Renaissance News



Volume 3, No.2

P.O. Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA, 19406

February, 1989

Three chapters in operation

With now over 250 members, Renaissance has positioned itself for future growth by creating local chapters. As of this month, there are three chapters in operation in the Delaware Valley.

The suburban King of Prussia Chapter, based at the original meeting location, is now managed by a local Board of Directors headed by Teri Kay. It is expected that, because of the unique facility and location, this chapter will continue to be a funnel for new members. The group meets on the third Saturday of the month.

In the Reading, Pa. area, Susan Marshall is leading the chapter operations. Susan, with the help of her real-life sister Dee, has already created enough interest to attract the attention of a Reading newspaper and a feature article is in the works. The group meets on the second Saturday of the month.

Tina Louise is no stranger to the responsibilities of leadership.

Tina, former president of the Phi Chapter, along with new "blood" drawn from the original Renaissance membership has organized a South Jersey Renaissance Chapter. Their first meeting was held on February 4th. The group will continue to meet on the first Saturday of the month.

JoAnn Roberts, Co-Director of Outreach/Chapter Development, thinks that the move to chapters was perfect timing. "There were people in the group who were chafing to get more involved at the decision making level. There were folks who had new and fresh ideas they wanted to try. Chapters provide the outlet for all this creative energy since the national board is limited in the number of positions. I think that 1989 will be our best year yet," she says.

Contact information for these chapters can be found on page 6. Anyone interested in forming a chapter should contact the office.

Dues for 1989 are payable now

Creating chapters has also created some management problems that will take a little time to sort out. One area that is being given primary consideration is dues.

Dues are structured in two tiers, local level and national level. At the national level dues are \$12 per year. In return, members receive this newsletter each month. Local dues are set by each chapter as determined by its governing body and are in addition to the national dues.

Now is the time to choose which chapter you will affiliate with and pay both your local and national dues through that chapter. Members who are unaffiliated with any chapter must pay their national dues directly to the national office.

Both national and local dues run on a calendar year, January to December. You may pay your 1989 dues anytime from now through the end of February.

Pilot project aims at recovery

One of the most amazing and wonderful aspects of Renaissance has been the sharing and level of trust that develops among its members. The need to share is central not only to TV/TS groups, but to others as well, e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Several members of Renaissance have shared that they are in recovery from some form of substance abuse, and that the abuse was, at least in part, due to their transgendered nature. For them, Renaissance and recovery is a process of reflection.

These three R's, Renaissance, recovery and reflection are the foundation for a pilot project sponsored by the national board of directors and is not associated with any local chapter. Vickie Anderson, who leads the project, is a transgendered person in recovery. Anderson saw the need and, with guidance from the Board, set about to put the project in motion herself. This is the spirit of Renaissance. (See 3R Preamble next column.)

The next RRR meeting is Feb. 18 at the King of Prussia location.

3R Preamble

"We, the 3R group, are members from recovery programs dealing with ALCOHOL and DRUGS.

We believe in sharing our experiences, strength, and hope about our recovery and gender identity to support each other.

We are self-supporting and do not wish to engage in any controversy. Our primary purpose is to stay CLEAN and SOBER and to help support gender identity and recovery.

We are in-addition-to, not inplace-of other programs."

Chapter news & notes

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

New Jersey

South Jersey: Meets second Saturday of the month. Contact Tina Louise, Box 2, Glasboro, NJ 08028. First planning meeting was held on Feb. 4.

Ohio

Columbus: Mikki is looking to start a chapter in the area.

Pennsylvania

King of Prussia: suburban Philadelphia. Meets third Saturday of the month at the original King of Prussia location. Contact Renaissance KofP, Box AD, Bensalem, PA 19020. Doors open-8 p.m.; New Member Orientation-8:30 p.m., Main Program-9:30 p.m.

The Feb. 18 meeting program will be a self directed, TV and TS, discussion on hormones.

The Mar. 18 meeting will feature Dianne Gwynne Berger who will discuss fashion and styles based on body types.

Reading: Meets first Saturday of the month. Contact Susan Marshall, Box 299, Oley, PA 19547. A first meeting is planned for Feb. 11. Susan has also identified resources in the Reading area for those that feel professional counseling is needed.

