



The Phi Journal



ISSUE 25

Editor - *Wendi Beeman*

JULY 1987

GREETINGS FROM THE PUBLISHER

Well, this is the promised "July" issue of the Phi Journal, even though the postmark says "August".

Back in April, my wife and I had our colors read and a makeup done by the Seasons color people, who were on the program for our March meeting. We are enthusiastic about the results. I am going to look better and save money, both as brother and as sister, by concentrating on "my" colors. Call Jean at 609 854 6360 for information.

Attention Phi Chapter officers! President Tina has called a meeting at her house for Saturday 29 August at 8 p.m. Do confirm your plans by phone, or by note c/o Wendi (send to: D. Beeman, P.O. Box 2512, West Chester, PA, 19380). See you there.

One more message from Tina. On the last page of this letter is a story about "Situations". When you read it, I think your response will be that you would like to experience one of their productions. This is what Tina has arranged for us. Situations will do a show at our next meeting at Selma's on 26 September. More in the next newsletter.

Now for Wendi's musings.

Jane

WE OWE THEM ONE

The untimely deaths earlier this year of pop artist Andy Warhol and producer-interviewer David Suskind should be cause for reflection by all crossdressers. Now I know what you are thinking. What did these two, one a serious artist who wasn't serious, an artist who painted large Campbell soup cans have in common with the other, a man best known for his TV interviews with Nikita Krushev and Richard Nixon but was one of TV's harshest critics? You should ask.

Warhol, who also produced movies, was one of the first to give androgynes and crossdressers a major role in what have become some of the cult film classics. He made stars out of such forgettable actresses as Holly Woodlawn, Candy Darling, and Jackie Curtis. Sure, these films never won any Oscars, but Warhol tried to show that it wasn't a person's facade that counted but what was inside. Holly Woodlawn and Candy Darling were just ordinary people with offbeat lifestyles.

To my knowledge, David Suskind was the first (at least in this country) to give transsexuals and transvestites a chance to tell their story on

national television. He once interviewed Philadelphia's own Harlow (a sex change), and on another program talked with heterosexual TV's, acknowledging that he had learned a great deal from their candor.

It is for this reason that crossdressers owe these two men something. They accepted TS's and TV's without being judgmental. If only more of our fellow human beings felt the same way.

HERE'S JOANIE! - OR IS THAT HERE'S JOANIES!?

Although I have often indicated that I am not a big fan of Joan Rivers, I was curious to see what sort of a crowd would be attracted when it was announced that a Joan Rivers' look-a-like contest was going to be held on her late night television show. Being the good crossdresser that I am, I had to tape the show to see how many men showed up dressed like Joanie.

I don't think there were as many as the show's male host (Joan was sick with flu) said - 20 per cent - but there were quite a few. In fact, one of the five finalists in the contest was a man.

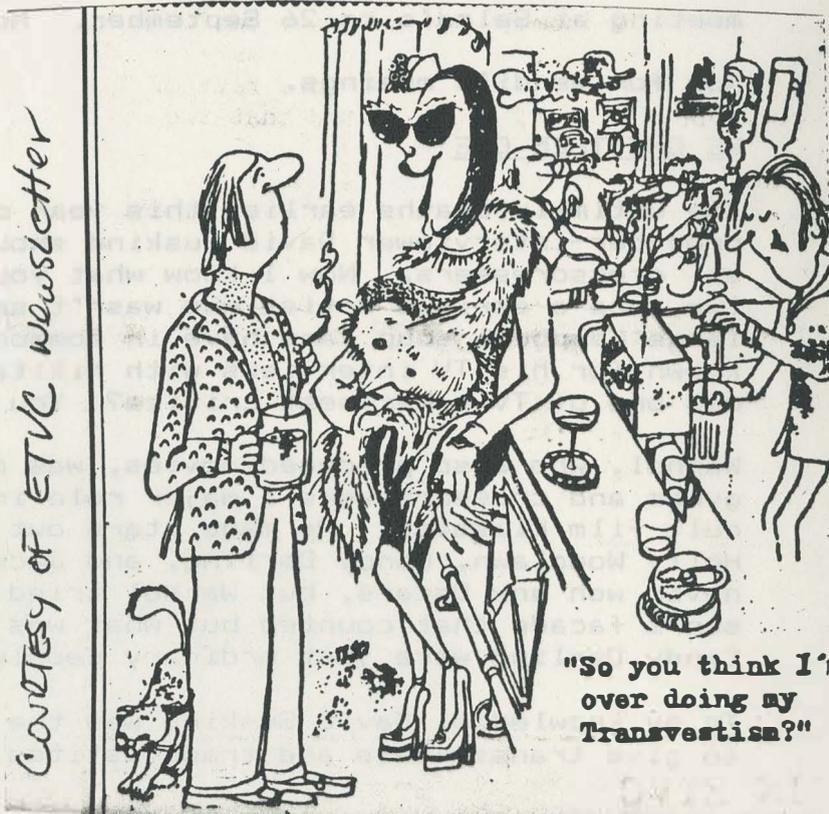
HINTS ON JEWELRY: KEEP IT TASTEFUL

It's an accepted fashion fact that jewelry can make or break your outfit. Here are some hints (excerpted from the *CHIC Diary*) that can help you when planning what accessories to wear:

