transsexual because he "psychologically identifies with the opposite sex," he explained, citing the definition in a dictionary.

"That's me. I'm making that choice," he said. "Right now, I'm a boy. I'm choosing to be a girl."

Nicholas said he started altering his appearance last spring, occasionally coming to school in makeup and feminine attire. "I dress like the dress code is in the book for the girls," he said.

He said the school's dress code should be rewritten. "I want them to say a boy can wear a dress," he said. "I want something to be done for other students like me," he said, suggesting that other students are hiding their sexual identities.

Nicholas now uses a female name and a new surname, but asked that his

new identity not be disclosed. He said he plans to have a sex-change operation in a few years.

Ms. Baber acknowledges that part of her anger at the school is from frustration over her son's behavior. "I want to beat them up for not helping me, [but] I know it's not their fault."

School officials and Nicholas say they have discussed the possibility of his going to an alternative school district for students who have difficulty in traditional school settings. But Ms. Baber, whose permission is required for such a transfer, is worried about what might happen there, and said she wants reassurance from school officials.

School spokeswoman Elizabeth Ackerman said this case is unique, but a sign of the times. "I think it's the beginning of what we will see more of in schools."

Dallas Denny, with the Atlanta-based American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc. (AEGIS), a national information publisher and referral service, suggested that the family seek counseling and include school officials so that a compromise might be struck.

Intentionally using the feminine pronoun, Ms. Denny said of Nicholas, "She's entitled to an education, and she shouldn't have to be a boy to get it."

Local lawyers say the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled repeatedly that students do not have unlimited rights in public schools.

"I think it's a hard case," said Georgia State University law professor Stephen Wermiel. "I think the courts that have the best argument are those that say the burden is on the school officials to demonstrate that their codes are reasonable. In this case, if they are willing to accommodate some of the student's privacy interests, it doesn't make sense to me to prohibit him from dressing as he pleases within the dress code limits."

Michael Hauptman, past president of the Georgia chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, said, "He can probably get something from his physician that he was going through the process and add that at this point in time, except for the surgical procedure, he is a female. Then I think the school will have a hard time saying he can't dress as a woman, especially if the physician says it's best for his mental and physical health."

*When we last heard from "Nicholas," she was back in school, attending at an alternative location—Ed.*



I'm gratified to know that AEGIS has become heir to the original Erickson Educational Foundation's Guideline and informational booklets. Zelda Supplee, Executive Director of EEF, was responsible for the publication of those booklets. I served as one of her primary educational consultants and advisors. When the EEF folded, its information service was taken over by Paul Walker, Ph.D., who did his post-doctoral training with me. When he became ill, Sister Mary Elizabeth took over, and now it is your turn. Congratulations, and good luck.

— John Money, Ph.D.  
The Johns Hopkins University

I have been very much impressed with the look and content of *Cbrysalis Quarterly* since I saw your first edition. I have always found the information contained in the quarterly appropriate, accurate, and meaningful. When we received your last edition, Volume 1, Number 4, I was very interested to see what you had in store for us. I was rather surprised to see that you had two features named, "There and back again: The Trinidad Experience" and "Sorry, Charlie: The Brussels Experience."

While I understand that Ingersoll Center has no trademark claims to the name "The Trinidad Experience" and "The Brussels Experience," I feel it is very unfortunate that those names were chosen for the articles printed in *Cbrysalis*. My fear comes from the potential for confusion that may be a consequence of this occurrence.

I sincerely hope that you will notify your readers that this conflict has come to your attention and that the stories printed in your magazine are in no way excerpted from, or are not representative of, the content of the publications copyrighted by Ingersoll Center or Ingersoll Press. I am very much concerned that your readers, who are not aware of these facts, may assume that these stories are in fact the same as our publications. As you

may know, our publications are concerned with the facts surrounding the surgeries in Trinidad and Brussels and not the experiences traveling to each particular site of surgery.

I thank you for your help in this situation. I very much respect the work AEGIS does and hope your organization and Ingersoll can work together on many significant projects to better both the lives of and understanding of the gender community.

— Robyn Allison Ellis  
Executive Director  
Ingersoll Gender Center

*We apologize for appropriating the names of Ingersoll's fine publications, even if in the subheadings of the articles. We in fact meant the articles to illuminate the experiences of traveling to exotic and faraway places, and so complement Ingersoll's "The Brussels Experience" and "The Trinidad Experience," which deal with the actual mechanics of readying oneself for and going through sex reassignment surgery with, respectively, Dr. Michel Seghers and Dr. Stanley Biber. We consider the Ingersoll booklets must read for those headed to either surgeon, and have consistently recommended them when we have made referrals to Dr. Seghers or Dr. Biber. Our readers will know now that the content of our article and your booklets are completely different (although complementary) and that our choice of subtitles was indeed unfortunate—Ed.*

*"The Brussels Experience" and "The Trinidad Experience" are available from Ingersoll Gender Center, 1812 East Madison, #106, Seattle, WA 98122-2843 (Phone 206-329-6651) for \$10 each plus \$1 for postage and handling.*

As we discussed at the Holiday en Femme, I am most anxious to let it be known that Tri-ess absolutely welcomes female-to-male crossdressers, their spouses and families, as full voting members of Tri-ess. Obviously, we will have to create ministries especially for them. Having both talked and written to several female-to-male crossdressers, it appears

that their needs and thought processes are much the same as those of male-to-female crossdressers. It will take time to work with our new female-to-male members, learn their needs, and respond to them appropriately. The first female-to-male crossdresser to break the barrier then, must be a person of deep understanding and empathy. As you know, my commitment to including female-to-male crossdressers is heartfelt and absolute, and I would appreciate any help you could give me as to how to minister to their needs, what organizations to write, or any other help with which you can possibly supply me. My intentions are honorable, but I feel rather like a waif in a dark forest, and I don't want to step on the toes of established female-to-male support organizations.

— Jane Ellen Fairfax  
Chairman of the Board, Tri-Ess

*Any fears we may have had that Tri-Ess is transphobic were dispelled when Jane bestowed upon a post-operative transsexual woman a Friends of Tri-Ess award in November at the Holiday en Femme, the Tri-Ess national convention, which, conveniently enough, was held eight miles down the road from my house. Jane is taking Tri-Ess in exciting directions, increasing the outreach to spouses and, as her letter at tests, to female crossdressers. Jane can be reached by writing her at Box 1105, Alief, TX 77411-1105. AEGIS is equally interested in female-to-male issues—Eds.*

Your advertisement, "Dangerous Curves," has been passed on to me by Carol Joubert of the South African Transsexual Research Unit. Please be assured that it will appear in the pages of our magazine, *Fanfare*, at the earliest opportunity.

We are excited at the work that AEGIS has undertaken. We feel that it is important and vital and in the interest of our worldwide community. Please believe that you have our wholehearted encouragement and support.

— P. Pines  
Overseas Coordinator

## Children of the Night

Or Carmel Re-Vamped

Cheryl Haynes

With solemn yet predictable tread  
The ball-clock paces out the few remaining seconds to  
midnight.

Sonorously the chimes announce the hour.  
Pendulous tones reverberate against solid oak paneling.

Outside the night lies icily clear over the marshes  
As the moon's silvered beams play fitfully  
Across a barren landscape.  
Pencil-thin clouds drift sluggishly across the face of the  
moon.

And... from across the valley  
Comes the languid cry of a wolf.

Carmel... his gaze transfixed, stares  
Panic stricken at his delicate hands.  
With growing unease he feels an unearthly chill  
Solemnly begin to ascend his spine.  
Unable to move he sits there... spell bound  
As his nails, once again, lengthen  
And display their pearlescent hue.

Watches, with mounting tension, as his facial hair  
Vanishes  
And his skin takes on a soft, peach-like quality.

Slowly now, delicate tints start to appear around his eyes  
And yes... he notes  
His lips once again begin to assume that deep glossy red  
hue,  
And a cruel sensual smile now plays upon them.  
Parting them slightly reveals pearly...  
Needle-sharp teeth.

Furtively he pulls aside the curtains,  
For her hunger is mounting.  
The moon is now fully ascended in the heavens.

Tormentedly he returns to his observations,  
Noting every minute of change,  
Fascination and terror sweetly, subtly, blending.  
Arching his back now he feels the pinch of her basque  
Constricting his movements in a pattern of her choosing.

Long glossy black tresses now cascade loosely about his  
Shoulders  
Lying frothily on her beaving bosom.  
Next he senses heavy swaths of red satin molding

Themselves about her body as a long black cape  
Cascades down her back.  
Exotic scents invade her nostrils  
Making senses swirl through iridescent pools of violet  
Light.

In the silvered half-light of the room she stands...  
A tall, gaunt, raven-like figure... newly born  
De Broudis.  
Staring wide-eyed and free of the reflection as...  
Gradually... it begins to fade away.

For Carmel has now vanished...  
Carmilla remains... and but for a brief... fleeting moment.  
"The night is far too short," she observes caustically...  
Then, she too, is gone...

"Was that a light rustle I heard  
Upon the night air?  
Close the French windows, dear.  
I feel a chill coming on."

Across the courtyard a bat squeak of sexuality is heard  
As the curtains of the room flutter listlessly...  
In the cool breeze.

Carmilla makes good her escape  
Shrouded in the black satin folds of night.

Too soon, the golden streaks of dawn will summon  
Her back... or:

Will her elfin pride prevent her from bearing the call  
And will she, as so many of her sisters have done before,  
Risk the savage glare of sunlight?  
Will she, too, be tempted... I wonder?  
Tempted to remain and usher in the dawn.

Or... return again in frenzied haste  
To the coolness, shade, and safety of his room.  
There to partake of that state akin to suspended animation.  
Removed from ignorance and intolerance  
Her appetites once more whetted by her nocturnal  
Visitations.

Suffice it to say...  
She will not return without leaving her mark.  
And who knows, yet maybe another sister may soon  
Spread her wings in the cool night air.

For those who would be safe... don't venture out  
Of a full moon, and...  
Be on the look-out for needle-sharp teeth.

Unless you'd like to get bitten, that is...?

Reprinted from *Narcissus*

## *A Splendor of Gender*

### *Of ASPs and GAPs in Genderbet Soup*

by Billie Jean Jones

*Here and there in the "Splendor of Gender" theme articles we've placed quotes from Wendy Parker's "The Gender Community: Where are we going in the nineties?" which first appeared in IFGE's TV-TS Tapestry. In it, she discusses the divisiveness in the gender community, pointing out, as did Benjamin Franklin at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, "We must all hang together, or assuredly, we shall all hang separately." We recall that Franklin also said, "Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into disputation, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinburgh." We don't necessarily share Franklin's prejudices, nor Billie Jean's about "WHIMs."*

**A** B C D E F G — now I know my X Y Zees. Oh, the alphabet (you better, you bet, you bet), these letter sets (and associated subtexts)— Oh language, thou foul seducer of deducing minds (if I can just find mine I'll be fine); thou stinking cauldron of mucky mire (one moment please, I'll soon tire); thou shrieking semblance of sentience (there, I'm done with this sentence).

*What's it all about, Alfie?*

QW# @HBFDCXZ!!!

*Come again?*

Excuse me, I just needed to get that out of my system— a little blast of energy to stir the alphabet soup— get the letters all stirred up, some forming tantalizing strings, acronyms, abbreviations, words. I was getting lost in the musings of what they might mean— that is, if words had formed I would be getting lost in their meanings, but when they are partially formed I tend to get lost in what they might form.

*You definitely lost me— what the hell are you talking about?*

I wasn't, actually. I was just getting started. See, I needed to shift the 'ol transmission from the whirling motor of emotions, images, feelings, thoughts and transliterate them into finite letters and words, even though much will be lost in the translation— language, after all, is just an abstraction.

*Could you just skip the abstract transition and get to the point, please?*

There may not be a point because everything is a process, so at best, this is just a point in the process, and since the process is constantly evolving, the point...

*Come on, I see the letter lying right next to the keyboard— you're supposed to be writing an article on gender diversity for Chrysalis Quarterly— like, cool it with the transmission, transliteration, translation stuff and get on with transgender, transsexual, transvestite stuff.*

Yeah, that's true... ya know, if there was a lotta diversity I could be writing about something more meaningful than the limitations inherent in a "Good 'Ol Boys" (GOB) club— Hey! that's a good one for the gender alphabet since gobs and gobs of White Heterosexual Identified Males (WHIMs) keep the Genderbet soup stirred up all the time anyway... ya know, sometimes I think I see some cross-dresser bored outta their gourd walk over to a notebook and start scribbling—a WHIM, mind you, one-o-those pale penis people who, on a whim decides they got it together and need to "set the world straight"—

some kinda acronym/abbreviation, new word thing that defines who everybody else is (or should be). So anyway, this half-imagined pinhead, who only exists somewhere in the wispy tendrils of what passes for my mind, carves their logo on their sword and shield and sets forth to slay the dragons lurking just outside, or, at any rate, to slay the imagined dragons that threaten world peace and the virginity of maidens everywhere. Yes indeedee. And, not only will this WHIM protect the maidens, who embody the spirit of the Goddess Of Our Femininity (GOOF), this WHIM will guise itself in the image of the Goddess so as to fool the dragon into an early demise. Soon, the WHIM warrior believes, the grateful populace will erect GOB castles across the land and gather within to sing songs of praise to the GOOF, and the Purity Of Cross-dressing (POC) will be protected evermore.

*Excuse me, I don't think that's the kind of article Dallas wants for CQ.*

Well, what do ya think about the GOOFy image of GOB castles POC-marking the landscape of WHIM CD turf?

*In a literary sense, you are out on the edge, if not already over the edge. Maybe you should rest and start over.*

I don't feel cranky, so I must not need a nap. Besides, I'm having fun, which is an indicator that I'm on my path— perhaps it is you who needs a nap.

*Brat.*

*Killjoy.*

*Airhead.*

Okay, okay, I've had enough— what else can you show me?

*I can't show you anything— I live inside your head, remember? You're the one who "shows." So show.*

Dear reader (gentle or otherwise), please forgive this display of dialogue between myself. We have this proclivity to interject our selfness onto the universe as if we were the center (which we are) without allowing for other perspectives (which we aren't) when we are writing. We often believe it is because we don't have anyone else living with us, and the best exposure we have to other perspectives comes from listening and reading. While we are immensely interested in news and events from Gen-

derland, and are in fact, experienced Gender Explorers, most of the voices we listen to and read are rather WHIMSICAL (as is our entire culture). During some of our early explorations we scratched up the patriarchal filters of our lenses, and since then we don't see things the way we used to. In our early daze, we were excited that this may have happened to other Gender Explorers, but more and more this seems to not be the case at all.

We were at a loss as to why more people didn't explore the vastness of Genderland rather than quickly traversing from one coast to another. We could understand the dysphoric traveler making passage post haste, but the greater number of traveler/explorers we have met here and there have not been dysphoric— just somewhat confused.

The more we explored, the more our lenses got scratched, and soon we could see that gender was just an arbitrary, binary division of people by earlier WHIM warriors to enforce CONTROL by first Dividing and then Conquering. Without our filter we "read" the story of Noah's Ark as a historical account of the drowning of Ambiguously Sexed Peoples (ASPs) and Gender Alternative Persons (GAPs) so that the binary "purity" of defined sex and gender could be "cleansed" and maintained as an absolute—and, absolutely dominated by WHIMs—without any gap in either-or. We tried different lenses, no lenses, bifocals, trifocals—we tried many times but have not found much "Truth" behind the veil of gender. We hold gender to be a construct; a masking device; an "act"— a requirement to participate "on the stage of life" (where each must play their part).

Many Transsexually Inclined Persons (TIPs) reveal this by stating, "I always felt like I was 'acting' the man's/woman's role." We hold that every person "acts" a gender. Those who begin to perceive their own act are "seeing" the puppeteer behind the puppet; they are "hearing" the "real" voice coming from the lips of the ventriloquist; they are "sensing" the thinker behind the thought. For many TIPs this preliminary

sense of "revelation" seems to compel action— but rather than continue with deconstructing the entire "act" of gender, TIPs switch roles and book passage coast to coast through the mists of Genderland.

Into this twilight zone of Genderland, a non-transsexually inclined GAP explorer encounters massive inflexibility—the transcendental polarity of the "changer/changed" and the "natural" polarity of the "organic" both pointing to the culturally foundational assumption of binary gender—a flimsy foundation to build rigid role rules on. (What is the gender of a true hermaphrodite?)

In our own gender explorations, we have acted variations within the two formally written roles, and we have glimpsed ourselves as different aspects of the same "person," regardless. We have also caught sight of ourselves co-mingled and questioned what, exactly, we saw or perceived— what gender are we in transition? And because we are intermittently transposing, and co-mingled at times both in the presentation sense and in the perceptive sense, we call us "it" because we can not be gender-specific; we know we are "other," whether that is "the third sex" or "the third gender" is less significant than knowing we are not either-or, and that we don't have to be only either-or. (What clothing and accessories would a true hermaphrodite possess?)

Marjorie Garber, in *Vested Interests*, makes and reiterates the point that *people look through the cross-dresser* (or transvestite) rather than at them. Many people seem to look through transvestism to see gender; many more look through to see sexuality; some see through to theater. When one looks (if one can) directly at a cross-dresser, what is it?

Sometimes we take our selves out to "Genderland" and mix it up with other ingredients in the Genderbet soup— but we don't find much diversity because the active clubs/organizations, publications and especially the events, are orientated toward and dominated by GOOF WHIMs, whether they are CD-TV, TG or TS. The real diversity in Genderland is excluded by the

*Concluded on page 41*

*Christine has worked in a variety of mental health settings, ranging from highly traditional day treatment programs, halfway houses, and crisis facilities to highly non-traditional programs such as the Tenderloin Self-Help Center. Additionally, she attended JFK University in Orinda, California, where she majored in trans-personal psychology. She is currently a Counseling Supervisor with the Tenderloin Self-Help Center.*

## *A Splendor of Gender*

### *Homeless Transsexuals: The Problem We Never Talk About*

*by Christine Tayleur*

**H**omeless people are treated like pariahs by this society. The welfare department blames them for being poor, the police treat them like criminals and assume that they are drug addicts or, if female, prostitutes, and the general populace avoids them whenever possible. Along with the usual problems homeless people face—discrimination in employment, hygiene problems, finding shelter and food—the male-to-female transsexual faces many additional burdens. (I have confined myself to the male-to-female here, because she is usually the most visible, though most of these problems are applicable to the female-to-male).

Because they are perceived as being lower in status than other persons, transsexuals are especially at risk as victims of violence. It's assumed that the police don't care what happens to them, and this is unfortunately all too often the case in a patriarchal, sexist, and homophobic society. On the street, the transsexual is subject to harassment, rape, and other kinds of violence. People become very threatened by a male dressing as a female, and so transsexuals are subject to a rather intense form of homophobia that I call "trans-phobia." When transsexuals become victims of this trans-phobia, there are few services to assist them.

The homeless transsexual is particularly subject to discrimination in getting her basic needs met. She faces all the problems of other homeless women, and in addition has facial and body hair to deal with—and, because she is homeless, it is difficult to obtain the hygiene supplies, soap, shampoo, razors, makeup, and other supplies she will need to maintain a presentable appearance. The transsexual woman needs cosmetics to cover facial hair. She has to try to find and maintain a hormone prescription, for she needs estrogens to reduce body hair, slow down beard growth, and maintain a feminine body shape. Similarly, the female-to-male needs androgens to maintain a male appearance, stop the menses, create a male voice, and develop other male secondary sex characteristics such as facial and body hair. In our culture, a woman is expected to maintain her appearance to a much greater extent than a man. And a transsexual has to work twice as hard to be considered half as good as a non-transsexual.

There are only two shelters in San Francisco that have a formal policy on the admission of transsexuals. These shelters segregate transsexuals from the general population and assign them specific beds (separate but equal, anyone?) They require the individual to have identification for the gender in which they are living. If you are homeless and penniless, the six dollars

system has a few beds, but this may be inappropriate for an addict who needs drug or alcohol detoxification services.

These are just some of the problems faced by the homeless transsexual. The discrimination and harassment that she faces makes life particularly difficult, contributes to mental illness and substance abuse, and may force her into drug-dealing or prostitution.

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*Fear and ignorance together create a catalyst in society for violence. Street Queens and Gay prostitutes in drag are usually ostracized from most gender groups—Wendy Parker*

---

required by the Department of Motor Vehicles, which issues identity cards, can seem like a fortune. Furthermore, in order to get identification in the appropriate gender, one has to have a physician's signature, and a doctor's visit costs around forty dollars. These shelters do not have the same requirements for nontranssexuals. This seems patently unfair and discriminatory.

Homelessness can cause many types of mental illness, and it exacerbates existing conditions. Some transsexuals, like other homeless people, are former mental patients. Many were turned out on the streets because of the closure or reduction in funding of many transitional housing programs for the mentally ill that took place during the Reagan era. Many homeless people suffer from war-like stress symptoms similar to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or "Vietnam Veteran's Syndrome." Transsexuals have these same pressures, in addition to the already stressful burden of being gender-conflicted. Furthermore, many homeless transsexuals are themselves Vietnam veterans who were highly decorated combat veterans, and are themselves suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in addition to gender dysphoria, and sometimes from substance abuse or mental illness problems as well—not to mention all of the problems attendant on being homeless.

Transsexuals who have problems with substance abuse have limited options, as few public inpatient programs will accept them. Most programs don't know how to work with transsexuals, or simply won't. The mental health

There are possibly more transgendered people in the Bay Area than in any other metropolitan area of the United States. In the desperate hope of finding help for their problems, many transsexuals come to San Francisco because of its reputation for being a "gay Mecca." Unfortunately, they find that most of the services are private, or are oriented to gay men and don't want to deal with them.

The vast majority of San Francisco's transsexuals are hard-working, stable members of society. Some are engineers, computer programmers, attorneys, psychologists, or physicians. Others are waitresses, beauticians, or laborers. These people who can pay have access to the many private services available for transsexually-identified people. Those who are homeless and penniless don't.

