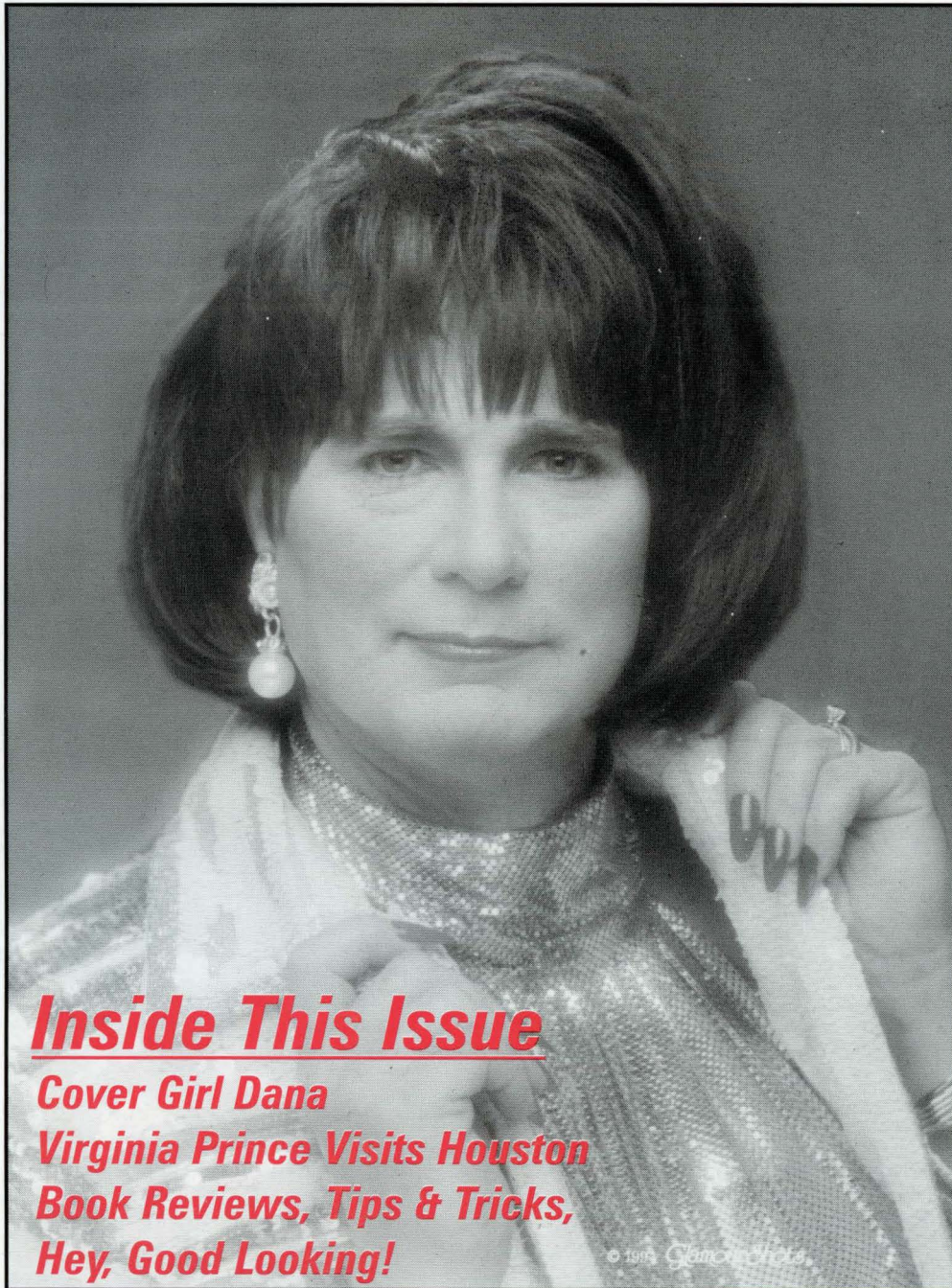


# FEMME & MIRROR

Volume 24 Issue 3

A Publication of Tri-Ess, The Society for the Second Self, Inc.



## ***Inside This Issue***

***Cover Girl Dana***

***Virginia Prince Visits Houston***

***Book Reviews, Tips & Tricks,***

***Hey, Good Looking!***

**Fall 1999**



# The Femme Mirror

*The Femme Mirror* is the quarterly journal of The Society for the Second Self, Inc., a non-profit 501c(3) corporation. Address: The Society for the Second Self, Inc., 8880 Bellaire B2 PMB 104, Houston TX 77036. Submissions to *The Femme Mirror* should be sent to: **The Femme Mirror, 8880 Bellaire B2 PMB 104, Houston, TX 77036.** Letters to the Editor may be directed to Frances Fairfax in care of *The Femme Mirror*.

Submissions of letters, manuscripts, photographs and art work implies the right of the Editor to edit and publish the material. True names and street addresses will not be published unless the Editor is specifically instructed by the author to do so. **Submission of materials on computer disks is encouraged. We are able to accept macintosh, ms-dos and windows formatted material, both 3.5" diskettes and 5.25" floppies.** ASCII text files preferred. When preparing text files, please strip all hard carriage returns and line feed commands from MS-DOS generated documents. Add one hard carriage return between paragraphs. We use PageMaker 6.5 to design pages, do all the formatting, and prepare the material for camera ready prints on PC DeskTop Publishing system. **Files may also be sent by email to: JEFTRIS@aol.com.** Articles are available to other transgender community publications on magnetic media if requested by specific article and issue. From time to time *The Femme Mirror* is asked for permission to reprint our articles in other community publications. If you do not wish to be published elsewhere, please so indicate when you submit your material.

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*The Femme Mirror* is absolutely committed to protecting the security and confidentiality of all Tri-Ess members. In order to ensure this protection, the *Mirror* conforms to the following editorial policy:

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

Please help us to serve you in a professional manner.

Thank you, Frances Fairfax

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## Are You Moving?

Please Notify Membership Director  
**Donna Martin**  
**P.O. Box 597859**  
**Chicago, IL 60659**

## A Note of Thanks

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



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## Their Own Worst Enemies

by Jane Ellen Fairfax



Jane Ellen Fairfax

Why do some crossdressers end up so unhappy? While social attitudes play a part, the tragedy many crossdressers experience is to a great extent, their own fault. In some ways, crossdressers are their own worst enemies. If you are a crossdresser, you can shoot yourself in the foot (or other places higher up) by doing the following:

- 1) Look at your chapter as nothing more than "a place to go dressed." It doesn't take a lot of preparation. Just slip some lacy, flowery finery over that old macho attitude, and go! Whatever you do, don't get involved! Just pay your dues (eventually), and wait for the publications, rights, and programs to fall into your hands. After all, everyone knows that the main worker in Tri-Ess is "Someone Else." She'll do it all while you sleep!
- 2) Keep that macho attitude intact. It's important that you win at everything you undertake. If anyone crosses you, make them regret it! A good show of anger will keep 'em in line!
- 3) To make sure your wife is as supportive as possible, adorn your crossdressing with sleaze. Dress like a streetwalker; hit the dives; associate with the lowest elements of the transgender community.
- 4) Try everything you can to suppress your masculinity. Stop engaging in all those masculine activities you used to enjoy. Ignore your former good buddies and the couples you used to go out with.
- 5) Fool around with hormones. They'll make you a real woman! Who needs a doctor? You know what's good for you! Besides, they're just after your money.
- 6) Make crossdressing absolutely the Number One Thing in your life. What do God, your family, and your occupation have to do with anything?
- 7) Push, push, push to crossdress whenever you like. Talk about being a "T-person," and "progressing along the gender continuum." Make your wife guess what you're going to do next. What's this stuff about respecting her comfort zone? "I gotta be me!"
- 8) Get involved in every petty spat and flame war in the gender community. Create some of your own! Everybody likes a good rumble!
- 9) If you serve, make sure it's only on your own terms. Remember, life is an investment. You gotta take more than you give to make a profit in this world!
- 10) When you've accomplished all the other nine, and your life falls apart, put on the world's biggest pity party. Cry about losing your wife and family, and moan about the prospect of being alone the rest of your life. Complain how prejudiced the world is, and what a cross it is to have so few friends, and to be stuck in a job far below your potential. After all, life dealt you a poor hand, and it's only right for you to be bitter about it.

A disgruntled wife? No. I am... Jane (CD)



## Letters to the Editor

**Hi Frances,**

I have an experience that I want to pass on because it was so pleasant. At the June meeting of Sigma Epsilon in Atlanta, my wife Donna and I went to dinner with another couple, Gina and Trudy, and one other sister, Michelle.

At the table next to us was a man eating alone. We exchanged pleasantries with him, but nothing else transpired between us. First of all my dinner company was exceptional. Gina is Jamaican and a retired RAF pilot, and Trudy is Irish — both are as delightful as any people can be. And Michelle is also a very interesting and pleasant and funny gal.

As we ate, we talked about various aspects of crossdressing and about Donna's and Trudy's concerns as wives. The man at the next table had to be able to overhear everything we said because we were so close together and because we made no effort to hide what we were saying. We had enjoyed a delicious dinner at the restaurant, and had enjoyed each other's good company.

Then as we were almost finished the man at the table next to us left. As soon as the man was out the door, the waiter came to our table and said that that gentleman had bought us a bottle of champagne, which we enjoyed. Needless to say, the kind gesture of that gentleman was more heartwarming than the champagne (although it was a very good champagne as best as my inexperienced pallet could discern). The only problem that it presented was that we had five ladies at our table (two by birth and inborn grace, and three by choice), and did not have a gentleman to

sample it for us before we partook of it. So, Gina did the honors.

All in all it made an already pleasant evening and delicious meal absolutely extraordinary. Thank you, whoever you are. Little acts of kindness go a long way in this life. Someone wiser than I once said, "We were put on this earth to see each other through, not to see through each other."

Ally AL-4940-H



**Dear Frances,**

Here is what I wrote about Linda for our newsletter. I hope what I wrote is OK, but being a writer was never one of my strong points. Which isn't unusual in itself, as I never have identified any strong points or skills in my being to start out with.

Take care,

Kathy

P.S. Congratulations on the latest Femme Mirror - a superb job as usual. One thing, I understand the need to try to save money, etc., but the printing of membership expiration dates on the address label may prove to be a poor idea. I just know from my case that I had already thrown out the envelope (properly recycled of course) by the time I saw that notice of change of policy. A nearby group, Rochester CD Network, used to do the same thing until they lost so many members who never checked their monthly newsletter to see that they were on the way out or this was their final mailing, that they had to change this way of notifying of renewals. Just a thought. ....K.L.

*Dear Kathy Lorraine,*

*Thanks so much for sending your tribute to Linda! It is so warm and sensitive, and makes us feel we know Linda, though never having met her.*

*Thanks also for your remarks about the mailing labels. Those warnings of expiring membership were a mistake when they appeared in the Spring issue, and I should never have let them creep back into the Summer issue. For the record, Membership Director Donna Martin has never ceased sending out individual Dues Renewal Notices, just as she has done so faithfully since the dawn of Tri-Ess history. However cumbersome, that's the only dues renewal system that really works.*

*Warmest regards,*

*Frances*



**Dear Jane Ellen and Mary Frances,**

I just wanted to follow up with both of you and ask you to convey my warmest thanks to your membership. I have received over 250 responses to my questionnaire and many, many letters which I am most pleased with. I now have the task of tabulating all the wonderful material they contain and writing the findings up (which might take some months). I will let you know the results when they are ready. Please tell all who participated and spent the money on the postage that I am most appreciative.

Warmest Aloha,

Grace





# Executive Director's Message

By Carol Bецcroft

Dear Sisters:

If you will remember from my previous columns, I said that I would contact those who have donated sets of books to various libraries. I wanted to make sure that the libraries actually put the gift books on their shelves. In the past, some librarians had taken our books and given them to, for example, Friends of the Library, and such organizations would sell our books to make money for the library.

It is absolutely necessary that we learn of our books' success in getting onto the library shelves. Otherwise, we're kidding ourselves. So, I had Marlene send out a letter that I wrote, to those who had donated to various libraries. I have begun to receive letters from our donators and I thought that you would like to know what is happening. So here goes:

Dear Carol,

I visited the Douglas County and Umpqua Community College libraries on March 4. Douglas County listed both of Rudd's books and the Bullough book in their index. The three books were on the shelf. The two books by Rudd had our sticker; the Bullough book did not have our sticker. Umpqua Community College's listing was identical to Douglas County's. Both books by Rudd were on the shelf and had our sticker. The index indi-

cated that the Bullough book was at Douglas County. I could find no listing for Prince's book or any other crossdressing books. I will visit Eugene City next week.

Penny OR-3547-U

Dear Carol,

Recently you wrote me to check my local library for the book packet that you sent to them a while ago. Sorry to say, there were absolutely no references to crossdressing in the new computerized system. The card catalog had a few older books. I wrote a letter, which is as follows:

*Head Librarian  
Hart Memorial Library  
Shrub Oak, N.Y.*

*Dear Librarian:*

*I am a Yorktown resident and I frequent the Hart Library. I am also a crossdresser....that is, I like to wear women's clothing. Recently I had the need to use the new computerized search system in your library, and while I was there I did a search on that topic that is part of my being. I was shocked that when I entered the words 'crossdresser', 'crossdress,' and 'transvestite,'*



*I had absolutely no hits. I also entered two authors, Prince and Rudd. Again, I failed to see any listings. These two authors have written numerous books that have been acclaimed by all those who have any dealings with the transgender movement, which would include crossdressers, spouses and significant others, plus therapists. I also had the opportunity to talk with the national headquarters of The Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess), which is a support group for heterosexual crossdressers. They informed me that they sent you a package of books on crossdressing and that you promised them that the books would be placed on the open shelves. I would appreciate your explaining why there are no materials dealing with such a common subject."*

**Tammie A.**

You can be sure I will follow up with Tammie to see if she hears from the librarian. If not, then I will get on the phone and give them "the treatment."

I also heard from Brandi in Maryland, who wrote:

"...The contact person's name was rather difficult to get, but they finally contacted me. I had previously explained what we wish to do and learned that they will accept two sets of books."

The following is what the library wrote to Brandi:

Dear...

Thank you for your offer to donate the titles on crossdressing to the Baltimore County Library. Of the four titles on your list, BCPL currently owns *Crossdressing, Sex and Gender* at the Towson Branch only. We would like to receive two copies of each of the titles you have suggested. The books will be assigned to various branches throughout our system. In your letter you mention two titles currently owned by BCPL. After checking our catalog I found that we also own copies of these additional titles: *Transformations, Vested Interests*, and *The Man in the Red Velvet Dress*. Several other titles are being considered for purchase that would update and expand our collection in this area. Please have the donated books directed to my attention, and I will see that they are processed and sent out to our branches. Thank you again for your interest in the BCPL library.

[Signature]

Now, wasn't that a great attitude from this fair-minded librarian? It would be nice if all librarians were that open-minded! I'll fol-

low up with this request for books to make sure that they get to their place on the library shelves.

Brandi also writes:

Baltimore County's library system has one of, if not the largest, circulation in the US. It has sixteen branches. I'll see if the librarian wants to pursue the project in other nearby counties in the state. I would hope that the library system would place four or five more sets.

Thanks, Brandi, for going out of your way to get information to the public via the public libraries.

I congratulate those sisters who have taken their time and money to educate the public about crossdressing. If you haven't decided to help up to now, please seriously consider donating our book packet to a nearby library. Remember! Tri-Ess will donate an additional packet of books, so you get a two-for-one deal. What could be better? See you next time!

## ADDRESS CHANGE!

On your mailings to our Tri-Ess address in Houston, please note we are now using the PMB prefix, instead of STE, to comply with Postal Regulations.

Make sure your mail gets to us! Address it as follows:

**The Society For The Second Self  
8880 Bellaire B2 PMB 104  
Houston Tx 77036-4621**

This affects all mail going to our box, whether addressed to TRI-ESS, THE FEMME MIRROR, SPICE, JANE ELLEN FAIRFAX, FRANCES FAIRFAX or any other TRI-ESS Officer or Department.

Make sure your mail gets to us!

**Note this change RIGHT NOW!**



## My Story

by Razilee Purdue

My early life seems to be typical for a crossdresser, from what the literature says. As the oldest child of an alcoholic father, with whom it was difficult to form a relationship, I envied my sister, a "straight A" student, who seemed more acceptable to him. Crossdressing began before age eight.

By age 19, however, my sister had had her first nervous breakdown, my parents were talking about a divorce, and my freshman year in college was so poor they asked me to leave. Finding a summer job, I lost it after a week. Finally, after being unable to sleep because of a toothache, on top of everything else, my reliable old tension reliever, dress-up, returned, but this time stronger than ever before.

I found myself wandering the streets in my mother's and sister's clothing, finally "borrowing" a wig from a wig shop that had conveniently left its bathroom window open. A couple of cops on patrol spotted me, while I naively imagined the sight of such as me would not arouse suspicion at 5 am. The police did not want to play my game. One threatened with his gun, his manhood apparently threatened by me. The chief talked about how he liked to wear silk shirts, showing how far he was from understanding. They took my prints, my picture, the clothes, and put me in the drunk tank, but then quickly changed their minds. Giving the police my true name, within an hour my parents came and got me. Although convicted of grand theft, because of the extenuating circumstances and God's mercy the judge, a classmate of my mother, only gave out probation and mandatory psychiatric treatment (which proved useless, of course).

My Dad didn't talk about the incident, but neither did he or Mom talk about a divorce any more either. He later stopped drinking, while my own addictions will not die. One of them is reading.

While reading through a book of names, one just seemed right, better than my given name for expressing who I am, and not too common: "Razilee (rah-zi-LEE) Hebrew for "my secret." For a surname there was "Purdue," French but going along with the Hebrew in a way, since it means "for God," which is how I would like to see my second self, a bit more able to express the gentler,

more loving, more lovable me. Of all the books, "The Bliss of Becoming One" by Rachel Miller and "Meet Me In the Middle" by Charlotte Holt Clinebell have been the most helpful.

Except for being quite (abnormally?) asexual, I've felt all the categories: androphobic (fearing the masculine), eonistic (like d'Eon, preferring to live as a female), femiphilic (loving the feminine), fetishistic (relating only to a part, not the whole of the other), gynephilic (loving women too much), gynandromorphophilia (a man's liking to take the form of a woman), misandrous (hating masculinity), narcissistic (loving one's self too much), pygmalionistic (loving one's own creation), transgendered (wanting to be accepted as other), transsexual

(wanting to relate sexually as other), transvestophilic (just liking to wear other's clothes).

My thoughts sometimes have been more transsexual, even to castration fantasies. At least part of my motivation is not having a supportive significant other in my life. I did have once, about fifteen years ago now, but our relationship wasn't odd; we both were. She hated most men, but called me gentle as a woman. Still I miss her. The name she chose to go by was Moira. We shared clothes and wigs and talked for hours.

To cope with these many and strange feelings we need, I believe, to face both the frighteningly masculine and the lovely feminine in us and between men and women. And it's best if those feel-





ings can be shared with friends who understand, or who if they can't understand, can accept. We can't deny the sensuality and sexuality of what we do. They're there to some degree for us all, even when it seems just fun and games. Neither ought we let them overwhelm what we're trying to express: our deep feelings for the men and women in our lives, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our definitions of what it means to be man or woman, or simply human.

In the works is an autobiographical novel. The experiences of passing a few times has been nice mostly, especially being accepted as one of the girls, but definitely not the groping hands of a certain ungentlemanly man, though it helped give better understanding of what ladies have to deal with from some men. Then, too, there's the children with the perceptive eyes and unrestrained mouths that blurt out: "She's a he!" It is such a personal thing, so personal I feel the need to fictionalize it and test myself out by letter writing before perhaps actually meeting a sister. I'm certainly interested in sharing feelings, experiences, lessons—which is why I joined the Pen Pals.

Although the closest Tri-Ess group is the other end of the state, I've recently learned about Crossport, a local group associated with the International Foundation for Gender Education, from the world wide web in January but didn't get the info on their meeting place until the day after the February meeting! Then in March all prepared to go, the usual restaurant where they had been meeting got rebooked and they were forced to meet elsewhere.

My sister, a psychology major, doesn't understand, writing that she thinks it's Providence saving me from abominations. She even called kilts "pseudofeminine!" (Well, mine was made from plaid skirts...) If this keeps up though, I'll begin to wonder, too. She writes about women having it harder than men, getting more responsibilities for less reward, etc. Is it, do you think, a case of greener grass—that there's much more gender dysphoria than is acknowledged?