A feature article on the Reading chapter is planned for a local pa-

Harrisburg/York: There has been some interest expressed for a chapter here and there is an MCC church that could be the meeting location. All that is needed is an interested party to do the footwork.

Vermont

Burlington: Michelle Michaels has been transferred to Indianna. We regret the loss of her talents to Vermont, but our sister group, IXE, has gained them.

Contact has been made with two sisters in the area who may be able to pull the chapter together.

Other

If you have any interest in these or other areas, please write to us at the office.

We can provide you with all the information you need to get a group started in your area.

Chapter handbook in preparation

Paula and JoAnn, Co-Directors of Outreach, are nearing completion of a Chapter Handbook. The handbook is a set of guidelines for operating Renaissance chapters within the basic framework of the national by laws.

Based on the actual experience of the original King of Prussia group, the handbook is complete with procedures and recommended practices.

Release of the booklet to chapters is expected by early March.

And, don't forget about...

• The PCHA Food Bank: Please bring canned and dried food to the next King of Prussia

Chapter meeting.

 The Benjamin Book Project with the Outreach Institute. The book is now available. Special member discounts, regular edition

@ \$28.50, Deluxe @ \$33.50

 Background Papers are available for \$1 each plus \$.25 postage for each pair ordered. Eight papers are available.

Mona Lisa charms: \$40

Library Project: please donate your books, tapes, videos, etc.

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Renaissance News

© 1989 Renaissance Education Association, Inc., Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA 19406 Subscription: \$12 per year.

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

Business reportthrough Jan. 18

Paid Members: 255

Starting Balance:	\$1780.69
Income:	
Dues & Donations	\$183.00
Publications	233.00
Subtotal	\$416.00
Expenses:	
Newsletter	\$157.17
Office Expenses	46.14
Postage	41.87
Subtotal	\$255.18

Renaissance Meeting Calendar February

\$1941.51

So. Jersey Chapter 4th kick-off meeting

Ending Balance

11th Reading Chapter kick-off meeting

18th KofP Chapter Discussion on hormones

24-26 Texas 'T' Party, San Antonio

March

4th So. Jersey Chapter 11th Reading Chapter KofP Chapter 18th

Opinion - Forum - Information

The straight dope on hormones... Karen Baumgardner, CGS Primrose, Dec '88

Every once in awhile I get a letter asking whether or not I can tell somebody how they can get hormones.

The first time I received such an inquiry, I though to myself, "Yeah, I can help people by dispensing this type of information." Then I got to thinking.

Quite a few of us have been inspired by false information concerning the magic of hormones. Our community has about 30 years worth of misinformation and fantasy literature, some of it put out by irresponsible dreamers, and some written and/or published by people who should know better. An awful, awful lot of it gives the impression that hormones can be administered indiscriminately, often without the ingestor's knowledge, and Viola!, instant breasts, rounded hips, higher voice, loss of beard and body hair. The dreamcome-true of every crossdresser. from TS to TG to TV.

And, everyone lives happily ever after.

Of course, it doesn't happen like this very often, if at all.

First of all, unless you're overdosing, the whole process is very slow. You will develop breasts over a period of time, but the size will depend more on heredity than on how long and how much hormones you take. Your pelvic area will fill out somewhat, but not a whole lot. Your voice won't change, your beard and body hair won't stop growing.

So, what will hormones do for you? First and foremost, they are mood-altering. You'll encounter

fits of depression, go on crying jags for no apparent reason and go on crying jags under particular circumstances. A smell, a phrase, a television theme song. Any one of these might set you off. Do you work with the public? Do your cc workers know anything about your transgenderism? How about your family, your friends? Can you explain why your emotions have suddenly gone out of control?

But that's minor stuff. There are also a myriad amount of physical problems that hormones can cause. First and foremost is liver damage. I have a close friend who got hormones on the "black market" well over 10 years ago, and the physical change suggests severe scarring of the liver that appears to be permanent. This may be an extreme case, but prescribing for yourself and overloading on the dosage to "speed things up" are a natural temptation in a situation in which you are not under competent medical supervision. In addition, hormones are dangerous for people with a history of heart problems, and the long term effects are finally being taken into consideration as far as whether or not hormones can cause cancer.