San Francisco has a long history and a great reputation for tolerance and respect for diversity. It was the site for the signing of the UN Charter, which was supposed to guarantee food, shelter, clothing, and medical care for the citizens of the signing countries. However, San Francisco is not living up to its great historical traditions, and is doing a great disservice to this vulnerable minority. The city needs more services specifically targeted to and sensitive to the needs of gender and sexual minorities, as well as other minorities.

The lack of human services for transsexuals and other gender and sexual minorities is nothing short of a violation of human rights. ♀♂

## *The TSHC: Every City Needs One*

The Tenderloin Self-Help Center is a nontraditional, alternative community resource and counseling agency targeting the needs of San Francisco's community. The Tenderloin is a densely populated, multi-ethnic inner-city neighborhood with a significant transsexually-identified minority population. The TSHC offers one-on-one peer-oriented counseling, community education and support groups, referrals, and advocacy services.

Transgender support services include a general support group and an addiction support group for transgendered women and men, and several peer counselors who are themselves transsexual people in various stages of transition. In early 1993, the TSHC will begin outreach services to the transsexual prostitute community and an employment service for transgendered persons.

*Tenderloin Self-Help Center  
191 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 554-0518*

## Case Vignettes

### Jo-Ann

Jo-Ann is a 20 year-old transsexual woman who is often homeless. She suffers from AIDS. Jo-Ann is a beautiful person: warm, intelligent, thoughtful, and courteous. She is an attractive-looking woman, especially when she makes an effort. She stands about 5'7" and weighs about a hundred and sixty-five pounds. She has straightened hair, light chocolate skin, and long, feminine eyelashes.

Jo-Ann is from Kentucky. She has two siblings—a brother slightly older than her, and a sister who is even older. When she was growing up, chaos was king in her family. Her father, an illiterate alcoholic and the descendant of share-croppers, physically and sexually abused her throughout her childhood and early adolescence. Her mother was a hyper-religious fundamentalist Christian who conveniently overlooked the abuse.

Because of her feminine appearance and mannerisms, and because she was a person of color in an almost all-white school, her early life was traumatic at best. The bullies would beat her up, and she got suspended from school for wearing womens' clothes. Her parents had her committed to the state mental hospital because of acting-out in school and crossdressing. When she came back, nothing had changed—the family was still as dysfunctional as ever, if not worse.

When she "came out" to her family, Jo-Ann's parents both rejected her. She was kicked out of the house at age sixteen. On the streets, she was forced into prostitution in order to survive.

Life on the streets is hard for anybody, but for a teen-aged transsexual prostitute of color, it is fraught with danger. Jo-Ann was at risk for victimization by the other street people, the customers, the police, pimps, and others. In the midst of her stress-filled and often violent life, Jo-Ann tried to maintain hormones, learn to dress and present herself as a woman, and save money for electrolysis. She

dreamed of a breast operation and sex reassignment surgery, but the money was never enough.

Jo-Ann became addicted to drugs and alcohol. At age 19, she moved to San Francisco, where she kept getting into abusive relationships with men. The men were themselves often alcoholic or drug-addicted, although sometimes they would ostensibly be in recovery. They were always abusive, and would beat her severely.

Last year, Jo-Ann got into recovery. She was diagnosed with AIDS at the same time. She ran off to New England, where she became involved with two lesbian women. They took advantage of her, stealing her money and involving her in a variety of illegal and dangerous scams. Finally, after a terrible winter, unable to maintain hormones or get adequate health care, she returned to San Francisco. Since then, she has continued to spend time in bars, and occasionally gives in to temptation and gets loaded. She periodically engages in prostitution. She still feels the need for the attention of sleazy men and the stage lights of the Black Rose, a filthy and dangerous Tenderloin hangout for transsexual prostitutes.

Jo-Ann at least uses condoms on a regular basis, which she gets from us at the Tenderloin Self-Help Center. We have connected her with various AIDS agencies, from which she gets free AZT, and which offer free counseling. We have helped her to get Supplemental Security Income, although it doesn't provide her with enough money to pay rent and utilities and still eat, and so she turns the occasional trick.

Jo-Ann checks in with us once or twice a week, when her lifestyle and disease threaten to overwhelm her. She knows that when she is finally ready to commit herself to a serious course of recovery and get help, we will be there for her.

### Elisabeth

Not all transsexuals who live in the Tenderloin are condemned to misery, poverty, and addiction. One young woman, formerly troubled, is a genuine success.

Elisabeth is a 32 year-old Caucasian transsexual woman. She stands about 5'10 and has beautiful brown eyes and dark blonde hair. For almost two-and-a-half years she has been in recovery from a heroin habit of long standing. She is a strikingly beautiful woman.

Elisabeth comes from a middle-class family from Santa Clara, California. Her father was an Air Force officer who divorced her mother when she was seven. Elisabeth always blamed herself for the divorce when she was growing up. Her mother, a recovering alcoholic, works at a major department store in San Jose.

Elisabeth spent four years in the Navy, where she learned computer programming. It was in the Navy that she began to use hard drugs to ease the pain of feeling like a woman trapped in a man's body. She had joined the Navy to try to "make a man out of herself," for she had been crossdressing in her mother's and sister's clothing since she was a small child. During high school, she had started drinking and hanging out with the "stoners," the drug-using crowd. She indulged in alcohol and marijuana and occasionally used other drugs, but it was in the military that she started using heroin.

After being discharged in 1984, Elisabeth moved into the Tenderloin and started taking female hormones and doing female impersonation in bars. She continued using drugs. She became caught up in prostitution, and the drugs continued to dominate her life. She was often homeless.

In 1989, Elisabeth came to the TS/TV Addiction Group at the Tenderloin Self-Help Center. The group saved her life. Because of the non-traditional, alternative approach, and because of the other transsexuals there, she was able to attend and graduate from a 30-day VA detoxification program, which she entered as a man (it would not have been available to her as a woman). About six months later, she gave up prostitution.

These days, Elisabeth is working as a computer programmer for a major firm in San Mateo County. She is considering returning to school to get a master's degree in psychology so that she can work with other transsexuals. She lives in a nice apartment in Oakland, and is now 2 1/2 years clean and sober.

*Billy Tipton  
was a jazz  
musician.*

*When he died,  
in 1989,  
television  
and  
newspaper  
sources  
proclaimed*

*him to have  
been a woman  
who had lived  
as a man in  
order to be a  
jazz musician.  
“He gave up  
everything,”  
they said. They  
were wrong.*

*He didn’t give  
up anything,  
for he wasn’t a  
woman.*

**Billy Tipton was a (choose one):**

- a. woman
- b. lesbian
- c. crossdresser
- ✓ d. man

AEGIS  
P.O. Box 33724  
Decatur, GA 30033

*The gay  
community  
was quick to  
proclaim Billy  
as a lesbian.  
They were  
wrong, too.  
Billy wasn’t a  
lesbian,  
either.*

*Billy was  
married, with  
three adopted  
sons. His  
family did  
not know of  
his female  
anatomy,  
but they  
knew*

*something the  
newspaper  
and television  
and gay press  
didn’t— that  
Billy Tipton  
was a man.*

Billy Tipton lived and died as a man. His life was not an imposture, and the notion that he was anything less than a man is a denial of everything that he was. Hands off! He’s one of ours!



Harry Benjamin began treating transsexual people in New York City at a time when it was impossible to find treatment anywhere else in the United States. His 1966 textbook, "The Transsexual Phenomenon" was the first written in the U.S. The foremost organization for professionals in the field of gender dysphoria is named after him.

## Harry Benjamin, M.D.

### A Remembrance

by Henrietta Thomas

Stephen Jay Gould, a brilliant and influential scientist, wrote in the September 1991 issue of *Natural History*, "Ultimate judgment must reside on a criterion of utility. All good science is accumulative. No one can get everything right the first time..." Further along in his article, "Unenchanted Evening," Gould adds, "We must have visceral contact in order to love." These quotations describe Dr. Harry Benjamin and his relationships with patients.

After a long practice which began before World War I, Dr. Benjamin, by then an established, though maverick, endocrinologist with a particular interest in geriatrics, was approached in 1948 by his friend, the eminent Dr. Alfred Kinsey, to examine an individual who did not fit into Kinsey's perceived scheme of sexual orientation. Reports have it that this person was very feminized, but was not a physical pseudohermaphrodite—nor, apparently, a transvestite. A decision was made to send the person to Europe, where it was possible to treat his/her condition, which Dr. Benjamin felt was causing unrelieved mental distress.

In this way, Dr. Benjamin began a new practice of treating transsexuals, and for quite a while no one else seemed to take on such patients. In 1954, when I made my first appointment, his total transsexual practice was an awkward squad of dissonantly different sorts of gender-confused patients which had scarcely passed the two dozen count—not nearly enough for conclusions or classifications.

An interjection is necessary at this point. In 1949, a physician who devoted all his time and energies to research issued a short monograph in which he described a syndrome identifying certain very rare persons as having been born female, albeit incompletely, and whose postnatal growth and development masked or erased much or most evidence of feminization. Because of some undisclosed genetic cause and anomalous embryological events, neurological differentiation was somehow inhibited. Thus, a female nervous system—a female brain, as it were, developed, incubating the present notion of "being a woman trapped in a male body." David Cauldwell, M.D., was the insightful explicator and theorist. He coined the word transsexual.

By his term *transexual*, Dr. Cauldwell meant a bridging of genders with no direct reference to sexual preference or orientation. I gathered that the syndrome was a form, though newly described, of intersexuality, but without the obvious features of such esoteric curiosities as hermaphroditism (exceedingly rare) or pseudohermaphroditism (rare enough). At that time, the medical literature was beginning to pay attention to chromosomal mysteries like Klinefelter's syndrome and Turner's syndrome. Dr. John Money of Johns Hopkins University was and is the authority on such cases.

I did not come across Dr. Cauldwell's contribution until 1954, but once I did, I lost no time in contacting him. Dr. Cauldwell was a compassionate and generous man. He told me he believed there was no cure for transsexualism, only alleviation and coping.

As he did not care to have a patient practice, Dr. Cauldwell suggested that I make an appointment with Dr. Benjamin.

Tragic it is when someone of empathy, of innovative synthesis, and who gives generously of his time, passes away quite young, with much left undone. Dr. Cauldwell affected the course of my life profoundly. Incidentally, for the sake of historic accuracy, his coinage had one "s": *transexualism*. My call to Dr. Benjamin's office was rewarded with a friendly voice. His nurse scheduled an appointment. The venue was a Park Avenue address just above Hunter College. It looked and was "big time." Other patients—not dysphoric—were of the wealthy set, with chauffeured vehicles at the curb.

Dr. Benjamin's entry was memorable and quite grand. He was short, bald, and elderly, and the epitome of professional dignity. He was clad, not surprisingly, in the ubiquitous white coat. He made me think of a grandfatherly figure, though, uh, not mine, to be sure. After inviting me to be seated alongside his desk in a room filled with shelves of books, he eased me into a conversation during which I described my feelings and alarming confusions, while he largely listened.

Dr. Benjamin extolled with great emphasis the virtues of being male: greater potential power, greater likelihood of superior earnings, greater esteem in the eyes of significant others, more upward mobility, and hence more satisfaction and reward—not to mention being in command sexually. While conversation with him was easy and forthright, I was really under a spell of telling persuasion. After all, the doctor was male and proud of it. He was astonished that I revealed no erotic drive or desire.

"Do you have erections in the morning?"

Taken off guard, I responded, "Are you supposed to?"

The doctor was incredulous. After further probing, he came to realize I was asexual, likely congenitally, and sterile. He was all for a two-prong remedial action. I was to be under the care of a psychiatrist, and also to receive masculinizing and maturational treatment through powerful injections of androgens and steroids. I had stopped maturing at age 11 or 12, he concluded. Well, better than "making a man of me" by joining the marines, and far less hazardous than purging via marriage, both frequent to-this-day disasters for transsexuals.

Was Dr. Benjamin's two-pronged approach a stumbling block? It was a veritable boulder in my path. Madame psychiatrist had little interest in exploring my feelings. I was then sent to a clinician of the Adlerian school, who suggested being in the very activities in which I was already fully participating. She dolefully let me know a couple of very funny dreams I described were symptomatic of impending emotional doom. Dr. Benjamin was livid. He regarded the two as analogous to the "know-nothings" of 19th century political history. "Forget them! Forget them all!" he added, "I will provide your therapy." He very gravely counseled, "Do not discuss your feelings with another physician, whether your family doctor or some specialist. They have no experience or empathetic insight."

Within a year, although by now pushing forty, I launched into a new

career as a guidance counselor, having a clientele of children and youth. While this seems a paradox, most of my work actually was with adults—parents and school personnel—including top administrators. Dr. Benjamin encouraged me enthusiastically. I was hell-bent to succeed and establish a reputation; I began to find it difficult to get over to New York from another state for checkups.

For a dozen years or more it was one rung up the ladder followed by another, with opportunities to travel, publish, and to become known as a risk-taking maverick, after all. Into discard went ties, suits, short hair and hiding a developed bosom.

However, I am getting ahead of myself. After I had made a more-than-fair effort as a guinea pig, Dr. Benjamin decided I was incurable. My physiological self rejected the maturation steroids and androgens. I remained unaroused in the morning or otherwise. No muscularity developed.

By that time the doctor had examined many patients with gender dysphoria, and he was in the throes of separating the wheat from the chaff. He of course eventually developed and published a taxonomy to accommodate what he regarded as types and possible permutations of gender dysphoria—the six stages. As a true scientist, today he would no doubt scrap his table in favor of new findings which are being empirically established.

As far as I can remember, Dr. Benjamin did not alter nomenclature. Transsexuals appeared to him to be of various intensities and intentions. He saw no need for such a vague and more all-embracing word as gender dysphoria. He did feel that differential diagnosis was most crucial. The establishment of the Benjamin Standards of Care followed his impetus and emphases. Today, those diagnostic centers which are of impeccable repute hew to the Standards.

Dr. Benjamin seemed to feel that my chameleon camouflage as a man provided protection from abuse and humiliation, for there are all too many

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Christine Beatty

## *A Splendor of Gender*

### *What is a Drag Queen?*

*by Christine Beatty*

*Goals of the nineties should include repairing, once and for all, the divisive schism of mistrust and discomfort that exists among several groups that have essentially the same overall political and social goals; goals of economic freedom and choice of lifestyles. The three groups consist of the Gay community, the Crossdressing community, and the Transsexual community. There has been an "uneasy alliance" that has traditionally existed between these groups. The transsexuals resented the crossdressers for not being as public with their desired expression of femininity and not experiencing the social ostracism and the job discrimination that a transsexual suffers, sometimes finding herself in a newly created economic "pink ghetto." On the other hand, strictly heterosexual crossdressing groups have been somewhat exclusive and discriminatory towards gays, bisexuals, and suspicious of the transsexuals and their needs in their newly acquired role of the opposite sex. The Gay community as a whole has felt that their tastes and goals were entirely different than that of the Gender community.— Wendy Parker*

W

ill somebody please tell me what a "drag queen" is? We all know what that means, don't we? A judge was once asked how he defined pornography, and his answer was, "I know it when I see it." Do we know a drag queen we see one?

"Drag queen" is a term often used to label certain elements of the cross-gender community. People who are ignorant of gender issues use it to denote any genetic male in a dress. Sometimes the name is used by gender people to describe themselves. Unfortunately, the label has also been used by some cross-gendered people to refer to others in a derogatory and exclusionary manner. As a community, we cannot afford this.

The gender community is as diverse as any other group in society, and probably the most discriminated against. Yet in the face of hostility, we find reasons to be separatists. For instance, some of us who feel we are more "respectable" to society tend to blame "drag queens," in part, for our poor social standing. To be certain, public attention often focuses on the most visible and colorful members of any minority. Yet it is no excuse for bashing them, verbally or otherwise. It does not give us a right to use labels judgementally.

Again, I ask: what are drag queens? Some of us have firm ideas about that, yet we should stay open-minded. Psychologists are not much use to us in this territory. Richard Docter admits in his book, *Transvestites and Transsexuals: Toward a Theory of Cross-Gender Behavior* (1988, Plenum Press—Ed.), that very little is known about the "homosexual" variations of cross-genderism, including primary transsexualism. The literature I have read seems to support this notion.

So what are drag queens? Some people believe that drag queens are members of the gay community. The fact is, however, that most transgendered people who get called drag queens are not really members of the gay community. To call them gay means that all transsexuals are homosexual except for the ones who choose sexual partners that are chromosomal opposites. Certainly, some gender people may identify as gay, but often they are gender ignorant and tend to view their sexuality using biologically-based labels.

Why would they do this? Several factors may contribute to this confusion with labels. The words "drag queen" have been used by some GIDAANT people (*GIDAANT stands for Gender Identity Disorder of Adolescence or Adulthood, Nontranssexual Type, a diagnostic label in the DSM III-R— these are the people called transgenderists—Ed.*) and even by a number of pre-operative transsexuals to describe themselves. Often, these are people who find

position that we "proper" transsexuals should help out our prostitute sisters when we can, but otherwise distance ourselves as much as possible. (Remember, crab lice can jump ten feet!) How are we supposed to provide any kind of role model at arm's length?

Most of the cross-gendered prostitutes I have known— and I have known at least a hundred— come from poor families and/or were runaways at an early age. Given the high cost of

tus) are of the late-onset variety. We often have a formal education and some job skills behind us. We have seldom, if ever, experienced life on the street for an extended period of time, especially at a younger age. We have never known some of the pressures that these "drag queens" have. Can we imagine what it must be like to be a teenager who wants to change his or her sex and has only "drag queens" for role models? Can we further imagine how hard it can be to break out of that life after a number of years?

I believe that the judgmental term of "drag queen" is sometimes applied in envy. In some cases, we get into transition too late to be pretty girls, and have to settle for just "passing" (when we can). The ones we call queens are often young and pretty. Let's face it; it's a stereotypically feminine trait to be catty, but let's not do so at the expense of these girls.

If we want to help them, we first need to realize that some of them are having fun being prostitutes. As a former hooker, I can attest that the job can actually be fun for a while. Really! It can also serve as a validation of one's femininity. Yet, it does get old. If you get into a cycle where you are hopelessly addicted or don't believe you can do anything else to support yourself, then you are really stuck. We who are better off are in a position to do a more positive form of mentorship, yet we can't do it if we isolate and exclude the "drag queens."

Gender education and rehabilitation are jobs that cannot be done at arm's length. We must support our sisters in more than word alone. It will take work on our part. For instance, it is very difficult for the pre-op TS or the TG to get into an inpatient recovery program as a woman. Faced with the prospect of being forced to live as men (something very damaging to our identity), most of them don't go into drug programs. If we want to help our sisters, this is one area where we could do something.

So what is a drag queen? I got all the way through this article without establishing a concrete definition. Do you know why? Because there isn't one. ♣

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*The whole subject of homophobia in America is insufferably tedious, but, like it or not, this community will always be associated with traditional gay lifestyles as long as most people still feel that the only reason that we dress is to attract men. Outside of the obvious validation of femininity attention from males affords our own psyche, we know that is often not the specific intention. Nevertheless, we continue to be thought of as "Drag Queens" by the less educated in society— Wendy Parker*

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the longer "trans-" words pretentious or suggestive of psychopathology. There may be other reasons for eschewing these more clinical terms. Perhaps it is partly because "respectable" cross-gendered folk— people who call themselves transsexual— have excluded them. Why would they want to take on the labels of their detractors or even listen to them in the first place?

We still haven't defined "drag queen." I have never read anything that adequately defined that phrase. Docter reports that it is used to denote a gay male prostitute in drag, yet I have often heard the term applied to genderfolk who have never turned a trick in their life. Some people use the term to refer to gay male transvestites who have a male identity but occasionally dress as a woman for a variety of reasons. Others use it to refer to those who do female impersonation. With so many associated images, "drag queen" is a meaningless label that should be abandoned, especially by responsible professionals.

So let's talk about how we usually mean it: a cross-gendered person engaged in prostitution. I don't think that prostitution is a great way of life, yet I can't judge another for making that choice. I have seen some people in the gender community take the

transition, a minimum wage job would have left them without a chance to feminize their bodies. Being inexperienced, most such girls seek out "mentors" when they first get to a neighborhood such as San Francisco's Tenderloin district. These mentors are usually prostitutes who are doing well for themselves and who become role models for the newer girls. It is from such mentorships that gender ignorance and haphazard gender transition are perpetuated. It is too bad that many transsexuals who have done well for themselves disappear after they get their surgery and integrate into mainstream society; maybe if the younger girls had different role models, they wouldn't be prostitutes.

I care about this issue, and with good reason. Five years ago I was a full time transsexual prostitute— excuse me, drag queen. I am grateful that I went into transition with two years of college so that all I needed to do was get off drugs, make some decisions, and start over. I have done well for myself, yet I have never lost contact with my sisters out on the street who are struggling to survive. I have the luxury of seeing life from their perspective, as well as from that of professionals in the cross-gender community.

Most successful transsexuals I know (in terms of socioeconomic sta-

## *A Splendor of Gender*

### *When One of the Girls Goes To Jail*

by Octavia Johnson/Little John

*Octavia was luckier than she probably realizes. She didn't get raped, she didn't get physically abused, she didn't get locked away out of sight of society for years, and best of all, she didn't pick up as a John whoever it is who has murdered five transgendered persons in Atlanta during the past year-and-a-half (four of the five appear to have been prostitutes). She's working the streets again, and it's only a matter of time before she is again arrested, or worse. Here's hoping her luck holds out—Ed.*

**I**t was a slow Monday night when I was arrested. I was perched at my usual spot when a burgundy mini-van pulled up. A rather attractive man dressed in black slacks and a camouflage jacket got out. “Off the wall and on the ground,” he yelled.

I freaked. Me, arrested? Didn't these people have anything better to do? What would they do to me?

Unfortunately, these questions and many more I can't remember were answered within the next couple of hours.

Arrest procedure for prostitution is uncomfortable, at best. The once-adorable officer is transformed into a large, obnoxious rodent, spewing obscenities left and right. The big oaf had the nerve to grab my sexual organ and pronounce, “What do you know? We got one of them drag queens.” Drag queen, indeed! I didn't know whether to take that as a compliment for my realness, or as an insult for what I am.