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## Tri-Ess Library Book Project

*My Husband Wears My Clothes* by Peggy Rudd

*Understanding Crossdressing* by Virginia Prince

*Crossdressing, Sex and Gender* by Bullough and Bullough

*Crossdressers and Those Who Share Their Lives*

by Peggy Rudd

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

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

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

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

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



## Jeremy's Dilemma

by Sofronia Anne Strong

It was at Jeremy's twelfth birthday party. The affair was winding down. The cake and ice cream had been devoured, the presents opened and the party games played. Jeremy and his buddies were just about to dash out in the back yard for a game of chicken base. The idea was to use the new bat and ball that were among his presents. Especially, he was going to break in the really groovy new catcher's mitt that his dad had given him. His mom was leaning against the hutch in the dining room, a coffee cup in her hand, nattering with a couple of the other moms. Jeremy's sister, Aggie, was in the den with three of her girl friends talking about how awful boys are. Jeremy and his buddies thought much the same about girls, of course, but wouldn't ever huddle in a corner and say so. These attitudes about the opposite sex were soon to change, of course, but the boys and girls at the party were not yet aware of that.

Just as Jeremy stepped toward the back door, bat, ball and glove in hand, a mysterious, hooded figure, dressed in black, stepped in through the door, blocking it. Jeremy stood transfixed, gazing in amazement at the awesome figure. Standing something over six feet, it wore black tights, leather boots and a cape with a hood which prevented him from seeing its face. Beneath the hood Jeremy caught a glimpse of something metallic and shiny gleaming. He couldn't tell if the figure was male or female. It seemed not quite either. It was merely statuesque and somewhat vague in form. Jeremy was more startled than frightened by the sight of it. It was something entirely outside his experience, or even his imagination. He tried to identify it as one of the action figures on TV or in his comic books. The form moved in a liquid motion, flowing back and forth in front of him, preventing his escape. From beneath its cloak it drew a gleaming object of a sort that Jeremy had never before seen. More quickly than Jeremy could process what he was looking at, or make any sense out of it, the black clad figure slipped an intricately worked, gleaming, stainless steel cage over Jeremy's head, snapped shut a lock fixed into the collar at its base and spoke to him in a hollow ringing voice.

"There! Now you are one of us. Live your life with that on!" As these words rang in his ears, Jeremy watched the strange figure depart via the back door. It seemed to have just evaporated.

Jeremy dropped his bat, ball and glove and entwined his fingers in the lattice work of the cage, struggling to tear it from his head.

He quickly realised that all he was going to tear off was his head. His several buddies, looks of horror on their faces, promptly fled via the back door. Jeremy ran into the dining room screaming, jerking uselessly at the cage.

"What in the world have you done now?" his mother asked with exasperation. "What is that thing? Where in the world did you get it? Take it off immediately!"

"I can't, Mom! Please, Mom, it won't come off! Get it off me, Mom!" Jeremy's voice was a plaintive wail. Jeremy's sister and her friends, the remainder of his guests and the three mothers in attendance stared dumbly at the terrified boy with his head in the stainless steel cage.

"Catch him!" Jeremy screamed. "He's all in black and he ran out the back. He did it to me! Someone catch him! Get it off! I can't get it off! Mom, catch the guy!..Get it off me, Mom!" Jeremy's body shuddered and he fell to his knees sobbing..

Willard's mother, a no-nonsense daughter of Aries, a woman of action, snatched the phone off the hook and punched in 911. When asked by the operator what was wanted, she felt foolish. About all she could say was, "This is the Watkins residence. Someone put a steel cage on Jeremy Watkins' head and ran out the back door. He's wearing black."

A brief silence ensued. The 911 Operator, ever professional, replied incredulously, "I am not sure I understand your request, Mrs. Watkins. Do you want the police or the rescue squad? Is there someone you want apprehended or do you need medical assistance?" Willard's mom, Adele Jenkins, in fact, sputtered with exasperation.

"Both! Catch the man in black that stuck the cage on Jeremy's head and then get some one out here to help us get it off of him! And I'm not Mrs. Watkins!"

"I understand," was the operator's cool reply. "I have dispatched a squad to search the neighborhood for your man in black and I have dispatched a rescue squad to the Watkins' residence."

"Thank you!" Adele retorted, hanging up the phone. The scene in the middle of the Watkins living room was truly bizarre. Jeremy was kneeling on the floor in tears, his fingers entwined in the filigree of the cage. His mother knelt beside him vainly trying to get him to release his grip on the cage so that she might examine it and his head inside it. The juvenile guests were huddled



in the den, some of the girls in tears, sitting with Aggie. The faint wail of a siren could be heard, growing slowly louder. Adele Jenkins and the other mothers present, stood staring at each other speechlessly.

The police found no trace of the hooded figure, of course, but they took a careful description and even brought in a police sketch artist to make up a drawing from Jeremy's description. It was posted throughout the town, but produced no arrests. The fire-rescue squad, entirely mystified at what they found - an hysterical twelve year old boy with an intricately worked stainless steel cage locked securely onto his neck and head, his nearly hysterical mother and the remnant guests of a birthday party- played it safe. They strapped Jeremy to a stretcher and turned him over to an ambulance crew to be transported to the emergency room at the community hospital. There he created another sensation in a place where very few things do that. Within a few minutes the entire staff of ER physicians had looked Jeremy over very carefully. What they saw was fascinating. What they ultimately discovered was more than fascinating. It was incredible. Jeremy was kept in the hospital for several days while the physicians consulted metallurgists and locksmiths. The hospital chaplain talked to Jeremy and his parents. Psychologists and the head psychiatrist talked to Jeremy, who remained very distraught and disconsolate as it became apparent that no one knew how to remove the cage without removing his head as well.

The police did their best to dispose of the case as a prank gone bad, but that didn't work at all. The cage had appeared too suddenly in front of too many people. There were so many witnesses who attested that Jeremy had been trapped in his cage in a moment's happening. His buddies even attested to the reality of the black clad, hooded figure. The police were forced to conclude that what everyone said happened had to be just what happened.

What the doctors found was no way to remove the cage. It was made of gleaming stainless steel, or so it seemed. Metallurgical tests showed it to be actually much harder than stainless steel. Attempts to saw into it, even with diamond tipped blades, simply destroyed the blades. Cutting it off with a torch was impossible, of course. However, a test was made, with great care and precaution, which test satisfied the investigators that even if it were feasible the material was unmeltable as well.

Careful examination of the cage revealed that it had been designed with incredible finesse. It was mostly open work and Jeremy's head was quite visible. It clearly had not been meant to disguise him, or to make him a mysterious figure behind a mask. It left his identity quite apparent. It rested on his shoulders and was fitted quite securely about his neck with a steel band, the one part of the device that was solid and not open-work. X-ray

examination showed that it was hinged at the neck and a clever lock was built into it, which lock Jeremy had heard click shut when it had been placed on him. There was no visible sign of the lock on the exterior, however, and while the lock work could be seen on X-rays, no locksmith could devise a way to access the works.

Jeremy had nearly functional degrees of movement of his head, but not quite full normal motility. Movement of his head was somewhat limited by protruberances inside the cage. He had full movement of his jaw and the cage offered no impediment to the full use of his mouth. Physicians were concerned about irritation or inflammation from the wearing of the cage, but mysteriously Jeremy reported that it was not really uncomfortable to wear. It caused him no physical distress at all. It didn't hurt, he said. It was just too hideously embarrassing. It made him a freak, he wailed, and he didn't want anyone to see him in it. His parents and sister agreed, pleading with the hospital chaplain to keep the clamoring media away from him. Because the nature of the cage was so mysterious, so bizarre, because there was so much that was inexplicable about the whole case, the authorities suppressed the story.

Of great interest and concern, of course, was the identity of the black clad figure. No one knew who or what this entity might have been. It had just appeared, locked the cage on Jeremy's head, spoken one sentence and vanished. Jeremy could repeat exactly what it had said and the words of the phantasm only deepened the mystery. Who did this and why? Why Jeremy? What had he done? Privately, Jeremy went over and over his own litany of misbehaviors and mistakes trying to think of something egregious enough to deserve this punishment. He couldn't! Neither could anyone else. For that matter was it even a punishment? There were some who thought it was, that the nature of the event suggested that. There were others who were wholly convinced of it. As rumors spread, despite the effort to keep the happening secret, it began to look like no one knew why Jeremy had been caged, but everyone had a pet theory about it.

Explanations ranged from divine retribution (Jeremy as a child of the devil) to divine favor- the cage as a mark of God's selection of Jeremy as His disciple. Others insisted that Jeremy was a space alien, and a subset of this group were certain that the cage had been placed on the hapless boy by space aliens who had taken him into their space vehicle and locked in onto his head. There were some who were convinced that there was nothing mysterious or extraterrestrial about it at all. They spread the story that Jeremy had earned his cage at home by defying his parents and that eventually his parents who had put it there would remove it. Jeremy, for his part, just wondered. He had always been just a nice kid. Now, for reasons unfathomable, by a hand un-



imaginable, he was condemned to live out his life with this elegantly wrought, gleaming steel cage on his head. The difficult thing he had to face was that there was no answer to the "why" question. There was just this boy with his head in a cage.

What did Jeremy do about his dilemma? Well, at first he battled with a seemingly unshakable anger. He was persistently enraged. He banged his caged head on the walls and on the floor a lot. At times it was necessary for his parents to restrain him. That angered him still more. It was bad enough, he howled, to have to be the worst freak in the world, but it was even worse to be strapped to a chair or onto his bed. Unfortunately, it was sometimes necessary in order to prevent him from doing himself harm. Jeremy pleaded, but to no avail. No one could figure out how to get it off. It seemed unreasonable to him that no one could help him. He prayed, but the prayers seemed to be sucked into a deaf heaven.

Jeremy finally perceived the uselessness of his anger and the futility of his pleadings. He realised that he was going, as the figure had said, to live his life with the cage on. He concluded that under the circumstances the only thing left to him to decide for himself was how he would live out that life. He decided that he would live it out alone. In that manner he could avoid dealing with what others thought of him or his conundrum. He went to his room, slammed and locked the door and composed a note to his parents, which he slid under the door:

*Dear Mom and Dad,*

*I don't want anyone to see me like this. It's too embarrassing. I'm not coming out anymore, not ever again. I have decided to live my life out alone in here. I will put my laundry out every Thursday morning and you can leave a tray outside for me at mealtimes. That's the deal. Just leave me alone in here and I won't be a problem to anyone, OK?*

*I love you, Jeremy the Freak*

No amount of pleading or reasoning through the closed door or on the telephone would shake Jeremy's resolve. He had imposed a sentence of solitary confinement upon himself and was determined to serve it out.

After some weeks Jeremy's laundry appeared only irregularly on Thursdays. His meals were often left uneaten outside the door. Attempts at conversation went unheeded with increasing frequency and his phone was no longer answered at all. A consultation with Jeremy's therapist indicated that Jeremy was undoubtedly suffering from depression. When Jeremy withdrew entirely from any communication with his family they intervened. Jeremy's depression was deemed clinical in degree and he was subsequently hospitalized. By this time he was fourteen. He would spend the next year in the hospital grappling with his demons. Then he would continue as an out-patient for several years. His

therapist had to allow him to ventilate his rage for a while and then patiently work with him as he went through a process of denial.

"Cage? What cage? I don't know what you are talking about!"

Slowly, patiently, she coaxed Jeremy past his anger and out of his denial. One day, in group, she asked him one of those key questions which can only be answered at just the right moment.

"Jeremy, have you ever taken a really close look at your cage? Have you ever taken an objective view of it apart from yourself?"

"No, of course not. I can't do that because I'm in it. I am part of the damn thing. What are you driving at?"

"Well, all of your difficulty derives from the fact that it is locked onto your head. I just wondered what we would think of it if it weren't on your head with you fussing about it all the time."

"Ooh!" Melanie, another patient in the group, squealed, clapping her hands. Jeremy liked Melanie. Her bouncing pony tail and gleeful cheeriness gladdened him. Besides, the sight and scent of her tended to turn his knees to rubber.

"Yeah, what if! I can see it. It's utterly beautiful! It's his sourpuss attitude that keeps us from seeing it. It's just gorgeous!"

Doug gave a low whistle. "Yeah, if it weren't on your head it would be considered a priceless artistic masterpiece."

"It would be on display in a museum somewhere!" Melanie squealed.

His therapist nodded her agreement.

"Jeremy, the gift of the exquisite cage is yours alone. No one else has one of those. It is unique and it makes you as beautiful as it is, because you and the cage are one and inseparable."

Jeremy didn't see it immediately.

"Fine, so sell me to a museum. I can go sit in a chair during museum hours and talk to the security guards. So, big deal. I'm unique and I'm beautiful and I belong in a museum. I get curated and written up in a museum catalogue and if I'm lucky I get to sit in other museums on loan. Some life that will be! More likely I will end up travelling with the circus."

"Yeah, 'Jeremy The Cage Headed Boy'." Doug laughed.

"Or, 'The Benfil Boy, the Living Masterpiece'," Melanie suggested.

"Either way, I'm still Jeremy the Jerk." It would take a few months for Jeremy to really comprehend what the doctor had suggested.

"Instead of being ashamed and hiding and cursing your fate, had

*Continued on page 17*



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

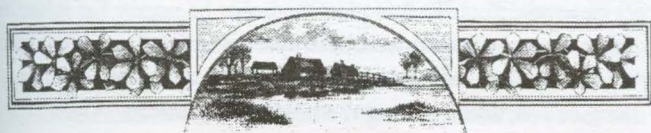
By Diane V.

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

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

How about it, Gals!!

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



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# The Psychology of Color

Dr. Alycia Ellison

As often noted, color has a visual impact on our lives, for the world would be a dreary place if one did not see the beauty of his surroundings. In your mind's eye, picture a barren surrealistic landscape in black and white, and note the effect on your psyche. This is the often bleak picture that a blind individual "sees" as he views his world in the absence of color, which now exists only by the remembrance of what it was like. It has been said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, which may be true to some extent, but does not apply to the beauty of a sunrise or sunset, the sun rays reflecting off of waves crashing on distant shores or on mountain streams. The moonlight or sunrise glistening on the snow covered mountain crests is nature's beautiful canvas and often the subject of many paintings and photographs.

This is the world we live in. Color and all our emotions are in tune with our color wheel, what we feel and what we perceive. Take, for example, one of the primary colors, blue. This color has been used for many years to denote the masculine gender, for his life begins under a blue blanket, and blue is one of the favorite masculine colors for clothes designers. In this respect, I mused one day as I sat listening to a depressed male client telling me his tale of woe. He was a very serious researcher and generally worked alone in his quest for information in his laboratory. He was wearing at that time a dark blue pair of pants, a navy blue sport coat and a light blue shirt and it struck me then, "What a paradox!" The world, it seems, is made up of depressed males.

Yet, as I looked out the window and thought for a moment, watching white fluffy clouds scudding across a clear blue sky, carrying with it the message of tranquility and peace, especially at sea, it dawned on me that blue is also the color of depressing feelings, thoughts and deeds. I remembered "Once in a Blue Moon," and "Blue Monday" when the stock market crashed. Sometimes it depicts a sense of depravity, such as profanity or off color behavior, "blue" jokes, etc. As I listened, "blue" conveyed to me an aura of mystery, a sense of adventure and isolation and one easily wounded by adversity, for the skin takes on a bluish tone when it becomes bruised. Man is by nature expected to be stoic, and has been brought up to feel no pain, to suffer in silence and to show no emotion. He must be strong at all times and is never to wear his emotions on his sleeve or to risk the jibes of his buddies as being a sissy. Thus, in fact in extreme exasperation or frustration he becomes blue in the face for holding his breath,

thus slowing down respiration and thus, paradoxically in one sense, it may be beneficial as it also lowers his blood pressure.

Again I reflected on the seemingly tranquility of the sky, but now visualized a Christmas tree or house bathed in nothing but blue bulbs. With this imagery, one comes up with a picture of coolness and isolation. Yet this color, blue, has magical powers as well, for as a primary color when combined with other rich colors it provides a richness and majesty that transcends one spirit. Without this color one could not blend or construct the tapestry of life.

Now think of the dynamics of the color red, the fiery nature of the sun and the spectacular color of sunsets. It is certainly a center of focus. For what does a young Lothario bring his first date? Naturally, a red rose, signifying a new approach or more importantly, a new way of life. For red is the color of our existence, of our life blood and the source of our energy. Thus certainly the young lass is born under this color. Her life begins with a pink blanket. Pink is the most innocent of all colors. With all innocence removed, the sultry color of femininity emerges. It is vibrant, alive and affirming life; in a way, a direct opposite of the male image. Girls are brought up to show emotions, smile and, in general, are far more open and receptive to stimuli than their male counterparts. Perhaps this is related, in part, again to their inborn color wheel as depicted by the pink blanket. She can bring men to their knees and to her heart, for red is life and is hot and sultry as a summer day. However, it is also the seed of nefariousness, as one pictures the red light districts or its warning of a danger to life and limb, as if carelessly disregarded our life blood will spill out in a ever widening circle. Hence, the red light on a crowded street or a red beacon shining on a empty sea at night warning of the shoals ahead.

In contrast to blue and its depressive effects, the effect of red is due to its life sustaining properties and can alleviate depression, for again, red is a call for action similar to that seen in a bull ring as the toreador flaunts his red cape in front of a raging bull. Witness the winning smile on a lady with sultry red lips and wearing a red suit or dress, or the many variations of red toned down for its desired effect. Red is also the color of anger, for when released it can agitate crowds, destroy friendships or endanger lives, as it increases blood pressure, respiration and heart rate, turning the face red, while feeling red heat boiling inside. When kept in



check, however, it is a vital force for building or rebuilding confidence in human relationships. The release of this emotional force is contradictory to depression, which is due to the withholding of anger. The emotional force is bottled inwardly, ready to explode like the red-hot lava flowing down the sides of an erupting volcano. Passion is the lifeblood of love and relationships, so without this color there is no life.

Now let us examine my favorite color, yellow, which has possibly led the Vikings to victory. Yellow is a color which no longer has degenerating qualities, for its forces are like the sun, self-generating and self-renewing. It is the color of the interior of life. The birth of the chicken is in the yellow of the egg, whereas, the vision of mankind is in the macula of the eye. It can be perceived as the wealth of a nation, or viewed as the false bravado of men who seek to corrupt the truth in search of wealth, as in the case of "yellow" journalism, the end reward debilitating rather than enhancing to all participants. For only truth can set one free, and a relationship built on the false pride or cowardice (yellow) or fools' gold is just as strong as a house built on a foundation of sand, ready to be washed away at the threat of a storm. Whereas relationships and love built on the true color of yellow contain a wealth of happiness beyond anyone's hopes and dreams. For yellow exists for the innovator, the inventor and those who show originality and wisdom. It is truly a color of the true introvert, introspective and discriminator.

Through the ages since the beginning of time the yellow of gold brings with it a mystical power so that it cannot stand alone. Its mystical power so intrigued men that alchemists over the earlier centuries sought to discover its secret, and thereby infuse one with hope and enlighten a world filled with skepticism and darkness. Its power would in this manner, allow one to clarify with startling awareness the murky working of unfinished business.

When combined, blue and yellow create green. Green brings newness, new life, new hope. Green light, go, jealousy, control Christmas cheer, life in the midst of icy winter. These are the powers, their strengths and weakness of the primary colors, which when combined together can exert their collective influence and produce a highly positive influence or can produce a devastatingly negative result

With these colors in mind let us now explore the basics of the non-colors, without which blending would not be possible. Now let us consider the innocence of youth, regardless of gender, for this brings to mind the color white, which is a reflection of all colors or, one could say, the absence of color. It cannot by itself be influenced by any outside source. Dignity, purity, a strong sense of purpose and ethereal in nature, this is white. Consider the white baptismal gown of the babe, the confirmation gown of

the young lady joining the church, the bride in all her innocence, but above all the angel exhibits the Godly character of this color. It alone has the power to diffuse energy or tone down any emotion reflected by any primary color as it hides nothing and diffuses emotions.

White signifies purity of thought, wisdom and experience with nothing to hide. In many ways it can be considered a good camouflage as the savior of mankind or virgin girls, the supreme protector, the man in the white hat, or Sir Lancelot riding his white horse to save the princess in distress. Thus when used appropriately, such as mixed with red, it becomes a gentle pink and one thinks now of gentleness and quality, no longer hard edged or angry, exposing a new freshness and a zest for life.