For the TS, this is all a necessary and calculated risk. For the rest of us, it's mainly a matter of something that would be "fun" to do.

I'm not your mother, and I'm not stick in the mud about all of this. I eat foods that are high in cholesterol, smoke like a chimney, have a little too much to drink now and then, and have spent most of my life disregarding rules and regulations. So, I'm not about to tell everybody that they shouldn't take hormones. Would you listen anyway?

What I'm going to advise is that if you HAVE to do it, do it right. If you're a TS, you've probably been through a gender clinic. Whether or not you continue to work within the program of a clinic, the endocrinologist will at least monitor your dosage and look for any problems that might arise during the initial stages of treatment. If all appears well, many TSs will look for another practitioner to continue treatment for reasons of cost, convenience, or sometimes personality.

For the rest of us, a good rule of thumb might be: if you have to ask, you're not ready. Read up about hormones. Check out stuff in the library.

Also, talk to other people who are on hormone therapy. If they are no longer on hormones, ask them why they quit. Find out what it was like. Find out if they got what they wanted from it. From what I've seen around, apparently not.

There are a couple of doctors in the area that dispense hormones to order. No questions asked. I don't agree with this policy, but it is at least a guarantee of minimum doctor's supervision. But, know what you're looking for and the possible consequences before you even consider walking in the front door. And, street hormones are like street drugs. Stay away from the stuff or it will kill ya.

Resources

Susan Marshall (Reading Chapter) hasn't been spending all her time organizing her chapter. She's located some resources in her area and has shared them with us.

- Professional counseling at the Counseling & Learning Center, contact Gerry Boyer 215-777-6412
- Wigs at La Pompadour, 747 Spring St., Reading, contact Annette Hartzell 215-373-0500. Please call first.

The Washroom Problem...by Julia Matheson, The Combury Society, Vancouver

For most humans, the act of relieving oneself of excess food and drink is the most private function of all. Even within families, the bathroom door is usually closed.

It is more private than sex. Group sex is known to happen, but I have yet to hear of group sessions of urinating or defecating.

Even male washrooms have cubicles, and women have been conditioned to be even more modest (or prudish, depending on your point of view.) Women astronauts, hardly the shyest or most insecure of females, would have been in space earlier had it not been for that vital necessity to provide them with separate toilet facilities.*

What, then, are likely to be the reactions of a woman who "reads" a TV in the women's washroom? Shock at the unexpected will be the first. She must wonder why this strange man is there. A Peeping

Tom, I think, would be her most likely conclusion.

Her next worry is illustrated by this notice recently posted in a community college: "ALERT — On April 6, at 12:40 p.m., a woman coming out of the shower in the women's changing room near the gym was confronted and intimidated by a man. Women should be aware that incidents such as this have happened before on this campus. PLEASE WATCH OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER."

As some of us have found out, women don't always react aggressively. They are conditioned to be more passive than men, but this does not mean they are not distressed. A woman may leave quietly to alert authorities, so that when you're back at your table in the restaurant, the police may arrive to investigate.

If the female you surprise happens to be a child, you may be confronted with an infuriated father, and no calling on the law will protect you from his anger.

Unless you can pass *perfectly*, using womens' washrooms will cause distress to the very people whom we are trying to emulate.

Intruding openly gets us all bad publicity as insensitive, despite what laws may or may not say. Everyone has a right to their privacy, including women, and if you can think of a more private place than a ladies' washroom, let me know. You'll find me drinking little while out in public and waiting until I get to my own space to deal with my bodily comfort.

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*Editor's Note: Julia is correct about the toilet being an issue for female astronauts, however, they do not get separate facilities. A privacy screen was added to the toilet area on the shuttle but it contributes little to any real privacy.

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Paula Jordan Sinclair... The NewsQueen

The cannons of journalism forbid a reporter from revealing his or her sources. But, there is one other reason, besides ethics, that has so far kept me from telling where I gather the crossdressing flotsam that fills these columns — my desire to protect my reputation as a person of taste and breeding.