He then asked me if I had AIDS or if I had needles in my purse. Then he handcuffed me. No matter how many times you play around with the idea, nothing is more horrifying or more final than the click of those cuffs.

On the way to jail, he asked me for both of my names— male and female. He then started cracking jokes about split personalities. The next set of questions were about how much I charged, how often I worked. Finally, he read me my rights. After that, he asked me how old I was. Then he asked if I had graduated from high school. When I said I was eighteen and yes, I had graduated, he sneered and said there was no reason for me to be hooking.

I was already crying. Really, how was he supposed to know why a girl went to work? How was he supposed to know my fears of being dependent upon another person? Did he know how hard it is for “one of those people” to get legitimate work? Thank the powers that be, I only had to listen to this guy's bullshit for fifteen minutes. I was damn near blubbing by the time we got to pretrial.

Pretrial wasn't any fun. They wouldn't let me touch up my makeup before they took my picture. They asked me again if I had AIDS. They let me make only one phone call. As I sat on the couch waiting to be booked, I watched the drug dealers and winos walking in and out of the phone booth. Several people asked me for cigarette money, or if I wanted to be their girlfriend. The most I could manage for the nice ones was a sob, as I started to cry again.

While I was sitting there, a sister walked through the door. As they assailed her with the same questions they had asked me, she saw me and winked and said she'd help me. As they escorted her back to the phones, I heard her cussing at the officers for not treating her with the respect due a lady.

I really hoped that this display was a ploy to get me under control, because seeing her like that made me roar with laughter. No matter how unhappy you are, a sister reading the cops the riot act is a sight to behold.

I was a little worried she wouldn't survive long enough to talk to me. But after another five minutes, she strolled around the corner, grinning like the cat who ate the canary. As far as realness goes, she wasn't much, but she was probably my salvation.

She said her name was Michelle. She had been arrested at about the same place as I, and for the same reason. Michelle was obviously a veteran to the situation, because she was all poise and grandeur. After talking with me for a while, she explained how things would go. Since neither of us had friends we could count on to bail us out, we would go to lockup. After being in the holding cell all night with ten "real men," we'd go to court in the morning.

Michelle stood guard while I slept. She had promised to waken me so I could take my turn, but the dear heart never did. The next morning, the other guys catcalled and snickered while we tried to relieve ourselves as privately as possible. That's not easy in a room full of guys.

Me and Michelle spent the morning fending off "real men" and exchanging tidbits about our lives. Around noon, everyone was rounded up and led to a smaller holding cell. At least this time they had the respect to separate Michelle and me from the other sleaze. Michelle told me we'd be going in front of the judge in a couple

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*Does the "community" we so casually refer to even exist, or is it merely wishful thinking on our part? Are we just a collection of individuals focusing on our own selfish goals, or do we have a larger altruistic agenda?—Wendy Parker*

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of hours. She stood in front of the bent piece of metal that served as a mirror, trying vainly to freshen up. I realized that I probably looked as disheveled as she. We were not allowed to put on makeup or take a shower or do any of the things a girl does before she leaves the house.

After Michelle and I had spent about three hours trying to fix each others' hair, some officers came in and handcuffed us together. Up to this point, I had had some peace of mind, but as soon as those cuffs went on, I got scared. Michelle looked at me and said, "What are you worried about? You're young white bread. The judge might even ask for your number."

As I've already said, Michelle was my salvation.

When we got to court, things happened rather quickly. We went to a holding cell and waited to be heard. Michelle said "After this, we'll probably be separated." What she said next appalled me. "There's a slight chance the judge will give you time. If that looks like it's going to happen, tell them that you have AIDS. I know I'm going to Jackson. I've been caught too many times. I can't protect you if you get sent up, so tell them you have AIDS. That way, you'll be separated and no one will be able to mess with you. They'll probably be afraid to touch you."

I was shocked. To tell such a wretched lie to make my life easier

seemed like blasphemy when I thought of friends who were dying of the disease. But when I went before the judge, I told him exactly what she had told me to say.

The judge was a man in his 60's who had probably the most twang in his voice I've ever had the misfortune to hear. He asked me only two questions: Was I guilty? Did I have \$250.00 to pay my fine? When I said yes to the first question and no to the second, he looked my way, and said, "Twenty days for idling and loitering for the solicitation of sex."

A sex offense. Minor, but still a sex offense. I cried all the way to the jail.

When I got to the jail, an officer named Sergeant Jackson asked if I was a sissy. I had learned an important lesson from Michelle: stand up for yourself. I looked that man in the eye and said, "Yes. Do you want to be one, too?" Not real snappy, I know, but it was all I could think of at the time. As I was paraded back to the medical ward, I felt a gush of relief. I knew I wasn't going to be harassed any more during this dreadful experience.

The medical ward was a row of twenty single cells with a central hallway and a common area called the day room. There were two other girls back there with me, Brandy and Lisa. They provided constant chatter and wonderment while I served my time.

I can honestly say that the rest of my stay was uneventful, except for the day I was released, when I was hassled again. As I said, this story was not to warn you, nor to make you leave my profession. This is just my account of what happened to me when I was arrested.

One of the worst things about the experience was that after spending the night in holding, I wasn't allowed to take a shower. I went to court feeling and looking less than perfect. And the whole time, I was treated like a deviant. They treated drug dealers like best buddies, but a nonviolent, non-threatening drag queen was ridiculed and harassed.

P.S. I wonder what happened to Michelle? ♀

*Gianna Eveling Israel is a paraprofessional counselor specializing in individual and small group counseling and education of those dealing with transgender issues. She is Western Regional Director for AEGIS, and a member of the AEGIS Interdisciplinary Advisory Board.*

## *A Splendor of Gender*

### *The Enemy Within Our Community*

*by Gianna Eveling Israel*

*Gianna serves as a liaison between the community at large and AEGIS; her position is officially called Minorities Facilitator. She ensures that concerns of the various factions of the gender community are communicated to our board. Those interested in contacting her can do so by writing her at Box 424447, San Francisco, CA 94142 (TEL 415-558-8058).*

**A**s transgendered individuals, we all face the common prejudices of a society driven by the dictates of idealistic gender and sex stereotypes. The effects of these prejudices are familiar: loss of family support, friends, employment, and social status, as well as the increased potential for victimization by businesses, social and legal institutions, and even other minority populations.

What often goes unrecognized and even ignored is the growing amount of prejudice within our own community. The classic pattern is one transgendered minority individual or group pitted against another individual or group. Embraced in this minority-versus-minority prejudice is the lack of support from and towards other non-transgendered minority communities: gay, lesbian, and sometimes even womens' groups. Everyone seeks self-recognition while the needs and rights of other individuals and groups commonly go unrecognized, discounted, or trampled upon.

Prejudice, to name the many-headed dragon, exists in our own community when a heterosexually dominated crossdresser social organization bars the attendance or membership of gay male crossdressers. One would think that a group of crossdressing individuals would recognize the difference between crossdressing, an activity, and sexual orientation, a part of an individual's primary identity, and have a little more understanding and acceptance of their gay counterparts. After all, do they not face the same prejudices from the larger society as we? As well, I have noted a large number of crossdressing organizations hold their meetings at gay bars.

Prejudice shows when presurgical transsexual people are addressed with the wrong pronoun or salutation by another transgendered individual. If confused about how to address someone, it is considerate to ask which pronoun they prefer, rather than making an erroneous assumption and offending. Surely those who have struggled in building crossgender identities should have compassion and respect for another's struggles.

Prejudice happens when transsexuals and crossdressers infight because one individual or group thinks it is superior, more serious, or more dedicated than the other. With such a side spectrum of crossgender behavior, this very old game serves no purpose whatsoever. The important element

of a healthy crossgender experience is seeking and fulfilling primary identity needs which vary from individual to individual regardless of position or transition status.

Prejudice shows when an HIV+ transsexual woman is barred from attending a transition support group because she has considered not having surgery for fear of setting off a downward-spiraling medical calamity. It would appear that an individual facing crossliving experiences in addition to HIV issues would need just as much, if not more, support than an average transgendered individual. (*Prejudice can be found when we play "more transgendered than thou," and in the bashing of crossdressers by many transsexual persons.—Ed.*)

Prejudice shows in the refusal of major transgender publications to acknowledge or at least provide contact points for other transgender minority support organizations. Example: I have noted that female-to-male support organizations and items of interest are infrequently mentioned in most publications. Almost every transgendered person I know initially spent a great deal of time searching out a support organization. Imagine their frustration when they finally discover an organization, only to find it will not serve them, and yet has no listing of other organizations.

Prejudice shows when a well-heeled transgendered individual encounters another transgendered individual who is obviously homeless, and doesn't so much as offer a smile of support or word of encouragement. How easy it is to ignore the plight of another human once our own security appears stable. Little if any support exists for the transgendered homeless. Frequently, the individual at the beginning of transition may be barred from male, female, and sometimes gay-oriented shelters and social services. Many of these individuals are youths alienated from family. Prostitution, chemical dependency, and high risk of victimization with no legal recourse leaves these individuals possibly damaged for life.

Prejudice happens when the larger transgendered community

refuses to acknowledge the presence of transgendered individuals detained in mental and correctional facilities. The transgendered incarcerated are at extremely high risk of emotional and sexual abuse. This includes rape, gang-rape, sexual slavery, and torture. Those currently crossliving or wishing to do so are usually denied gender-appropriate clothing and hormones specifically because our society labels transgender phenomena as a lifestyle choice rather than as a character of one's primary identity.

Let us now forget that prior to the middle of this century, transgendered individuals were systematically thrown into prisons and mental wards because the medical and social institutions of the time viewed transgender phenomena as a "deviancy." Unlike homosexuality, transsexualism and transvestism are still listed in *The Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association* (DSM III-R). How easy it would be for society to reframe the gender and sexually-oriented components of an individual's primary identity into a deviance again.

Illustrated here are a small selection of the prejudices which threaten to segregate the transgender community as a whole and undermine its potential as a source of acceptance, healing, and education. Not to be overlooked is one of the most common prejudices acted out by members of our community—acceptance based on "passability." This particular prejudice dramatically illustrates the core foundation supporting prejudice: our inability to see beyond stereotypes and see an individual for who he or she really is—a person with individual needs, experiences, and expressions.

*Editor's Note: AEGIS is interested in and devoted to providing fair representation of transgender minorities and their issues within our publications, studies, conventions, and other educational endeavors. If you are interested in minority issues, please contact Gianna Eveling Israel at AEGIS-WEST, P.O. Box 424447, San Francisco, CA 94142 (415) 558-8058. ♀*

## *CQ's Quotations From the Literature*

### *Thirty-five Years of Sensitivity in Psychiatric Thinking*

*Those patients seen by me who wanted to change their genital status were all borderline psychotics who wanted other parts of their bodies altered. They wanted plastic surgery for their faces and noses and entertained other self-destructive fantasies... Do we have to collaborate with the sexual delusions of our patients? Are we not rendering them a sad disservice?*

—Meerloo, J.A.M. (1967). *Change of sex and collaboration with the psychosis. American Journal of Psychiatry, 123*(2), 167-168.

*(The) interrelationship of cultural antinomianism and a psychiatric misplaced emphasis is seen at its grimmest in the practice known as sex reassignment surgery. I happen to know about this because Johns Hopkins was one of the places in the United States where this practice was given its start. It was part of my intention, when I arrived in Baltimore in 1975, to help end it... Moral matters should have some salience here. These include the waste of human resources; the confusions imposed on society where these men/women insist on acceptance...; the encouragement of the "illusion of technique," which assumes that the body is like a suit of clothes to be hemmed and stitched to style; and, finally, the ghastliness of the mutilated anatomy... As physicians, psychiatrists, when they give in to this, abandon the role of protecting patients from their symptoms and become little more than technicians working on behalf of a cultural force.*

—McHugh, P.R. (1992). *Psychiatric misadventures. American Scholar, 61*, 497-510.



*To those who may not know, Virginia is a founder of Tri-Ess and has been a gender pioneer and activist for oh, these past 50 years or so. She is, happily, a member of the AEGIS Interdisciplinary Board of Advisors. The following is excerpted from the 100th issue of "Transvestia," in which Virginia gave a history of her transvestism and of the magazine. It was the last of which she was editor, and was published in 1979.*

## *How I Became a Convicted Felon*

*by Virginia Prince*

What I am now about to tell has been known to a limited number of friends and readers but not to the general readership of *Transvestia*. The reason it was not related in detail was that I was afraid that it would frighten people away from their own escape from the closet. It is always difficult to explain all the details of an incident like that which I am about to deal with, because you can't take that much space, and in any case it sounds like protesting too much when you try to explain. But by this time it does not matter much, and as it is an important part of the era both for me and for what it brought about indirectly for many of you, I will set it forth here as briefly as possible, yet as completely as I can.

I can't rightly remember the year this occurred, but I think it was 1962. In any case, a friend of mine had become acquainted with a certain person back east in some way that I don't remember. He was a transvestite and she was apparently a very understanding woman, and they wrote long letters back and forth and got very intimate with each other. He had to move away and gave me her name, saying that I might like to write and continue the correspondence. Since she had urged him to be very open and intimate and not to beat around the bush, I presumed that went for me, too. So I wrote her a letter explaining how I came to "inherit" the correspondence and that I too was a transvestite. Well, I got a little carried away, I guess, for I let my fantasy run and related how she and I might behave if we were together. I am sure many of you have had similar fantasies—two "women" making love together. So I went through this fantasy in the letter. It really wasn't much—certainly not for these days—it was a Sunday School picnic compared to what you can read and see everywhere today, but this was in the early 60's, and things weren't so liberal then, by a long ways.

Well, I never got a reply to the letter. I thought I must have hurt her feelings or shocked her or something, though that hardly seemed likely considering the way she and my friend had written each other. But in due course I forgot all about it.

Late one afternoon, over a year later, I got a call from my wife at the office, telling me that there were two postal inspectors at the house who wanted to talk to me. I spoke to one of them and told him they could hang

around, as I was about ready to leave the office.

I got home, found them, and talked to them briefly, and then asked them if, since it was now dinner time and my wife and son were at home, I could come down to the Hollywood post office after dinner and answer whatever they wanted to know, and they agreed. I ate dinner and then went down there, taking along an educational scrapbook I had assembled, which presented the whole field of crossdressing in all its aspects. They were pretty nice about everything. They showed me a letter and asked if I had written it, and I saw that it was the letter I had written to this "woman" over a year ago. It turned out that she was no lady, but rather a man who held himself out to be a woman. It appeared that he was in some sort of trouble with the post office on other grounds, and, as they do in such cases, they put a "cover" on his mail. That means that they noted the names and/or return addresses of all mail coming to him. By this tactic, they can pyramid from one suspect to a number of others, who in turn lead them still further. Of course, all police types operate on the theory that anyone who corresponds with a suspicious person is of necessity suspicious himself. So into this little "cover" drops my letter. They got it and held it for a year before doing anything about it.

Well, I couldn't deny that I wrote it, but I told him that it was not only the only letter I ever wrote to that person, but it was the only letter of that frank nature that I ever wrote to anyone. He then showed me the name and address of the person who wrote the Gilbert stories (*Tales from a Pink Mirror* is one). I acknowledged that I knew him and had written to him several times in regard to the magazine, but nothing in any way off color. They asked me many questions about crossdressing, and I told them and illustrated it with my scrapbook material. At about 10:00 p.m. they called it off, thanking me for coming down. I thought everything was resolved, and went home. But the next afternoon at

the office, I got a call from one of the inspectors, and he said that there were a couple of matters they had overlooked the night before, and would I please come by the Hollywood station that afternoon. So I did. You have all seen spy movies where the Nazi interrogator alternately offers a cigarette and cup of coffee to the man he is questioning, and then slaps him or beats him or gets tough in some other way. Well, the night before was the good guy scene, as I found out on this second occasion. This time an inspector got tough and accused me of all sorts of things, among which were being a homosexual and dealing in obscene materials. He told me that he wanted the post office box closed and the magazine discontinued. I was flabbergasted. What did that have to do with the supposedly obscene letter? I asked for his supervisor's name and said that I wanted to appeal the matter. He said that he was the final authority, but if I wanted to make a statement to do so and get it to him within three days.

I went home and spent several days composing a three or four page, single-spaced, typed letter, going into the whole field and the significance of the magazine and everything else, and mailed it to the inspector. Nothing happened for about a month, and I thought the whole matter was over. Then early one afternoon, the same inspector and a police officer appeared at my company office (I was president of my own manufacturing concern). I let them in, and they gave me to understand that they wanted me to come downtown with them. I protested that I had business matters to attend to that afternoon, but that I'd come down in the morning. No dice! It was now, period! I asked if I could then go out into the plant and give the people some instructions as to what to do while I was gone. They said "no," and just to be sure that I didn't try anything funny, they sat me down in a chair and handcuffed me to it. Then they proceeded to take the drawers out of my desk and turn them upside down on the floor and generally ransack the place. When I protested,

they said they had the right to make a search of any premises at which someone was arrested. That was the first statement I had that I was under arrest, and when I tried to find out what for, they said I'd find out downtown. So I hung my coat over my manacled hands and left the office.

We went down to the Federal Building, and all the way along, they let me understand that they regarded me as a homosexual. This was an era when the post office department thought it was going to stamp out homosexuality in America, and they were doing all sorts of things to various people. I had already had letters from readers in various parts of the country relating how postal inspectors had harassed them, seizing copies of mine and other literature, and in one case taking all of one person's femme clothes which were in his car trunk. It was evident that they were clamping down all over.

Well, I was given my fabled one phone call, and got hold of my attorney's office. One of his people would be present at the arraignment, about 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. It was about 2:00 p.m. when I called. They put me in a fair-sized conference room with bars on one side and a locked door on the other. There was a table in the middle, and a couple of chairs, and nothing else. I climbed on the table, stretched out on my back, and went to sleep to pass the time.

Eventually, the arraignment was held and bail was set. My attorney had brought a bondsman, who put up the bail and then drove me back to the office, where I gave him a check.

My wife and I went down to see the Assistant District Attorney several times, but he said there was little he could do, because once the post office department turned a case over to them, they had to prosecute. Eventually my case came to trial, and I pleaded guilty, not only because I did send the letter, but because to have pleaded not guilty would have meant a prolonged trial and the possibility of publicity, which would have proved very embarrassing to my father, who was

*Continued on page 50*

*Stephen is editor of "Boy's Own," a newsletter for female-to-male transsexual persons, and is active in Press For Change, a Political Action Group which campaigns for the rights of transsexual persons in England. He is a practicing attorney and a proud new father.*

## *The History of a Psychiatric Diagnostic Category: Transsexualism*

*by Stephen Whittle*

*To be diagnosed as transsexual, the patient must meet the following three criteria:*

*A. Persistent discomfort and sense of inappropriateness about one's assigned sex.*

*B. Persistent preoccupation for at least two years with getting rid of one's primary and secondary sex characteristics and acquiring the sex characteristics of the other sex.*

*C. The person has reached puberty.*

*Specify history of sexual orientation: asexual, homosexual, heterosexual, or unspecified.*

*— DSM III-R*

**W**hy is it that we hand over to a group of psychiatrists and psychologists (a group of grey-suited men who have been cloned from the same mold [Sussex stockbroker]) the right to define OUR condition and pontificate on the complexities of OUR feelings and gender?"

*— Hennessee, 1990-1991*

Transsexualism, since the publication of the American Psychiatric Association's third edition of *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM III) in 1980, has been generally recognized by psychiatrists as being a mental disorder that requires their professional intervention. Prior to the publication of the DSM III, the condition and its treatment had undergone much public and academic discussion since the publicity that surrounded Christine Jorgensen's return to the USA, in 1953, after her reassignment surgery in Denmark. This discussion took place primarily amongst professionals who worked in areas which were concerned with mental disease—that is, psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychotherapists, who are by their position the definers of such mental disease. There is little evidence until the late 1980's and early 1990's that people who were defined as having transsexualism participated in the discussion about the condition and its treatment. The recent contributions of transsexuals are very much at odds with the clinician's view that they are suffering from a mental disorder, but they remain within a diagnostic and treatment system in which they are viewed as anomalies within the gendered "norms" of Western societies.

According to Foucault (1979, p. 43), "the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted... [by]... Westphal's famous article of 1870 on "contrary sexual sensations." But it took another 110 years for transsexualism to be included in the DSM III. That is, there was 110 years of research, case studies, and discussion before a consensus could be reached on what constituted the "disease" of transsexualism (see sidebar). At present, there is little accord by clinicians over its treatment, and even less agreement over its etiology (Money, 1988, p. 89). Despite the fact that the predominant form of relief provided for somebody who has the

disorder is surgical and endocrinological intervention, transsexualism does not appear in any general medical or surgical textbooks. However, transsexualism is included in the range of psychosexual disorders in DSM III-R.

The arrival at the consensus of diagnosis of transsexualism has had a much longer history than many think. Transsexualism is generally considered a recent phenomenon, as surgical treatment was not available before the twentieth century. The first case of surgical intervention is often cited as being that of Lili Elbe, who underwent reassignment in Germany in 1931 (Hoyer, 1937), though there are a number of known cases before this. Hirschfeld describes the case of a male-to-female, Dora, who had genital surgery, and a female-to-male who also had breast tissue removed, both in the 1920's (Hirschfeld, 1948). Harry Benjamin (1969) described how he tried to induce breast growth in a man by means of hormones in the early 1920's. However, the idea of "sex change surgery" entered the public and professional consciousness only with the publicity surrounding Christine Jorgensen's surgery in Denmark in 1951/1952, and Roberta Cowell's surgery at the same time in England.

The medical words that we currently use for individuals who require "sex change" treatment were not derived until 1949, when David Cauldwell invented the term "Psychopathia Transexualis" (Cauldwell, 1949, p. 274), and the associated word transsexual. Cauldwell was a medical writer of popular articles and books designed to educate the general public in sexual matters. In 1953, the endocrinologist Harry Benjamin wrote the first scientific paper to use the word transsexual. Between Westphal and Benjamin, psychosexual professionals attempted to categorize individuals who would now be recognized by the public as being transsexual into "homosexual types."