The other non-color is black. It is like night for nothing is perceived through it. It is the essence of mystery, evil and destruction. It absorbs all available color, reflecting none. Thus, black imparts a mysterious quality to those who wear it and when diluted by white making shades of gray, it tends to make the wearer a non-entity, a shadowy figure and one who wants to stay in the background. In men, it signifies power, competency, aggressiveness and seriousness of purpose. In women, it denotes prestige, wealth and culture as epitomized by the black cocktail dress or basic black dress, which universally is always in style. It signifies warmth and intimacy and a mysterious come hither air and intrigue, as noted also by the passionate effects of black lingerie, as well as power and cruelty as epitomized by the man who wears a black hat. In western culture, it also depicts sadness and grief when worn to funerals or times of mourning as it is self-absorbing.

Now you may ask, what has this to do with crossdressing? For basically speaking, in the man's world, color and style does not really exist. According to an article in our newspaper, Harrah, one of the largest manufacturers of men's slacks, which are made in basically blue, black, gray and brown colors, noted that 80% of them were purchased for their men by women. On account of this they were shifting their advertising accounts to women's magazines. According to the Van Heusen Design group, however, the safest colors men can use are, you guessed it, black, navy, gray and khaki. Again, these are neutral colors because men are afraid of standing out, and for the most part, muted colors and dark colors go over in business better than bright colors. For the adventuresome soul, a daring splash of color, as in a tie, is acceptable. But of course do not mention this to IBM. In pants you can dress up in a black silk shirt, but of course blue shirts and white shirts work best as most men feel more comfortable with no more than the three basic colors. Now loosen up men! If you want to send a firm message of who you are or pretend to be,



wear dark colors, especially if you are concerned about not being taken seriously. They send a message of power and competency, whereas, light colors will make you seem more approachable and friendlier, supposedly as they take the edge off of appearing to be strong or aggressive.

In the case of the crossdresser, the effects of color and style are obvious if one intends to pass in the female world. It is an obvious fact that it is to his advantage having a knowledgeable and helpful spouse or girl friend to aid in this transition. The average male crossdresser is initially at a loss when it comes to wearing or coordinating appropriate colors or style. For alone, he is forced to depend heavily on advice he receives from magazines, or acquaintances who are familiar with his crossdressing. Color is vitally important and co-ordination of tops or blouses and skirts as well as shoes and accessories play a dynamic role in the presentation of the total picture. This area cries for a real women's touch, for the typical male color scheme revolves around generally solid colors, such as black, blue, gray or brown slacks, combined with a solid or striped blue or white shirts, without accessories except the occasional tie. Women's colors are more feminine in their rendition of shades or in contrasting brighter colors depending on the season of the year. Most outfits are accessorized and color balanced, as shoes, purse, and jewelry are coordinated for total effect. When putting together an outfit, it partially depends on the time of the year and perhaps the phase of the moon. Colors can add spring to your step, for the right clothes say you are comfortable with yourself, allowing you to pass with ease, as color influences your total presentation.

This was brought out to me more forcefully one bright sunny day as I was walking in the local mall looking at the new styles in women's fashions in the various store windows. I ran into a kindred spirit who remarked, "These new fashions remind me somewhat of the time when I was young and fashion minded." I thought back to the times when skirts were returning to just below the knee after coming from the mini-skirt craze and then plummeting to the maxi-skirt phase, and I said to myself, "Here we go again!" This time I refused to get involved, and because of this my closet will never be the same again. For this time, I vowed never to purchase anything that didn't conform to my sense of style or color regardless of the fashion trend.

This change in perception started a short time ago, when one day while walking through the mall as Alycia, I fell in love with a yellow silk blouse and I had to have it, so I acquired it. I had some doubts about it, but I thought that it might be due to its price as it was not covered in my budget. However, while wearing it one day I discovered I was feeling listless and out of sorts, so remembering my mate commenting on the effects that certain

colors had on emotions, I conducted an experiment and changed and put on a lovely red silk blouse with cap sleeves. Suddenly, I felt exhilarated. Looking in the mirror, I saw I had the same hair, same makeup, same white skirt, but I looked like a different person. I looked vibrant and alive, whereas, before I was listless and pale.

This got me to thinking, so I took it one step further. I went into a department store and went to a make up counter where they were giving free makeovers in their private room. I stepped up and inquired when they had an opening and they said come back in 15 minutes and they would fit me in. I browsed through the store and returned at the appointed time.. I was taken into the Salon area and my makeup was removed. I was then informed that I was using the wrong style of coverage and color. Using their color analyzer, she discovered I had pink not yellow undertones, so that the colors I had been using tended to make me look more pale and washed out. She then turned to me and inquired in a matter of fact tone, "Did you feel tired and listless some of the time, when you used similar colors?" I responded, "Yes, especially if I had been on my feet a lot or had a hard day at the office." This is where I differed from the average woman, as I thought in terms of absolute reality. "No," she responded diffidently, "I mean shortly after you put on a color or style did it leave you feeling flat after a while, as this would imply that your color wheel is out of tune."

I will now show you what I mean as she proceeded to demonstrate, beginning with a moisturizer, the correct foundation for my color, beige brown eye shadow, blush and finishing with a mauve lipstick. I felt terrific and replenished. I paid for my new acquisitions and visited the nearest bookstore to find more information on style and color for by now I had become fascinated by the psychology of color. I now noted that many stylists claimed that the color and style you wear conveyed emotions and feelings very quickly. "Aha!" I exclaimed to myself. That is the answer to what I was seeking. Therefore, now picture yourself in your best colors, whether it be blue, green, yellow or red, then imagine the impact that the right color will make on your outlook. With this insight, I learned that I had to match skin tone with clothing colors to radiate total confidence without feeling washed out.

However, you may ask, what has this to do with style? Now, that is a horse of a different color, for I have also discovered it also plays an integral part in how I feel as well as how I present myself to the world, either drab and anonymous, or vibrant and alive. Thus one of the easiest mistakes to make, I discovered, is when putting together your wardrobe, to pick the wrong color or style for your body type. I've done it plenty of times, often because I



was attracted by the color without realizing that the wrong color will kill any garment, but as important as color is, a garment that is made of the wrong fabric or worn with an inappropriate fabric, such as silk and cotton, will equally be a weak link in how you present yourself. This is especially true if worn together. I am now aware that changing color as well as the style and texture of the material sets me free to find and express my moods and feelings. I now feel alive with clear warm colors but not those that are too vibrant.

With these thoughts echoing in my mind, I continued my stroll in the mall and, then, there it was, staring at me through the window. I knew I had to have it. On the manikin in the window was a wide black and white checkered skirt topped with a solid black blouse. One look at the rack told me they had it in my size and after locating a black blouse, I went and tried on the combination. The skirt fell to just below the knee and when combined with the black blouse I looked terrific and felt ecstatic. Suddenly I was back in fashion again. So once again the adage was right. If it sings your song and the color and style are right, you are the winner. While in the man's world, color and style may not really exist, but for the crossdresser, color and style are everything.

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*Continued from page 12*

you ever considered your cage might be a blessing?" she asked some sessions later. "It makes you a one-of-a-kind person and a person of great beauty. Have you ever considered that instead of hiding, you might take pride in your uniqueness and beauty, and find the joy to be had in sharing yourself with others?"

Jeremy was stunned. No, that idea had never occurred to him. He had been too busy feeling sorry for himself. After that session this new idea served as a turning point. He nurtured it and built upon it, striving for ways in which he could make his unique beauty something he could share with others to their pleasure and enjoyment.

Jeremy grew up to be an artist, a sculptor in metal, who created exquisite works of worked stainless steel filigree, inspired by the cage he wore on his head. Instead of sitting in a museum on display, he created sculptures that were displayed in the finest museums. He fashioned headcages for milliners and fashion houses. The world's richest and most beautiful women vied for the ownership of a Benfil, each of which he created for its owner. In time, Jeremy Benfil became one of the world's artistic treasures. (I just love happy endings! Don't you?)



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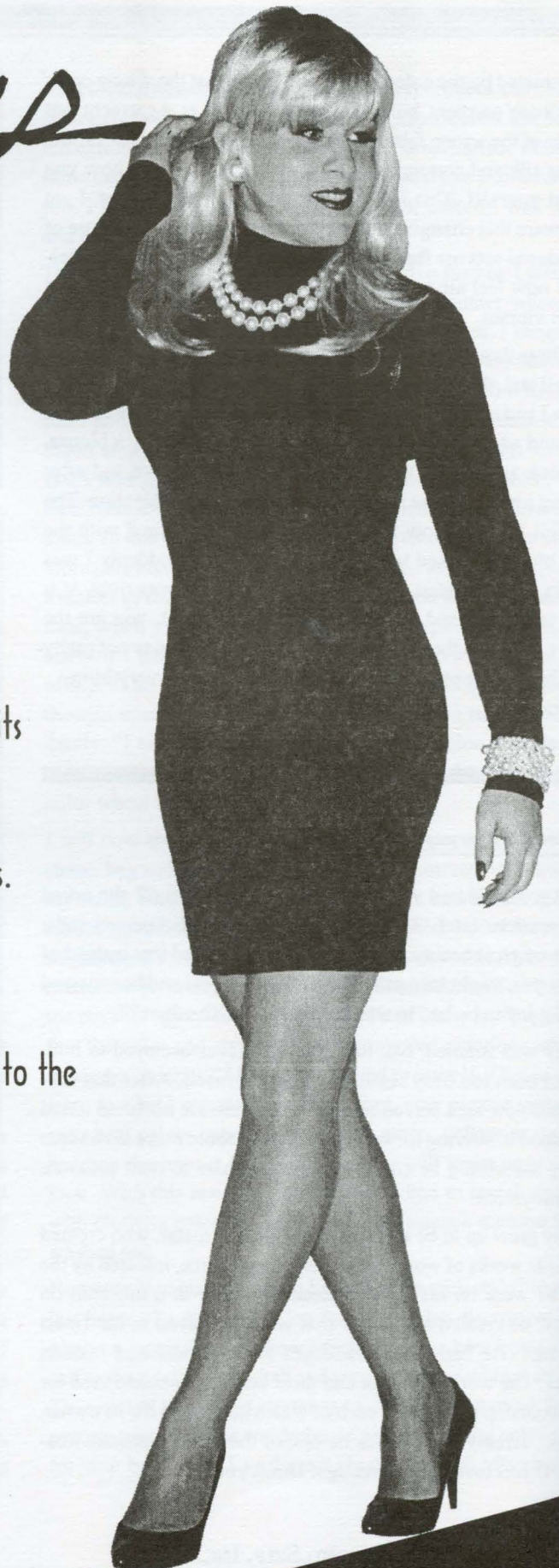
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## Who, Me? Help?

by Rachel Miller

When I began the journey to understand crossdressing, my only goal was to resolve my personal problems. I was too needy myself to help others. Many organizations, books and people aided my quest and became my therapists on the road to understanding and acceptance. As my self-development progressed, I wanted to give something back to the community that had helped me.

My wife Marsha urged me to record what we were learning on our journey because she felt it would be helpful to others who were walking a similar path. I wanted to wait because I didn't have all the answers. Then I realized that no one else did either and nothing would ever happen if I waited. So I committed to start doing what I could.

At first I worried that one person couldn't do much but then remembered the movie, "It's A Wonderful Life." George Bailey believed his life to be a failure but his guardian angel Clarence showed him the world as if he had never been born. The negative changes resulting from his absence were startling. Clarence told George that everyone's life touches many other lives and, if you aren't around to touch them, it leaves a big hole. I was determined not to leave a hole.

Many crossdressers have serious issues ranging from obsessive/compulsive behavior to guilt and denial. Many use clothing and makeup to block out reality. Others continuously suppress their true feelings. Tragic stories of addiction, depression, suicide and other destructive activities are commonplace, so help is clearly needed.

While we probably can't become psychiatrists or social workers, we can show that we care. We can reach out in love and friendship and accept others as they are without judgment. We can show them how to express their feelings. We can encourage them to face their problems. We can be a coach, a cheerleader or a sounding board. Although we can't do everything, we can follow Helen Keller's advice—

*I am only one; but still I am one.*

*I cannot do everything,*

*but still I can do something;*

*I will not refuse to do the something I can do.*

Someone somewhere is trying to take the same step you just took. If you don't help them, who else can? You can help! You must help! We must all do what we can, starting now!

Rachel's community best seller, "The Bliss of Becoming One!" encourages crossdressers to integrate their feminine and masculine traits through understanding and self-acceptance. It encourages revealing our true selves to our loved ones, helping those in need in the community and educating society. Signed copies are available for \$15 postage paid from Opportunities for Improvement, P.O. Box 31475, Oakland, CA 94604.

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# Folk Festivals

by Ricky

So you just got all dressed up and have nowhere to go. Sure, you could try the shopping mall again, but that's only a few hours. Wouldn't it be wonderful to spend a weekend en femme? But the next transgender weekend event is months away, and besides, it's halfway across the country and you can't afford it anyway.

I have a suggestion for you, then. I am as obsessed with folk music as I am with dresses, and all through the summer months there are folk festivals scattered around the country. When folkies converge on one piece of ground for a weekend of music something remarkable happens. An instant caring community forms and you can let the kids run free while you browse among the music and crafts or just simply enjoy yourself without any pressure or hassle.

Say the words "Folk Music" and most people think of Woody Guthrie or Peter, Paul & Mary. But folk music is much more than that. In a typical festival you will find a bluegrass band, someone singing the blues, a bit of 20s or 30s jazz, an entire area devoted to the kids, close-harmony Gospel on Sunday mornings, bawdy songs around the campfire, Irish tenors, British drinking songs in 95 part harmony, French love songs, a Yiddish klezmer band, a Scots piper or a Canadian fiddler. In short, if there is not a long cord with an amplifier on the end you'll find it somewhere.

For the crossdresser there are several advantages. Since it is the last refuge of the hippie look, long hair, flowing skirts and ruffled blouses are in, even if we can't join in the bra-less look. It's outdoors and there are no dress codes, so you have a wide choice of clothing to wear. The only problem is makeup. Since we can't very well go without it, we must take some care, as heavy makeup would be noticeably out of place unless backed up with suitably ostentatious clothing.

Many festivals have booths of striking and original jewelry, clothing and oddaments that are mostly made by hand and simply cannot be found elsewhere. You could stay at a motel, but as most festivals are held in the open, there is camping on site or nearby and dressing privately in your tent or room is easy. The availability of portable toilets, while not the most wonderful of inventions, eliminates that vexing problem of which door to go through when nature calls.

Most important, folkies are the original laid back crowd, and

there is such an open and friendly feeling that even if you are read it will most likely result in some friendly and curious conversation with nobody getting excited. The cost for the weekend usually runs less than \$40 per person and kids 12 and under are usually free. Most have food at reasonable prices or you can bring your own. Most festivals ban or restrict alcohol to designated areas, these are very definitely family oriented events.

So how do you find one of these festivals in your area? The best way is to get an issue of Sing Out! (125 E. 3rd St., Bethlehem, PA, 18015) and look at the national festival listings. You could even be a big spender and get a subscription; it's a good deal. So widen your horizons and get out to see the world!

*(This article originally appeared in the late lamented Cross-Talk magazine, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)*

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## Top Ten Things Only Women Understand

10. Why it's good to have five pairs of black shoes.
9. The difference between cream, ivory, and off-white.
8. Crying can be fun.
7. FAT CLOTHES.
6. A salad, diet drink, and a hot fudge sundae make a balanced lunch.
5. Discovering a designer dress on the clearance rack can be considered a peak life experience.
4. The inaccuracy of every bathroom scale ever made.
3. A good man might be hard to find, but a good hairdresser is next to impossible.
2. Why a phone call between two women never lasts under ten minutes.

**AND THE NUMBER ONE THING ONLY  
WOMEN UNDERSTAND:**

1. OTHER WOMEN!



# A Clinical Psychologist on Crossdressing

by Kristen, Toni, Valerie, Jayne, & Lesley

Dr. Christine Grubb, a psychologist in private practice and an instructor at Paradise Valley Community College, Phoenix, was the guest speaker at the Ladies Night Out on the 4th Saturday of March at the G&L Center. A turnout of 26, including several spouses and significant others, were treated to a discussion of crossdressing as viewed by Christine in her practice over many years. Dr. Grubb is one of the few experienced professionals in the area who deal with gender issues.

Christine described how society labels everyone and their actions. In her practice she explains what the "labels" (crossdressing, etc.) mean and then she works at having people trust each other and devise ways to tolerate or accept the crossdressing in their relationship. Education is an important part of the acceptance process as well as being open to each other. The more a person fights their own urge to crossdress the worse it becomes as a mental and personal issue. By coming to terms with crossdressing the practice becomes a part of an individual's personality and can be integrated into everyday life in an acceptable manner. It is important to view crossdressing not as a secret, which leads to shame and negative feedback, but rather to view it as a private issue that is not forced on others but can be discussed as the need presents itself.

Dr. Grubb feels that crossdressing does not lead to a transsexual lifestyle; even the DSM IV manual states that. However, experimentation can occur, which leads the individual or observer to feel that a continuum to becoming transsexual exists.

A new version of the DSM IV manual on psychological disorders is due out soon. The speaker pointed out the continual change in interpretation of what is a mental disorder which has taken place over time in the manuals, and its use mainly as a tool for insurance billing. A general definition used by many psychologists for "crossdresser" is someone who dresses in clothes appropriate to the opposite sex, whereas a "transvestite" is a heterosexual male who dresses for sexual gratification. Although considered a mental disorder if it interferes with everyday life in the home and workplace, she notes that other human traits (homosexuality, neurosis) formerly viewed as illnesses are no longer considered as such.

The DSM IV usage of the term "transvestism" is inherently contradictory in that the sexual component of crossdressing decreases over time whereas the urge to crossdress does not. DSM IV dwells on the notion of "impairment" to the individual as being a sign of mental illness. However, she points out the social and workplace, "impairment" is due to others being unable to handle the dressing in clothes typically worn by the opposite sex.

Finally, Dr. Grubb discussed how to have crossdressing become a positive part of a relationship, and how to integrate it into social contacts and societal change. Dr. Grubb suggested making it part of marital play in which each couple has to work out their own construct (e.g., see how it is treated by the couple in "Bert & Lori, An Autobiography," available from the Alpha Zeta library). Camille suggested it is best to understand that some people will not accept crossdressing, and simply learn to live with them, just as we as individuals view and live with some cultural elements that we view as negative.

Stephanie felt social interaction at malls was not a problem but advised us to pick the best times to do it (e.g., at periods of low foot traffic). Another idea presented was to go to store clerks in male mode first and ask if they object to one's coming in en-femme to shop. On a broader scale it was suggested that while fighting for transgender rights has to start somewhere, transgender groups should carefully pick issues they are going to pursue politically or in the courts. A good point made by Stephanie about institutional inertia likened the efforts that we individually and collectively have to make to trying to stop a large, heavy rolling ball. Trying to stop it by standing in front of it results in being flattened. By running alongside it and chipping away at it and slowing its momentum, however, you eventually stop the ball. In time society does change!

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

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## *He Makes Each Soul Unique*

*I am considering not how, but why, He makes each soul unique. If He had no use for all these differences, I do not see why He should have created more souls than one. Be sure that the ins and outs of your individuality are no mystery to Him; and one day they will no longer be a mystery to you. Your soul has a curious shape because it is hollow made to fit a particular swelling in the infinite contours of the Divine substance, or a key to unlock one of the doors in the house with many mansions. For it is not humanity in that abstract to be saved, but you — you, the individual reader. Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it — made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand.*

*- C.S. Lewis in The Problem Of Pain*



# Transgenderism, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

by Elisabeth Anne Kellogg

One of the verses used to condemn transgenderism is 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. In this article, we will do a thorough exegesis of the passage to determine its meaning and find how, if at all, it relates to transgenderism.

This verse is cited as saying that the effeminate will not inherit the kingdom of God. This idea is based on the King James Version's translation of the Greek *malakoi*.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, KJV)

A comparison of the King James and New International translations, however, shows that this translation is not universal.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, NIV)

"Male prostitutes" is a lot different from "effeminate." So what is the correct translation?

Approaching this verse, I at first thought it would simply be a matter of determining the correct meaning of this one word. In retrospect, it has turned out to be more like the process of peeling an onion. This has been compounded by the fact that most commentators and translators seem to have considered this verse either too obvious (perhaps read "inconsequential") or too linguistically difficult to have put much effort into explaining and translating it.