That pose vanishes this month with the first item. Anyone who spent more than 30 seconds in a market check-out line last month will know that a color photo of Phil Donahue in drag was splashed across the front page of the *Globe*. Yes, it's true; I read those tabloids.

In its wonderful "insider" style, the *Globe* quoted a Donahue "friend" as advising him to "quit dressing in drag and engaging in other madcap antics or risk being kicked off the air." The unnamed friend was referring to the show on crossdressing that aired in November and featured several Renaissance members.

"By putting on that stupid skirt on the crossdressing show he did get the kind of publicity Geraldo got after he was bopped on the nose," the friend is quoted.

The NewsQueen's own insiders in the television industry say that the crossdressing show is still being talked about, and they think Donahue showed real chutzpah in the ratings war with Oprah.

Stay Tuned.

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In addition to telling us what really goes on in the entertainment world, the tabloids are also a leading source of information about the future, thanks to their annual New Year predictions. One of my favorite seers is Countess Sophia Sabak, who vaticinates for the Weekly World News. That's the one paper that can't afford four-color front pages.

The Countess has a special record among supermarket sibyls. To the best of my knowledge, she has never been right. So, with that in mind, prepare yourself to be amazed and astounded by two of her prognostications for 1989:

"Fans of NBC's smash sitcom *The Golden Girls* will be stunned when one of the gals gets a sex change operation on an upcoming episode of the show."

"Ruffles and flounces will take the men's fashion scene by storm, making many males in the country look like sissies. The revolutionary new fashion turn will drive men's clothing slaes to record heights."

Remember, you read it here, second.

Now, from strange fake facts, we turn to strange true facts. First, there is a story judged by *Parade* magazine as the "worst fashion news item of 1988." While south Florida was sweltering in the midst of a heat wave, male students at North Miami Beach High School showed up for classes in skirts. No, they hadn't been bitten by the transvestite bug; they were protesting the school dress code (an aptly named policy) that forbids males to wear shorts but allows females to bare their legs in skirts.

"It was a way to keep cool," Brad Meltzer, 18, student body president, told the United Press International. Brad had worn his girl friend's blue cheerleader skirt.

Assistant Principal Frank Johnson noted that in addition to running afoul of the school's rules, the boys had some practical problems. "In class, they tried to sit as ladylike as they could. But that's not possible if you haven't practicewd over the years."

Girl, isn't that the truth!

More unladylike behavior was reported in the Chicago area in December. According to police, a man was getting into his car about 2AM when two men approached him, one of them in drag. "She" pulled a knife, and the pair ordered the man to drive to a deserted alley where the duo robbed the man of his wedding ring and \$100 in cash.

Police in the area soon located the crossdressed robber. Tony Brooks, 27, was positively identified by the victim, and was arrested for armed robbery.

Amore violent crime involving a drag entertainer occured in San Francisco recently.

Dolly's ordeal began when he was accosted by the men after he left a Nob Hill party where he had performed. One of them held a knife to his throat and the others blindfolded him and threw him into the trunk of their car. After driving to a deserted area near Golden Gate bridge, the four men pulled him from the car, ripped off part of his costume, and spit and urinated on him. They then proceeded to rape him, periodically kicking him in the face and beating him with a baseball bat. At one point, Dolly passed out, and was kicked into consciousness and then raped with the small end of the bat. He passed out again, and when he came to, the men were gone along with his costume jewelry and about \$30 in cash. Dolly was eventually picked up by police.

Bad as it was, it could have been worse. "If they had known I was a man, they probably would have killed me." Apparently the men did not know Dolly's true gender; they called him "pretty mama" several times during the attack.

"I've been through quite a bit," Dolly said, "but I'm going to be fine." And true to his word, he went out the next night, in drag as Dolly, to do a benefit.

Although Miss Sinclair claims to read several newspapers daily, other demands on her time (including spending long hours standing in supermarket lines reading tabloids for free) may cause her to miss an item If you see an article about transgenderism, clip it out and send it to her c/o Renaissance.