Historically, the path of the definition of the transsexual can be traced to the present diagnostic specifications which appear in the DSM III-R. By following this path, it will be seen that the consensus has been reached

through the search for the etiology and cure for homosexuality. Ironically, the removal of homosexuality from DSM III's "Psychosexual Disorder" category coincided with the inclusion of transsexualism under the subcategory of "Gender Identity Disorders."

In order to understand this paradox, the context of the involvement of the psychiatric establishment with transsexual people needs to be looked at. For that, it is necessary to look at the general involvement, with such people, in a temporal and cultural frame, of all authorities— church, state, and medical. It is also necessary to look at the history of the response of state and church authorities to what would now be termed homosexuality and its associated sexual acts. It is possible to see that the "transsexual" category arose out of subdividing homosexuals into various categories by the 19th and 20th century sexologists. That, in turn, arose out of the historical treatment of individuals who wore the clothing of the opposite natal sex and their association with homosexuality. The historical response of church, state, and medicine to homosexual acts resulted in the classification of transsexualism as a medical disorder.

### *Definitions*

For the purposes of this discussion, it is necessary to define the term transsexual as I will use it in this paper. As transsexualism as presently defined (see the sidebar on page 25) was in itself unnamed until recently, it must be acknowledged that historically, individuals could not self-identify as transsexual. Neither could they conceive of the possibility of surgical intervention.

For these reasons, I will consider transsexuals to be those people who have lived, or desired to live, a large part of their adult life in the role and dress of that gender group which would be considered in opposition to their sex as designated at birth. They will have during that time have been recognized by society as belonging to their chosen gender. These people

continued this role to the point of death unless otherwise prevented (e.g., by discovery and punishment, or by illness). With this criterion, it would be possible to categorize Frenchy "Katherine" Vosbaugh (Sullivan, 1990, p. 9), Jack "Bee" Garland (Sullivan, 1990, p. 22), and Billy Tipton (Graham, 1989) as female-to-male transsexuals. I will refer to those for whom there is evidence of temporary cross-living or cross-dressing, as crossdressers. I will define as transgenderists both transsexuals and crossdressers.

### *Medieval Europe and Crossdressers— Witches and Demons*

In Western culture, there is a long history of individuals who were transgendered. There are mythological references such as in the ancient Greek legends of Hermaphrodite and Ganymede, and the Roman story of Venus Castina, the goddess who responded with sympathy and understanding to the yearnings of feminine souls locked in male bodies. Ancient Greek and Roman writers commented on young men who desired to live their lives as women: "Expending every possible care on their outward adornment, they are not ashamed even to employ every device to change artificially their nature as men into women— some of them craving a complete transformation into women, they have amputated their generative members" (Masters in Green, 1974, p. 5, citing Philo).

It was the influence of Christianity which appears to have first called for transgenderists to be punished for their behavior. Punishment, rather than "treatment," was the predominant mode of dealing with the issue until the work of the psychologists of the 19th century. In *Deuteronomy 22*, verse 5, there appears an apparent prohibition of the wearing of male attire by women, or of female dress by men. Crossdressing was occasionally codified against in the secular laws of Medieval Europe, but was included consistently in the list of offenses against God, or of heresy. When Gratian completed his textbook of canon law, (*A Harmony of Conflicting*

*Canons, Concordia Discordantium Canonum*, known as the *Decretum*) in A.D. 1140 and included in it an earlier Conciliar condemnation of crossdressing, it was possible to say that crossdressing as such was unlawful under the codified church laws. Gratian is recognized as the first church Jurist, and the teaching of his *Decretum* in Bologna led to its being adopted throughout the new universities of the time in Germany, France, England, and Italy. Four main decretist schools developed: Bolognese, Parisian, Anglo-Norman, and Rhenish. The students of these schools, known as Decretists, annotated and expounded Gratian's work. Few of them attended to the issue of crossdressing or transgenderist behavior. An exception was Stephen of Tournai, of the Parisian school, who in his *Summa* of 1160 distinguished between respectable women who dressed as men in order to protect their chastity and women who lived as men in order to sin more freely (Brundage, 1987).

There is much documented evidence of the Medieval and Renaissance crossdresser, particularly as street prostitute and actor. Evidence of the authorities' role and attitude to the transgenderist is difficult to discover. The church and secular law both dealt with the act of sodomy rather than the relationship which might lead to it. In Venice in 1354, Rolandinus Ronchaiai, who had acted and looked like a woman, was burned for sodomy (Goodich, 1979, p. 13). Without the opportunity for surgical intervention, the only options for those transgenderists who wished to have a sex life were those acts considered to be homosexual.

There are many medieval accounts of female saints who were transgenderists. One of the first stories is that of Pelagia, a dancing girl who, upon conversion to Christianity left Antioch as a man and travelled to the Holy Land, where "he" was admired for his asceticism and holiness. "His" genital sex was not discovered until death. A saint with a similar name is Saint Margarita Pelagius. Pelagius was so horrified at the

idea of marriage that "he" took refuge in a monastery, lived and worked as a man, and was even accused of having made pregnant the portress of a convent. Rather than face discovery, Pelagius lived as a hermit after this accusation. Only at death, when genital sex was discovered, was Pelagius proclaimed innocent of the crime. There are many similar stories of other saints: Apollinaris, Eugenia, Anastasia, and more (Bullough, 1974).

There is also the apocryphal story of Pope Joan— known as Pope John VIII, which first appeared in a book by Stephen de Bourbon (1261), then in the medieval history of Polonius in 1279 (Addis & Arnolds, 1951, p. 35). Joan is reputed to have been uncovered when "he" gave birth to a child in front of a large crowd of spectators whilst in the midst of a Papal procession. She apparently died shortly after the birth. The story was relegated to legend by the end of the 16th century, but until then it was held to be true, and Pope Julius III approved of the publication of a report of Joan's death (Bullough, 1974).

On the other hand, there is little evidence of a history or mythology of crossdressing behavior amongst men in the medieval period in Western society, although there are a great many legends of such behavior amongst the berdache of North America and Siberia and the Mahu of Polynesia (Baynes, 1990; Williams, 1988). According to Bullough (1974), this discrepancy may be due to the fact that transgendered behavior in women was seen as part of their search for chastity and holiness, and was therefore recorded, whereas it was assumed that transgendered behavior in men was for the purpose of getting close to women, for example in convents, in order to have sex with nuns. Such persons would have been considered to be of low status, and their behavior was not noteworthy.

As stated, sodomy in Medieval Europe was both a secular and ecclesiastical crime, but as Goodich (1979) and Bray (1982) both argue, it was generally an act privately participated in in private households. Despite the codification of the canon and secular laws which took place in the 13th and

14th centuries and the penances and punishments devised for the act of sodomy, there was no recourse to using them unless the peace and stability of a community was threatened. The state and church were much more concerned with heterosexual behavior— the production of illegitimate children, and adultery. Whilst at these times, there were laws against particular sexual acts such as sodomy and tribadism, there seem to have been no particular laws against individuals dressing and living in the role opposite to their natively assigned sex. Apparent exceptions are mentioned by Saslow (1989, in Duberman, et al., p. 96), who tells of "A woman burned at Fontaines, France, about 1535, when authorities discovered that she had been passing as a man in order to marry another woman and 'counterfeit the office of husband'." Two nuns were burnt in 15th century Spain for penetrative sex using a dildo. It is difficult to know if the punishment in these two cases were for the sexual acts or for the claim that it led to male prerogatives, so threatening the status quo.

Another possible exception was laws against witchcraft. First derived in the tenth century against women who followed the goddess Diana, these were codified at the beginning of the 14th century (Addis & Arnolds, 1951, p. 840). Green (1974) states that throughout Medieval Europe there was a belief that witches possessed potions that could change the sex of humans or animals. There was also a belief that demons could change others and themselves into women, and for this reason bishops were requested to look out for thongs of demons transformed into women (Bullough, 1974). *The Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Witches Hammer*, Sprenger & Institor, 1489) contains an eyewitness account of a sex change of a girl into a boy by demons. Green (1974) points out that this was the book that served as a resource for treatment by physicians of the insane for almost 300 years.

To illustrate the point that transgenderist behavior could be associated with witchcraft and heresy

and viewed as part of the devil's works, one need look no further than the famous trial of St. Joan of Arc, who was burned at the stake. The charges against her were that she could not prove that her political quest, her voices, or her clothing served God's purposes rather than Satan's. She was only 19 when she was executed in 1431. A peasant girl who heard voices, she had led the French army to several victories against the English before her capture in 1430. She was charged with various heretical acts and beliefs, and told that her voices were those of demons, and not of God. Two of the twelve charges against her dealt with the wearing of male costume. After almost a year's inquisition, she repented and promised to wear female clothing. She was sentenced to life imprisonment, but in prison she resumed wearing men's dress. It was this act which led to her execution with the full complicity of the French and the English. She argued that she had not intended to promise never to wear male clothing again, and that she would continue to do so because "it was more lawful and convenient for her to wear it, since she was among men, than to wear woman's dress" (Bullough, 1974). Joan's trial was a rarity, in that few records remain of other individuals condemned on such grounds.

Bray (1982) shows that whilst Medieval English society associated "sex changes" and other "unnatural acts" such as sodomy with the supernatural and the workings of the devil, it would be unlikely to recognize the behavior of family or neighbors as demonic. Sodomy and heresy, "sex change" and demons were conceptually linked. Though there was technically abhorrence of such behavior on theological and religious grounds, the behavior of individuals was usually tolerated. Thus, it is easy to understand the small number of prosecutions and lenient punishments for such crimes. For example, Bray (1974) quotes the conviction of Meredith Davy for sodomizing his apprentice—he was not jailed, but merely required not to do it any more. He was still allowed to sleep with the boy.

As Saslow puts it, "An unsolved problem in this (period) is the wide variation of open violations of official taboo" (1989, p. 95, in Duberman, et al.). In Medieval Europe and England, in particular, there was no specific punishment prescribed for cross-dressing, and courts had to deal with incidents infrequently. Consequently, no fixed policy was established. Temporary crossdressing during festivities was an old folk custom. Unless such events got out of hand or there were political overtones, it rarely came to the attention of the courts. Long-term crossdressing may well have induced a court to pass heavier sentence upon an individual who had used his or her "disguise" to commit crime or fraud (Dekker & van de Pol, 1989). Although there were sometimes both laws proscribing transgenderist behavior and on occasion trials of individuals who crossdressed or cross-lived, local communities as a rule did not condemn such individuals. Punitive sentences were elicited only by those who were thought to have practiced witchcraft on others, or to have been possessed by demons which caused such behavior. Communities were reluctant to allege witchcraft or demonic possession because of the trials and torments that would accompany official investigation. Communities appear to have dealt with such issues locally. Much the same can be said about the enforcement of laws against sodomy and crossdressing in Medieval Europe.

#### *The Restoration—The Rise of the Effeminate Man*

Before 1885, there was no comprehensive law relating to male homosexuality in England. The only relevant law was that concerning buggery, dating from 1533. It notionally carried the maximum of a death sentence. This law was part of the assimilation of established ecclesiastical sanctions into the secular law, and marked the surrender to the state of many of the powers of the medieval church, at the time the dissolution of the Roman Catholic church in England.

Through the Witchcraft Act was not repealed until 1736, its influence had mostly died in the latter half of the 17th century. Popular opinion had begun to turn, and increasingly, theologians, most notably the Jesuit, Father Frederic Spee, condemned the practice of trial and execution for witchcraft.

During the period of the Restoration, transgendered behavior started to be documented. Dekker and van de Pol (1989) discovered documentary evidence of 119 "women living as men" in the Netherlands between 1550 and 1839. Nearly all of these, though, were from the 17th and 18th centuries. Also from this latter period, evidence of men who lived as women was beginning to come forward. The Abby de Choisy (1644-1724) left a firsthand account of a lifelong wish to live and be treated as a woman (Cauldwell, 1963, pp. 40-51). The Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont's (1728-1810) life as a woman has been written about many times (his name was used by Havelock Ellis in the 20th century to coin the term "Eonism," meaning crossdressing).

In England, the church's influence on the state had declined with the collapse of Cromwell's Protectorate in 1660. Thus, the use of laws against witchcraft were to decline.

Trumbach (1989, in Duberman, et al.) shows that between 1660 and 1700, in London, there was a temporal change in the social classification of people who participated in sodomy: first, as the man who had a wife, a whore and a boy; later as libertine-rake; and finally, as effeminate homosexual. Before this period, male and female crossdressing had little to do with sexual proclivities. But the change over this 40-year period had a profound effect on the development of the 19th century psychosexual category of "homosexual."

Christian law, since the 12th century, had held that sex acts were only to take place within marriage. Men who did not confine their sexual episodes to marriage usually had sex with both adolescent boys and female prostitutes. Prosecution for such acts,

as has been seen, was inconsistent. With the Restoration came a social space in which new ideas could be explored. For the male aristocracy, religious skepticism and republican politics were to become discussion points, along with libertinism. Libertinism was originally used to mean "habitual licentiousness" (1611), but by 1641, it also meant "free-thinking in religious matters". Those who moved away from the rigors of the medieval church would also in their lifestyles move away from its rigid sexual requirements. Trumbach (1989, p. 130, in Duberman, et al.), states, "The behavior of the relatively small circle of aristocratic libertines in the 1660's and 1670's... in (whose) world the love of boys certainly did not exclude the love of women; but the love of boys was seen as the most extreme act of sexual libertinism."

This was a minority of men, often those with wealth, who played with women what was called the "love game," involving selection, seduction, subjection, and separation. The female victims of this game were often subjected to anal intercourse and sadistic practices. Romantic love was reserved for "boys" and "catamites." The men who played the "game" came to be known as Rakes, and Trumbach (1989, in Duberman, et al.) portrays the changing view of the Rake on the restoration stage, from a heterosexual to a bisexual libertine.

This was the historical period when the concept of the "self" came into being. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary (1970) cites the usage of "self" in its modern form as first occurring in 1674, defining it as "That which in a person is intrinsically he (in contradistinction to what is adventitious); the ego (often identified with the soul or mind as opposed to the body); a permanent subject of successive and varying states of consciousness."

A sense of personal identity arose, a consciousness of individuality which in turn affected the personal concept of sexuality: "Sexual activity was increasingly coming to define a particular type of person. In return, people were beginning to define them-

selves as different and their difference was constituted around their sexuality." (Weeks, 1980, p. 34).

The Rakes, who were free thinkers, viewed their love of boys as being a love of the "same sex," of other men with like minds and concepts of self. Now it was possible to identify oneself with a particular "type" of person, and so Rakes began to meet together in order to find lovers of similar type. Sexual activities, rather than being contained within the home, work place, and local community, began to center around special meeting places in urban areas, where individuals would be guaranteed to meet others who would wish to participate in similar sexual activities. At the same time, others, like the Abby de Choisy and Edward Hyde, Viscount Cornbury— afterwards Earl of Clarendon— were expressing their dissatisfaction with the social expectations of their gender.

It was said of Edward Hyde, often regarded as the first known English transvestite, and Governor of New York and New Jersey (1701-1708) that he "was a clever man whose great insanity was showing himself in womens' clothes. When New Yorkers complained that he had opened their legislative assembly dressed as a woman, he retorted, "You are very stupid not to see the propriety of it. In this place, and particularly on this occasion, I represent a woman (Queen Anne), and ought in all respect to represent her as faithfully as I can." (Davenport-Hines, 1990, p. 74).

However, there is no proof that Hyde was a sodomite, or practiced other homosexual activities. Neither is there any evidence of sodomy in the cases of the Abby de Choisy or the Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont. According to Trumbach (1989, in Duberman, et al.), there was at the time the concept of the Fop, an effeminate man. Different from the Rake, the Fop was heterosexual, was not a misogynist. He preferred the company of women to men. Hyde and Choisy could be constructed as extreme Fops.

There was a change in attitude during the 19th century. The Fop—

that is, the effeminate man— began to be associated with the effeminate man who was a passive partner in homosexual activities. Trumbach (1989, in Duberman, et al.) puts this down to the fact that during this time, with the development of the concept of the self, women also began to have a "self." Whereas in the past they had been housekeepers, childbearers, and satisfiers of men's sexual desires, they now had a role as a friend and companion to many married men. The companionship that had previously been found between men and boys was now assumed to exist only within the marital relationship.

Wives no longer tolerated extra-marital sexual relationships between their husbands and other men. There arose an awareness that men should/could only desire women. This assumption led in time to the division of homosexual men into two distinct subgroups: those who appeared "masculine" and those who appeared "as women." The clubs and places for the meeting of men that had originated with the Libertines now became places where men met with other men who were induced by society's values to behave "as women."

Trumbach (1977, p. 11) argues that "whenever homosexual behavior surfaced at the Royal Courts from the 12th to the early 17th century, it was accompanied by what contemporaries viewed as markedly effeminate behavior... it is unlikely that the London homosexual sub-culture emerged only in the late 17th century when one considers, if nothing else, the theatrical milieu, with its transvestite boys, in which Marlowe wrote Edward II and Shakespeare his sonnets."

Despite this, it was not until the early 18th century that trials were seen of effeminate sodomites and evidence emerges of the meeting places of such people. In view of Dekker and van de Pol's (1989) work on female cross-dressers in the Netherlands, it seems that even if Trumbach's view is true, that prior to the 18th century, the roles of effeminate man or masculine women were not available to the general populace. They were contained in

very specific communities: the theater and the court, in which they were tolerated. However, in the latter half of the 17th century, we see evidence of the Libertine influence permeating the class structure. This may have been due to their predilection for relationships with their servants. Whereas in the past, homosexual behavior had been between individuals of the same class (that is, artisan with laborer or apprentice, or kings and courtiers), it was now between classes. Therefore, the effeminate fashions of the court could be passed down through the class structure of society. Some taverns and houses became mens' clubs of mixed social classes where homosexuals could meet. These places became known as molly houses ("Molly" was originally a term for a female prostitute and, like the word "queen," which was later derivated, became a term for the effeminate passive male homosexual). There were estimated to be perhaps 20 molly houses in London by the 1720's (Davenport-Hines, 1990, p. 72). They were generally in a private house or a tavern, and in them:

*A new and stricter code of private words, physical gestures, clothing, vocal mimicry, and other rituals developed and came to characterize a new sodomite subculture... There, congregants revelled in feminine mimicry and in acting out (with a mixture of mockery and envy) scenes from heterosexual life... The back room in molly houses to which men retired for sex was known as the chapel; sexual acts performed there were known as marrying; the first sexual conjunction between two men was known as a wedding night.*

*Some mollies not only assumed female nicknames or adopted feminine language, but created pregnancy rituals, culminating in mock lying-ins where a "pregnant" man gave birth to a doll... In short, the mollies were... playing out the other domestic roles of men and women.*

— Davenport-Hines, 1990, 72-73

The Society for the Reformation of Manners was founded by Puritanical Christians and operated between 1691 and 1730. It functioned by employing spies and doggedly prosecuted prostitutes, pornographers, sabbath breakers, swearers, and sodomites. They pursued successful prosecutions of the members of molly houses in 1699, 1707, and 1726. In 1726, there had been purges of homosexuals in both France and Holland. In France, the leader of a "school and bordello for sodomy" was executed, and 200 others were given prison sentences. In Holland, 200 sodomites were executed by drowning, hanging, or burning. Over a two-year period, there were over 2000 British newspaper reports of the Dutch trials (Davenport-Hines, 1990, p. 72). In London, in a well-organized campaign by the Society for the Reformation of Manners, over 20 molly houses were raided. The group trials were to be a national scandal.

Thus, crossdressing changed in character in the popular perception. From being a form of disguise or theater with occasional overtones of sodomy, it became the identifier of a form of sodomite— though not to persist as a pervading image of the homosexual, except in the style of the "queen," the image of the molly gave rise to the concept of a distinctive homosexual culture and identity, and the development of a protective subculture for those involved.

Throughout the 18th century, there were prosecutions of sodomites, but it was a fragmented response to the issue. However, the association of the sodomite with the "feminine man" had become inextricably linked in the minds of the public and the state. That linking provided a framework for the medicalization of the feminine man and the masculine female during the 19th and 20th centuries.

#### *The Nineteenth Century— The Rise of Treatment as Response*

Before the 18th century, there was practically no social framework for dealing with the insane, and no theory of insanity. The deranged beggar was

a familiar part of the medieval landscape. Others were supported primarily by their families. The only specialized support was that provided by Bethlan (*known as Bedlam— Ed.*) Hospital, which had been founded in 1247.

At the time of the Enlightenment, as the concept of the self was being engendered, there was the rise of the Asylum movement in Europe. Private madhouses were in common use from 1700, but were by their nature limited to the more affluent sections of society. Demographic changes with industrialization and the growth of the cities were the compelling influences after 1750, resulting in the creation of special institutions for the insane. Originally places of care and control, there was little concept of treatment or cure of the illnesses from which the inmates suffered. However, the theories of the Enlightenment evolved from the ideas of rationality and irrationality, and the concept of humane treatment. The first acknowledged equation of the insane with other sick persons was by the rational, enlightened Joseph II of Austria. In 1738, he commanded that any religious order whose insane members had been locked up in underground cells. "Should treat its own members afflicted with madness with the selfsame care as those suffering from any other ailment." (Doerner, 1981, p. 171).

From that first acknowledgment, there was, throughout the 18th and 19th century, the development of the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry, as worthwhile and valued careers for physicians. In 1860, in Zurich, Griesinger converted the existing asylum into a clinic. According to Doerner (1981), he created the model for university psychiatry that was to last for the next 100 years. Westphal was a pupil of Griesinger's. Like Griesinger, he was a liberal, natural science-oriented psychiatrist. Westphal and Griesinger, along with L. Meyer, founded the *Archiv fur Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten*, which attacked the asylums and their doctors as inhumane. It demanded free treatment for all, and the abolition of the restraints that had been used in



the Asylum system. It was this school of psychiatry which was to medicalize those people who practiced homosexual acts, or had other "associated behavior."