Let us then begin to peel this onion by looking at the meaning of *malakos*. The following can be extracted from Liddell and Scott [Liddell, Henry George, and Scott, Robert, revised by Jones, Henry Stuart, A Greek-English Lexicon With a Supplement, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968), pp.1076f]:

*Malakos* has the basic meaning of soft; of things subject to touch: soft.

A fresh plowed field is a "soft" field; soft, grassy meadow;

soft-fleeced; a slow fire is a "soft" fire; marsh water is "soft" water; to sleep "softly" means on soft bedding; to sit "softly" means on a cushion. of things not subject to touch: gentle; soft, mild.

"Soft" words are fair words; "soft" looks are tender, youthful looks; a "soft" scent is faint, or delicate; a "soft" climate is mild. of persons or modes of life: soft; mild; gentle; and negatively: feeble; faint-hearted; cowardly; morally weak; lacking in self control; "Soft" music is effeminate or tuned to a low pitch. "soft" writing style is feeble. "soft" reason is weak; loose; bodily speaking, "soft" is weakly; sick; to be ill.

There is nothing here to suggest that the meaning is "effeminate," except in the musical sense. And certainly nothing to suggest prostitution.

Looking at other scriptural references is not particularly helpful either. Outside of this verse, the word only appears twice in the Septuagint and twice in the Gospels. In Proverbs 25:15 we hear about the power of a "soft" tongue (fair speech). And in 26:22, gossip is compared to "soft" food (choice morsels). In Matthew 11:8 and Luke 7:25, John the Baptist asks the crowd if they have come to see a man in "soft" clothing (fine clothes).

The early church fathers generally believed that in this verse Paul was talking about those who were morally weak. It was only in the late middle ages that interpreters started to claim that here "soft" meant some kind of sexual sin.

One argument put forth about translating this word has to do with the meaning of "effeminate" at the time the KJV was written. In the 16th through the 18th Centuries the term "effeminate" did not mean what it means to us today. At that time the term was applied to a class of men who were notorious womanizers. These men pursued women as a career, often living off the older rich women whom they seduced. The most famous of these was Casanova. The modern word would likely be "gigolo."

So far we have made little progress by working with the single word. It is appropriate to move to the next layer by examining the immediate verse. This passage lists ten groups of people who "will not inherit the kingdom of God." The Greek for some of these groups is well known; some other terms are difficult. All of the terms in this list are masculine plural. A point to remember about gender and number in Greek is that the feminine plural is



only used for groups that are exclusively feminine. Mixed masculine and feminine groups are always referred to with the masculine plural.

**Pornos, porne** - A prostitute. The Greek root comes from the verb "to sell."

In the New Testament, this term appears to have two closely related meanings. One is as the equivalent of the Hebrew *zanah*, as in "Tamar has been playing the harlot." (Gen 38:24) It was with sense of harlotry that the Pharisees protested that they were not illegitimate children in John 8:41. In 1 Tim 1:10 it is translated "adulterer" in the Hebrew sense when normally *moichos* is the proper term for an adulterer. Since *moichos* also appears in this list, "adulterer" is not the likely meaning. The other meaning of *pornos* is in the proper sense of a prostitute or the patron of a prostitute. Because in the New Testament, the prohibition of prostitution is paired so often with the prohibition of eating meat sacrificed to idols, it is specifically referring to temple prostitution. The NIV translation of this word as the generalized "sexually immoral" seems untenable here and in every other verse where it occurs.

**Eidololatries** - An idolater, a person or thing offered or dedicated to an idol.

**Moichos** - An adulterer or paramour.

**Malakos** - Soft.

**Arsenokoites** - A slang term, this word only appears three times in Greek literature (here, in a commentary on this verse, and in 1 Tim 1:10). It probably meant a homosexual or a pederast. The majority of homosexuals in the Roman world were pederasts so it is difficult to determine whether it refers to the homosexuality part, the pederast part or both. In 1 Tim 1:10 it is translated as "perverts," a rather ambiguous word.

**Klepton** - A thief.

**Pleonectes** - A defrauder, greedy (in the active sense of taking what you don't deserve).

**Methusos** - A drunkard.

**Loidoros** - A reviler. A verbal abuser.

**Harpax** - A robber or rapist. The "extortioners" of the KJV is probably better than the "swindlers" of the NIV, for extortioners tend to use force to take what they want, rather than the indirect methods of swindlers.

This list is related to that in chapter 5 verses 9-11. There the NIV lists "the sexually immoral (prostitutes), greedy, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards, and swindlers."

The lists in 5:9-11 and 6:9-10 are bracketed by two discussions

of "sexual immorality." One, in 5:1, discusses an instance of incest: "A man has his father's wife." The other, in 6:15-20, discusses joining the members of Christ's body to a prostitute. While the NIV translates both these passages as referring to "sexual immorality," the Greek refers to prostitutes. This is in obvious reference to the fact that at Corinth the worship of Aphrodite fostered prostitution in the name of religion. At one time 1,000 sacred prostitutes served her temple. This is a large number for a city of about 650,000 people. Approximately one out of every hundred women was a prostitute.

In this context, it is a little difficult to figure out what kind of "soft" people are being talked about. Many translators seem to assume the first half of the list deals with sexual sin and the second half with other kinds of sins.

At this point it helps to enlarge the context. Verses 7 and 8 provide an introduction to verses 9 and 10, where the word *adikoi* gives the pivot to connect them.

The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?

(1 Cor 6:7-9a, NIV)

Now we can see that this is not a random list of ten kinds of sinners, but ten groups of people who might be sued for wronging someone. How then, might we translate these groups as the victimizers of others?

The first two groups are people who purport to buy or sell something that they cannot. Prostitutes are sellers of "love." But the one kind of love they can't sell is "true love." In essence they take money for something they can't give. The relationship between the prostitute and his/her client is mutually harmful. Idolaters or those involved in idol worship, try to buy and sell favor with the gods through gifts and sacrifices. Much of religion today is still idolatry in this sense. The sellers of heaven preach a religion of obeying the law instead of telling people of the grace that God has provided through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The next three groups are those who gain sex by force or persuasion. Adulterers are those who have illicit sex with married people. Pederasts are child molesters. Between these two "soft" may mean the seducers of unmarried people. Here is recognition of the truism: "Seduction is the subtlest form of rape." In this context, the interpretation of "soft" as being the Casanova's and Don Juan's of the world, makes sense.



## Hostessing New Sisters

by Melanie Yarborough

It's funny how the most important thing support groups are supposed to do is hardly ever done: making new sisters welcome. For a new sister, coming out is like being naked in a roomful of strangers. Anyone in this vulnerable state seriously needs warmth and support. Sadly, all too often they don't receive it.

Why is this? Because in spite of all of our pretenses at being women, we still behave very much like men. We prefer to shop-talk with the people we already know about sports or computers or cars. We want to be the active center of attention, not the passive listener. And we want to be among the winners (the experienced elite) instead of with the nervous first-timer in the corner. Simply put, we lack the skills to be good hostesses. As men, we're not expected to be sensitive or caring.

Approaching new sisters is much easier than anyone realizes. The wonderful thing is that anything can be said to start a conversation. Unlike in straight gatherings, the listener won't judge or condemn you on your brilliance. They'll be grateful for anything you say: it's an acknowledgement, a validation. You can comment on an outfit, jewelry or shoes, "Where did you get it?"

From there you can discuss the best places to buy things. Or you can talk about the community, the other groups, and the kinds of events that go on. Or short and funny personal transgender stories to bring a laugh or smile. Or a recent transgender book or movie or television show.

It's probably best to NOT ask deep personal questions like *Why do you do this?* or *What were some of your experiences growing up?* And many newcomers still carry with them a sense of shame. One of the most dramatic things we can do is show them through our own example someone who is transgendered & proud.

It's also helpful to use endearment words like "Honey" and "Dear." As men, we're not used to giving them. But as men, we love to hear them said to us. It puts us at ease, makes us feel welcome. Just don't overdo it!

Perhaps the most important thing is being able to LISTEN. Men are used to having other people listen to them, and it's crucial to cast aside this subconscious macho tendency. It takes skill to listen sympathetically. A new sister wants to feel special and taken seriously, and anything they say is a way of baring their soul. Brusque changes of subject, or cold unconcern are not only rude, but damaging. It's been suggested that transgender groups should each have an official hostess to greet newcomers. But shouldn't we all reach out to them?

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

## Cleaning

By Ricky

I what to know who makes up the rules, and when I find her I want her to change them, now! It may come as a shock to you, but life just ain't fair. With my new job I am living in a two room apartment all by myself on weekdays. My wife is in school 2 hours away from my apartment, which is 2 hours away from our (supposedly permanent) home, and we navigate from node to node on this triangular route each weekend. I thought life was supposed to get more stable when you hit your forties!

But I digress. Being alone again means that for 15 hours of each day (less overtime) I can revel in female attire. I can sleep in a nightgown, run around in bra and panties or full formal gown, and otherwise be as feminine as possible whenever I darn well please. I can be daring and eat spaghetti in a white lace blouse. I can sit at the computer with my angel sleeves dangling on the keyboard and full length skirt winding up in the chair wheels or wake up to the comforting feel of a stuffed bra and silky nightgown clinging to my body. I can spend hours at the sewing machine, enduring its snarling and make new clothes for myself. I can cook, I can read, I can do anything I want and wear a dress too. So why is it I just cannot force myself to put on a housedress and clean the place up?

Our culture defines housecleaning as a feminine pursuit. If life were fair, putting on a dress would instantly motivate me to wash the dishes and sweep the floor. If you watch TV you know real women have a primal urge to lay about the place with spray can and dust rag, but somehow this facet of femininity has escaped me. The ultrafeminine joy of cleaning the bathroom has all the appeal of the material I'm supposed to be cleaning, no matter how much nylon, rayon, spandex and silicone is distributed over my body. I have to face it. I hate cleaning no matter what I'm wearing, and there is no one else to do it for me.

Perhaps the solution is to hire a housekeeper to come in and do it for me, but then I'd have to come up with a really inventive explanation for the panties in the laundry basket and the 46B bra hanging off the door-knob. Creating a convincing extemporaneous dissertation as to what I do with the padded corset may strain even my powers of fabrication. I've toyed with the notion of turning on every faucet in the place before leaving for the weekend and allowing the resulting tidal wave to cleanse the floor, but I really want my security deposit back. And I suppose letting the gerbils out of the cage to nibble up all the trash would simply make matters worse, especially as they are pregnant.

So anyway, I want to have a long and serious talk with whoever instilled the desire to crossdress in me. Just why didn't I get the full treatment? If you know where to find her, let me know. But meanwhile I have to take out the trash...

*(This article originally appeared in the late lamented Cross-Talk magazine, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)*



The next two groups steal, either directly or by persuasion: thieves and defrauders or swindlers.

The last three groups show violence to others. Drunkards are those who become violent from alcohol. Revilers are verbal abusers. Slanders use words to harm peoples reputations. In either case, they do it out of hate. Spouse abusers, child abusers, and any who commit hate crimes would also be condemned here. Robbers and rapists use violence for gain.

So a possible translation of this passage might be:

The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and wrong, and you do this to your brothers! Do you not know that wrong-doers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sellers of "love," nor the sellers of heaven, not the seducers of the married, of the unmarried, or of children, neither thieves nor swindlers, and not those violent from drink, from hate, or for gain will inherit the kingdom of God.

(1 Cor 6:7-10)

This interpretation places this passage within the main theme of 1:10-6:20 where Paul is arguing against the divisions that have grown up in the Corinthian church. "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought." (1 Cor 1:10) "For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly?" (1 Cor 3:3) "The spiritual man makes judgements about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgement." (1 Cor 2:15) "If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgement instead of before the saints?" (1 Cor 6:1) "The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already." (1 Cor 6:7) An echo of this is in 2 Cor 12:20, "I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder."

Based on modern exegesis, this verse has nothing to do with transgenderism at all. It's about the dangers of divisiveness in the church.

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# Communication

by Ricky

We have a problem here, and the problem is communication. I am all for a gender neutral society, one that ignores the innate differences between those with contrasting genital plumbing. I encourage people to live without constant unnecessary reference to what position they assume when nature calls, but gosh darn it, there are limits! I refer specifically to one Saturday when I attended a function at a local college and felt nature calling me. I was, naturally, in my normal male attire and persona, and began to wander the endless brick-and-concrete halls of the building in search of the proper door. This being a modern college campus there were very few signs with words and letters on them around the place. Perhaps this is because so many students can't read, but is probably an attempt to use the so called universal icons to aid non English speakers so they will be just as confused as those of us who speak English. I soon sighted an orange figure with round head, a sketchy torso and two pipes below representing legs. Ah, the universal icon for maleness, trousers! I placed my hand upon the door to enter when I heard a loud exclamation from a nearby stranger. The kind stranger pointed out the fact there were two little curved lines on the schematic torso denoting breasts, indicating that I was about to enter the women's room.

I never thought I would be arguing for continuing a sexist stereotype in print, but here I go. Those little icons on the door are meant to communicate a message. That message is culturally based, and changing the rules without telling anyone is a lousy trick. If you're going to change the icon for 'Women' then give us poor males a hint when you do. Why orange? Color the fool thing pink to give us a hint. You could even put up a sign in a few common languages so you won't discriminate. I wouldn't even snarl at spelling it with a "y" if it would help me avoid embarrassment.

That's the whole idea behind communication, the receiver of the message has to get the correct meaning from the sender. If either one is using a set of assumptions that the other is not aware of, there is a failure of communication. This brings to mind the unceasing attempts of those in our community to invent new words to describe what we are. I'm sure it is meant as a way to communicate the subtle (or even blatant) differences between those of us males who feel compelled to wear women's clothes. The differences are there, they are real, they have meaning. I dress for the good feeling the clothes give me. A transsexual dresses be-

cause she is convinced the clothes match her gender. Drag queens have their own motivation, as do all the other endless flavors of crossdressers. But do we really need a separate word to describe each person's motivation? Even if we were inventive enough to create an array of new words so each human being that heard it would have no doubt as to why you want to wear a bra and panties, would it make any difference? Would someone outside the community really care if a gorzlop is a man who presented as a woman from 8 AM to 3 PM each day because his birth family warped his psyche? Does it help to know that a zloggog is professional female impersonator who was into lace and spandex? Could you handle another slew of pseudo-words beginning with "bi" without going stark, raving bonkers?

So let's keep it simple, shall we? We are all crossdressers if we like to wear women's clothes. There's no shame in it, no need to be worried about what the word really means, or if it really describes everything about you. The art of conversation was created to find out the details, so if you want to know what motivated the person in the blue skirt to put it on, just strike up a conversation and ask. Person to person communication beats trying to decipher some made up word that tries to jam a wealth of ideas into a single group of letters. Give it a try sometime.

*(This article originally appeared in the late lamented Cross-Talk magazine, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)*

## Tri-Ess E-Mail

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



## On Cross-Dressing Safely

by Lucy Stone

Those of you who were in Williamsburg for the March meeting heard some important words on personal safety considerations when we are dressed en femme from Trooper Eric VanFossen of the Virginia State Police. His talk prompted me to write this commentary.

He stated that when each of us is crossdressed, we are as vulnerable as are our wives. Many criminals are more likely to attack a woman than a man. However, he didn't mention an additional vulnerability that each of us faces, the potential life-threatening consequences that could result from not passing. There are many intolerant individuals, who do not understand us or feel threatened by anyone who is at all different from the generally accepted stereotype. The typical response is to label us as *gay*. Given the right set of circumstances, that subjects any of us to a potentially fatal *gay bashing*.

Does the potential for great harm mean that each of us should stay in our individual closets with our doors locked tight? Of course not, but what it does mean is that we should take the trooper's advice very seriously. He told us to cross dress as often as we find practical but to think through each excursion beforehand to screen for situations with the potential for personal harm. Specifically, he said to observe the following:

- When going to a part of town that you don't know or you don't feel secure in, before going there always plan your route, as well as alternate routes for quick escape.
- Don't engage in confrontations of any kind with other motorists. If another motorist gets offended because you inadvertently cut him off and begins to harass you, get away from the situation as quickly as you can.

Based on my experience, I would also add several additional points:

- Whenever you go out always dress and act like a lady.
- Go places where and at times when ladies usually go, and always blend in. For example, a trip to the mall on Saturday, dressed in pants and a casual top would be a good choice. Wearing a short skirt and heels and going unaccompanied to a bar late at night would seem like a bad choice.

I have been going out dressed for more than twenty years, and I currently go out on the average of once per week. I have always

tried to observe the points set forth above, and I have never experienced a response from others that was more serious than a questioning glance. I wouldn't be so foolish as to say that I couldn't have a problem someday, but as long as I use good judgment in choosing my outings, the probability is unlikely.

One of the greatest dangers for each of us is the tendency to rush into a sudden opportunity to dress, for it can be all too easy to ignore or rationalize away any potentially high-risk problem areas. So take your time, and if possible, go with someone else. I have been greatly aided because I have a supportive wife who helps me plan ahead to avoid pitfalls and potentially hazardous situations. Going with another person, whether your spouse or another cross-dresser, is also a good idea because you can help each other avoid problems. For this reason, women usually do not go alone when they can go with someone else.

*(From the newsletter of Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter.)*

### ADDRESS CHANGE!

On your mailings to our Tri-Ess address in Houston, please note we are now using the PMB prefix, instead of STE, to comply with Postal Regulations.

Make sure your mail gets to us! Address it as follows:

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This affects all mail going to our box, whether addressed to TRI-ESS, THE FEMME MIRROR, SPICE, JANE ELLEN FAIRFAX, FRANCES FAIRFAX or any other TRI-ESS Officer or Department.

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The Society for the Second Self, Inc., Fall, 1999

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# Our Gender Family #16 - July, 1999

## *The Clothing Confusion Conspiracy*

by Rachel Miller

The men trudge in grim-faced. There's no joking about Dilbert, no bragging about sexual conquests, no cheering about the World Series. They are painfully aware of the critical importance of these MS-DOS meetings. As Carl approaches the podium silence envelopes the room.

"We all know the problem; what we need are solutions. Saying men can't wear dresses while ignoring women wearing pants has been getting progressively more difficult to defend ever since Rosie the Riveter took over our factories in '42. And comments about confusing God's plan for the separation of men and women actually comes off as sexist and works against us.

"The best approach seems to be the fear angle that we talked about last time. We've got to convince women that cross-dressers, transsexuals and gays are infiltrating their ranks and undermining womanhood and women's rights. We've got to make women believe that men in dresses and other "female" clothing are dangerous to them. We've got to make women afraid of these people. Then we can claim that we are defending women—We aren't against men in dresses; we are against what the conspiracy of men in dresses is doing to degrade womanhood. That's the high road, that's the strategy. Now, what tactics might be effective? Yes, Bill..."

The discussion intensifies as the magnitude of the problem and the price of failure become clearer. Alan drifts off in thought...

"If we could only go back to the good old days when we kept women barefoot and pregnant. They were happy with any small concession we gave them. Now they're taking senior management jobs and telling their husbands to help clean house and take care of the kids. They've not only got college sports teams but professionals on national television. They are taking over our territory. If it becomes okay for guys to wear dresses and be compassionate instead of wearing pants and being tough, it will just continue to blur the line of separation between us and them. We're supposed to be in charge. Women are supposed to obey us. Oh man, we've got to stop these guys from wearing dresses!"

...Alan returns to full consciousness just as Carl wraps up the tactical discussion.

"Okay then. The committee will work out the details of the top five proposals and have them ready for discussion and action next week. It is important that you are here for that meeting. Meanwhile, we must be careful that it never appears that we are trying to preserve our positions of power. Any hint that we are trying to slow the advance of women in society would be a disaster."

Carl paused and the familiar beep-beep of a computer powering up filled the room.

"Remember! Never write down what MS-DOS stands for! Never say it

out loud! Only whisper it to another member and then be absolutely certain that no one else hears you. Okay, see you all next week."

The men trudge out, determined to be successful and equally determined to conceal their true goals.

Of course this entire story is fictional. No one cares if a man wears a dress, and there certainly isn't a secret society called Men Say—Defend Our Superiority. Besides, everyone knows that men have been slaving tirelessly for the equality of women since Alfred Lord Tennyson sounded the drumbeat 150 years ago—

*Man for the field and woman for the hearth:*

*Man for the sword and for the needle she:*

*Man with the head and woman with the heart:*

*Man to command and woman to obey;*

*All else confusion.*

Notes:

1. I will present a spiritual seminar at the Holiday En Femme in Houston on Friday, November 12th. Part 1 is "What Does The Bible Tell Us?"—A logical refutation of the legalistic approach based on Deuteronomy 22:5. It includes a study of God's love and compassion. It focuses on His grace that frees us from all condemnation. Part 2 is "Finding An Accepting Church Home"—A discussion of the practical aspects of finding a church that accepts people as they are. It describes steps you can take and discusses denominations that are more open to transgendered people.