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National Gender News

from around the TV/TS community

The November/December 1988 issue of the SIECUS Report reviews an interesting book that may be of interest to some members, entitled Terrific Sex In Fearful Times, by Brooks Peters,(St. Martin's Press, New York, 1988. \$14.95.) The book is a useful and well thought out way to help educate all people about how to eroticize safer sex. Sexually conservative folks will likely be offended by the content and tone. Meanwhile SIECUS celebrates its twentyfifth anniversary in 1989. SIECUS is the Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S. and a non profit organization affiliated with the Department of Health Education of the School of Education, Health, Nursing and Arts Professions of New York University.

NGN

The "Tempest In The Toilet" continues. Janice Van Cleve (Emerald City) has replied to Veronica Brown's (The XX Club) editorial about transvestites using the public ladies restrooms in Seattle. After pointing out some inconsistencies in Brown's logic, Van Cleve accuses Brown, a TS, of having a "smug attitude of elitism." Brown replies that she is against any form of "blanket law that makes it legal for a crossdressed man (transvestite) to have access to a woman's restroom." Brown then launches into a discussion of transvestite 'sexuality' as preached by Virginia Prince and concludes by challenging Janice to "both take our clothes off...and see who gets into the women's room." Stay tuned. It ain't over til the fat lady sings. For yet another opinion, see the Washroom Problem on page 4.

NGN

Veronica really does have the best interest of the community at heart and recognizes there is a great misunderstanding between TSs and

TVs. To her credit, she is trying to do something about it by closing the gap. In the January issue of Twenty Minutes, she proposes that TVs make up a list of gripes about TSs and TSs do the same about TVs. Then she wants each group to state how they would like the other group to treat them. If she gets enough response she'll print the lists. The object is to get a dialogue going and air the differences. If you would like to contribute, write to Veronica Brown, c/o The XX Club, Box 80690, Forrest Park Station, Springfield, MA 01138

NGN

Beyond their wildest dreams is how the folks at Boulton & Park describe it. "It" is the first, annual (?) Texas 'T' Party in San Antonio. Projected attendance is now around 100 to 125 people. Congratulations ladies! It was also noticed that B&P has adopted the practice of giving a 3 month complimentary subscription to their newsletter to inquirers. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and we're flattered.

NGN

Some very nice comments were made about Renaissance in the last issue of The Transformer, the newsletter of the River City TV group in Omaha. Maybe they ought to consider changing their name though since the Tapestry thought they were the same as the River City Ruffles, a Tri-Ess chapter (Gee, so did the editor of Lady-Like!) and didn't give them a listing. Anyone in the Omaha area interested in an up and coming, open support group should write to River City, Box 1305, Bellevue, NE 68005.

NGN

Laura-Marie got her pantyhose in a twist over an incident at the Gender Identity Center in Denver. It seems that she was vehemently opposed to the Bush-Quayle ticket and wanted GIC members to take a stand as a group. She was rebuffed and for that wrote an angry diatribe in the latest issue of their newsletter. Looks like no one took the time to explain to her the rules and regulations governing nonprofit, tax exempt organizations and political action. Maybe someone should take the time to do that.

NGN

Congratulations to Marsha Michaels on being crowned Miss CGS 1988 at the Chicago Gender Society pageant. The newsletter of CGS, The Primrose, is one of the best written, even if it isn't one of the prettiest (Sorry, Karen). The "Ask Patti" feature is one of the more humorous in any publication lately. If you'd like your own copy, write to CGS, Box 578005, Chicago, IL 60657 and enclose \$20 for a Limited Membership.

NGN

Roberta Dean, a founding member of Chi Chapter in Chicago and, more recently, a columnist for the Transvestian has died after a year long battle with cancer.

NGN

A new periodical is about to appear on the scene. Gender Expressions is is a non-sexual, nonexploitative journal covering all aspects of-what else?-gender expression. The magazine will be published six times per year. Contributors represent a nationwide cross section of transgender people, their significant others, and professionals.

Janet Christon, a member of several gender groups and formerly associated with Tiffany's Rosebuds, is both the editor and designer of the journal.

Subscription information for Gender Expressions will be available for the next installment of

"NGN".

NGN

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