Meanwhile, in the 19th century in Britain and Germany, homosexual behavior and homosexual prostitution had become a major social problem (Weeks, in Duberman, et al., 1990, p. 198). A member of the Home Office wrote in 1822, after the arrest of the Bishop of Clogher for sodomy:

*No event... is to be more lamented both on public and private grounds. It will sap the very foundations of society. It will raise up the lower orders against the higher, and in the present temper of the public mind against the Church, it will do more to injure the Establishment than all the united efforts of its enemies could have effected in a century.*

—Davenport-Hines, 1991, p. 103

There was a general feeling amongst those in power that if the public were kept ignorant of the act of sodomy, the "weak-minded" would not be tempted. Unfortunately for those in power, trials were reported and provoked public and police interest in an offense of which they have previously been scarcely aware. Until 1885, when Labouchere's amendment to the Criminal Law Act was passed, there was still only the 1533 act under which to prosecute individuals. This had criminalized the act of sodomy or buggery; other homosexual acts were not criminalized. This caused problems for those wishing to control homosexuals, as the proof of sodomy that was required was often difficult to obtain. The only other grounds for prosecution of homosexuality was "conspiracy to commit a felony."

Though there was the idea of the effeminate man as a sodomite, as shown in the trial of Boulton and Park in 1871, there was little knowledge of the subject. Ernest (Stella) Boulton and Fred (Fanny) Park were arrested in 1870 for indecent behavior. Boulton and Park were crossdressers. They

were immediately examined for evidence of sodomy, and charged with conspiracy to commit such acts. They had frequented the haunts of female prostitutes for over two years, and the police were of the opinion that they were working as male prostitutes. The authorities lacked knowledge on the subject and based their prosecution on transvestism and their soliciting of men as women rather than sodomy. No conviction could be obtained on these grounds, and they were ultimately acquitted of the charge of "conspiracy to commit a felony by crossdressing." (Davenport-Hines, 1991, p. 118).

In reality, the authorities were concerned with using the law to suppress sexually transmitted disease, through the control of female prostitutes. At the same time, there was a massive rise in the idea of the Christian family, a great concern about the immorality of the inner city populace, and a concern with the corruption of young people and the weak-minded. Homosexuals were considered to be a threat in all three areas. They had no regard for the family and its sacred place in society, they were considered part of the immoral inner city populace, both as users and service providers, and they were imagined to be corrupters of young people.

Into this milieu, Griesinger and his contemporaries:

*...ushered in an almost "imperialistic" penetration by psychiatry of the (non-psychiatric) somatic brain and nervous diseases, and also— even more portentous— of society as a whole (i.e., those countless individuals whose "irrationality" could not previously become visible because they had never been in institutions, who had concealed their problems with society from that society, keeping them locked up within themselves.*

—Doerner, 1981, p. 274

The most important innovation in the ushering in of this world was

the outpatient clinic. At these, a new class of patients presented who did not warrant incarceration in asylums:

*Now, as their "weakness" was becoming "conspicuous" to the pitiless diagnostic control agent of economic liberalism— efficiency— this army of the "irritable and weak," the "abnormal," the "sexual perverts," the psychopaths, compulsive neurotics— the area in which the borderline between the "abnormal" and "normal" is indistinct— began to unburden themselves to the privately practicing neurologists or the clinical psychiatrist.*

—Doerner, 1981, p. 274

Individuals who were unhappy with what society expected of them now had doctors to go to who could diagnose them and even "cure" them. Homosexuals or individuals associated with the homosexual subculture, who lived in fear of the law, could turn to doctors who would hopefully help them to put aside their dangerous desires and aid them towards re-establishing their place in "normal" society.

At the end of the 19th century, Labouchere's amendment to the Criminal Law Act was being enacted. This criminalized "any male person who, in public or in private commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of any act of gross indecency with another male person." If found guilty, the punishment was imprisonment for up to two years with or without hard labor. This criminalization of private sexual practices, referred to as a "blackmailer's charter," was sure to drive individuals to visit the doctor. As homosexuals turned to the medical profession for cure, the doctors were able to collect case histories of such individuals. From these, they discovered that rather than all homosexuals being the same, there was great diversity, both in individual history and also in practice and desire.

As previously stated, in the first half of the 19th century the authorities had been reticent about discussing homosexuality, for fear that doing so might influence others to "take up this heinous crime." Discussion in general was severely limited because of the use of euphemisms and delicacies. Many people were also wary of discussion lest they themselves be thought to be sodomites and hence risk severe punishment for their surmised crime. But as Foucault has suggested, the refusal to discuss sex marked sex as the secret, and by that it became the center of discourse. There was to be an explosion of debate around sexuality at the end of the 19th century.

Much of that debate concerned the relations of the law with sexuality. Three of the first "sexologists as writers," Ulrichs (homosexual), Hirschfeld (homosexual and suspected transvestite) and Ellis (as a result of his wife's inclinations and experiences) were actually acting in their own interests. They wished to decriminalize homosexual behavior by medicalizing it through science.

Foucault claims Westphal was the first writer to deal with homosexuality as a state of being. However, Casper (1852) pointed out that homosexual behavior was some kind of "moral hermaphroditism." Ulrichs (1864 onwards) devised the words "uranian" and "urning"; he regarded uranism as a "congenital abnormality by which a female soul had become united with a male body (1952, in Ellis, 1948, p. 66). But Westphal was the first medical writer to deal with the subject, and to define a medical category into which "homosexual" people fell. Foucault (1978, p. 43) says of the category Westphal created that it was "characterized... less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and feminine in oneself. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a

hermaphroditism of the soul... the homosexual was now a species."

This separation enabled Krafft-Ebing to differentiate from other categories of homosexual those individuals who we would now recognize as being transsexual. Krafft-Ebing divided homosexuality into two major categories: acquired homosexuality, and congenital homosexuality. Under both headings he described transgenderism, under the first as "Eviration and Defemination," and/or "Metamorphosis Sexualis Paranoica," and under the second as "Effemination and Viraginity" and/or "Androgyny and Gynandry." It is extremely difficult to understand how he distinguished between case histories which today would appear similar—perhaps because we no longer have a conception of acquired or congenital homosexuality. The cases Krafft-Ebing presents are interesting, in that we see the subjects using the same ways of describing themselves that we see in case histories of transsexuals from the 1950's to 1980's. We see in Case 99 the first recorded image of the words, "I feel like a woman in a man's form," (Krafft-Ebing, 1891, p. 209), which was to become the classic phrase of self-description used by transsexuals of the latter half of the twentieth century.

Magnus Hirschfeld was the next most influential voice. Hirschfeld was not just a doctor, but also a medico-legal expert in Germany's courts. He used his position to advance the science of sex to achieve social justice—for which he was to be hounded, and his books burnt or pulped when the National Socialists came to power in the 1930's. Hirschfeld coined the word "transvestite" from the title of his book, *Die Transvestiten*, published in 1910. He divided his "transvestites" into five subcategories: 1) the heterosexual; 2) the bisexual; 3) the homosexual; 4) the narcissistic; and 5) the asexual (Ellis, 1928, p. 13). Hirschfeld was the first to suggest that "homosexuality (is) primarily a biological phenomenon of universal extension and secondarily a... social phenomenon of serious importance."

Albert Moll amended Hirschfeld's

categories in 1921, and arrived at a classification which included a subgroup of homosexual cases in which crossdressing constitutes part of the contrary sexual psychic state. However, Ellis (1928), in his commentary on Moll, draws attention to the fact that Moll failed to grasp Hirschfeld's idea of intermediate sexuality for "pronounced" cases of crossdressing.

Havelock Ellis, who wrote an encyclopedic seven-volume work cataloging and categorizing all types of sexual activity, carefully separated transvestites from transgenderists. He called transvestites, as we now know them, Eonists. Transgenderists were kept in the group of "sexual inverts"—that is, homosexuals.

It was Hirschfeld, in 1938, who finally separated transgendered behavior from homosexuality (King, 1981, in Plummer), a separation that allowed the medical profession to take a specialized professional interest in the "treatment" of the former. From the 1950's, Cauldwell's use of the term transsexual to describe someone who was "physically of one sex and apparently psychologically of the opposite sex (King, 1981, p. 166, in Plummer) was being used to justify surgical intervention of behalf of such individuals. But even today there are still those who argue that transvestism or transsexualism is merely a mask for latent homosexuality.

Through the work of the early sexologists, transsexuality became a recognized phenomenon available for study, discussion, and treatment. As was demonstrated in my introduction, there was, by the 1930's, an active role being played by psychologists, psychiatrists, endocrinologists, and surgeons in the "treatment" of transgenderists. This continues to this day. There are many arguments about the involvement of so many professions, but that discussion requires a separate space from this one.

This paper has attempted to show how the psychiatric category of transsexual was reached. It also highlights the inconsistency in the approach of psychiatric professionals as exemplified by the DSM III-R, which

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## Notes From the Yellow Brick Road

by Lea Perrin

*As we were laying out this issue, we received the shocking and saddening news that the woman writing the "Lea Perrin" columns had died after a brief illness contracted from an abscess of a tooth. "Lea" was a vibrant and exuberant person. We are diminished.*

*This is the last column Lea sent us.*

**I**n Dan Jenkins' novel, *Semi-Tough*, Billy Joe Puckett explains all that goes on as "Life, its ownself..."

But amazingly enough, some persons in transition repeatedly are quoted in writing and heard in support groups complaining about the Harry Benjamin requirements of a "real-life test" for a period of time before surgeons are willing to alter their physical gender existence permanently. For some reason, these folks feel that there should be no effort made by them to determine whether the course of action they have chosen is in fact the correct one for the rest of their temporal existence.

In many of these instances of loud wailing and complaining, the loudest of the bunch are the furthest from the reality of the gender existence of their choice. It is almost as if they are saying they are afraid that they could not pass a real-life test of their chosen existence, and are deluded that some magic of the surgeon's knife will transform them into all that they are not or don't believe they can obtain by work and self-discipline.

Are they afraid of what they will find—that the efforts and determination they have shown and the sacrifices they have made were offerings on the altar of self-delusion? That gender dysphoria might turn out not really to be the issue, but partial symptoms of it may mask problems they had not the courage to face? After surgery, it is too late to evaluate. The real-life test is really the only effective way for a person to know that he or she is in fact gender dysphoric. All it requires is taking enough time and having sufficient self-honesty to truly evaluate how you really feel about who you are and a chance to really decide without barriers how you really want to live.

You are not trying to provide a result for someone else's approval. This information is for you and you only. There is no pass or fail. Actually, the term "test" in itself is an incorrect usage. The title of the exercise should be real-life experiment. In an experiment, negative results are as valid as positive results. If you are truly gender dysphoric, by the end of the experiment you won't have the least problem convincing a mental health professional to perform whatever procedures you request, without argument. You will be so deeply immersed in your role, so natural, so consistent with the norm for the gender that any other existence would be inconceivable.

It may bear out that you are truly gender dysphoric, but physically incapable of assuming the physical gender role of choice. You still need to know this for certain by giving the experiment full effort. Don't duck the experiment or quit before you try. A lot of "I can't's" and "I'll never be able to's" dissolve in the crucible of "I have to's." For many people who have been considering transition for years and hold the common fear of never being able to "pass," the real life experiment properly entered into will yield some surprising results when answers and solutions to doubts and fears are approached in the presence of immediate need.

Perhaps you will still find yourself physically incapable of changing gender roles, but you will know that you have done all that you could. It will be the benchmark for looking at more possible alternatives. You will have the opportunity to find other possible solutions to ease your pain without having trapped yourself in a permanently untenable position.

It is a fact of reality that a person in transition is simply returning to his or her original gender self. Once able to function in that gender, and with practice to assimilate cultural distinctions, the resultant confidence and comfort will go a long way towards overcoming physical imperfections. Men and women come in wide and varied sizes. There are many short, slight men, and many large, tall women. What all of these people have in common is the sureness that they are the gender they claim to be. Once you develop the confidence that you are who you say you are and believe it in your core, this confidence will work for you. This, in fact, is the essence of the real-life experiment— that you can say to yourself that you are the gender you say you are, believe it without condition, and realize that you have always been that gender, regardless of how you have been forced to live. You will then be able to go back over your whole life and see where the influences of your real gender were the determinants of your decisions on many issues, large and small.

Experiments in all sciences are dependent on absolute truth. This is a really tough hurdle for a person in transition. In their attempt to get treatment, persons with gender dysphoria have often been forced to be extremely artful in order to obtain services from the still rudimentary diagnostic system and from service providers reluctant to provide hormonal relief on demand. My life partner, K.D., met me quite a way along the path to wholeness. While she was totally supportive and tried to learn everything possible about the condition that affected both of our lives, she never understood the reasons for so much duplicity in myself and my friends. I realized that she had never seen what this thing looked like at the beginning and what a struggle it was to get initial credibility. It's not difficult to change doctors and get treatment when you walk into the examining room with fully developed breasts and other evidence of hormonal adjustment. But the trick is to get that first pill, that first shot. To show her this, I invited an acquaintance to dinner who was in the pre-first stages of obtaining treatment. As this middle-aged, very male business executive sat across from us in our living room, she heard the same expressions of feeling, frustration, and desire to change at all costs that she had heard and seen from me. She immediately saw the congruity problem and knew the pain was real. She heard the person relate the difficulties of getting anyone even at a so-called "gender clinic" to provide treatment. She started to realize that the lying, evasions, and manipulations people in transition have had to use in many cases in order to get wholeness were necessary.

The real-life experiment gives you the opportunity, without restrictions, to honestly operate in wholeness; to see if the person you always imagined you were is real, or whether you had gotten so caught up in the challenge that you created a false perception of a life role you would not be able or willing to sustain for the rest of your life.

Because of the prevarication sometimes necessary to gain initial transition treatment, when it comes to being truthful with yourself, the skills of self-truth may be very rusty. It is vital to relearn them in order not to make gross errors in judgment during the real-life experiment and beyond. If you delude or kid yourself at this point, it could cost you your total function and perhaps your life.

### *BULLETIN! BULLETIN!*

*The real-life experiment does not start the day you first put on a dress or a man's suit and go out. It starts the day you stop "passing" and start living.*

This is not in any way meant to disparage all the effort that goes into the achieving of initial physical congruity in the gender of your choice. It is absolutely essential that you and the people you encounter be comfortable enough with your physical presence that no stir is generally made when you walk into a public encounter situation. It does not mean that if you get "read" from time to time that the experiment must begin again or has failed, or that if thinking of that possibility sometimes puts you ill at ease in certain situations your general success is negated.

These are real probabilities of occurrence, and you will always to some extent be a stranger in a strange land. You still must persevere and acquire a comfort level that is for the most part unthinking about your chosen gender. Then and only then will you be able to function in social and work situations on a continuing basis and be able to ask and answer in full honesty, "Do I really like it, now that the novelty has worn off, now that the challenge is no more. Can I truly live this way for the rest of my life?"

I really believe that no one who is not a woman would be crazy enough to live a woman's life and deal with all of the physical and emotional elements of that existence. You have

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## How to Start & Maintain a Gender Support Organization

by Dallas Denny & Holly Boswell

*In 1986, Holly founded the Phoenix Transgender Support Group in Asheville, North Carolina. Phoenix is an open group. Dallas became a member of Phoenix in 1989. In 1991, she founded Atlanta Gender Explorations, which is modeled on Phoenix. Both groups are non-sexual, and serve persons with a wide variety of gender issues.*

*Phoenix  
P.O. Box 18332  
Asheville, NC 28814*

*Atlanta Gender Explorations  
P.O. Box 1542  
Roswell, GA 30077*

*(404) 642-9652  
(404) 962-3118*

For many of us, finding a support group is the lifeline we need, for there we meet people who we scarcely dared believe existed—those who are like us. There we share experiences, obtain referrals, make friends, and gather knowledge. There we can safely divulge the feelings that we have been holding inside us. There we may feel, for the first time, truly at home.

Some of us are lucky enough to have support groups which are conveniently near. Others must drive long distances. But there are many who either cannot afford to travel or who live just too far away to conveniently attend a support group.

Whether you live in Newfoundland, Fargo, North Dakota, or Iuka, Mississippi, it is safe to say that there are other transgendered people nearby, and perhaps even in the same town. The problem is locating them. Transsexual people, transgenderists, and crossdressers hardly wear signs proclaiming their status, and besides, they may be fearful of exposure or in denial. How to make contact?

The sad fact is that many transgendered people will never be reached. But those with the courage to look about and make repeated attempts to find help—and we say repeated because those first cautious reachings out are frequently rebuffed or ignored—can eventually link up with the paraculture: that marvelous network of support groups, information services, newsletters, magazines, service providers, and social clubs that serve those with gender dysphoria. But what if you live in Newfoundland? What if you live in Fargo, North Dakota? What if you live in Iuka Mississippi? What if the nearest source of support is hundreds of miles away? What are you to do?

Well, you can do one of two things: you can gird your loins and gas your car and make the journey, or you can form a local support network.

“What, me?” you say? “I can’t do that. I’m just an average person.” Well, Virginia Prince was just an average person and she formed FPE, which eventually became Tri-Ess. Christine Jorgensen was just an average person and she found the courage to go to Scandinavia to seek sex reassignment. Lou Sullivan was just an average person and he wrote *Information for the Female-to-Male Crossdresser and Transsexual*. Merissa Sherrill Lynn was just an average person and she had a vision of IFGE. Mr. Peabody was just an average person and he invented the WayBack Machine.

Face it. You can do it. Here’s how:

### 1. *Decide who you will serve. Be as inclusive as possible.*

Persons with gender issues are highly variable, and if you are the only source of support around, you should think very hard before excluding certain factions, making them as alone as you once were— but feeling more so because of their exclusion. You may be transsexual, and so your thoughts may run to transsexualism, but what about the crossdresser? You may be a heterosexual crossdresser. What about the homosexual crossdresser? What about the transgenderist? What about female-to-male people, who, after all, make up half of our population? What about significant others, who often have tremendous problems coping with their transgendered partners? Our suggestion to you is that whatever the focus of your group, you should not be exclusionary, but should welcome anyone with a gender conflict, white, black, straight, gay, male, female, HIV+, TS, TG, CD, SO, LSMFT, or any other variant of what Billie Jean Jones, elsewhere in this issue, calls the Genderbet Soup. If the focus of the group seems too broad, you may decide to break into special interest groups (or SIGs, as they are called by computer user groups) according to self-identification or interest.

If you decide to limit yourself to one sub-group, then you will have a closed group. Otherwise, your group will be open. The relative merits of open and focused groups are addressed elsewhere in this issue by Holly Boswell.

Even if you do close your group to some faction of the community, don't leave others out in the cold. Surely you remember how that felt! Treat them with care and consideration. Talk to them, help them to understand themselves, and help them to find or start an organization or group which can help them.

### 2. *Decide upon provisional policies.*

You should give serious consideration to how your group will function. Is it a social group, or is it a

self-help group, or is it both? How often will you meet? How long will your meetings last, and what will you do? Will you charge money to attend, and if so, how much? Will refreshments be served? What behavior will be considered acceptable, and what will be considered unacceptable? What will be your security requirements?

You will be asked to help people find psychologists, surgeons, and endocrinologists, so the sooner you have a policy about referrals, the better. You should decide whether to endorse the Standards of Care of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. We strongly suggest that you do, for they are the only standards for the hormonal and surgical treatment of transsexual persons, and they provide common-sense safeguards that can save a lot of human misery.

Second, you should decide what referrals you will and will not make, and under what conditions you will make referrals. You may decide to refer the individual only to mental health caregivers (psychologists, counselors, social workers, psychiatrists) and to support groups and information clearinghouses like AEGIS and IFGE. You may decide to give the names directly to the individual's therapist and let him or her make the referral. If you decide to refer the individual to endocrinologists, plastic surgeons, and surgeons who do sex reassignment surgery, you should ask yourself whether the individual is ready for the service they are requesting. It is common, for example, for those who are just starting out to seek specific information about a physician who does sex reassignment surgery— years before they realistically need this information. Their query will serve only to impose needless work on the surgeon and his staff. Similarly, it would be in violation of the Standards of Care to refer an individual to an endocrinologist or other physician for hormones before he or she is in possession of a letter from a clinical mental health worker authorizing them. You must decide whether to take the individual's word that such a letter exists, or whether to ask to verify it with the

letter-writer (which would require a release of information form).

### 3. *Choose a name.*

It will pay to give some thought to this, for changing the name of your group, once it is established, will take some doing. Your name should say exactly what you will do, without being unwieldy. Exercise your creativity and your sense of humor. Some groups use historic names, like Texas' Boulton and Park society, which is named after two gay crossdressers who were arrested in Victorian England. Holly's group, the Phoenix Transgender Support Group, is named after the fabulous mythological bird which arises from its own ashes. Many groups and organizations with long names are called by their acronyms; you get bonus points for coming up with a name that, while telling what you do, makes an acronym that is a word, like LIFE (Long Island Femme Expression). Double bonus points if your acronym makes a word that is gender-related. The word AEGIS, for example, means shield or auspices, and so describes the organization's purpose. And no, AEGIS' founder didn't sit up nights thinking of it; she spent all of thirty minutes on the name. [And by the way, AEGIS isn't a support group, but a national clearinghouse for information about gender dysphoria. There's no rule that says you must start a support group. Perhaps, like Billie Jean Jones or Phoebe Smith, who publish, respectively, *GenderFlex*, (formerly *TV Guise*), and *The Transsexual Voice*, you would rather publish a newsletter. Perhaps, like Sister Mary Elizabeth, you would rather start an information service (J2CP). Perhaps, like Anne Ogborn, you would rather start an advocacy organization. Perhaps, like Phyllis Frye, you would rather put together a conference (she is the driving force behind the First National Conference on Transgender Law). Perhaps, like Mjka Scott and others in England, you would rather put together a political action committee like their Press For Change.]

#### 4. Rent a post office box.

A few dollars will buy you a secure place to receive your mail in whatever name you wish, both personal and organizational, and will provide protection of your privacy. If you move across town, or if the leadership of the organization passes out of your hands and into another's, the post office box will remain constant. This is important, for you will be listing that post office box just about everywhere.

#### 5. Get a dedicated telephone line.

If you open your private phone line to gender inquiries, you'll be getting calls at 2 AM. You may be able to put up with this for a short time, but at some point, you will want to get a dedicated telephone line. If money is tight, you can probably make do with a RingMaster number, at least for a while. If you get a dedicated line at a later date, you can use the RingMaster number, and so avoid having to re-publicize your group's phone number.