2. The complete series of Our Gender Family newsletters featured by the Transgender Community Forum of AOL is available on my web site at <http://members.aol.com/rachelmill> (Keyword to: <http://members.aol.com/rachelmill>) The extremely popular series of articles published in The Femme Mirror is also there along with those written jointly by Marsha and I for The Sweetheart Connection, a newsletter designed specifically for the spouses and significant others of transgendered people. I'm sure you will find interesting reading in this widely acclaimed material.

3. My community best seller, The Bliss of Becoming One! encourages transvestites to integrate their feminine and masculine traits through understanding and self-acceptance. It encourages revealing our true selves to our loved ones, helping those in need in the community and educating society. Signed copies are available for \$15 postage paid from Opportunities for Improvement, P.O. Box 31475, Oakland, CA 94604.

4. Your financial support to help defray the costs of these much needed educational efforts is most welcome. Contributions of any amount can be sent to the preceding address. You have my thanks and gratitude for your assistance in this important work.



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## **Can You See Through Me?**

by PKB

*My eyes show emotion,  
my heart shows love,  
My head says devotion,  
are you listening up above?*

*There should only be two of us,  
yet there is three,  
In you I trust,  
Can you see through me?*

*I am in need  
of your wisdom and guide  
but am surrounded by greed  
and want to hide.*

*Please spare me this pain  
and carry me through  
I can't do it alone,  
I really need you.*

*An answer maybe  
I need to know  
can you see through me?  
Which way do I go?*



## A Visit from Virginia

by Jane Ellen and Frances Fairfax

Here at Tau Chi Chapter, planning our meeting programs is the collective responsibility of our Board of Directors, which means that all of us, not just some poor Programs Director, get grey hairs. Earlier this year, however, we hit on a wonderful program idea for June's meeting - we would invite Virginia Prince, the Great Grandmother of the whole transgendered community. We had had the privilege of knowing Virginia for many years, but few in Houston had met her and fewer still realized what a treat they were in for. Virginia graciously accepted our invitation, airline arrangements were secured, and with two weeks to go before the meeting, we departed for a much needed family vacation.

Imagine our shock upon returning a week later and finding, buried in our mountain of accumulated e-mail, a note from a California friend with a report of Virginia's death! Grief and dismay were held at bay by one small shred of hope: our friend had seen the notice in a gender group newsletter. Swiftly we dialed up Virginia's home, and to our vast relief, the unmistakable voice of Virginia herself answered! After assuring us she was very much alive, she told us how much she was looking forward to seeing us again that Friday. (Later we determined that someone had confused Virginia "Charles" Prince with Charles Pearce, a well known Bay Area entertainer who had recently passed away.) Amused and relieved, we got back to answering our e-mail.

After that jolting prelude, Virginia's visit certainly exceeded expectations! It began with a Friday evening at Boys-R-U's, held in the Clubhouse at the Gulf Greyhound Track. Virginia, in her role as Investments Director, made some winning calls, and came away with a gleam in her eye. We fully expect her to introduce a brand new investment strategy for Tri-Ess at the upcoming Summer Board Meeting. (Please ignore any rumors that Tri-Ess is "going to the dogs.")

At Saturday's meeting, Jane introduced Virginia by telling the assembled members and guests we had gone to great lengths to bring her to us - clear to the next life! Jane proceeded to read Virginia's obituary from a gender group's newsletter (which shall remain nameless). It was quite eloquent, but fortunately, a bit premature.

We had asked Virginia to tell us about the earliest days of the transgender community and the beginnings of Tri-Ess. She did not disappoint us. Her first memories of crossdressing were at

age 12, but it was another 12 years before she discovered another crossdresser. As she gradually learned of and corresponded with other crossdressers, she began circulating a mimeographed newsletter, "Transvestia," which later went to a magazine format and ran for over a hundred issues. Finally she was able to get her fellow crossdressers together for a meeting, and launched the famous "Hose and Heels Club," which became F.P.E. (Full Personality Expression), the immediate predecessor of Tri-Ess.



Along the way, Virginia related, she endured two messy divorces, complete with highly embarrassing publicity, ostracism by her family, financial setbacks and depression. She was even persecuted by the Post Office as part of an anti-homosexuality campaign. Convicted of sending "obscene materials" through the mail, Virginia was sentenced to three years' probation, under which any crime (including crossdressing, which was illegal then) could send her to prison. Said Phyllis Frye, "I wish I could have been your defense attorney on that case." Of course, this took place when Phyllis (and most of the rest of us) was still a child.

Thanks to her actual defense attorney, however, Virginia turned the tables on her persecutors. He saw to it that her "community service" consisted of full-dress lectures on crossdressing before civic clubs, thus launching a speaking career that took her before audiences across the US and Europe, and onto radio and television. On a speaking trip to Washington DC, she was able to confront the Postal Service authorities. She succeeded in overturning not only her own conviction and sentence, but the Post Office's entire censorship campaign!

In those earliest days of FPE, Virginia did it all. She set up the



meetings, published the newsletter (the original *Femme Mirror*), carried on her voluminous correspondence, and counseled frightened novice crossdressers. Because of her own unfortunate circumstances, Virginia had a particular concern for crossdressers' wives and girlfriends. Recognizing wives' fears about "where all this is going," Virginia was determined to focus FPE's support efforts on the heterosexual crossdresser. Tri-Ess, she said, is a "selective" organization, not an "exclusive" one, for choosing to support those we are best equipped to help. She even wrote the first "how-to" books: *Understanding Crossdressing*, *How To Be A Woman Though Male*, and *The Transvestite And His Wife*. This last was the first and only book dealing with wives' issues until Peggy Rudd published *My Husband Wears My Clothes* well over a decade later.

Virginia's rapport with her audience was total. For over an hour she held us spellbound, punctuating her narrative with humorous quips and pronouncements. Taking exception to the use of "queer" as an all-inclusive label for the GLBT population, she and Phyllis Frye enjoyed a good-humored debate. She reiterated her opposition to sexual reassignment surgery for crossdressers, and rejected efforts by some to label her a "pre-operative" transsexual because she has lived as Virginia full time for decades without sexual reassignment. Instead, Virginia reminded her audience,

*Continued on page 38*



THE SOCIETY FOR THE SECOND SELF, INC.

## Sensitivity Training

By Becky

Sensitivity training - who needs it and why? Sensitivity training is a big thing on the career development market these days. It may be a fad; you know, one of these topics that piques everyone's interest, runs its course and then is overtaken by a new fad. Sort of like lava lamps, bell bottoms, and flip 'dos.

But I've noticed lately, since I've "come out," that when wearing feminine apparel, even if it's just panties under my regular en homme clothes, I am a great deal more aware of both how sensitive I am to my feelings and concerns and how aware I am of other's sensitivities. I guess that's what Tri-Ess sort of hints at when their publications talk about crossdressers "being more aware of their second selves" than non-crossdressers.

Even my "significant other" commented the other evening that I had been really uptight until about 10 days just prior to me writing this column. "Something" happened that I sort of chilled out and became much more attuned to other's feelings and much more at ease and less stressed. (We've had relatives staying with us for two months and "Becky" was back in the closet, really back there!) My significant other was saying that after that "something" happened, I basically was much more aware of how my actions and words were affecting others and reacted accordingly, I was more sensitive.

She laughed when I told her what had happened. I too had realized that I was getting up tight and back into my macho "I'm in charge here" mode. (For those of you with Myers-Briggs MBTI background, my en homme type is an ENTJ. I have no idea what Becky's is. I will find out shortly and let you know!) Anyway, I was fully aware that my lack of sensitivity was showing through. And the change came about when I decided that I really didn't care anymore; I'd wear what I wanted to wear under my clothes and no one would know the difference. The boxer shorts went into the bottom drawer and the hi-rises and briefs came out of the lingerie cabinet and back into my dresser, and back on me! Sunday saw me wearing everything feminine under my suit (including thigh-highs) to church, and I was no longer stressed out. And the positive feature was (in her words) I was a whole lot nicer to live with because I was now much more sensitive to others and how they felt.

Remember the garter belt sequence in *Bull Durham*? Maybe there is more to that than we thought, and maybe there is really something to that "second self" awareness and to the actions that trigger it. (From the newsletter of Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter.)



# Virginia Prince Visits Houston

By Vanessa Edwards Foster \*

Transgenderism's ultimate pioneer, Virginia Prince, paid a rare visit to Houston June 19 at the Westchase Hilton. Though some had inferred this could be her last visit to Houston, I wondered about that statement. She may be an upper-octogenarian, but she appeared quite healthy...and feisty! Someone who's been around as much as she has is also bound to have formed some definite opinions. She did not disappoint on that count!

She was introduced by Tri-Ess' Jane Ellen Fairfax, who read a passage written about Virginia "Charles" Prince and giving a stirring requiem of her loss. Then Virginia took the podium and, quoting Mark Twain, stated: "The reports of my demise are greatly exaggerated." She then mentioned she was here by "special dispensation," quipping, "I always said I'd be more at home in hell than in heaven - there'd be more of my friends there."

Born in 1912, she surmises she felt the first stirrings to crossdress around the age of 12. One incident from her adolescence stood clearly in her mind:

Her parents and she had taken a trans-Atlantic cruise when "Charles" was 16, and during the cruise she was exhorted by the wife of another passenger to have her dress young Charles as a 16-year old girl. It captured the teen's imagination and ignited stirrings never realized before. But she didn't do it. She was so wracked with self-guilt and denial that she couldn't release herself.

After receiving her Ph.D. in biochemistry at University of California, she discovered at one of her pharmacology symposiums that one of the other interns in her program was also a crossdresser. An epiphany! She badly wanted to contact the individual, but realizing the environment and fearing for her career, she had to think up a moniker. She chose Charles (her father's first name) and Prince (the street she lived on). Later, Virginia evolved from the Charles Prince persona. After contacting this Louise Lawrence, she got the names of others in the Los Angeles area.

Still "Charles," she realized that there may be some validity to this behavior. Someone once asked her if she'd ever seen a psychiatrist, and she replied, "Yes. I've cured two of 'em!" It wasn't until she visited a Dr. Bowman from the college she interned at that she got her second epiphany. After spilling her guts, the psychologist put his feet up on a desk drawer and said, "Okay. So what else is new?"

"Charles" was shocked. Hadn't the doctor listened to anything that was just said? Did he not care? Insulted and mad, the doctor then explained that "Charles" wasn't alone. There [were] thousands more like you." The doctor related he knew of at least 350 in New York alone! "Learn to accept yourself."

Virginia then moved to L.A. and looked up a person in Long Beach - desperately poor and living in a small shack - and along with seven others began a loose-knit crossdressing club. It was there she got her first idea for *Transvestia*. *Transvestia* published its first issue in 1960, pre-sold at a (rather hefty for that time) price of \$4 each. The first issues were mimeographed, which was found to be unworkable.

About that time in the early 60's, she formed the Hose & Heels Club, but it was a tense start. Because of the rampant paranoia during that time, and also the fact that crossdressing was still outlawed - thus many were afraid to admit to it - the group had a difficult time trying to figure out how to begin. "You started thinking," Prince remembered, "that the person sitting next to you was with the Sheriff's, and the one sitting across from you was the FBI..." So they devised a way of safely finding out who was a member.

Each attendee, in those early days, brought two bags. In one was a lunch; in the other, hose and heels. In that tension-filled first meeting everyone sat in a circle and ate their lunch from the first bag. Then after the contents of the first bag were emptied, Virginia piped up, "Now we have to eat the contents of the second bag." The participants put on the hose, and then put on the high heels. That was the telling factor: "If they had shoes that fit, they were a transvestite."

Later, Virginia founded FPE (Full Personality Expression) - the precursor to Tri-Ess. There were a number of chapters around the nation, and she recalled a visit to the Houston Chapter. "It was strange, walking the streets of Houston," she mused. The fear was that this was a rednecked city with (as many municipalities) laws against her appearing in public.

During the mid-60's, Carol Beecroft formed *Mademoiselle*, an open-membership group (such as GCTC), that was a conglomeration of crossdressers, transsexuals and drag, hetero and gay alike. Eventually Beecroft left that organization, and offered to merge with Prince's group, which became Society for the Sec-



ond Self - or then, Tri-Sigma. However, there was a real female sorority of the same name; "and when they found out, they were not happy!" After the sorority filed suit, the group decided to rename itself Tri-Ess (S). Since then, Tri-Ess has become the largest and oldest crossdressing organization in the world.

At one point, Virginia was actually arrested for mailing pornographic materials during the Postal Service's crackdown on homosexuality. "We all know how effective that was!" she quipped. But the arrest inspired two things. First she was sentenced to 3 years probation - meaning no crossdressing for that period (keeping in mind it was still illegal). However, her attorney mentioned she could perhaps do seminars as a kind of release. He mentioned his involvement in the Kiwanis, and Virginia agreed. The first presentation - on "pseudohermaphroditism" - went so well, that she was asked to another, then another. Before long she was touring and giving lectures on the subject, which brought her to Washington DC for a TV (pun intended) interview. As an aside, Virginia claims origination of the acronym TV, coined so she could talk about the subject in public without openly referring to it.

While in Washington, acting on information she'd received from an attorney friend, she spoke with the Postal Inspector General, and - long story short - was instrumental in helping halt the Post Office's heavy-handed censorship of the mail, and overturned her probation. She was free to live as Virginia full-time again, and never looked back.

At one point, this Tri-Ess founder had actually considered sexual reassignment surgery. It was immediately after hearing about Christine Jorgensen. "When she hit the newspapers," Virginia related, "if I'd had \$5,000 - I'd have been on the next boat to Denmark!" The fact that Christine didn't have to worry about a permit to wear women's clothing and appear in public captured her initial fancy. But in the end, Virginia said, "I was glad I was broke at the time. It would've been the greatest mistake of my life." At one point, she got a chance to meet Christine and her mother as she was performing in L.A. Jorgensen was a curiosity, but she had no impression of her otherwise.

Someone once referred to her as a "pre-op" - a term she took issue with. Virginia opined the word had no meaning. To back up her view, she quipped, "we're all pre-dead! What does that mean?" In her view, if you're not a transsexual, you're a transgenderist - a term she coined and uses to identify herself. In fact, she considers sexual reassignment surgery a mistake for any crossdresser, and doesn't really understand one's identification with transsexuality.

She also disagreed with another term finding usage in the GLBT community: "queer." In her view, it is as defined in the dictio-

nary - a derogatory term meaning unusual or odd (or as Webster's defines it, mildly insane). While understanding the need for a term to identify the entire GLBT spectrum, she prefers the search for a more positive connotation.

On gays, lesbians and transgenders, Virginia proffered that we "all have the same enemy: ignorance!" She then mentioned that she'd like to see the gay / lesbian community confront societal attitudes - to tell America, "What damn difference does it make?" She continued, "It doesn't affect what a person does; it doesn't affect anyone else. It's no one else's business, unless they make it their business."

"Why can't we give people the choice to be who it is, or what it is they want to be? And why does society get upset about males who wear dresses?"

Virginia related she was also good friends with Dr. Harry Benjamin, who in fact gave her her first prescription for estrogen. She then related a story of how Dr. Benjamin lived to be over 100 years old. At about the time he was to turn 100, one of his friends asked him, "What's the first thing you're going to do when you turn 100?"

Dr. Benjamin thought for a few seconds and answered, "I'm gonna look in the mirror." After the friend asked why, Dr. Benjamin replied, "because I've never seen a 100 year old man before." Said Virginia, one of her goals is "to live to be 100, so I can look in the mirror. Because I've never seen a 100 year old crossdresser before!" Stumbling a bit at one point, Virginia quipped, "I can't think.... I can't remember.... The important thing is to remember to think!"

Summing things up, Virginia mentioned we needed "to get involved, in whatever fashion." She also exhorted the members for the need to get involved actively, and to do their part to help their groups stay alive. Wise words, indeed.

\* (Ed.Note: Vanessa, a guest of Tau Chi Chapter for Virginia's appearance, is herself a 41 year old never-married, pre-operative transsexual. She is President of the Gulf Coast Transgender Community, and also President and Editor of the Texas Association for Transsexual Support. Active socio-politically on the local, state and national level, she is a seasoned lobbyist for transgender rights, a founder and board member of several transgender lobbying groups, and founder of the first-ever transgender Political Action Committee in the nation: TPACT (Texas Political Action Coalition of Transgenders), where she serves as their Board Chair.)





# Single Crossdresser Issues

by Melanie Yarborough

Crossdressers not yet in a committed relationship or married have a special set of challenges. While many desperately want to meet a woman, they despair of meeting one who'll be sympathetic and understanding of their situation. Given this, these are some of the more important issues single crossdressers should consider:

## **1. WHEN do you tell a woman you're a crossdresser?**

All reasonable people agree "Before you get serious, definitely before marriage." Any crossdresser who would withhold this information is setting the stage for disaster. Now, many crossdressers fear rejection and losing their woman if they do this. To this I respond: if you tell her the right way (more on this later) and back it up with actions, the edge can be blunted.

Also, it's better to know right away if she can't accept it. Think about which is worse: losing a woman now and dealing with a few months of heartbreak and finding someone else, or being trapped in a marriage where you have to be closeted all the time.

Also, not telling her creates serious long-term damage when she feels betrayed by your not having told her. Once you get intimate, a boundary has been crossed, and anything after that will be seen as betrayal. Women fear betrayal perhaps more than men do. And this can poison a relationship for years afterwards: she'll definitely think, "What else has he been withholding?"

Some take the opposite tack of "Tell her immediately". The logic is, "If she can handle it, fine. If not, it was never meant to be." But when a woman is just starting to know you, crossdressing will become one negative thing to examine against an otherwise blank canvas. But if she knows other things about you, your personality, your history, your likes and dislikes, she can get a more balanced picture. She can weigh this against the positive things she already knows about you.

Now, there are some women who simply will not accept this. If you meet firm and unyielding resistance, you may have to consider cutting your losses and ending the relationship. It's better to lose \$100 today than \$1000 tomorrow. And you know the cliché: "There's many fish in the sea?" It's true.

## **2. HOW do you tell a woman you're a crossdresser?**

Dropping hints to test the water is useful. You can make references to current movies, or say you knew someone who was transsexual. You'd be surprised at how this can be creatively juxtaposed into a conversation. Her reaction gives you an idea of where

she stands. Be advised that women with strongly religious backgrounds are often the least tolerant of diversity. Also, a woman with some college education may also mean a more open mind.'

Where you tell her is just as important as how. Obviously, choose a private indoor place, not a busy public one. Or, a tranquil open-air park or beach without too many people is nice.

When you break the news, be positive. Don't preface it with a negative vocabulary of shame like, "We've got a problem to talk about." She'll immediately tense up and brace for the worst. It's better to be more casual, indicating that you've got something meaningful to talk about. Negative words send out signals of shame. Positive words mean unique and special. Also, use disarming body language helps: maintaining eye contact, holding your hand to your chest, using sincere tone of voice, etc.

Don't give her too much information at first! This is a lot to handle in one sitting. If you start throwing out biological and sociological theories, or your transgender life story, it's going to confuse her. Keep your words simple and to the point, and don't use our community's slang and acronyms. Reiterate that you respect her enough to feel you have to be honest with her, and that you're not gay and not transsexual.

## **3. Be prepared to make compromises.**

Single crossdressers have, up to a point, the freedom to indulge. But once in a relationship, this changes. There are suddenly limitations on the frequency and extent one can self-gratify. But don't consider it as having freedom taken away. Consider it as now thinking in terms of two people, not just one. Two is a more complicated number than one, but not a worse one.

Also, what might seem insignificant to you, may be significant to her. Take body shaving, for example. Most crossdressers cannot understand how anyone would have a problem with it. But to many women this can indeed be a serious issue. They like hair, they want a man. What might seem right and fair and logical to men may seem wrong and unfair and illogical to women.

Relationships always call for compromise on issues: finances, religion, tastes in food, attitude towards raising children, likes and dislikes in entertainment, feelings towards relatives, division of chores, etc. Maybe sexual issues are a little stronger, but they're still just another issue up for negotiation. The secret is: R-E-C-I-P-R-O-C-I-T-Y.