- * Glitter, and that includes your diamonds and rhinestones, should not be worn before 1700. (5 p.m.)
- * Select size and shape of jewelry to fit your body and facial structure. If you have a large round body and face, you should not wear large round jewelry; a square, angular face should not wear angular jewelry.
- * Offset a short, broad neck with long chains and earrings.
- * Match your jewelry - gold with gold, silver with silver.
- * Do not mix necklaces and earrings. They should match.

IN THE BOOKWORLD

JoAnn Roberts, a sister from the King of Prussia area, who also appeared on a Phil Donohue show, has written and published a book, *Art and Illusion: A Guide to Crossdressing*. The 30-page book contains illustrations and is available for \$10 postpaid from Creative Design Service, P.O. Box 1263, King of Prussia, PA, 19406.



GOING UNDER COVER

Looking for an effective means to cover beards and other blemishes when you want to be at your most glamorous? Here are some covers that come highly recommended:

- * Clinique's Continuous Coverage. Use a setting powder with it.
- * Elizabeth Arden's Flawless Finish cream. It comes in seven shades. Use Illusion loose powder (4 shades) to set it.

Both items are available wherever fine cosmetics are sold.

If you are darker skinned, you might want to try the Dermablend cover system or Fashion Flair's Perfect Finish cream.

YOU OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES

That's the way it is for six lucky CD's who appear in the June '87 issue of *American Photographer* magazine. Mariette Pathy Allen, the noted photographer of the paraculture, who has been our guest in the past, has written an article for the magazine and six photographs taken by her accompany the article. In issue 50 of *Tapestry* magazine, Mariette says that the editors titled the article "Gender Pretenders", not a very happy choice. She also invites readers of *Tapestry* who cannot find the June *American Photographer* to write to her at 241 East 17th Street, New York, NY, 10003.

IFGE CONVENTION TRANSCRIPT PLANNED

For those of you who may be interested, a complete transcript of the speeches and workshops at the IFGE Convention in Chicago is being made available. Cost will be \$10 or less. To reserve your copy, write to Convention Abstract, c/o P.O. Box 19, Wayland, MA, 01778. Also, a rather extensive report on the meeting is available in the *Tapestry* just mentioned, issue 50. Every CD who wants to know what's going on in our world should be a subscriber to *Tapestry*. Same address as above.

MORE FEMALE IMPERSONATORS ON PARADE

The long-running "La Cage" show at Bally's Park Place in Atlantic City is not the only impersonator show at the Jersey shore resorts. Three other shows in the Wildwoods don't compare with the glitzy and polished "La Cage" production but are worth taking in for a laugh or two.

In North Wildwood the Fiesta Follies perform on Friday and Saturday nights at the Pier Top Lounge, 9701 Atlantic Avenue (609 729 6600). Show features female and male illusionists. The Fantasy Follies appear Tuesday through Sunday at The Fun Spot, 557 West Glenwood Avenue, Wildwood (609 522 3580). At the Club Lincoln, Atlantic and Lincoln Avenues (609 522 1551), a "Galaxy of Stars" features female and male impersonators nightly. Call for show times.

Hendi

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I would like to change my gender as freely and as often as I change my shirt."
Andre Breton (French poet and artist)

Situations/

Sociodrama group confronts issues from all walks of life

by James Charles Roberts

At the rehearsal they pretended that they were—collectively—a Thanksgiving Dinner. One played the turkey; one was a serving tray; one, with fingers twitching, was a candle; and one was a banana.

They also pretended that they were passengers in a hot air balloon that was about to crash because of a tear in the balloon itself. As panic set in, one threw up. Others sought ways to avoid the impending disaster. A clever person thought of squatting low to absorb the crash of the balloon into the water below. The day was not saved, however, because one of them couldn't swim.

Does this sound like Acting 101 at a high school or college? Does it sound like some avant garde theatre rehearsal for a street festival? It is, in fact, neither. It is Situations, Dan Estes' sociodrama troupe, warming up for the central topic of this rehearsal—AIDS. It is also the topic of the troupe's next public performance, on September 6 at the MCC church as part of the weekend-long AIDS Vigil.