Most telephone companies now support RingMaster, which is a separate number which will cause a distinctive ring on your telephone, letting you know if the incoming call is personal or gender-related. You can answer the phone with different greetings, depending upon the ring: "Hi. This is Bill Jones." "Hi, this is the Fargo Multidenominational Transcontinental Support Group, B.J. speaking. We bend gender. How can we help you?" Be careful not to confuse the rings!

Answering machines unfortunately can't yet distinguish the Ringmaster calls from your other calls, so you may want to leave an ambiguous but reassuring message so that callers won't freak out and go back in the closet for twenty years. "Good evening and thank you for calling. You've reached M.T.S.G. This is also Bill Jones' private number. We'd be happy to return your call or send you information about us. Please speak slowly and distinctly after you hear the beep."

If you open your private phone line to gender inquiries, you'll need to convey to all group members guide-

## *The Need for Open Support Groups*

by Holly Boswell

Until recently, most transgender support groups have been focused on the two most obvious segments of the gender community: heterosexual crossdressers and transsexual people. These two segments have specific needs and concerns that are often best addressed in a focused manner that requires exclusivity.

Meanwhile, as increasing numbers of people with gender issues present themselves and seek support, we have come to see how truly diverse we are. Transgenderists, androgynes, crossdressers who are gay, lesbian or bisexual, prostitutes, HIV+ persons and PWA's, and many other gender alternative people will continue to lack meaningful support until there are groups that are open to them. This is why more and more new groups are welcoming *all* people with gender issues.

A special kind of sharing takes place in an open group. One gets to see the entire issue of gender displayed in a fascinating array of aspects. And when male and female significant others and counselors are participating, the spectrum is even more colorful. Rigid stereotypes of what a crossdresser or transsexual person is supposed to be are shattered. Sexuality is seen as the fluid energy it really is, independent of gender. Topics pop up spontaneously and a wealth of experience and viewpoints are shared. In fact, with only a few gentle nudges from a facilitator, the discussion is usually so lively that no programs or meeting agendas are necessary. This is peer counseling at its best.

Most people who come to a support group are looking for companionship and information. Many are in a formative stage of discovering

who they really are and what to do about it. The open dialogue that takes place in this kind of group gives everyone a chance to hear the perspectives of others who are living or experimenting with all sorts of gender options they may or may not have even thought of. Members can also feel quite comfortable testing these options, since conforming to standards is not expected. This is especially valuable for novices, who might otherwise be seduced into the only option offered by a focused group. How many would-be transsexual people might benefit more from this open approach? We all need to find our place in the rainbow of gender, and to understand that our colors may shift over time.

There ought to be a support group within a hundred miles of every transgendered person. At the grassroots level, more of these people will be served if the first group in their area is open. As members increase, specialized focus groups can follow. If an area already has one or more focused groups— which is often the case in large cities— it's probably time to form an open group to fill in the gaps.

Because the gender community was first organized by members of focused groups, there has been a troubling lack of cohesiveness that has resulted in polarization and petty squabbling. The heterosexual crossdressers and the transsexual persons are like two columns on a weak foundation. With the new trend of open support groups, that foundation will be strengthened. And as open support groups begin to nurture more columns of gay or bisexual crossdressers, transgenderists, female-to-male transsexual persons, androgynes, and more, we may have a structure that can support a roof. With the spirit of unity and inclusiveness that open groups promote, we may indeed create the temple of a community we can all call home.

lines for phone etiquette. These guidelines might include the confidentiality of the phone number (i.e., don't give it to others), hours, and who to ask for when they call.

#### *6. Have business cards and stationery designed and printed.*

Your support group at this point consists of a post office box and a RingMaster number, but nobody needs to know that. If you want to stay small, you can do without fancy stationery, but if you want to make a good impression on those with whom you'll be corresponding, have attractive business cards, letterhead, and envelopes made up. It will pay if you spend a little money for an attractive design and a good printing job. The more impressive your materials look, the more seriously you'll be taken. It will really help here to consult a graphic artist, who will do a custom design for you for less than you might think. Don't go cutesy and do cards with pretty women on them. Don't scrimp on paper quality either, and for God's sake, don't use pink paper! Look at the letterhead of the large corporations and try for the same look, but don't directly copy anyone's logo, unless you like dealing with corporate lawyers.

Rather than spelling things out, you may want to use only your organization's initials and address on your envelopes, for you'll be sending mail to people whose well-being could be jeopardized by an envelope that said something like "Important gender-related information enclosed!" Be discrete, especially when mailing to a street address rather than a post office box.

#### *7. Do a press release, using your letterhead.*

Prepare a press release, stating your purpose, your philosophy, any projects or products you might have, and membership criteria for your support group, and have a few hundred copies run off. It will be important to address issues like security requirements, dues, and group policies early

on, at least enough to add structure to the organization until officers can be elected and permanent policies decided upon. You may want to do a second broadside, or incorporate, in the first, educational information for the many people who don't know about gender dysphoria.

In time, you may want to expand these materials into a brochure. After all, you'll be sending it to prospective members, helping professionals, and other gender organizations for years to come.

#### *8. Get listed locally.*

You should get your name in as many publications and in as many other places as possible. Local gay organizations, crisis lines, medical referral services, hospitals, colleges and universities, physicians, psychologists, clergymen, electrologists— all will be happy to hear that there is somewhere to refer their clients with gender dysphoria. Your community may have an alternative newspaper which will list you for free or run a free ad, or you may have to (horrors) pay for an ad.

Telephone contact is great, but follow up your calls with a note on your letterhead. That's what you got it for. Your letters should be neatly typed or computer-printed. Be sure to include your press release and your business card. Your correspondents will be impressed with so professional an organization, and will have something concrete to hang onto instead of trying to find that scrap of paper on which they jotted down your phone number.

You can also put up your cards and press releases on bulletin boards in bars, supermarkets, and other places where large numbers of people will be likely to see them. What can it hurt?

#### *9. Get listed within the gender community.*

You are now listed locally, and will start getting calls. Why not get hooked up nationally so that other

organizations can refer people to you? IFGE, AEGIS, and other organizations get calls from all around the world, and will be happy to have a group in Fargo, North Dakota to refer to— and so will that little support group in Iuka Mississippi, who just got a call from your next door neighbor in Fargo. Send your press release with a nice cover letter, and ask that your business card (you might even have a small ad drawn up) be printed in their magazine or newsletter. You can also contact nationally known gender clinics and service providers, who also get calls from your neighbors in Fargo.

The paraculture's most comprehensive listing of support groups and other services is printed in each issue of *The TV-TS Tapestry*, which is published about three times a year by The International Foundation for Gender Education. This listing is a gateway into the gender world. All of the players, both major and minor, are listed there. Write to as many organizations as you can afford, asking to exchange publications and information. The magazines and newsletters which will start to appear in your box will help to build the sense of community, make you friends, and give you opportunities. Be sure to pass the booklets on to other group members after you read them. They can, in fact, be the beginning of the group's gender library.

#### *10. Telecommunicate.*

Local and national computer bulletin boards are utilized by millions of people. Messages placed on such boards— and especially the dozen or so gender-related national boards, are another way of bringing in new prospects. If you don't have a computer and modem, find someone you trust who does and ask them to post information about your group and monitor replies.

#### *11. Consider a newsletter.*

Newsletters can be fancy and time-consuming, or folksy, quick, and dirty. If you have a computer or even a typewriter, you can crank out a couple



of pages every month, telling about your local activities, and send copies around the town and around the country, and to your members (when you get them). Other groups will be impressed, and (here's the best reason for doing a newsletter) will put you on their exchange list. With their newsletters, you'll be able to monitor the happenings of the gender world and ultimately, better serve your members.

Do yourself and the world a favor, though. Get a dictionary, and, if you have a computer, buy a spelling checking program and use it. Have your newsletter read for clarity and style and spelling by someone who knows how to proofread— and preferably by two people who know how to proofread. It has to do with that image thing again.

### *12. Devise security procedures.*

With the above in place, you'll start getting calls and letters from people anxious to meet you and join your support group. You'll need some way to screen people to make sure they're okay, and they'll need some way to screen you to make sure that you're okay. Ideally, there should be a secure, well-lighted meeting room which is in a neutral location. Practically, this may not be possible. You'll find that a lengthy phone conversation will give you a good idea about the needs and interests of most callers. You may decide that a telephone screening will suffice, or you may want to meet the caller in person. Whatever you decide, you should formulate screening and other security procedures and have them in place early on— ideally, before your first incoming call. It would be a good idea to include your security requirements on the press release or brochure that you send around.

Group members must be told and told again of the importance of respecting the privacy of others. It would be a good idea to make them sign a statement agreeing to do so. It will be necessary to instruct group members about proper protocol. For instance, what purpose will it serve for members to know the last names of

other members? (Answer: none). What should they do if they run into another group member at the mall? (Answer: ignore them, especially if the person is with someone else. Contact should be made only if the other person indicates that they want to make contact).

Some of your group members will have two names, and it may prove difficult to tell which one to use in different circumstances. Each member should be asked to indicate if it is all right to receive mail and telephone calls, and which name should be used.

Remember: Lives are at stake here. Loose lips sink ships. A slip of the tongue or pen can cause great damage to the lives of your group members. It's a good policy to never give out phone numbers without explicit permission. It makes life a little more difficult, but a lot safer. You can get out of the middleman position by obtaining the permission of the caller to give his or her number to the second party.

We've included on page 43 a copy of the Atlanta Gender Explorations group's confidentiality and security statement, which is modeled on Phoenix Transgender Support Group in Asheville, North Carolina— Holly's group. Like her, you may want to have group members sign a waiver of responsibility so that they cannot blame you for everything that goes wrong in their lives.

### *13. Find a meeting place.*

If you are comfortable with getting together in your house or at the home of another group member, then you will not need to find a meeting place. Otherwise, you will need to find a place which is secure, safe, inexpensive, and which offers your members freedom to come and go crossdressed. You may want or need a location with facilities for members to change clothes. Certain churches (of the more liberal persuasion) may be open to giving you free or low-cost meeting spaces, and so may gay support centers or bars. Helping professionals may let you have space, and may even serve as a resource and sponsor for the group.

Once your group reaches a critical size, a small contribution from each member will pay for rent of a hotel suite and refreshments, with money left over for printing costs and stamps. Until then, you may have to compromise. One thing to consider: you will probably want to keep the actual location of your meetings secret, divulging that information only to people who have passed the security requirements.

### *14. Make the group self-supporting.*

You may have to dig a bit into your pocket for start-up expenses, but several hundred dollars will go a long way. Consider the alternative— lots of travel, which will not be inexpensive. You can either give your organization money, or make a loan to it, with full expectation of eventual payback. Perhaps you should consult an attorney about the latter.

You can't exactly have a transgender car wash or bake sale (although with the increasing acceptance of transgendered people, perhaps the first gender walkathon is not so far in the future). There are, however, various ways to make money, limited only by your creativity.

First, you can ask your members for dues. You should keep fees low, certainly less than ten dollars per meeting, and lower, if at all possible. If you have to go to some time and trouble to screen prospective members, you might charge them a modest screening fee, which will go into the organization's treasury. You might also ask members for voluntary donations in excess of the dues.

You can sell subscriptions to your newsletter, especially to those folks who want to monitor what is happening, but are not yet ready to come out. You should calculate printing expenses and postage and then charge somewhat more, but don't price yourself out of business. Remember that you're doing this to help people and not to make a buck.

After your organization has reached a healthy size, there will be other ways to make money. You can

maintain a clothing exchange, put on a pageant, have a fancy \$20 a plate fundraising dinner, or have a spaghetti supper for five dollars a plate. And when the ball is really rolling, you can incorporate as a nonprofit entity, file for 501(c) federal nonprofit status, announce that contributions are tax-deductible, and go after grant money and charitable donations.

### *15. Structure of meetings.*

Most of your members will have personal issues which they want to discuss. The group meetings should not have so much structure that this is not possible. "I know you're having a breakdown, Ronnie Jane, but it's time to play 'Walk on the Wild Side' by Lou Reed." In fact, time for personal issues should be built into the schedule for each and every meeting. You may want to have guest speakers at some of the meetings, and at others you may want to throw out a topic for general discussion: "What is the best way to deal with children? Should they be told? When?" You should be careful to select topics of interest to all of the members. We guarantee you that female-to-male crossdressers and transsexual people will not want to talk about makeup (although they may get a kick out of the lingerie show!).

### *16. Start a lending library.*

You can use the magazines and newsletters you get in a newsletter exchange to form the core of a lending library which includes inexpensive paperback self-help books, newspaper clippings, articles from mainstream magazines, and articles and stories from the group members. You can ask individual members to donate a book. You'll need to keep close tabs on the materials, though, for otherwise they will tend to walk.

### *17. Build the organization.*

As your membership grows, you may need to elect officers and appoint staff and committees to be in charge of various activities. Remember that in any organization, 10% of

the members do 90% of the work. Recruit new talent. It'll make your life easier.

If you can afford a dedicated telephone line with Call Forwarding, then you'll be able to transfer the "hot line" to volunteers. If a writer emerges, you may be able to place the burden of the newsletter in capable hands. No matter what talents an individual might have, there will be something they can do. Duplication and mailing of the newsletter is a burdensome task, but someone in the group may be happy to make that their contribution. Someone else may be happy to screen prospective members.

Upon election, the president should officiate at meetings. One of the first tasks of the officers should be to devise a constitution or a set of bylaws, and address the provisional statement of policy under which you have been operating. The officers may revise or expand it, or they may decide to let it stand.

### *18. Don't hold the organization back.*

Consider that you may be starting something that may become bigger than you are. Welcome the talents and contributions of others, and don't try to maintain absolute control. Sure—you're always going to think of it as "your" group, but in fact, it isn't. It's the members' group, and you should keep that in mind at all times. You didn't really want to run a support group for the rest of your life, did you? When the group is in capable hands, you might want to back away and watch it fly.

### *19. Remember that peoples' lives are at stake.*

Despite the generally light-hearted tone of this article, you must remember that the support you will be providing will have profound effects on the lives of others, as well as on your own. The needs of the individual must come before the needs of the organization. You must also maintain yourself in as professional a manner as possible at all times, helping people as much as

possible, yet at the same time meeting your personal needs.

What does that mean, you may ask? Simple: you should keep within the limits of your knowledge, and not stray beyond; you should follow commonly accepted practice like endorsing the Benjamin Standards of Care for transsexual people. You should learn as much as you can and respect the judgement of those who know more than you do, and defer to them when appropriate. All referrals should be in the best interest of the client. You should delegate authority rather than trying to do everything by yourself. And above all, you should maintain strict confidentiality of your group members and those who make inquiries regarding the group.

One of the common traps that those who run support groups fall into is overextending themselves. When this happens, burnout occurs, and then phone calls and letters from those wanting information go unanswered, prospective members go unscreened, and newsletters go unpublished. Please keep in mind that a phone call or letter may be the only time an individual finds the courage to reach out. If you don't have the time or energy or inclination to deal with those seeking help or to publish your newsletter, find someone in your organization who does, or at least refer those who call or write elsewhere. And please be sensitive; it's easy to make a remark on the phone or on paper which will send someone back in the closet for two or three years.

There is of course much more to running a support group than we could possibly mention in these pages. We haven't told you, for instance, what to do when you get a midnight call from someone in crisis, or what to do if someone breaks group protocol. Like the rest of us, you'll have to learn as you go. But hopefully, our suggestions will empower you and give you direction if you do decide to form your own support group.

Good luck if you decide to give it a try. ☽

*Genderbet Soup*  
*Continued from page 10*

filter that "sees" cross-dressers, transgenderists, transsexuals and transvestites as WHIMs. The filter that sees Significant Others (SOs) as non-cross-dressing White Heterosexual Identified Females (WHIFs); the filter that *requires* the addition of "female" to "other" cross-dressing/gendering people (i.e. FTMs); the filter that "filters out" bisexuals, homosexuals, erotic fetishists, gender-benders, people of color, and other GAPs. Segregated Genderland is truly POC-marked with too many GOB clubs mainly populated by WHIMs and a few "wifely" WHIFs.

And the "programming" at these events begs to have more diversity—such as cross-dressing as an aspect of masculinity (for males); as an aspect of femininity (for females); as a deconstruction of the binarism of gender (and a corresponding expansion of the "third"—the transitional space, the non-specific "other"); as an aspect of eroticism; role-playing; sexual expression; transculturalism (for examples). AND, a reduction on the emphasis of TIPS (hormones, voice and body changes are dealt with so extensively and thoroughly that they have become the "ideal" for far too many Gender Explorers who are not being shown other paths to "Gender Euphoria"—are in fact being shown how to swap one rigid sex-gender classification for another as an affirmative course even though their motivation may be the rejection of culturally "expected" gender attributes and not biology/anatomy). If sex and gender are inseparable (the congruity that TIPS seek), then we wonder: Are we masculine even if we wear skirts, or nurture our children, or cry during the sad parts of a movie? (What gender is a child born in the "Third World?")

*Wake-up, Billie Jean! Wake-up!!*

I am awake, dammitall— what do you want?!

*You have to finish the CQ piece.*

I just did.

*No you didn't. You were dreaming that you wrote it. ☺☺*

*How I Became...*  
*Continued from page 50*

Dr. Benjamin and others. I went to the Post Office Building. Outside it, I called the former postal attorney and told him what I was about to do. He was not very happy with the idea and made me feel that if I ever went into that building I might not get out again. That was frightening, but this was the United States! I went in and found the office of the Chief Inspector, Mr. Montegue. I told him what I was doing there, and he told me that Mr. Callahan of the mailability section was the one to talk to, and called him in. Callahan took me into his office, and I brainwashed him for an hour and a half about the whole field of transvestism and the fact that we weren't gay, and told him that his inspectors had overstepped their bounds on a whole lot of occasions, and showed him the letters saying so. He was polite, understanding, and cooperative. After that visit, I heard no more complaints from around the country of inspectors giving transvestites a hard time. I think I was able to change the thinking of the whole post office department and their handling of our kind of people.

If it hadn't been for that probation, I would never have had motivation for starting the talks to clubs, which was in turn responsible for my getting to do television interview shows, radio talk shows, and lectures to medical schools, colleges, and groups of students.

Over the years, I was able to do a great deal of spreading the word through society. Others are doing this work now, but I can safely say that I was the first one to get up before hundreds in service clubs and millions on radio and television, dressed as a lady, admitting to being a male, and then explaining what it was all about. I am satisfied that I contributed my bit to the gradual opening up of social attitudes concerning sex, gender, and crossdressing. It is because I feel that I have made my contribution that I feel entitled to retire from the active fray at this point and let some of the rest of you carry the battle forward. ☺☺

*Yellow Brick Road*  
*Continued from page 34*





really got to be a woman to put up with setting your hair at 6:30 every morning, getting dressed in something acceptable for work, putting up with all the chauvinistic BS from men in the workplace all day, come home, and then share in all of the domestic tasks of living. Women do it every day of their lives. If you can't accept the responsibilities of the reality of the existence, better that you find out in the experimental stage and become a healthy transgenderist or crossdresser, and leave the heavy stuff alone.

But if the chosen gender identity is truly you, you will join your fifty percent of the population and gain the comfort of the life of the person you are and were always meant to be. You will shortly learn that being male or female is not the "happily ever after" cure-all to your life situations, it just facilitates trying to solve the problems and overcoming the other hurdles without the millstone of gender dysphoria around your neck.

If you do find that you are correct in gender choice during the real-life experiment, you will start to see dimensions of your existence and learn about a self that has been so far hidden. No person, however committed or studied, can really know about the cultural existence of the other gender until he or she has lived in it. No matter what you think life in that gender is really like, it will be far different and more complex in texture than you ever imagined. This will be revealed by your accepting the full requirements and responsibilities of the gender role and will yield a real joy of enlightenment, a source of constant wonderment, and make every day better than the best Christmas that you have ever had. I have enjoyed the time of my experiment very much, worked with it, explored it, wondered at it. Because of it, I knew when it was time for the reality of surgery. I knew that I was lying down on that operating table with an unconditional acceptance of myself as a female for the rest of my life. That and the love of my life partner are the only things I have ever been sure of in my life. ☺☺

# Reviews

## Rating System

-  Don't Bother
-  Only if the price is right
-  Definitely worthwhile
-  Most Excellent

## *The Partnership Way*

Riane Eisler & David Loye. New York: Harper & Collins, ©1990.

Review by Anthony James Roberti

Rating:

Most Excellent

It is easy to find books that suggest big changes, because they are abundant. They are written by authors who have studied a social problem and in their books analyze it in minute detail. In the last paragraph they warn us that if things don't change very soon, we're all in big trouble.

Some readers will take the hint and organize a community action group. Most of us, though, are consumers who know very little about being activists. When a book, or more likely a TV show, manages to raise anger over an issue, most of us, as consumers, have no idea how to direct this anger constructively.

There's another obstacle, which might be even bigger than the first. Writers who work from an academic standpoint know that they must present evidence supporting a thesis in order to convince the academic world. As a result, their books may be too technical for most people to understand, and many may be unable to read between the lines to the underlying message.

*The Chalice and the Blade* by Riane Eisler is an ideal example. Through archaeological evidence, she paints a picture of the past that is important and shocking. According to Eisler, the first civilizations were not based on domination, fear, and violence, but on open communication and equality, especially sexual (*gender?*—Ed.) equality. Domination and warfare were an intrusion that, combined with many unfortunate factors, led to the rise of male-dominant, life-negative cultures. The only accounts of history that have survived were written after the rise of patriarchy, so the only account of history we have inherited is from the "dominator"

viewpoint. Yet all is not gloom: there have been periods of resurgence, when the partnership way of living was revived, and these revivals were responsible for most of the advances in our way of life. Eisler ends on an optimistic note: with public consciousness raised to the level it is in this century, action can be taken to permanently restore the partnership style of society and therefore end the debilitating violent stereotypes that cause both women and men to suffer.

*The Chalice and the Blade* made tremendous waves, striking a chord that resonated within those who read it. Discussion groups sprang up everywhere; a national network grew to advance the partnership idea; teachers at many schools and universities started using the book for classes and seminars. Even still, *Chalice* faced the drawbacks described above—most people are consumers, not activists, and not everyone can read through the archaeological details to get the message.