#### 4. *Issues of Security.*

Having a woman over to your place presents challenges. If you live by yourself, you're used to having a wardrobe and femme things around. But you can be betrayed by a single makeup sponge, a forgotten pair of panties, or a stray copy of a newsletter. Start thinking NOW of places to hide things if need be. These can be in zippered roll bags covered up by men's clothes, the trunk of your car, or even a friend's place if just for a day or two.

Keep pictures of yourself en femme under lock and key. Time and time again I've heard of dozens of crossdressers who've been outed when they left compromising photos lying around the house. Make the last-minute "Transgender Sweep"- a quick glance over the room for any stray femme items.

Also, be prepared for excuses for being absent when you go to support group meetings or events. You may even have to skip a meeting sometimes. Don't give the impression: "I have to be at this place, but I can't tell you where." When you put an air of mystery around something, it encourages her to imagine the worst.

#### 5. *Communication Problems.*

If you start off with the assumption, "I can't change; this is something you need to accept," there's a problem. The point of a relationship is to grow together, not to take a stand, and have the other person yield to it. True, you may not be able to stop crossdressing. But you do have control of when and for what interval you do it, and to what degree she has to see it. From having talked with several genetic women, I've learned that many women fear that crossdressing may be a THRESHOLD. Just as marijuana was feared to be a threshold to heroin and cocaine, crossdressing may be feared to be threshold to becoming gay or transsexual. You need to reassure her on both counts that you aren't. And you can't do this with just words, the suspicion may linger on. You have to do it with deeds: by being willing to be the masculine man she wants and needs.

Lies are bad for relationships. If you tell one lie, you have to tell ten more to cover it up. You'll also have to keep lies straight as contradictions get noticed. For example, if you say it's your bowling night, be prepared for questions on where the alley is, how your game went, who you were with, etc. That's a lot of things to have to keep track of, isn't it?

Crossdressers pride themselves on how they understand women better by having walked in their shoes. Now's the time to put it to the test by really understanding a woman's point of view in the relationship and what she wants.

#### 6. *Start developing new interests.*

One of the first things a person wants to know is "What are your

interests?" Obviously, you can't hit her with the truth yet! Evasive answers arouse suspicion: are you involved in something illegal? Before you start looking to meet someone, you should have one or two interests to be able to talk about. Yes, it may mean taking time away from dressing around the house, shopping, or support group meetings. But it will make you a more well-rounded person, and better able to have a relationship.

#### 7. *Use your advantages.*

Single crossdressers have several advantages over married ones. No, it's not the obvious freedom to dress. It's that those single and in the community have already gone through the difficult process of coming out to themselves BEFORE getting married. By the time they meet someone, a lot of the traumatic initial self-confrontation is past. By contrast, having to do this while married or in a relationship is a lot harder.

Single crossdressers also have the benefit of learning from married ones. By asking the right questions, listening and learning, a single crossdresser can avoid miscalculations and errors many married crossdressers unknowingly make. And if a married crossdresser can share this knowledge with a single sister, they'll have done what our groups are supposed to do: provide peer support.

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

### *Just Walk Beside Me*

*"Don't walk too far ahead, I may not follow. . ."  
Your steps are so much swifter than my own,  
If I lose sight of you within the distance,  
I doubt that I can continue on alone.*

*"Don't walk too far behind, I may not lead. . ."  
I lack the strength of soul that you possess,  
And if you lost your way because of me,  
The both of us would face a wilderness.*

*"But walk beside me. . . " so that I may know  
The sweet companionship your presence brings,  
So may we, hand-in-hand and heart-to-heart,  
Help each other on to higher things.*

*Grace E. Easley*



# Bigmouth

by Ricky

It has been brought to my attention more than once that I have a big mouth. I'm sure that you, my readers, have remarked on my talent for fearlessly offering opinion and advice from behind the safety of the printed page. Unlike talking, where my pontifications can be challenged by a loud, "Oh, yeah? That's what you say!" if someone out there wants to comment they have to take the time to compose their thoughts, put them on paper, find a stamp and mail the thing. In practice this means I go unchallenged from the Olympian heights of my keyboard, royally assuming my wisdom has been heard and accepted by the masses, who obviously base their life's path on my precepts.

That is until I have to put my advice into practice in my own personal life. There have been two major changes in my life recently. After 24 years my wife and I have called it quits, for reasons that have nothing to do with my crossdressing. I find myself singularly unprepared for the whole dating scene, I mean dating is for teenagers with raging hormones and not for 46 year old bearded crossdressers with raging hormones. First of all it's hard to find a date, after all most of my friends are already married, and the relationships with those that aren't are already set in a non-romantic mode. Suddenly those ads in the "getting personal" columns that were so funny to read have a new relevance, and feeling like a fool, I sent off a few letters. And no, I didn't mention my penchant for petticoats in the letter. So much for starting out with pure, unadulterated honesty.

Then the agonizing questions started. Do I stop shaving my legs? Are all the crossdressing magazines removed from the toilet tank in case I bring her home? What if I like her, how do I tell her? I know I have told my readers you have to tell the lady before you get serious, but I don't want to! I mean, it's scary! I don't want to be rejected, ridiculed or reviled. Anyway, I was saved from making this choice because the first date was a disaster, she had more makeup on her face than I have cumulatively worn in my entire life (this for a picnic!) and I got maybe 16 words out of her over a 3 hour date. Whew. But the next date is in two weeks. Let me see, should I stop shaving my legs or....

Then there is the question of telling the children. I thought I was safe from this one, after all my kids are grown and they already know. What I had neglected to consider is that grown kids have a tendency to have kids of their own. That's right, my daughter is making me a grandperson, for lack of a better non-gender spe-

cific word. I have always threatened to be the kind of grandparent my parents were, spoil the kids rotten while they had them then let mom and dad live with the consequences. There is only one problem with this scenario. My daughter is living with me while she goes to college, and I will have to live with the consequences. In fact she has another 4 years to her masters degree, and with the father in school also that means I will be helping raise my grandbaby until almost school age.

I must admit the idea of holding a baby to my artificially enhanced breast is very appealing, what could make a person feel more feminine? But there are those consequences to deal with, and the decision is made more complicated since this is not my baby, but theirs. They accept me, but will this extend to the baby? We haven't discussed it yet, after all she isn't even showing yet, but the topic has to come up over the next seven or eight months. Anybody know a good advice columnist I can consult?

*(This article originally appeared in the late lamented Cross-Talk magazine, and is reprinted here by permission of the author.)*



## *Continued from page 33*

she is a transgenderist, a term she herself coined to describe just such persons who, like her, live full time without sexual reassignment.

Referring back to "Charles'" premature obituary, Virginia quipped that "Charles" was not only still alive and kicking, but was about to make "his" first appearance after thirtysomething years of living full time as Virginia. This is to take place at this year's SPICE conference, where for the sake of the women in attendance, no crossdressing is permitted. SPICE has long been dear to Virginia's heart, as she was the first to champion women's concerns in their crossdressing relationships. Now, in a sacrificially loving gesture, she will attend SPICE and deliver the Keynote Address as "Charles." What a lady!

*(For more details of Virginia's presentation, please see the article by Vanessa Foster.)*



## Loose Lips Sink Careers!

by Stephanie S.

Recently our leading lady printed an article [in our chapter newsletter] that discussed the pros and cons of an "open" group. Both sides of this discussion had their own good points, only nothing was mentioned about what happens to our own personal security when you open up a group to individuals who have not been screened, or in some cases, as you are about to find out, not screened closely enough.

I've been involved with Tri-Ess and Alpha Zeta for three years now, and in that time our closed door policy has worked great. It's allowed myself as well as others who were at a dead end, to take control of their gender issues. On one August morning last year, I found out just how fragile this new life can still be, when one of our new members confirmed to me what an open door policy can do.

Last August I had decided to leave my semi-retired-from-truck-driving life and went to work for a local convenience store. Now, one might think that when a girl who can get a different date every night and make strangers drop what they are doing and run to open a door for her 38-25-36 figure, she would seem to have nothing more to want in life. Think again. It only took one mouth from one person to make her life a nightmare for one more time. At this new job, where I once enjoyed the customers and co-workers alike, things suddenly changed. All it took was for one person who had attended a meeting, to tell a "day worker" that he saw me at that meeting. This "day worker" then came into the store and asked if I were a crossdresser, right in front of my co-workers and manager. This put me in a very bad position at work and cost me my reputation, caused much embarrassment, and managed to take away my raise, safety bonus, and my overtime which quickly went from 50+ hours per week down to 25 hours or less for the whole week. All these personal costs were in addition to the harassment, and the legal costs incurred by the employer when I filed sexual harassment and discrimination charges against my manager.

Fortunately, my personal strength and will to endure helped me overcome my obstacles as I had in the past. But, I never suspected I would be put in this situation again by a potential Alpha Zeta member. If this were a more "open" group, with minimal screening in place, the risk to members' security could be even more serious. So, please let's keep things the way they are. Our policy of anonymity may not be 100% foolproof, but it does minimize some of the risks. But remember, it only takes one person to make a life take a turn.

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

## The Challenge

*Do you think that your tomorrow*

*Will be different than today?*

*Do you think the things you hoped for*

*Will come true in any way?*

*By the thoughts you put in action,*

*By the dreams you strive to reach—*

*You can shape or form the future*

*By some hard-sought fact they teach.*

*Choose the good you want to happen—*

*It surrounds you in the "now".*

*You can make or change the present*

*Let God's wisdom show you how!*

*Take the path that seems to open:*

*For you're walking it today!*

*You can even change tomorrow,*

*If you let God show the way!*

Roxie Lusk Smith



## The Happy Couple

by Lynda Frank

There have been a number of articles written about and for the wives of crossdressers in the last few issues of the *Femme Mirror*. They advise the crossdresser on how to treat his wife and the wife on how to deal with the crossdressing issue in the marriage, the idea being to help keep marriages from developing a troubling situation that could lead to a divorce.

In my experience over the past fifteen years I have not met anyone who can honestly say he had a good marriage that broke up over the crossdressing issue. Couples that have a good loving relationship manage to work it out quite well, each in their own way. When someone tells me the crossdressing broke up his marriage and they are questioned further, it turns out that there were always other issues in the marriage that were unresolved. Key among these issues is poor communication between the husband and wife. How many marriages are there out there where there is no love or respect left, but the participants don't feel capable or able to say, "Let's split," and they stay together because they can't find a publicly acceptable good reason to get a divorce? Then along comes the crossdressing disclosure, and Wham! she has a reason that gives her 100% of the right and him all the wrong, and now she can go for the gold. The crossdressing becomes the reason but not the cause of the divorce.

When I read articles written for the crossdresser on how he should treat his wife, I cringe. How a husband interacts with his wife should not be any different whether the issue is how they spend their money, how they discipline their children, how they behave with their in-laws, how he dresses or how she dresses. Good marriages need good communication, respect, and a desire by each partner to understand and help the other be happy. Crossdressers themselves, more than anyone else, should be able to keep the crossdressing issue in its proper perspective. In a marriage, all issues in dispute are worked out in a way that's been successful for that particular couple in the past. The crossdressing issue needs to be handled in the same way that works best for any other issue. If keeping things that may be unpleasant from the spouse is part of the marriage, then perhaps in that case that's the way for this to be handled.

Accepting the crossdressing in a partner does not mean that that partner must change his life as a conciliatory gesture. An agreement to do so will only fail. He is what he is and she is what she is, and although compromising may be necessary, drastically changing is generally not what will work for either partner. He has probably always had these feelings and they have made him the person that she chose to marry in the first place. Both must realize that if either partner changes in any meaningful way, the relationship also will change. *(Lynda Frank may be reached at [lyndafranknyc@yahoo.com](mailto:lyndafranknyc@yahoo.com))*

## Be Careful What You Wish For

by Sally GA-4187-S

Imagine a society where crossdressing was highly encouraged. Imagine a society where men could wear woman's clothing without fear of ridicule or condemnation. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could dress for work, in either men's or women's clothing? Just imagine a day at the office playing the gender role of your choice.

Well, I have often wondered what a society without gender hang-ups might be like. In such a society, I would never have to fear ridicule or misunderstanding. I could dress as a woman whenever and wherever I liked. Wouldn't that be just great? Well, maybe, but then again, maybe not?

As I ponder the possibilities of a crossdresser friendly society, my thoughts always drift back to the reasons I enjoy dressing like a girl in the first place. Of course, feminine expression is paramount among reasons. However, there are other reasons I enjoy crossdressing so very much. One of the other reasons, is a reason that I rarely admit to, yet it drives my desire with at least as much force as feminine expression.

I am talking about thrill and excitement. Every time I put on a dress or apply make-up, my heart races, and I am overcome with an intense sense of adventure. As an individual who leads a relatively safe life style, the act of crossdressing is an unusual risk. When I don woman's clothing and venture out into public, I become a thrill seeker, and I really savor the adventure the act brings about.

Why then, is crossdressing for me, such a thrill? Well, the reason lies in the fact that men in woman's clothing, are not readily accepted in today's society. That lack of acceptance results in risk, and depending upon the situation, the risk can be substantial. If society was such that crossdressing was perfectly acceptable, I am quite sure that putting on a dress and moving about in public wouldn't be nearly so thrilling. If everyone accepted my crossdressing behavior without reservation, then the fear, anxiety, and the excitement that add so much to the experience, would simply not be there.

When I think about it, widespread acceptance might just counter the tremendous adventure associated with the crossdressing experience. That wonderful society I so often think about might just have more negative effect than positive. With that in mind, I guess I should be careful what I wish!

*(Reprinted from The Southern Belle, newsletter of Sigma Epsilon Chapter.)*



## Outreach at Villa Julie College

by Kim and Lisa

Not only do we have to cope, on our own terms, with crossdressing; we volunteered to talk to a college class about it! Kate Thomas, a psychotherapist who had previously addressed Chi Epsilon Sigma on the issue of cross-dressing, extended an open invitation to talk to students of hers who was studying sexuality. The offer was accepted, but I wonder just how many of us really thought it would come to pass. Well, it came to pass and, lo and behold, I found myself volunteering, along with my wife Lisa.

On Monday, April 26, Grace, Terri, Lisa and I went to Villa Julie College in Baltimore. We met Kate outside and walked in. I do have to admit I found the hallway to the classroom somewhat foreboding, not really knowing if I was ready for this. I wondered if there would be people any of us knew in there, and how or what they might be thinking of us. Soon enough we found ourselves in front of a class of students. I quickly noted that 1) they were a lot younger than I was, and 2) they were mostly female. Grace and Terri went en femme while I decided to go en homme. Lisa and I talked about it and decided it might be better if I dressed "normally" to lend a contrast to Grace and Terri.

Grace led off with an excellent overhead projection review of crossdressing, including "facts and fictions" of crossdressers, who we are, why we do it (don't know, we just do) and the differences between crossdressers and other transgendered people. Terri followed, talking about her experiences with crossdressing, including the emotional as well as the spiritual impacts on her life and how she interacted with her wife in the crossdressing area. Lisa and I further expanded on crossdressing and how we dealt with it from a couple's view. Lisa provided insight on how she felt as far as how she viewed not only me, but also others in our group, as well as her perspective on crossdressing in general.

Throughout the class, students were free to ask any questions they had or to relate any stories they wanted to share. All in all, we all felt the class went very well. I can't say, from my standpoint, if we changed anyone's views on us, but I would like to think we did. Several students did mention some incidents they were aware of regarding people they knew who had "experiences" with some form of cross-dressing, so it was not all us doing the talking.

Time ran out rather quickly, to our surprise. Looking back, it was a great experience. We all enjoyed ourselves and we got word out about not only ourselves but also about Tri-Ess in general. Once I got over the initial nervousness, I felt pretty comfortable talking about crossdressing. Collectively we decided that if the opportunity presented itself again, we'd do it in a heartbeat. Grace even talked about extending offers to other educational institutions in the area, offering our services if there was a need or desire. Everyone gave and every-

one received during our visit to Kate's class, so I guess it would be fair to say everyone came away a winner, and that's the best part!

Your Editrix Asks: What kind of questions did the students ask?

Kim and Lisa: There weren't as many questions as I thought there would be.

I think maybe because Grace covered potential ones in the overview. Someone asked Grace if she knew at what point people "decided" they were crossdressers. Grace mentioned that as far as she was concerned, there really wasn't that "realization" that she was a crossdresser at a certain point. I said that it wasn't something you could put a finger on; it just happened. I used the example of homosexual/lesbian and the fact that they didn't choose to be that way; it just was. Terry also added that if she could take a pill that would make the crossdressing go away, as well as recollection of it, would her wife want her to. She said "No," as did Lisa. Lisa said "It's part of who we are." They wanted to know if Lisa and I ever fight over clothing. Grace was asked if it's "exciting" to put on women's clothing. Grace said it wasn't (from an erotic standpoint). I said it sort of was, but that once I'm dressed it's not as "exciting." (This is hard to explain, but hope you know what I mean. I think the getting dressed part is exciting more than the actual "now I'm dressed" part).

They wanted to know who knew of our crossdressing (i.e., kids, friends, and parents). They asked Lisa if she would go out in public while I'm dressed. She said yes, as for example at Chi Epsilon Sigma meetings in public places. Several felt people should be able to dress as they wish and it was okay with them. (Easier said than done, though!)

Your Editrix Asks: Had the students encountered crossdressing elsewhere?

Kim and Lisa: The only stories relating to crossdressing they told, was by one who said a friend of hers was dressed up as a cheerleader for Halloween. She said he seemed to enjoy it quite a bit so she wondered if maybe he could be a cross-dresser. Grace added that Halloween is a great holiday for us and it's also a convenient time for others to "dress" and get away with it using the holiday as an excuse. Another related a story about a boy who used to wear a long skirt and funky long socks. Students used to comment on his wearing the skirt.

*(From the newsletter of Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter.)*





## BOOK Reviews

by Erin MI - 4708 - T

This material offers us a way to see our own issues reflected in the mainstream culture, rather than feel we are in a gender ghetto.

### *The Real Thing*

by Henry James

Some of you might enjoy the short story, "The Real Thing," by Henry James. The title alone is suggestive. The text is even more pertinent to the transgender community. The basic message is that there are some disadvantages to being the real thing, and there are some advantages, in terms of personal growth, and realizing unknown parts of ourselves, when we break out of accustomed roles, or can have more flexible personalities. To change, we at first cannot possibly be the real thing that we want to become.

The story involves a conventionally distinguished, conventionally good looking couple, the Monarchs, the best of their type, who are down on their luck and seek employment as artists' models. Because they are so good at being the best of their perfect type, they are not sufficiently versatile to do anything else, despite the artist's sincere efforts to use them as models. Their changed luck puts them somewhat in the position of being the last fern tree in Greenland as the glaciers come down. The artist's other models, definitely not the real thing, are able to pass for just about anything, which is their strength.

At the very end, when the Monarchs break their accustomed roles, the stiffness and lack of spontaneity lift momentarily, and we see them as more real people, less obsessed about being the best of their type, less obsessed about fitting the standard. This is only a brief outline, but James does a wonderful job of providing more detail that will probably feel familiar to many of you, the colorless propriety of the Monarchs being similar to the rigidity of having to live life constantly as the best of the masculine type.

### *College Girls*

from the Sweet Valley Series

created by Francine Pascal

This selection is one of a series of mainstream books that appear to be written for preteens. From the transgender standpoint, the interesting parts are on pp 29-32, 48-50, 106-108, 150-151, 175, 204, 220, 227, but you may find the book opens to these places on its own. Who has time to read the whole book anymore?

Winston Egbert has his name mistakenly changed by computer error to "Winnie", and gets assigned to an all girls dorm. His efforts to correct the mistake are met with no sympathy by the female administrator whom he talks to. She basically tells him he'll get used to it. He is gradually acclimated to his new environment, and feminized to the point of attending a dance en femme, as an ersatz Shirley Temple, in a short skating dress. But the girls seem to like him that way, and he gets to like it too.

What surprised me about this was that it is hardly different from some of our own transgender fiction. It appears we are getting mainstreamed, at least in the younger generations.

### *Jessica's Nightmare*

from the Sweet Valley Series

created by Francine Pascal

This also is from a series of books written for preteens, and is of interest because in this story, mainstream literature provides some insight into motivations for feminization of some young boys, but seen from the standpoint of the feminizer. A young girl has nightmares about a monster biped. To abate her fear, the teacher and the class decide to make the monster less scary. They draw the monster, and the students add details that make the drawing less scary. By the text (pp.48-60) and by the drawing (p.59) in the text, almost all of the features added are feminizing, consisting of high heels, femme hat, bow, dress, purse, etc.