AIDS is but one of the many issues Situations presents in its public demonstration performances. Also covered are race relations, religion, domestic violence, sexism, homophobia, mental illness, employee-management relations and nuclear war. There are no scripts on these or any other topics, either in rehearsal or in performance. The subjects are handled through improvisation and audience response participation. All dialogue and action spring directly from the situation—hence the name.

Situations, by its own definition "explores issues which are a group or societal problem." The troupe is trained in processes and techniques designed to involve each person present, at a level comfortable to each individual, in an enactment of issues of importance to the audience. Sociodrama—as opposed to psychodrama—explores feelings and increases insights into diverse points of view on a range of problematic topics.

The man who organized this troupe is Dan Estes, Ed.D., a board certified psychotherapist. Estes also serves as director. He is quick to point out the difference between Situations' sociodrama and the more commonly known psychodrama. Said Estes, "In sociodrama the issues come from a group or from society at large. In psychodrama you're dealing with the individual in relation to the rest of society. And that individual is the

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Harry Eberlin



Dan Estes: "In sociodrama the issues come from a group or from society at large. In psychodrama you're dealing with the individual in relation to the rest of society. And that individual is the protagonist."

Estes insisted that sociodrama is the "safer" of the two. "In sociodrama you don't have to air out your own dirty linen in public. Psychodrama is really not appropriate in public. A fragile personality could be damaged by that kind of exposure."

Situations, in the year since its formation, has performed for MCC, Mercy Catholic Hospital, Miserecordia Hospital, the Monday Nighters, Temple University and the Youth Detention Center. As a rule, the audience structures the performance by writing down situations they would like to see improvised. Sometimes the general topic is known in advance, sometimes not. But the performers never know exactly what they will say or how the audience will respond because they

that have been trained to sit politely and hold their responses until the curtain call.

When Situations performed at Miserecordia Hospital, for example, said troupe member Tommi Aviccoli, "We were doing a sketch about an abusive father. The situation got so heated that the audience was actually screaming at the actor playing the father."

Hugh Rosen, another troupe member, is a teacher in the mental health field. His only connection with the "legitimate" theater is one acting course he took in school. He said he came to Situations last year because "it gave me the opportunity to engage in a constructive activity." Rosen expressed a liking for improvisation and felt that an "aroused" audience was a positive thing. Lest anyone assume that Situations is a closed group, Rosen added, "We are open to all people straight or gay, male or female."

At the rehearsal Estes expressed the hope for greater racial and gender parity. Eight performers were present at the rehearsal, six of whom were male. There were no people of color.

Meanwhile, Situations continues to get rave notices from groups for whom it has performed. Rev. Joseph Gilbert of MCC called the troupe "wonderful." Situations performed last spring at an MCC monthly dinner for half of the congregation. Gilbert noted, "Situations did a presentation that dealt with issues like coming out, AIDS and other things. The experience was valuable in that they helped us to deal with a lot of our own stuff."

What is Situations' ultimate goal? In Estes' own words, "Our goal is to dramatically enact social issues and concerns in such a way as to enable the participating audience to acquire new insights and perspectives, as well as to undergo an emotional catharsis."

How does he achieve this? "We usually begin by eliciting from the audience expressions of concern over social issues of special relevance. Engaging the audience further, a social vignette is crafted which particularizes the issue to be enacted."

During the enactment Estes selectively stops the action to elicit the internal dialogue of the actors and to invite comments from the audience. Once the enactment is over, he has the actors step outside of their roles and engage the audience in a dia-

At the rehearsal the actors, after having done the warm-up improvisations, are ready to tackle the difficult issue of AIDS. In the first scenario a woman is seated in a dentist's chair. He detects what he thinks is a Kaposi's sarcoma lesion in her mouth and orders her out of his office—on the assumption that she has AIDS. The gay man who works as his aide stands idly by and does not intervene.

During the "processing," or critique, that follows the sketch, the actors who were not directly involved ask the woman playing the patient why she was not more enraged. They question the doctor's lack of professionalism. And they chide the gay man for his lack of assertiveness in preventing the woman from being humiliated. Through this exploration of fears and prejudice surrounding the AIDS issue, Situations prepares itself for the MCC audience a few weeks later.

Put Your Group Into...

SITUATIONS:

A Sociodrama Roleplaying Troupe Creating
Experiential Encounters On Social Issues And Group Concerns -
Together With You!

Director:
Dan Estes, Ed.D.
Board Certified Psychodramatist
(215) 567-2260
2004 Chestnut Street
Phila., PA 19103