Eisler and partner David Loye's *The Partnership Way* makes up for these shortcomings. They start by summarizing the concepts in *Chalice*. The last chapters in Part I tell how the partnership concept might be applied to youth, church, chemical dependency, and codependency groups. The second part is a nine-lesson plan for teaching the ideas of *Chalice* in a small group or classroom setting. Here, the ideas of *Chalice* are explained in plain language and arranged as topics for group discussion. They include the interruption of partnership society by dominator societies, the "essential difference" between partnership and dominator cultures, and the "hidden heritage" of the Great Mother. Each idea is presented in several ways in order to best meet the specific interests and experience of different groups. Guidelines are included for facilitators who are not well-practiced in ideas. The sessions are not only interesting and stimulating, but also model respectful, rather than confrontational, ways of talking with one another. Throughout the program, no blame is placed on

men for male domination. The emphasis is entirely on healing and moving on. The ninth lesson contains pages of suggestions on specific community action projects the group can undertake after fully exploring the notion of partnership. There is a section of additional topics, projects, and resources that can be used by facilitators in group discussion. Part III contains several essays that continue some of the ideas in Challice, such as the misuse, and the potential constructive use of technology.

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of Eisler's paradigm is the sense of optimism it inspires. She has helped many to believe that a society based on respectful interconnection rather than fear and domination is not a pipe dream, but a viable option. It can be difficult to break out of patterns we learned as children, but the human race is the most adaptive species there is. It is obvious to most that we must adapt now. Eisler and Loye have done an invaluable service by guiding us in the right direction. ♀

### *Accounting for Transsexualism and Transhomosexuality*

Brian Tully, Ph.D. ©1992.  
Whiting & Birch, London

*Review by Holly Cross*

*Rating:*

*Only if the price is right*

*Holly crossdresses, but does not feel that she's transsexual. She knows about National Health from a month in Inverness Hospital.*

This book is not about finances. As we all know, there's no accounting for transsexualism.

Tully's book is written for counselors, by a counselor. It is mostly a compendium from Dr. Tully's (his degree is in psychology) case notebooks.

In Britain, if you feel you are transsexual, you tell the family doctor, who is shocked and feels inadequate, and he refers you to the Gender Identity Clinic at Charing Cross Hospital (Fulham) in London— even if you live in

northern Scotland.

At the G.I.C. you might talk to a junior psychologist such as Dr. Tully was in the late '70's. You go there several times for interviews (National Health pays the transportation and bills, but you spend a lot of time traveling and waiting). In time, you might get approved to go on the waiting list for gender reassignment surgery. Then it's a matter of budget, priorities, and the surgeon's availability.

Those who can— that is, those who have the money— will often avoid Charing Cross, since the same surgeon may be available at a reasonable charge at another London hospital, and of course there is Brussels, quite close. With application of cash, things happen quickly.

In the time period covered in the book, apparently the Standards of Care were not operating rules at the Charing Cross G.I.C., for in some of the follow-up interviews it becomes obvious that the "real-life test" was often observed by staying home and watching the telly rather than going out and working as a woman. The wisdom of having effective and complete electrolysis before anything else is occasionally obvious by complaints of those who did not do that ending as a "bearded lady."

On the other hand, the G.I.C. was fairly selective, approving only 24% of the 143 male-to-female persons covered here for surgery, and 43% of the female-to-male persons. Still, there were some obvious mistakes.

A wide spectrum is represented, including some who are slightly mentally retarded. I get no impression of prejudice, espousal of a particular hypothesis, nor of any tendency to "play God" on the part of the author. He does make it clear that ALL of the applicants had more problems than simple gender dysphoria, and that whatever their sex, many of them seemed not to be in good control of their life. I suppose the justification for asking those who don't get surgery to come back and talk some more with the psychologist is that the counseling should be helpful to them. In any case, there is no pecuniary motive; in socialized medicine, the real problem is over-

worked helping professionals, and burnout.

The book would be worthwhile to another professional, in giving a lot of distilled experience to someone who has just acquired a transsexual patient, but I don't think it is helpful to the person with gender dysphoria, except as background material. If your counselor already has a copy of Magnus Hirschfeld's book, *Transvestites*, this is a possible addition to his library. ♀

### *Atlanta Gender Explorations Support Group Confidentiality & Security Statement*

*Our members are diverse, and have varying needs. Many take risks to join us. Marriages, children, reputations, and livelihoods are all on the line. We owe each other the promise of confidentiality. It is a crucial, mutual concern.*

1. *Personal information is extremely confidential, and should not be discussed either outside the group or with other group members. Under no circumstance should you give anyone the phone number or address of a group member without their express approval.*

2. *What is discussed within the group needs to stay within the group.*

3. *Our meeting place is secret. We do not need errant thrill seekers or unfriendly parties on our doorstep. You must not disclose our meeting location.*

4. *You are welcome to bring partners, friends, or family members to meetings, but this must first be cleared with one of the group officers.*

5. *When asking for group members on the phone or when sending mail, be careful of the name you use. If in doubt, check with one of officers or facilitators first.*

6. *When encountering other group members in public, you should ignore them unless they indicate that they are willing to greet you. You must not go the homes or places of business of other group members without specific invitation from that group member.*

*I hereby acknowledge that my involvement with the A.G.E. support group is voluntary, and that the support group exists solely for purposes of peer support and self-help. I accept responsibility for my own welfare. I realize that I am not obligated to take the advice or suggestions of the group leaders or members, and will not hold them accountable for my own well-being or actions. I agree not to divulge information about the meeting place or members, and to follow the rules of the support group.*

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed)

# Bits n Pieces

We had heard rumors (or rumours, since they originated in Great Britain), that there had once been a gender-related magazine called "Chrysalis." When we got to know Phaedra Kelly, we asked her to tell us about it (We've never seen it).

JoAnn Roberts told me that her son said that Phaedra is the most unusual person he ever met. On the basis of her correspondence alone, we would have to concur. You'll see what we mean as you read this.

## *Chrysalis International* *A History of a Maverick*

by Phaedra Kelly

Volume 1, No. 1 of *Chrysalis* appeared in January, 1988. *Chrysalis* was a bimonthly, which never missed a deadline, despite one instance of a hurricane which killed all power. It made it to the readers with a special Hurricane Issue supplement, accounting for the storm, and porcelain insulators from fallen telegraph poles were painted with the masthead logo, three of which are in the Transgender Archives collection at Ulster University. The fourth is with me. We produced six issues a year over two years, but in 1989, Volume 2, No. 1 began with a new title, *Chrysalis International*, a.k.a. *C.I.*, the first, as far as I know, of its kind to be truly international and linked to a working network, setting off the trend for "stables" of overseas editors and columnists on a regular basis.

The trend then became reciprocal, with my swapping a column in the Elaine Barrie Project Australia's *NuScene* (not long thereafter imitating *CI* by calling itself *International NuScene*) for Elaine's column in *CI*. We also had a regular and exceptionally good column from Renaissance's Trudy Henri.

We began In Their Own Words interviews, with celebrities in the community and theatrical/cabaret periphery making contact through the network and via stage newspaper sources and professional journalists of my acquaintance. Richard O'Brien, our second interviewee, became a subscriber to the tune of 200 pounds, and called *CI* a "beacon of common sense." My old friend Quentin Crisp, now in the United States, was the only paid interviewee. His fee was two pots

of the English savory beverage Boveril, with which he makes warm drinks to keep out the New York cold. For artist/sculptor and founder of the Alternative Miss World, Andrew Logan, we supplied items of junk jewelry for his use in art statuary. *CI* became akin to a magazine version of the Chelsea Hotel, Warhol's Factory, Logan's Studio in the Sky, Rocky Horror, every multi-arts trans-orientated cult going. Its theme was eclecticism, and *CI* was never afraid to appear to stray from the mundane. The idea was, "If Tran does it, it IS Transgender specific, so we cover it, and what's more, research it to the ultimate!" So any peripheral hobby had its story to tell. Our lust for life and the satiation of a hungry low boredom threshold excited and thrilled our readers.

We found that interesting people were interested to be in *CI*. For instance, Bobby Graham, a professional stunt Tran with circus and special military service experience, volunteered many photos from his/her chameleon incarnations and a prolific interview about his career in movie stunts, and her trick of blowing herself up with 9 pounds of gelignite while lying on a bed of nails.

Our news section made comment, never, ever taking the copy gained from newspapers as gospel, but always attempting a follow-up and proof through our world network. Three times, as a result, *CI* proved stories to be totally fiction, compiled by bored overseas stringers exploiting our minorities' supposed lack of influence and attention span while securing their retainer fees easily. This once got us slated anonymously by a local Island newspaper review (along with our custom of calling non-Trans "saps" (i.e., Homo sapiens, wise man, too damned wise for their own good), and the battle through what was then called the Press Council, a neutral watchdog body, and gained right of reply in the same newspaper.

Being a maverick, *CI* was a Gender Transient herself. She was always unbiased towards anybody of any stripe, providing that person accepted or in some way acknowledged

polarity of gender by transformation of some kind. Radical feminists and hard right "straight" gays got no easy passage, nor did journalists, politicians and lazy TV/TS sisters. Putting it mildly, *CI* would be bloody rude to people who ill-advisedly imagined that they could pop off at the soft underbelly of an undefended and undefendable minority. We swiftfast removed that illusion!

Its target audience? Anybody! It even went to the Kremlin, when we were hunting Soviet contacts, though it's not known whether Gorbachev read it. Prince Charles, however, had a letter of thanks sent, and Thatcher privately rather enjoyed it, even when the cover illustration was of editoress Miss Kelly as an 18th century pirate Captain Anne Bonney, with a distressed Mrs. T trussed up and held at cutlass point (a drawing commissioned by *CI* from Thelma Pine of the Phoenix Society in South Africa).

We pioneered a lot of things—in fact, anything we jolly well pleased. The sensation was very sixties: do what you like if it feels right. When we didn't know it was supposed to be impossible, we went ahead and did it anyway. Raw, original community news was one thing we originated, not the usual inter-group gossip, so much as the hard news of people's pain, fear, and distress in countries hardly heard about until then: Thelma's nearness by accident to a terrorist bomb, the riots among Khusra in Pakistan, the AIDS paranoia in cops attacking TV hookers in Greece, published with first-hand statements and accounts from victims. *CI* wasn't afraid to hurt, but as much aspired to delight, amuse, titillate, and entertain.

Apart from efforts to excite and stimulate its producers as much as its readers, and to raise some funds for the International TransGender Authority's further work, *CI* was designed to enhance the network and expand it by increasing the number of other journals exchanged and received for it, and improving our contacts. It would, could, and did lend its hand to anybody's cause. But it became a cult, and cults seldom

make money—not enough to run on. She had fulfilled all her pledges, reformed and in some places revolutionized other groups' journals, been oft-imitated but never equalled, and it was time for the lady to fade like the sci-fi heroes she loved, into the other dimensions. It was time for her to go from this world.

At the close of 1989, Volume 2, No. 6 of *CI* went down fighting, sporting a yellow snakeskin cover, dotted with illustrations justifiably stolen from the catalog of the Hayward Gallery's Leonardo da Vinci collection (which act we expect that great androgyne Leonardo would have approved), and on the back—also snakeskin yellow—a crystal spider in the bottom right corner. The editorial, titled "I Want to Feel Your Strength," characteristically began at the end of the magazine, just after the Last Word cartoon. It was based on messages sent to the free world from within the Warsaw ghetto, up until the Germans kicked the door in, a staccato burst of machine gun fire was heard, and the frequency went dead (a trusting move on my part, rewarded as ever by the readers, over three-quarters of whom wrote to identify the reference and congratulate me on it. *CI* readers were a breed unto their own).

It ended thus: "The end meets the beginning. Never fear that life may come to an end. Rather fear it may never have a beginning. You won't have *CI*, but you will have others new and the newly-changed old, in which I want to feel your strength and realize you are people, as indomitable and entitled to rights as any other animal claiming that label. The guns chatter, wood splinters, cordite clears, and the green glow of an Amstrad screen illuminates an empty *Chrysalis* on a chair... the gender transient has already dried her wings and flown... 'boom, boom, boom, boom/vic-tor-ry-ee...' (the first percussion of Beethoven's 5th). Good night, gentle reader, and never let the saps grind you down."

I think the experiment worked, and the wish is just about becoming fulfilled now. ☺

*Dr. Anne Bolin, an anthropologist and the author of "In Search of Eve," has turned her attention these days to female body-builders. In the spirit of participant-observation, she has herself become a bodybuilder. When preparing for competition, she puts herself on an incredibly strict diet in order to reduce body fat. Here are some tips from Anne for a low-fat diet.*

### *Anne Bolin's Workout Diet*

The nutritional program I have put together represents the integration of several approaches. It is basically a low fat and healthy approach to eating. It includes strategies that are used in the competitive bodybuilding community to lose fat and develop a lean physique. This program could not have been developed without the guidance of David Janicello, my bodybuilding mentor, as well as personal trainer and nutritional counselor (and owner of Winner's Gym, Burlington, NC).

#### *General Guidelines*

1. Begin your program by educating yourself about fats, sugars, and sodium, as well as chemical additives. Learn to read labels and select foods that are preferably low in fats, sugars, and sodium. In the beginning stages, you may not need to count calories, but focus on changing the kinds of foods you eat and when you eat. When you hit a plateau, you may need to focus on the total number of calories, as well. Remember, the older you are, the less calories you need.
2. Eat 6 to 8 times a day, or try to eat every two hours. Keep these amount of food units small. No large meals.
3. Avoid fried foods. Do not add salt or fats to your foods. For example, stir fry in water or use a very light coat of Pam. It is best to bake, microwave, boil, or open grill your food.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to write or call:

Anne Bolin  
1223 Franklin St.  
Burlington, NC 27215  
(919) 229-7600 (home)  
(919) 229-2191 (work)

(Diet is on page 46)

## Eating Program

### Meats, Fish, Poultry, Vegetable Protein

Fish, any kind  
Turkey, Chicken  
Eggs— try eggbeaters, or use only egg whites  
Tofu or other vegetable proteins

*Avoid red meat, unless very lean and grilled. Your serving size should be about 3-6 oz., depending upon your height and weight.*

### Dairy Products

Skim milk  
Non-fat yogurt (not low fat)  
Low-fat cottage cheese— good stuff, high protein, low fat  
No cheese, butter, or whole milk

*The following was published in "The Signal" in slightly different form.*

### Men's Work

by Denise Noe

We are hearing a lot today about the "daughter track." This is the term coined to describe the situation of women caring for their aging, often infirm, parents. A parallel to the "mommy track," (the less demanding career path for women who want to spend more time with their children), the daughter track catches women at the next stage of their lives. It subtracts time and energy that women can give to their jobs, as well as taking precious time from their leisure.

There is something ridiculous about the "daughter track" which distinguishes it sharply from the "mommy track": there is no basis for it in biology. In fact, there is a glaring biological fact that makes men the more appropriate caretakers for the elderly.

Pregnancy and childbirth cannot be shared by the two sexes. Nature has decreed they be performed by women. Breast-feeding can only be done by women. This early biological connection, it is often said, leads to the mother having an emotional bond in place so that most child care falls to her.

But sons and daughters are equally attached to their parents.

### Vegetables

Eat without salt and butter, either fresh, frozen, grilled, or steamed.

*Make your food taste zestier by learning how to season and taking advantage of diet products.*

Pritikin products in general (located in the diet section of grocery stores)  
Diet dressings. Watch for sodium and serving size  
Featherlight diet barbecue sauce (has lower sodium)  
Low sodium diet catsup

### Grains

Pita bread, Bagels (1 gm fat)  
Bread (read label: pick no fat, low sodium brand)  
Cereal: fruit squares, shredded wheat, oatmeal, grits— any cereal that has 0-1

They spend an equal amount of time in the womb and at the breast. They are equally related to the father. So from that vantage point, both sexes ought to be equally responsible for the aging parent.

But there is a way in which the two genders are not equal, and this one suggests that the care of elderly parents ought to be the responsibility of sons rather than daughters. Old people are heavy. It takes physical strength to assist an old person in getting around. A woman who regularly performs these chores is likely to end up exhausted and strained. For the same reason males are preferred in military combat— superior physical strength— they are better suited than females to care for the elderly.

The elderly themselves would benefit if men were their primary caregivers. Toward the end of life, when the smallest differences mean so much, our aged would enjoy more

gm fat/serving

Potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes, plain or with a little Molly McButter  
Pasta, rice, rice cakes

### Fruit

All kinds, with the exception of avocados. You can eat a piece of fruit about 30-60 minutes before your workout, or drink fruit juice 30 minutes before workout or exercise; otherwise, don't eat for two hours before working out.

*You can make your own sauces with mustard, vinegar, a little honey or Nutrasweet (Equal).*

*The great news: non-fat yogurt and angel food cake are both fat-free!*

confidence and comfort if they could lean (often quite literally) on the powerful arms of a son.

Why does the care of aging parents fall to women instead of men? Probably because of the seeming resemblance between infants and the aged. But as we have seen, the analogy between the baby and the elderly person is a false one. The more compelling reason is tautological: women care for the aged because women care for the aged. Thus, the daughters of the aging have their health jeopardized, their career aspirations imperiled, and their leisure whittled into nothingness.

Women ought to flatly refuse to do this kind of work. As Mother Teresa said in another context, they should "let men do what they are more suited to do." And the usual size and physical strength differences between male and female clearly mark the care of the aged as "men's work." ♀♂

### Second International Conference on Transgender Law & Employment Policy

26-29 August, 1993 in Houston, TX, USA

Contact Phyllis Frye, 5707 Firenza Street, Houston, TX 77035-5515  
(send stamped, self-addressed envelope with \$ .52 in postage)

Regional Planning Meetings: 27-28 Feb., San Antonio, during the Texas "T" Party (Call Phyllis Frye at 713-723-8368. She will return call collect), 24-25 April, Washington, DC (Call Aity Marla Aspen Rothblatt at 301-495-0172), & Sunday before ICTLEP conference (Contact Phyllis Frye). For proceedings from first conference, send \$40.00 (U.S. funds), and specify audio or video (add \$5.00 for overseas)



*Marie-Anne Fernagut from the Belgian Gender Foundation was good enough to send us the following at our request. We have left it in its original form rather than Americanizing it.*

### *Transsexualism in Belgium*

by Marie-Anne FERNAGUT

The situation of transsexual people and the problems they have to face aren't much different in Belgium compared with other European countries. We perceive the same rejection of transsexuals by the majority of the people because of the social taboo. Even the rejection of family and friends, the same misunderstandings exist about gender dysphoria. There are the enormously high costs of medical treatments; dismissal at work happens very often; the judicial procedure to change legal status is quite expensive, and so on...

Fortunately, we can say that in recent years things have somehow changed in a more positive way. Especially in the area of psychological and medical help, there is much progress in Belgium. But still there is a lot of work to be done. For about five years, specialized teams have developed counseling activities for transsexual patients and perform hormonal and surgical treatment. The quality of this medical treatment is very up to date, even so that e.g. American transsexuals regularly come to seek surgical help in Belgium. From their stories, we know that the medical treatment in the United States is even more expensive in comparison with our country.

But what about the juridical situation? In Belgium there is no law which regulates the changing of birth certificates. Therefore, every individual situation has to be examined separately in court and judged can freely decide whether they will accept or reject the request to change the legal sex.

Fortunately, there is a tendency within most of the Flemish courts to accept requests coming from unmarried and childless transsexual people. In all cases married people have to

divorce before they can have a legal sex change. In some of the medical teams, this demand for a divorce is also one of the conditions that has to be fulfilled before medical treatment can be started.

In Italy, but also in the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark there is a law which regulates the changing of the legal sex. We firmly believe that it is the right policy. In this way it becomes possible to avoid complex and ridiculous situations, as there are in Belgium, where one court rejects exactly the same request that is easily accepted by another court. The procedure to change the legal sex is quite expensive. It can easily mount to up to \$70,000 BF (*Belgian francs—Ed.*), which is about \$24,000 U.S., and it takes at least one year before it is finished.

If one asks for a legal sex change and a changing of the first name at once, it mostly is accepted in court. For name changing only, we have a special law in Belgium and a lot of transsexuals want to make use of it.

Transsexualism is officially accepted as a reason for name changing. This law dates from 1974, but was changed two years ago in a not so popular way: changing one's name has become ten times more expensive than it was before. The actual costs have raised to 20,000 BF, which is about \$667 U.S.

But there is more to be done than changing names and birth certificates. Being a very small minority group, transsexual people are discriminated against in various ways. Until

today, the sick (*National health care?—Ed.*) funds refuse to pay for the medical treatment and electrolysis, and we all know that the latter is a very expensive treatment. Should there not be such thing as the right to medical care? And what about dismissal from the job? Transsexuals don't have the right to work like other people? Transsexuals often have to cope with violence, humiliations, and mockery. Isn't there the International Convention of Human Rights which condemns every affectation of the personal life sphere?

For all these reasons, we can only express our greatest sympathy for the European Parliament action of some, as there are Ms. Van Hemeldonck and Mr. Van Nostitz and all other initiatives in this direction, who wants to ban all forms of discriminations regarding transsexual people.

*When we were in Brussels in mid-1991, one of Dr. Michel Seghers' patients, a French-speaking Belgian (Flemish is the other main language), told me that she had been refused a name change by the courts and was granted one only after appealing to Leroy. She didn't know the English words. Le roi. The king. Guess you had to have been there.—Ed. ☺☺*

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## Telephone Hot Lines in U.S., Canada, & U.K.

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>> These hotlines are run by non-profit organizations, and may not be answered "live" at all times as a result.

>> Listings followed by % are for groups known to be sexually-oriented; listings followed by # are for primarily TS-oriented groups; listings followed by @ are for heterosexual TV/CDs only. Most other listings are for "open" (both TV/CD and TS) groups. While we make every effort to keep this listing updated, phone numbers may change without notice.