The teacher and the class here are playing the role of the Stoller type 2 mother (see Presentations of Gender, Robert Stoller), who fearing and hating males, feminizes her son, lest he grow up to become a monster (male). That a mainstream book should have this feminizing scenario seems telling in regard to the acceptance of the feminizing solution to perceived male threat, perhaps based on women's figurative, or real, nightmares. Living with a mother who has such nightmares, a boy can learn to develop non threatening, calming, nurturing (girl) behaviors, realizing that his being like that is what she would prefer, or would feel safe with, and so he can preclude any attacks by her. At this point, he may not even want to be girlish.

If he succeeds in being non threatening, perhaps then the relationship becomes more like the "blissful symbiosis" of the Stoller type 1 mother, and being girlish becomes an unconflicted and successful response. If she is not sufficiently calmed, and attacks



him for being the monster, or if he counterattacks, or fails to comply and calm her, then we have the scenario of the Stoller type 2 mom, more of a survival situation for the boy, rather than a blissful symbiosis. In times of attack or stress, he might conclude he needs to try harder to be a good girl.

**Turn of the Screw**

by Henry James

This book has motifs of "Jessica's Monster," only in this instance, the threatening male is in the form of the spectre Quint. The governess seems to be an engulfing figure worried about unconfirmed, hidden, ever lurking and threatening demons, and Miles is the beautiful child who is not definitely all boy. The distant father/uncle, the physical closeness that the governess tries to maintain with the children, and her efforts to keep them from separating and going out in the threatening world, echo themes familiar in clinical transgender literature. By exaggerating threats to the children, she distracts attention from her not attending adequately to the problem of Miles' expulsion from school, and she becomes a more central and important figure in the household.

Miles' death at the end seems more likely a figurative death of himself as a separate person, dead in the grip of her embrace.

Those knowledgeable about Henry James may, or may not, find this a simple ghost story. James seems deeper than that. Dying in 1916, he lacked access to the extensive body of psychological literature that was to follow, suggesting that his insights came from experience, rather than education. Maybe there is influence from his famous brother, the psychologist, William James.

**The Beast and the Jungle**

by Henry James

This short story concerns a long, and apparently unconsummated relationship between a man and woman, unconsummated at least in part due to his unnamed "perversion", which made him unsuitable for a life with a woman. James never details the perversion, but describes it as the man's great secret, which he has only shared with this woman, the sharing of which relieves him of some of its burden. It haunts the man all of his life, and impairs him from sharing his life with anyone in a meaningful way. You can feel his life dangling, waiting to happen, because he hesitates to approach her more closely. I didn't know they wrote this kind of stuff in those days.



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## Tri-Ess Pen Pals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## List of Pen Pals

Now, here are the Pen Pals:

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## Tri-Ess Helpline!

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

**(209) 688-9246**

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

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

**(713) 349-8969**

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

**(903) 813-3398**

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



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# Crossdressers & The Police

*Understanding Law Enforcement's Perspective*

by Melanie Yarborough

"If you would put yourself in our shoes, it would make our job a lot easier," says Officer Steve Johnson, a one-time guest speaker at Born Free, the Riverside County Transgender support group. "The nature of our business dictates that not all contacts [with the Police] will be positive." And, he admits, "There has not been a lot of training on [transgender issues] in the Police Academy.... Police Officers are human. Some of us are going to respond properly, some not." But a greater sensitivity on the part of Crossdressers to the difficult job police face can go a long way towards disarming a potentially tense situation.

Steve Johnson is the Public Information Officer of the Riverside Police Department, and works directly for the Chief of Police. He goes to various groups as liaison for the Department, as well as handling media relations. He admits that this is his first major contact with Crossdresser support groups, and he recognizes his need to learn more.

Many crossdressers' worst nightmare is a traffic stop or other detention by a Law Enforcement Officer. Many feel they cannot tell the truth about their situation, for fear of harassment or embarrassment. "But cops are the wrong people to lie to....The worst thing you can possibly do is lie," Officer Johnson stresses. Police are trained to look for "Red Flags" when they stop an individual. For example, multiple ID cards are one. What activity would you be involved in that would necessitate changing your identity?

Moreover, "The majority of transgendered people I come into contact with are transvestite prostitutes on University Avenue," he candidly admits. "Many of them have drug habits and carry concealed weapons." Many police by instinct assume any crossdressed person is one of these. And, unfortunately, "It does you folks an injustice."

What should one do if stopped, say, for a traffic violation? Definitely do *\*not\** get out of your car first - that's a very big red flag. If possible, try to have your ID ready in hand. Remember, police are trained to assume that everyone they come into contact with has a weapon. Keep your hands on the steering wheel. Make no furtive movements, even to reach for an ID. Also, listen carefully to what the police ask you. In an agitated state of mind, it's easy to let one's mind wander. But being jittery and inattentive can lead police to suspect you're under the influence of alcohol

or drugs. Stay focused. Do everything they tell you to do, to the letter. And above all, don't lie!

Another difficult situation: what to do if stopped by store security in a Ladies' restroom or dressing room? It's best to offer to leave. Be soft-spoken, dignified, and express apology. Unless you've broken a law, they have no legal right to detain you, and probably don't want a loud commotion anyway. However, if you take a stand and insist on a God-given right to express yourself, this could easily turn into a criminal offense: disturbing the peace.

It was suggested that Police Academy training include sensitivity training on Transgender issues. But, Officer Johnson admits, "They go through such intense training, I don't know if they'd even give you a day." The P.O.S.T. system (Police Officers Standards Of Training) has a very rigorous procedure to add anything new to their curriculum. There are budget and time constraints as well. However, after graduation, officers are required to attend periodic seminars on topics such as "Cultural Sensitivity," "Domestic Violence" or "First Aid." This (Transgender issues) might be a special program which could be worked in at that time.

Police officers are trained to have a COMMAND PRESENCE, a necessary tool in confrontations. This is often mistaken for hostility. But remember, "Your behavior dictates how I will respond. If you're low-key, professional and dignified, I'll be the same."

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

## *The Word "Christian"*

It is not for us to say who, in the deepest sense, is or is not close to the spirit of Christ. We do not see into men's hearts. We cannot judge, and are indeed forbidden to judge. It would be wicked arrogance for us to say that any man is, or is not, a Christian in this refined sense.

- C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*





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Continued on page 53



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

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

Now, a few words from Beverly:

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

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

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

Regards, Beverly

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

## Chapters On Line!

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



## Tri-Ess World Wide Web Sites

- Alpha's (Los Angeles CA)**  
<http://www.3dcom.com/tg/alpha/alpha.htm>
- Alpha Omega's (Cleveland OH)**  
<http://www.triess-alphaomega.org>
- Alpha Tau's (Austin TX)**  
<http://www.angelfire.com/tx/atau>
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<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Heights/7396/>
- Chi Epsilon Sigma's (Baltimore MD)**  
[http://members.tripod.com/~Chesapeake\\_Tri\\_Ess](http://members.tripod.com/~Chesapeake_Tri_Ess)
- Judy Daniels'**  
<http://www.angelfire.com/ok/judytriess/index.html>
- Kappa Beta's (Charlotte NC)**  
<http://www.kappabeta.org>
- Lambda Mu's (Lansing MI)**  
<http://www.lambdamu.com>
- Phi Epsilon Mu's (Orlando FL)**  
<http://www.horizon-usa.com/misc/fem.htm>
- Pi Theta Chapter's (Southern MN- Northern IA)**  
<http://www.mwpcdir.com>
- Rho Tau Chapter's (Richmond-Tidewater VA)**  
<http://www.transgender.org/rtc/>
- Sigma Epsilon Chapter (Atlanta GA)**  
<http://pages.prodigy.com/kerricd/sigep.htm>
- Sigma Mu (Springfield MO)**  
[http://members.tripod.com/~Sigma\\_Mu/](http://members.tripod.com/~Sigma_Mu/)
- Sigma Rho Delta's (Raleigh/Durham NC)**  
<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Cafe/6000>
- Tau Omega's (Ardmore OK)**  
<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/2258/>
- Tau Upsilon's (Tucson AZ)**  
<http://members.aol.com/tauupsilon>
- Theta Upsilon Gamma's (Las Vega NV)**  
<http://www.geocities.com/westhollywood/park/1880>
- Tri Chi's (Fresno CA)**  
<http://www.psnw.com/~huckfinn/index.html>
- Tri-Ess International**  
<http://www.firstnethou.com/brenda/tri-ess.htm>
- Tri-Ess Resources Page**  
<http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/Stonewall/6801/>
- Tri-Ess Traveling Girls' Directory**  
<http://www.mwpcdir.com>
- SPICE**  
<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/SPICE.html>
- CDSO**  
<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/CDSO.html>
- TRIESS42**  
<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/triess42.html>
- Holiday En Femme 1999**  
<http://www.firstnethou.com/brenda/holiday.htm>

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## About Our Cover Girl

We feel Dana hardly needs an introduction after the many accounts of her "Adventures in Outreach" that have graced these pages. Instead, we thought we'd let you view Dana through the eyes of a college student newspaper reporter who interviewed Dana following one of her presentations.

"....This was one of the most interesting interviews I have ever done - and one of the most enlightening.

"It is strange talking to a lady who has a man's voice. My brain had a hard time adjusting to this at first, but got accustomed to it after about 20 minutes.

"Never having known a crossdresser before, and only having seen them on television, I went into this with a few stereotypes. I know it is bad to do that in an interview, but they were soon shattered by Dana.

"Dana entered the room with a pile of books and pictures. The books were written by crossdressers and Dana was in a number of them. The pictures he showed me were of a cruise he and a number of other crossdressers and their families went on. That's right, families. In a couple of shots it was difficult to tell who was the wife and who was the husband.

"With families, I mean children too. Dana has been married for more than 20 years and has two daughters. One daughter has been out of college for two years; the other is a senior in college.

"Once Dana got talking, it was no holds barred. He especially loved to talk about the youth of today. 'The young generation is more hip than ever,' he said. 'The ability for a young adult to explore the world by way of travel and the internet is great.'

"He especially enjoys talking to the younger children. 'They (children) are very understanding. They see people for who they are, not what they are.'

"Next, we discussed fashion, a topic about which Dana has a pretty strong opinion. 'Most crossdressers go overboard. I just want to blend in with the ladies,' he said.

"This, I noticed, was true. The term crossdresser usually conjures images of grandiose makeup, gowns, and jewels - something like Tammy Faye Bakker or Dame Edna. Dana, however, was pretty subdued and conservative. He wore a short black skirt and black panty hose. His blouse was a black and dark gold colored number. His hair was done in a Jenifer Aniston 'do, just a

little shorter. He was also wearing red lipstick and small earrings.

"See, it really wasn't that outrageous. He wasn't wearing any flashy colors or overboard makeup. There, again, was another stereotype he smashed. Then we discussed society.

"When asked if he was trying to prove something, he said yes and no. 'It's to show that you can be part of a different gender role and still be a decent member of society, he said. 'Besides, it's freedom of expression, a kind of stress relief.'

"This brought an end to my discussion with Dana. It was a lot of fun. Dana is a guy who loves life and loves people. I think we is having more fun than a lot of people I know. ..."

To which we can only add, "Yep! That's our Dana!"

*(Quotations from "Shooting the poop with a crossdresser" by Grant J. Fisk, in a student newspaper of the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay.)*

### The Society for the Second Self, Inc.

Financial Summary, Fiscal Years Ended December 31

*Based on the Society's Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax and internal accounting records.*

	1998	1997
Revenue and Support <i>(Includes supporting membership contributions)</i>	\$48,100	\$39,700
Total Revenues	\$57,300	\$57,100
Expenses and Program Services*	\$63,300	\$55,800
Excess Revenues <i>(Excess Expenses)</i>	(\$6,000)	(\$1,300)
Tri-Ess Fund Balance <i>(Investments)</i>	\$37,515	\$43,480

*\*No officer or director receives any compensation for her services to The Society. 1998 Expenses included \$8,255 for the Tri-Ess Membership Directory.*



Continued from page 49

**Tri-Ess Chapters (cont.)****Reno NV Metro Area  
FORMING CHAPTER**

c/o Janet Hildy  
P.O. Box 52050  
Sparks NV 89435-2050  
E-Mail: Yor1810@aol.com

**Region 9 (Florida)****Orlando, FL Metro Area  
PHI EPSILON MU**

P.O. Box 3261, Winter Park, FL 32790  
Contact: Alexis FL-3077-E  
Phone: 407-382-8389  
E-Mail: KellyFL@aol.com  
Web Site: <http://www.horizon-usa.com/misc/fem.htm>

**Fort Myers, FL Metro Area  
GAMMA CHI BETA**

P8660 College Pkwy, Ste.230  
Ft. Myers FL 33919  
Contact: Alycia FL-4274-E  
Phone 941-481-1604 or 941-481-1410  
E-Mail: mindbody@peganet.com

**Miami FL Metro Area  
MU BETA GAMMA**

PO Box 4126, Hialeah, FL 33014-1126  
Contact: Barbara Ann  
E-Mail: barbaraann1@juno.com  
Phone: 1-305-653-8088

**Region 10 (International)****Quebec City, PQ Metro Area  
FORMING CHAPTER**

**BETA EPSILON LAMBDA**  
1050 Rue Orleans, Charlesbourg, PQ G1H 2H2  
Contact: Micheline  
Phone: 1-418-621-5032  
Fax: 1-418-621-5092  
E-Mail: milady@cmq.qc.ca

**Overseas Coordinator**

Eve Burchert  
574 Golfview Dr.  
Barrington IL 60010

# Big Sister Report

by Marlene

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

AK 4320 A JoAnn *	MN 1875 Z Lynda
AL 4005 J Sarah	MN 3264 G Sofronia Ann *
AL 4940 H Ally	MO 1823 M Diana *
AZ 3954 B Rebecca	MO 4760 H Rachel
AZ 5041 L Lacy *	NC 3734 C Sherri *
CA 3413 C Pricilla	NC 4800 C Debbie *
CA 4373 H Karen	NC 3743 H Elizabeth Ann *
CA 1397 L Judy Ann *	NM 4717 S Terri
CA 3738 P Laura	NV 4222 B Robyn
CA 3592S Tommie *	NY 4846 S Jessica
CA 1282 V Fran *	NY 3717 P Tammie *
CA 4346 Y Julie *	OH 4850 D Susie *
CO 3869 H Angie	OH 2751 M Gloria Sue
CO2446 W Billie *	OK 2222 R Regina
FL 2520 B Joan *	PA 2164 C Sue
FL 2383 L Catherine *	PA 4046 J Rita
FL 2565 P Joan	SD 4384 W Brennda
FL 3433 T Donna *	TN 1230 H Rita
FL 4859 W Donna *	TX 3179 Brenda
HI 4503 J Elise *	TX 4261 H Diane *
ID 5142 D Linda Kay	TX 1441 W Brandi Ann *
IL 3416 M Candace	TX 1669 M Vicki
IL 4033 E Jennifer *	VA 1304 M Andria
IL 1172 S Marilee *	VT 4336 S Stephanie *
IN 5049 S Mindy	WA 2835 Q Kristal *
IN 3637 K Teddy *	WA 3308 A Allison
KS 4719 B Robyn	WI 2729 L Kathy *
MA 5097 B Delores	WI 4148 W Frances Ann
MA 4619 C Rose *	WI 4816 S Charlette
MD 4883 A Terri *	WI 4864 S Katherine
MI 3948 T Marcia Ann	

\* means that she has an email address

## WANTED: BIG SISTERS

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

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



# Thank You for the Life You Have Given Me

by Susan ND-4676

My Dear Sisters,

I would like to take a moment in time to offer a heart felt Thank You to all of my sisters at Tri-Ess and particularly the Beta Gamma Chapter.

Two years ago, I thought I was the only person like myself in the world. I was afraid to step out into the sunshine and experience the joy that was to be had. I was afraid that if anyone saw me dressed as a woman, that they would run off screaming and have me arrested. I was what you would call a very closeted crossdresser.

In the last two years, Tri-Ess and Beta Gamma have shown me that I can go out in the world dressed the way I like and no one seems to care one way or the other. I have had some very wonderful experiences with my sisters, and dining out at some very nice restaurants has been the high spot. Everyone at Beta Gamma have been so helpful and supportive. Without you I could never have come to where I am now. You have taken my hand when I needed your help the most. You have held me up and helped me walk. You have done more than you will ever know to remove the bonds of guilt and shame that have been a part of my life for almost 50 years. I owe you more than I will ever be able to repay. All I can say is, "Thank You" for what you have given me. Thank you for the strength you have given me to enjoy this wonderful world that we share.

Last week I had an opportunity to test my wings in a way that I have only dreamed about since I was very young. I needed to take a trip to the state of Washington for about a week. This trip was to be part business and part pleasure. I have wanted to go on a trip as my feminine self for more time than I care to remember, so I thought this was the perfect time to try out my new found wings.

I knew that I would need motel rooms along the way, and not knowing local laws about crossdressing, I called a lot of the national chains and asked about their discrimination policies. I asked if it covered crossdressers. Lo and behold, they all said that I would be welcome at their properties no matter how I dressed. So I made my reservations with one of the chains. But would I have what it takes to walk into a motel, dressed as a woman, in a strange town, and ask for my room?

I told the person taking the reservations to notify the motels that

I would be arriving in feminine attire. The first night was after a business meeting, which I had to attend in drab, so I checked in as my male self. It was a good chance to find out if my reservation was still there after they had been notified about their crossdressing guest. Sure enough, I was in their computer and had my room, but I do think they were a little confused because of my mode of dress. The next day would be my big test.

After a good night's sleep I arose to greet the day that I had been waiting for. Would I have the nerve and self confidence? I took a nice long shower with my favorite body wash and let all of my femininity come forth. Next came my makeup, wig, jewelry and clothes. I couldn't believe it! I was actually going to live my dream! After I was all set to go, it was down to the lobby and out to my car. On the way I passed two maids who glanced my way and continued about their work. They either thought I was a woman or didn't care. As I went through the lobby, no one paid any attention to me. In the parking lot, there were two couples in their 50's or 60's next to my car. Again, no one paid any attention to me. I was doing it! I was being a female and getting away with it! Glory Be!

The rest of the day was just traveling. No one seemed to notice anything out of the ordinary. I used the ladies' rooms that were empty and bought gas at numerous stations. No one paid me the least bit of attention. Only one time did a young woman, from Georgia, notice me, and that was when I was parked at a rest stop. I just gave her and her young husband a smile and that was it.

My journey was soon to come to an end. I had traveled over 600 miles and was getting close to my next stop. I was amazed at how much self confidence I had. When I reached my motel, I didn't hesitate. I grabbed my purse and walked into the lobby, tall and proud. I waited behind another couple at the desk and when it was my turn I asked for my reservation. The clerk was so pleasant. She gave me better service than I receive at most motels dressed in my drab clothes. The couple that were before me just gave me a smile that I warmly returned. When I brought my luggage in, a nice couple held the lobby doors open for me. Now, I could get use to being treated like a lady! In my room I sat down to reflect on the day's events. What a glorious day!

But why must it end, I asked myself? Don't I need a light jacket? Why not push the limits? So it was back in my car and off to the



local Burlington Coat Factory. I found a parking spot in a nearby parking garage and off I went through the skywalk system of Spokane, Washington. I eventually ended up on the streets of Spokane headed to the store I was looking for. All along the way, people were passing me and I them. All types of people, old ones, young ones, men, women and children. No one was running from me. I was walking on a crowded street and I was just another person there.

I found my way to the store I was looking for and in I went. A young man greeted me at the door and welcomed me to the Burlington Coat Factory. Could this be real? Up on the 3rd floor I found the department I was looking for. As I looked through the jackets, a sales girl asked if I needed any help. I told her that I was just looking for now, and off she went. I looked through all the coats and tried on the ones that interested me, but found nothing I liked that fit me.

Nothing is more fun than shopping for clothes while dressed as a woman. At the parking garage, a young couple arrived at the walk in door just before I did, and he was such a gentleman as he held the door for me. I retrieved my car and paid the attendant. Not one eye brow was raised. Can life be any better?

After dinner and a couple of drinks, I headed back to my room and the sweet dreams that I knew I would have after the day that had been so long in coming. Thank You, Tri-Ess and all my sisters, for making this day possible.

A few days later, after my visit was over, it was time to head for home. I would make the return trip as my feminine self also. On the way I was the first car in line at a construction site, and I had to talk to the flagger. After she told me that it would be a few minutes, she returned to her conversation with another lady worker in a near by pick-up truck, the pilot car. I watched to see if the lady flagger told her about me. Nothing! Did I pass, or did maybe just not care?