### NEW ENGLAND REGION:

CD Network, Rochester: (716) 251-2312  
Chi Delta Mu Chapter Tri-Ess, NYC: (201) 663-0772 @  
Connecticut Outreach Society, Hartford: (203) 371-6292  
East Coast F2M Group, Cambridge: (413) 584-7616 #  
Eulenspiegel Society, NYC: (212) 477-6588 %  
Expressing Our Nature, Rochester: (212) 629-5750  
Gender Identity Program, NYC: (212) 969-0888 #  
Girls' Night Out, NYC: (212) 794-1665 ext 202  
Harriet Lane's TV Set, CT: (203) 237-1968  
Int'l. Foundation for Gender Education: (617) 894-8340  
Long Island Femme Expression: (718) 446-6753  
Metropolitan Gender Network, NYC: (201) 794-1665 ext 332  
My Choice, Baltimore: (410) 732-4546  
Outreach Institute, N. Portland: (207) 775-0858  
Pink Flamingoes, Boston: (617) 536-5639  
Renaissance Education Ass'n.: (215) 630-1437  
Renaissance Greater Philadelphia Chapter: (215) 946-8887  
Renaissance LSV Chapter, Harrisburg: (717) 780-1578  
Renaissance S. Jersey Chapter: (609) 641-3782  
Rhode Island Society, Newport: (401) 847-1035  
Tiffany Club, Boston: (508) 358-2305  
Transgenderists Independence Club, Albany: (518) 436-4513  
Transpiit, Pittsburgh: (412) 781-0257  
Transsupport, Portland: (207) 676-5870  
Washington-Baltimore Alliance: (301) 277-5475  
XX (Twenty) Club, Hartford: (203) 646-8651 #

### THE SOUTH:

American Educational Gender Info. Service: (404) 939-0244  
Atlanta Gender Explorations: (404) 962-3118 #  
Beta Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Mississippi: (601) 982-7678 @  
Black Rose, Arlington: (301) 369-7667 %  
Carolina Trans-Sensual Alliance, Charlotte: (704) 551-8838  
GDA North Carolina: (704) 982-1028  
Gender Information Network, Gainesville: (904) 332-8178  
Montgomery Institute, Augusta: (404) 603-9426 #  
M.O.R.E., Ft. Lauderdale: (305) 966-2138  
Mu Sigma Chapter Tri-Ess, Arkansas: (501) 972-1826 @  
Phi Epsilon Mu Chapter Tri-Ess, Central FL: (407) 677-9540 @  
Reality, Orlando: (407) 425-4527 #  
Serenity, Hollywood: (305) 436-9477  
Starburst, Tampa-St. Petersburg: (813) 866-0438  
Virginia's Secret, Richmond: (804) 741-1187

### MIDWEST & VICINITY:

Central Illinois Gender Assoc.: (309) 444-9918  
Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Chicago: (708) 364-9514 @  
Chicago Gender Society: (312) 434-5445  
City of Lakes Crossgender Comm., Minn'pls: (612) 229-3613  
Cross-Port, Cincinnati: (513) 474-9557  
Crossdressers & Friends, Kansas City: (913) 381-8887  
Crystal Club, Columbus: (614) 777-0648  
Crossroads, Detroit: (313) 537-3267  
Gender Dysphoria Support, Sbaunee Mss'n: (913) 371-0658 #

Indiana Crossdressers Society, Indianapolis: (317) 894-8109  
Iowa Artistry, Cedar Rapids: (319) 842-2654  
N.G.D.O., Detroit: (313) 842-5258 #  
Quad-City Society for Sex. Ed., Davenport: (319) 324-9641  
St. Louis Gender Foundation: (314) 567-8615  
Sunday Society, Chicago: (312) 252-7024

### SOUTHWEST/MOUNTAIN REGION:

Alpha Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Amarillo: (806) 359-7714 @  
Bluebonnet Coalition, San Antonio: (512) 656-4163  
Boulton & Park Society, San Antonio: (512) 545-3668  
CrossDressers International, Tulsa: (918) 582-6643  
Delta Omega Chapter Tri-Ess, Dallas: (817) 261-3253 @  
Eta Tau Chapter Tri-Ess, Austin: (512) 438-7604 @  
First Saturday, El Paso: (505) 434-5144  
Gender Crisis Help Line, Tucson: (602) 293-3456  
Gender Identity Center, Denver: (303) 458-5378  
Gulf Coast Transgender Community, Houston: (713) 780-3553  
Heart of Texas Gender Alliance, San Angelo: (915) 944-1381  
Help Me ... Accept Me, Dallas: (214) 404-1926  
ReCast, Dallas: (214) 641-4842 #  
Second Image, Austin: (512) 778-5460  
Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess) Nat'l.: (512) 438-7788 @  
TS Peer Support, Houston: (713) 333-2278 #  
Tau Chi Chapter Tri-Ess, Houston: (713) 988-8064 @  
Tri-Plex Gender Association, Waco: (817) 867-1077

### PACIFIC NORTHWEST:

Emerald City, Seattle: (206) 284-1071  
Northwest Gender Alliance, Portland: (503) 774-8463  
Rose City Gender Center, Portland: (503) 230-1036  
Salmacis Feminist Social Society, Eugene: (503) 688-4282  
Transsexual Lesbians & Friends, Seattle: (206) 292-1037 #

### THE WEST COAST (CA & HI):

Alpha Chapter Tri-Ess, Los Angeles: (213) 876-6141 @  
American Transsexual Education Center: (213) 469-4709 #  
Androgyny, Santa Monica: (213) 467-8317  
CHIC, Los Angeles: (310) 420-2580 @  
Diablo Valley Girls, Walnut Creek: (510) 849-4112  
Educational TV Channel, San Francisco: (510) 549-2665  
Feminine Image, Riverside/San Bernardino: (714) 931-1515  
Hawaii Transgendered Outreach, Honolulu: (808) 923-4270  
Neutral Corner, San Diego: (619) 685-3696  
Powder Puffs of Orange County, Anaheim: (714) 779-9013  
Rainbow Gender Association, San Jose: (408) 984-4044  
Sacramento Gender Association: (800) 585-7742  
Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess) Calif.: (209) 688-9246 @  
Swan's Inner Sorority, San Jose: (408) 297-1423

### CANADA:

Canadian Crossdressers Club, Toronto: (416) 921-6112  
Club Met, Montreal: (514) 528-8874  
Entre Femme, Quebec: (418) 529-1132 #  
Gender Mosaic, Ottawa: (613) 749-5203  
Illusions Social Club, Calgary: (403) 486-9661  
Monarch Social Club, Ontario: (416) 949-6602

### U.K.:

Beaumont Society, London: 081-756-1782  
Gender Dysphoria Trust, London: 0323-641100 #  
GenTrust, London: 071-730-7453  
Liverbirds, Liverpool: 051-709-4745  
New TransEssex: 0268-583761  
Rose's, Sheffield: 0742-342870  
Scottish TV/TS Group, Edinburgh: 031-556-4049  
TV/TS Support Group, London: 071-729-1466

*The History of...*  
*Continued from page 32*

removed homosexuality from psychosexual disorders, whilst at the same time adding transsexuality. For many centuries, the two were inextricably linked. Illustrated by this study are the hegemonic roles that the church, state, and medicine have had in regulating through their ideological apparatuses those who have cross-dressed or cross-lived. This illustration can be helpful in considering the social control mechanisms which have affected many other individuals who fall into socially stigmatized categories (e.g. black people, deaf people, disabled people, and those defined as insane). Transsexual persons are unique, however, in that as we now approach the 21st century, they are still in the position of rationalized isolation, kept there by those who would consider it politically incorrect to oppress any other minority group. This, a structuralist would suggest, is as a result of transsexuals being non-human. "Man" and "woman" are used as words to represent the whole of humanity, and as "transsexual" fits neither key word, transsexuals are not part of humanity. Whatever the reason, the oppression is real—transsexuals have a perplexing legal status. They lose their jobs, their homes, and their families merely for being.

The conclusion must be that either a transsexual is "sick," as defined in DSM III-R, and therefore worthy of treatment or cure (the latter has been impossible to achieve), or, alternatively, that they just "are," as homosexuals now just "are." In the former case, "sickness," repression of transsexuals is untenably immoral. In the later case, they must be entitled to the civil rights other citizens obtain in democratic states.

For some time, a difference in civil rights and responsibilities due to being either "male" or "female" has been regarded as being inequitable. Is being "transsexual" so very different from either of these categories? ♀♂

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prominent in professional circles in the city at the time.

When the hearing came up, the judge asked the D.A. the circumstances of the case, and he mentioned the letter briefly, and then went into a harangue about the magazine and how we had to put a stop to such things, and that an example had to be made, and that he wanted the magazine discontinued and the post office box closed.

The judge then turned to me and asked my response to that. I replied that while I did write the letter in question, it was the only one I had ever written of that sort and that I did so thinking the recipient was a woman, but more importantly, I didn't see what that had to do with the magazine, which had never contained anything off color, prurient, sexy, or obscene, and moreover, had saved a number of marriages and prevented several suicides. I told him that I had the letters to prove it and that I didn't see why it should be discontinued. He turned back to the D.A. and asked what he had to say to that, and the D.A. in effect played the same record over again. Then back to me, and I again protested the idea of closing the box and stopping the magazine. The judge then sentenced me— ready for this?— to three years in the Federal Penitentiary and five years of probation and said nothing about either the box or the magazine. He had to sentence me, since I had plead guilty.

Well, I was glad enough that he hadn't interfered with the magazine, but I was absolutely aghast at the prospect of five years of probation, because that meant that I couldn't break ANY laws or they would lay the original sentence on me— three years in the pen. In those days there was an anti-masquerade law in Los Angeles. Thus, if I was out dressed and got picked up, I could spend the next three years in the pen, if the judge so decided. It's one thing to be in the closet and wanting to get out, but it's a lot different to be out as I had been since I was 18 and then to be crammed back into it. I was fit to be tied.

My attorney saved the day by suggesting that I give lectures about the subject, which I could do while dressed, and said that he would fix it up with his own Kiwanis Club if I wanted to do it. I was petrified at the idea of standing up before a bunch of men while dressed as a woman and telling them all about crossdressing, but on the other hand, it was the only apparent solution to the probation problem, so I agreed.

For several weeks, I wrestled with the problem of what to say to the Kiwanis. I finally got a speech written that enabled me to build up an explanation for the phenomenon before I had to name it and admit to it. It went over pretty well. There were a couple of visitors there from other Kiwanis clubs and they asked me if I could speak to their clubs. I was off to the races.

I didn't get paid for 90 percent of the speaking engagements, but I did get to go out. I came to realize that in the 20 or so minutes the Kiwanis gave me to speak, I could not begin to go into the subject completely, so I put together the pamphlet titled, "Introduction to Transvestism," which appears as the first six or seven pages of *The Transvestite and His Wife*.

It was from these appearances before mens' clubs that I learned one lesson: namely, that people go by what they see and not by what they know. This was brought home to me in particular by a man in one of the clubs. When I finished speaking, he stood up and said he had a question. I said, "Go ahead." He said, "Well, ah, that is, you said you'd been married?" "Yes." "And, ah, ah, you had a son?" "Yes." "Well, ah, what I want— well, I mean, ah, I don't underst— I mean, ah, ah, ah, well, who had the baby? You or your wife?" I'd already told him I was a male, had been married, and had a son, but he could see only a woman talking, and since women have the babies, the main problem was to find out which woman was the mother. It was good for a laugh, but it taught me a lesson. If you can make people see the right thing, they'll act and think accordingly, in spite of what they may know about you.

Back to the aftermath of the trial. One of our readers was an attorney

and worried that the spreading postal investigations might get to him. He wrote to a friend of his, another attorney, who had one time been Solicitor General for the post office department. That gentleman wrote back to him and also to me, and among other things, said it was unheard of to prosecute on a first offense, as they had prosecuted me on the basis of a single letter. The more I thought of the D.A.'s remarks, the more I was convinced that they had just used the letter as a means of getting me into court on the magazine and post office box issue. As I said, this was in the era when they were after the gays and they assumed that I (and all of us) were gay. So, one day I went to the Federal Building and up to the office of the judge who had heard the case. I was talking to his secretary when he came in. She told him I would like to speak with him for a few minutes, and he said to come into his office. I went in and sat down and he asked what he could do for me. I reminded him of the case and of the sentence he had handed down, and then I reminded him of the D.A.'s comments, which were entirely directed at the magazine and post office box and had barely mentioned the letter, which was the nominal subject of the trial. He recalled that. Then I showed him the letter from the Solicitor General and told him I felt that the whole matter of the letter, which they had had in their possession for a whole year, was merely a mechanism for getting at the magazine. We discussed a few other issues, and finally he said, "Have your attorney file a petition for dismissal of probation." I did so, and five months after he had given me the sentence, I was free of the probation. The post office was defeated in their attempt to prevent *Transvestia* from being published and circulated.

Later that year, I was to go to New York, and decided to go down to Washington, too. I took a number of testimonial letters from readers about how much the magazine had helped them, a bunch of letters telling how they had been treated by postal inspectors, and some scientific material about the subject of transvestism by

*Concluded on page 41*

*Harry Benjamin, M.D.*  
*Continued from page 16*

basically insecure, and hence rigid sorts ready to torment any kind of "deviant." His counsel and caveats were well-taken.

Did Dr. Benjamin ever suggest SRS, a procedure that gradually came to the fore in discussions of treatment of transsexualism, especially after Johns Hopkins triggered a series of university-based diagnostic centers? Never.

Early surgery was largely limited to castration and demasculinization (penectomy), with little attempt at simulation of female genitalia. The early cases— all done abroad somewhere, were sensationalized not only by tabloid newspapers and magazines, but by supposedly responsible publications. The recipients of this notorious treatment were often night club entertainers or seekers of publicity. They were often publicly ridiculed.

Myths came into being about "changing sex," something any red-blooded he-man regarded as incomprehensible. Psychiatrists of various schools, especially psychoanalysts, clung to long-standing notions about dysphorias as "perversions." Krafft-Ebing as I recall, prattled about "neurasthenia," and Freud about some absurd "complexes." Stekel (why were such antiques the ones available in bookstores for the unwary?) was condemning and damning. There were indeed "sexologists." One of them, Magnus Hirschfeld, coined the term "transvestite" and sympathetically described a class of dysphoria. I came across a book called *Man into Woman*, a biography about Lili Elbe, who had a form of surgical intervention around 1930, but who lived only a short time thereafter, apparently because of infections, and, it would seem, an unsuccessful attempt to transplant ovarian tissue. Dr. Benjamin soon dissuaded me from paying attention to all this "literature," for he regarded me as exceptionally stable. While by degrees I came more and more to resemble the "real thing," he was strongly of the opinion that I did not need to take either the physical or financial risks that surgery entailed.

To his dismay, Dr. Benjamin seemed to draw his quota of very unstable requesters— in fact, demanders— of surgery. There were those who threatened and even carried out self-mutilation and the extreme of suicide. He sometimes gave them what they wanted, for it was "preventive medicine" of a sort. I would venture to guess that Dr. Benjamin was the first to be aware of the addictive or "entitlement" kind of transsexual, who shops endlessly for services and undergoes more and more body-altering rigmaroles. He was not patient with such types, and told me so.

Some telling conversations over the course of time, plus the failure of the maturation and masculinization treatment, enabled Dr. Benjamin to convince himself that I was incurably a transsexual. But, as I have written, I was equipped to cope without surgery. His successor and associate, Dr. Charles Ihlenfeld, has been and remains to this day of the same mind. "SRS? Why?" is his view.

Why, indeed? Clinical therapist Dr. Leah Schaefer, the most critical helping professional in my life, concurs. "The public is not about to invade your privacy, especially if aplomb which comes to develop results in unabashed immersion in life on the distaff side." To be sure, stigma reduction or elimination is of great importance and crucially important— in fact, essential— to some transsexuals. I have met a number of them and I cannot merely have empathy with them, but urge them to attain the goals of fullest possible feminization, and not to worry so much about surgery. Most appear to attach great importance to sexual participation as females. Their most severe problems, requiring critical but often sloughed-off therapeutic attention and guidance, seems to be to find resolution to broken marriages (mates who rightfully feel deceived), children who can only be bewildered and unprepared, false expectations of ultimate tolerance, and acceptance by any and all knowing others. There is ultimately a need to form and nourish meaningful attachments with what is now socially

the other gender. The possibility of being a "side show" socially or at a work place, of ultimate rejection, of even of falling into promiscuity, are certainly booby traps. I firmly believe Dr. Benjamin was cognizant of such dangers, even if he did not express apprehension about them.

For reasons I am unable, in retrospect, to explain, Dr. Benjamin never suggested a peer group or peer associations. Only once did he suggest my meeting another transsexual. One time a very husky athletic-looking person also had an appointment. Dr. B. said this patient had a family but, despite his mate's distress, wanted to "become a woman." He felt perhaps I might be useful as a peer counselor, for after all, my field was counseling (albeit in another area with different characteristics and dimensions). The patient declined. The doctor was irritated. "No hope!"

Sometimes there were, to be sure, other patients in the waiting room, but communication was rare. In a doctor's office most everyone, however, nonchalant, is self-absorbed (transsexuals are outrageously egocentric, anyway), so one sort of plopped and at least figuratively drummed one's fingers while biding time. THE time. A few braggadocio popped up now and then. "I'm a model. You should see me in girls' clothes!" Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Benjamin was a great medical and psychological scientist, a man's man, but compassionate toward all, and especially toward mankind, for he loved this life and clung to it to a remarkable age. To the very end of his life (101 years!), he was vitally concerned about continuing developments in the field. He was in frequent contact with Dr. Ihlenfeld, his protegee, and with Dr. Leah Schaefer, whom he supported enthusiastically.

Exact dates, even years, become a bit vague years later when memory is searched. I have no written diaries or correspondence with either Dr. Cauldwell or Dr. Benjamin. But Dr. Benjamin's last words to me were, "I have become 85 years old and sometimes I feel it!" Only physically. ☽☽

How else to close an issue devoted to acceptance and diversity than with a warning? This is a caveat to those who operate support groups: 'Ware the predator. Willis and those like him effect not only open support groups, but focused groups like Tri-Ess chapters. Many a heterosexual crossdresser has been aghast to find the hand of another crossdresser on his leg after a meeting.

Willis (not his real name) came to the support group professing a gender need. He was friendly and sincere, pushing all the right buttons when he was screened. He was helpful, volunteering his time and energy, pitching in, showing lots of initiative.

Willis professed heterosexuality, and, indeed, had been married four times, although he was only in his thirties. He admitted to a troubled past, attributing much of it to not dealing with his gender issue. We could sympathize with that.

Willis was shy about cross-dressing; he didn't dress for several months, and when he did, his clothing was somewhat fetishistic—leather skirt, come-f\*\*k-me pumps, long curly wig. We were sure we would be seeing more of 'Wanda.' But next month, he was back to his boy clothes.

Willis was new in town, with few friends. Despite his claimed heterosexuality, it was clear that he found some of the transsexual people in the group attractive. Even though our support group was nonsexual, we weren't unduly alarmed when he began a relationship with another group member.

Meanwhile, Willis had made himself nearly indispensable to the group. He had been elected an officer, he was in charge of correspondence and the mailing list, he was in charge of refreshments, he worked the help line. And then the trouble began.

It started when he continued to show interest in other group members, and came on to them in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. The first hint of trouble was increased tension between Sharon and Beverly. Initially, Willis

had given equal attention to the two. When he chose Beverly, Sharon didn't deal with it well. Nor did Bev, when he kept on with Sharon. Willis assured us it was their problem.

Donna was in serious need of a reality check. She was barging ahead like a steam locomotive, dismantling her life, disregarding things like electrolysis. Her appearance was very rough, but after a visit to Jim Bridges' boutique at Southern Comfort 1991, she was convinced that she was ready for a modeling career (no fault of Jim's). She believed that she passed in all circumstances, but the rest of us thought that she passed rarely if at all.

The group devoted considerable time and energy to helping Donna to gain a view of herself that was consistent with her actual appearance. We counseled her to proceed cautiously, to get vocational training (she had lost both of her jobs by this time due to showing pictures of herself cross-

with Science; mad at Beverly, he took off one evening. He happened to call me. I used Ringback service to find his location. He had phoned from the female impersonator's house.

Confronted, Willis claimed that the increasing tensions within the group were the fault of the various group members, and certainly not his. He was insistent that he was not the one with the problem.

I was fond of Willis, but as facilitator of the group, there was only one thing I could ethically do. I brought charges, and as a result of the proceedings, he voluntarily left the group. Later he tried to return, but despite the fact that his gender need was legitimate, the officers felt he was a threat to the other group members; his application was declined.

The support group, although open, was a gender support group. On the front end, it was made clear to Willis that sexual advances to group members were inappropriate, and would not be tolerated. Nevertheless, he managed to wreak major havoc before we could detect the problem and deal with it.

Willis was a sexual predator, a shark in the swimming pool.

He and others like him pose major problems for gender support groups. If a group is not to self-destruct or degenerate into a place for sexual liaisons, the Willises must be either eliminated or controlled. The group cannot be allowed to become a hunting ground.

Gender support groups can serve persons with a wide range of lifestyles, gender issues, and sexual preferences. But they cannot serve those who would subvert the group for their personal needs—whether financial, sexual, or self-aggrandizing. They must retain as their focus the needs of the group members, even when that means playing hardball with the Willises of the world. Persons with gender dysphoria are vulnerable and often desperate, and must be safeguarded. Officers and facilitators of support groups must take any and all precautions to safeguard their members. ♣

## Closing Words

By Dallas Denny

# The Shark in the Swimming Pool

dressed to customers at the registers). "Have electrolysis," we cautioned. "Get experience in your new role." "Don't rush into real-life test." Naturally, she did not take our advice.

We later discovered that Willis, in a desperate attempt to get into her pants, was surreptitiously encouraging her.

Willis was slick, but he was not as smart as he thought. In a weak moment, he admitted to turning a call from a crossdresser on the help line into a mutual fantasy-masturbation session. He told us how sorry he was, swearing that it wouldn't happen again. While we were still reeling from that, he subverted another call, this one from Audrey, a female impersonator, turning it into a personal liaison. Willis was not forthcoming about her, but we suspected that he was up to something. We blinded him

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