The rest of the trip brought similar experiences and similar reactions. I was in the ladies' room at a rest stop when a lady came in and waited by the stall door for me to finish. I finished up and exchanged smiles with her as I left the stall. She was comfortable enough to enter the stall and do her thing. Numerous gas stops and two more rest rooms where women came in while I was using the facilities, there were smiles exchanged and everyone seemed to accept me. Everyone was at ease around me and I around them. I was in the realm that I loved.

Along the way I stopped at Williston, ND, on a busy Friday afternoon, and purchased some hand cream at the local Wall-Mart. The next stop was Minot, ND. The last time I was there I noticed a cute skirt outfit in the Penney's store at the Mall. Why not? When I arrived I drove right up front, grabbed my purse

and walked in as proud as can be. After looking around for a while, I found the skirt that I was looking for. As I stood in front of the mirror, holding it up to myself, I could only dream about the time that I would get to wear it. I decided that it was a keeper and took it up to the sales clerk, who was more than helpful with my purchase. Life doesn't get any better than this!

I cannot begin to tell you what this trip has meant to me. It was something I never thought would happen and I know that it never would have without the help and support of Tri-Ess and the girls at Beta Gamma. How small the words of thanks seem to be for what I have received! Please know that without you I would still be in the darkness, and that you have brought me forth into the wonderful sun filled world. The closet I was in had walls that were so close, and now I wonder if there is anything that we can't do, any place we can't go. Perhaps the only limits that we have, are the ones we put on ourselves. I know for me the sky is the limit, and it's off to Atlanta in September for a week long trip as the woman that I am.

Thank you again for making life the joy that it is, and thanks to all the women of the world for being so accepting of us.

---

### *The 23rd Psalm - Updated*

The Lord is my programmer,

I shall not crash.

He installed His software

on the hard disk of my heart;

All of His commands are user-friendly.

His directory guides me to the right choices

For His name's sake.

Even though I scroll through the problems of life,

I will fear no bugs, for he is my backup.

His password protects me.

He prepares a menu before me

in the presence of my enemies.

His help is only a keystroke away.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me

all the days of my life,

And my file will be merged with His

and saved forever.



# A Transgendered Vision for Three Continents

By Melanie and Peggy Rudd

Someone once said, "It is better to look where you are going than to remember where you have been." Right now we are finding it difficult to follow this advice, for we recently returned from Australia and New Zealand where good people, good food, and tremendous natural beauty are the expected norm. But following the advice becomes easier when we reflect upon the vision of three continents and realize that we are moving forward with many of the same dreams, goals and expectations for the transgendered community. It really is a small world after all!

After 15 hours non-stop from Los Angeles, our first stop was Sydney, the largest and most cosmopolitan city in Australia. Leslie Anne, the President of the Seahorse Society, met us at our hotel and took us to the Taxi Club, a restaurant and club that is very popular with Sidney's gay, lesbian and transgender community, where other members of the Seahorse Society met us for stimulating conversation and dinner. We were glad they were such fun people, because the long flights from Los Angeles and Houston had left us sleep deprived, and less than the "life of the party." We invited them to Texas so that we could show them the more lively side of our personalities.

We were almost too jet lagged to learn to speak the Australian version of English, but we discovered some subtle differences as we went along. Peggy's entree turned out to be an appetizer, and we quickly learned that nobody in the group wanted to be a bloke, which translated to "male."

We were pleased to learn that Seahorse members were familiar with some of the activities we sponsor, and most had read at least one of our books. This awareness can be credited to the work of pioneer transgendered leaders who developed a dissemination of literature for libraries and organizations all across their continent. They have pride in their transgender community, even as they are proud to be the Olympic site for the 2000 Olympics.

Our next stop was the South Island of New Zealand. We were unable to find any transgender organizations there, so Melanie and Peggy played tourist, absorbing the majestic beauty of an untamed wilderness, serene fiords, lakes, and the Southern Alps and volcanic landscapes, already covered with snow, and etched among the yellow popular trees which swayed gently in the mountain air. It was fall Down Under and the colors were unbelievable. Neither of us had ever seen a place so close to heaven. Our

beloved father had died the week prior to the trip, so we kept wondering if we were on the earth or if we had joined Pop in a perfect eternal world. We quickly found New Zealand a country characterized by kind-

ness, trust, gentleness and honor. Even the peak traffic turned out to be a herd of cattle looking for the greenest pasture.

Melanie had been concerned about remaining en femme during most of our time spent in New Zealand. Her fears disappeared at the Mt. Cook Lodge when standing in line with ten other women waiting for an available stall in the women's restroom a woman from the US stated to Melanie, "Don't you wish we were men so we wouldn't have to wait in line in the women's restroom when the men's room has no line."

We reached the North Island from Christchurch by train and the Inter islander ferry. We could see the South Island fade away in the distance. Every twist in the journey is a line in that warm, reluctant, half smile of the Southlander. Those long, green landscapes and dramatic skies reflect the tenacity and independence of the people, a stoic determination to hold their self-reliant course. These



Melanie with Koala Bear



Melanie with New Zealand sheep



people have always been pathfinders, and we will believe they will be secure in their quest for a gender identity. In New Zealand the transgender community has been successful in obtaining respect, acceptance and protection against discrimination. One of their most popular officials is a post-op transsexual Mayor who was recently reelected without opposition. She has been asked to run for the New Zealand Parliament.

We were met in the ferry terminal by a wonderful couple, Janet and Claudia, who reside in Wellington, the capitol city. They are the leaders of the national transgender organization in New Zealand, CDROM (Cross Dressers Really Ordinary Men), with chapters in three North Island cities and a new chapter on the South Island. Claudia, who is a well known artist in New Zealand, lives full-time as Claudia. In June CDROM will sponsor their first international transgender conference in Wellington. Although we had never met, ours was an emotional tearful greeting. We were bonded by a common need, mutual interest and the same gender focus.

That evening a large group from the CDROM Wellington chapter met at their home for pizza and snacks. Also present to primarily meet and talk with Peggy were an intersexed counselor and the host of a popular New Zealand radio talk show. The dialog was stimulating and thought provoking. At the end of the evening the CDROM chapter presented us with a teddy bear called CEEDEE, named for the organization in New Zealand.

The next morning we took a temporary pause from our gender



Melanie and Peggy with CDROM Wellington group

activities for Peggy and Mel to have brunch in the home of a high school classmate of Peggy, who had retired from the position of President of a New Zealand oil company. We were impressed by the beauty of their home and the elegantly served brunch. While Dan admits to missing the old gang from Coleman, Texas High School, he doesn't miss us enough to give up all that



New Zealand has to offer. In fact he said, "Sometimes I feel like a foreigner in my native land."

Our next gender stop was Auckland where Marie, Dawn and Barbara were our lovely hostesses. Twenty members of the Auckland CDROM group including 8 spouses/partners provided a reception for us in the home of the leader of the chapter, Marie. Peggy was presented with a farewell gift of love, a beautiful bouquet of flowers, as fresh and beautiful as their country had been. The next day Dawn and Barbara gave us a tour of Auckland. Perhaps the highlight of the scenic tour of Auckland was viewing the location and preparation for the upcoming America's Cup in Auckland. Barbara has a keen interest in yachting, and especially enjoyed showing us the winning ships from the past, and the hopefuls for the next event.

This journey Down Under was significant for many reasons. First of all, Melanie experienced life in the femme role Down Under in a very accepting and supportive environment. We enjoyed the comments from people who recognized us as "sisters." We appreciated the absence of stares and rude comments. Most of all we felt a keen awareness with the transgender groups in Sidney, Wellington and Auckland that we share a transgendered vision that spans three continents. We are in the midst of change! Nature, so abundant in this beautiful place, is unlike art, for nature refuses to be fixed. Each day the strokes rewrite the story. Our story is being rewritten each moment of each day. We are saving our frequent-flyer miles for a return trip Down Under soon!

*Reprinted from the June 7, 1999 CDForum (www.tgfmall.com/tgfm.html)*



# Inspirations From Down Under

by Peggy Rudd

The plans for New Zealand's CDROM's first national conference were in the final planning stages when we visited two of their transgender groups in April of 1999. The national leaders, Claudia and Janet, expressed some anxiety, for they realized the magnitude of the conference. Their dream was becoming a reality after months of planning. It is now June, and the conference is history and a moving inspiration for all of us who watched the event become reality. The last time we heard from Janet she was in a pensive mood as she reflected upon the event. :

"It's 10:50 A.M. on Monday, as I write this. The conference closed last night. As I'm typing, the tears are coming on strong. What a weekend! On Friday night, Claudia, my transgendered husband, announced that although we had not set a theme for the conference, she felt that if there was a theme it should be, 'WE ARE FAMILY.' The Mayor of Wellington was a fantastic speaker and really made himself at home, and there was a lot of very friendly rivalry between the Auckland and Wellington CDROM Chapter folks. After the Mayor spoke we played the video greeting from Peggy Rudd produced during her visit in our home in April .

"Saturday's speakers were incredible; lots of emotion was felt by all. We had no idea how well the program would go, but the total program was absolutely amazing. There were sixty people in attendance that night when Georgina Beer, the Mayor of Casterton, gave an amazing speech and captivated the audience for over an hour. Later, Gareth Farr performed as only Gareth could.

"Sunday saw the Auckland versus Wellington netball game. Wellington, I'm happy to say, won the match, but Claudia is still in a lot of pain from pretending to be the ball and bouncing on the concrete court. This was followed by the leadership meeting where a lot of discussion took place. Overall everyone is happy with the direction the CDROM organization is going.

"Sunday afternoon was our trade display, and it was great to see the retailers giving helpful advice and encouragement. We also held a partners' workshop, facilitated by Man Mitchell, professional counselor."

Melanie and I continue to receive positive reports from Down Under! The first annual CDROM International Conference was a total success. The presentations were emotional and inspirational. Couples found a new level of commitment. We were pleased with the involvement of professionals in New Zealand.

We had met Man during a social gathering at Janet's home and realized she had the knowledge and understanding to guide others. We were also impressed with the community work by members of CDROM, a work that has moved into the mainstream of New Zealand society. It is more meaningful when counselors and community leaders do radio and television talk shows as an educational outreach as well as significant work within the community. Janet also described some of the more emotional aspects of the conference.

"Sunday night was the beauty pageant with 19 contestants. Gareth came back and was M.C. for the night. After a few closing speeches, he sang his transgendered version of the New Zealand national anthem, reducing many to tears. We presented the hotel with a certificate awarding them a 5 Star+ rating for their transgender friendliness. They had been totally superb over the whole time, and hotel management told us how much they had enjoyed having us. They said that we had been one of the best groups they had."

During times of reflection following such an historic event, the basic question surfaces, "What have the people of New Zealand learned from the experience of the first national conference for the transgendered in their country?" During the first twenty four hours after the conference, Janet had sorted through the facts and the emotion of the conference. She organized her thoughts about the lessons learned.

"On a personal level, we can achieve anything we set our hearts and minds to do, Claudia and I work so well together that anything is possible."

When Janet looked at the larger picture, she felt a sense of community and family, diversity and acceptance. "As a group, we are one people, uniting together, strong and proud." But Janet did not stop there; she pondered the effect the conference had on others, and the benefit they realized. She thought about many signs of progress, but enumerated only a few. I have summarized her thoughts related to the visible signs of progress in her country. These signs include the following:

1. AN OUTREACH SYSTEM in which many people from smaller areas will be able to get together and work out how they can organize. Janet believes that smaller localized groups will form over New Zealand during the next few years.



## Mary's View

by Mary P.

My husband and I thank all of our friends in Tri-Ess for your kind support over the past 18 months. We have learned a lot about a very important and yet hidden part of society. People are not used to talking about men exploring female energy, let alone putting on female clothes and makeup. So many of you have shared your joy and sorrow, and have revealed yourself to me with your emails. I have learned about you as persons and your friendship has made a big difference in my quiet days at home without a project, computer, or corporate people to interact with. Because of your friendship and kindness I was able to cope.... You and I came to learn about each other and our varied worlds through many questions that we have about our gender and inner self.

Some of us are asking themselves very serious questions about physical gender. Some of us are asking ourselves about our cultural gender. So let's examine what a woman is inside. Some choose to get pregnant, give birth, and become mothers and find themselves the mentor youngsters. Some cannot become pregnant because of circumstance. Motherhood does not make a female a woman. A woman becomes an adult through her love, nurturing and friendship. She becomes a woman by extending her inner being as she listens, understands her lover/SO/ mate/spouse's purpose, goals and lifelong dreams. If she is unable to even try to begin understanding her mate's search for meaning and pursuit of dreams, she hasn't become a complete woman.

Her behavior reflects getting in touch with what is important and meaningful to her loved ones and friends. There has to be a dedicated and determined focus on this altruistic act of reaching out to the other person. Her behavior demonstrates love for herself, her own dreams, and her empathy for others' dreams-especially her significant other.

It is my belief that women are meant to teach the rest of society that compassion, empathy, love and understanding are meant to be at the very foundation of everyday living. That foundation should dictate how we make our laws, how we educate our young, how we provide for our aged, and how we value each individual. Gentleness and compassion are behavioral qualities that are not meant to be gender specific.

Perhaps men are meant to learn from the behavior of women. If most men could get past their aggressive behavior and learn from

a woman's empathy, the world might be a better place. I would hope that the men who are seeking to better understand their feminine aspect would consider that their journey is part of their own energy. The solution does not lie waiting in a bottle of black cohosh capsules, depo-provera or Estrace. No, you won't find the solution outside of yourself; you have to look and examine inside yourself first.

Many women are seeking to overcome centuries of prejudice towards our inborn empathy, insight and intuitive behavior to teach men about how these "female" qualities can be found within them. A responsible mother or aunt will demonstrate this in raising a son or nephew. Even before the 1960s, there were women courageous enough to raise a son to value his gentle side along with his competitive nature, and were wise to raise daughters to excel in academics and the professions with equal determination.

Women are not seductress creatures by design. I beg to disagree with the Old Testament, but we are not cursed by Eve because of her misdeed. Perhaps to please our mate we choose to get ourselves dolled up to look pretty and catch a certain significant other's attention. But we are not sex objects, ditzzy blondes, hysterical redheads, or bouncy boobed brunettes. Maybe we even get dolled up to please ourselves. We are people, we are human, and we are meant to teach men about peace.

There are quite a few men in Tri-Ess don't wish to maintain the war inside themselves, let alone wage it with others. There are others who are anguished in their "dilemma" who believe that if they have a pair of fleshy breasts to gaze at privately in the mirror then somehow they are "really" women. Not so. These genetic males are committing a terrible irresponsibility by not really getting to know themselves on the inside first. Being a woman is not about "breasts." Perhaps the crossdressers might understand this better than most. Crossdressers understand the difference between real and pretend, putting things into timed out segments, and getting on with their real responsibilities instead of running away.

Being a woman is not about having breasts. If anybody wants to know what it really feels like to have breasts and nurse a baby, please e-mail me offline. I will be glad to send you a five-sentence description of what it's really like. It's a special experi-



In fact, the week after returning from New Zealand, Melanie had an inquiry, and put a crossdresser, Lisa, from Christchurch, in contact with Janet and Claudia. Lisa was invited to the conference and has now organized the fourth Chapter of CDROM in Christchurch. The first meeting of the new Chapter was held on the fourth weekend in June, 1999, 30 days after the first contact of Lisa with CDROM.

2. A REAL AND DYNAMIC SUPPORT NETWORK set up by the partners. One partner will write a regular column for the newsletter.
3. AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GROUP AND THE PEOPLE BEING SERVED. Janet and Claudia understood the type of people who will be served. There are local representatives from the various transgender groups who will form a leadership group. Those who attended the conference will forward inquiries to the national leaders with total confidence.
4. A TRUE NATIONAL COMMUNITY. Janet saw a group characterized by a balanced representation. There were six F2M's at the conference. Four of those became members of CDROM. One F2M, John, has joined the National CDROM Committee and will also write an F2M perspective column for the newsletter. As well as being involved in the group, the F2M members will also have meetings apart from the monthly CDROM regular meetings, which will provide an opportunity to discuss the issues they are dealing with.

Claudia and Janet summarized their thoughts with the words, "We are tired but happy!" And happy they should be! When we look at the progress of this distant, isolated land, we see true success personified. This is a country of three and a half million people, a population one million less than Houston. Collectively they have been organized for only two years, and already they have concluded their first national convention, and have well over a hundred paid members in four Chapters.

One week after the conference Janet and Claudia learned that their funding request to the New Zealand Lottery Commission for \$5,000 NZ had been approved and would be used for outreach and educational programs to be sponsored by CDROM in New Zealand. CDROM may also become an affiliate of Tri-Ess.

During our visit I had the distinct feeling that these humble people of New Zealand looked to us for guidance. When I ponder the wonder of it all, I can say very honestly that New Zealand taught me many lessons. I am not sure who the real teacher was, for I learned four basic steps for success while in New Zealand: *Plan purposefully, Prepare prayerfully, Proceed positively, Pursue persistently. Such an inspiration!*

## Death of a Member

by Kathy Lorraine

Dear Sisters,

I am very sad to report the passing of one of our members. Linda V. passed away on May 17th after a short illness. She was 84.

Many of you probably never met her, as she only made one meeting in the last three years due to poor health. Before that she had been more active with the group, attending meetings when she could escape the duties of her farm. She had made her debut with the group back in April '94.

Linda was a quiet girl. She was one of those who sat and listened. She never said too much to the group, but when one talked with her one on one, a font of knowledge was there to be learned from. Mostly it was of the matters of the heart. And what her years of experience had taught her about how to live with self-acceptance and dignity, and humor.

It also was from Linda that we learned there was another 'Buffalo Belles' group at one time in the area. Or what it was like growing up in an era that didn't have a Jerry Springer or an Oprah parading gender variations on the screen each week; growing up thinking that you must be the only man alive who has the feelings we all share.

Linda had a long marriage with Margaret, who attended a meeting with Linda a couple of years ago. Their successful integration of Linda into their union for almost 50 years should serve as a reminder to all couples of what love and consideration for each other can accomplish.

Linda also left behind two sons who never were acquainted with this side of their dad. But it probably doesn't matter, as I'm sure they have enough wonderful memories of him to fill anyone's heart.





ence, but it's not the only thing that sets us apart from men. What you might be imagining in your mind may really be very far from the truth. There are a lot of misconceptions about what breasts feel like when we walk, jump, put on a blouse, or even take a shower. You would be surprised! It's not all you think it is. And by the way, we don't feel the weight and density of our breasts bouncing as we walk, at least not when we are not lactating. Nursing has its own differences, but those are transitory.

I have come to see that quite a few men in Tri-Ess really care about finding and keeping a real peace inside themselves. And so they have looked to women. Why not? The women haven't been waging war, killing others, or competing globally at the cost of others. (I am excluding the Scarlet O'Hara types out there. Scheming never worked in the long run; somebody always ends up paying a terrible price.) Women listen, brainstorm and find solutions by talking it out, sometimes with their friends. They typically find more social solutions.

Women are typically the peacemakers. I have been criticized for my attempts at diplomacy and for hearing the other person. I have been praised for it, too. Many of my female friends have had insight into conflict resolution that really worked and had lasting, permanent results. But isn't peace and contentment a lot easier to live with than perpetuating conflict and violence?

Women don't typically fight back to perpetuate war. If we get into a conflict, we search for a quick resolution. To the men who are searching for their inborn gentleness and empathy, I thank you. Searching for who you really are will make you better fathers, husbands, lovers, friends and colleagues.

*(From the newsletter of Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter.)*

### Disclaimer

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

## *A Place For Us*

There is a little place  
Only I know  
I go to this space  
only to grow.

It's nothing fancy  
no walls laced with pearls  
telling was chancy  
I am one of the girls.

I have wanted this  
for so many years  
I can't steal a kiss  
she'll start the tears.

I don't want to hurt her  
I love her too much  
go back to where we were?  
Are you really that nuts?

I'm out of the closet  
And into the world  
I borrowed her corset  
Oh, her ruffles are furled!

so I tried on a skirt  
so what does it matter  
Don't wear the shirt?  
It makes me look fatter?!?!?!?!?

Come with me, my dear  
I promise I won't bite  
It's special in here  
I'm free as a kite.

I know a little place  
only we go  
to laugh and to love  
and continue to grow...

Dedicated to  
crossdressers  
and their S.O.'s  
Written By a Wife. PKB  
4/23/99





**Hey,  
Good  
Looking!**

### ***Oily Skin?***

What works great as an oil absorber is Milk of Magnesia, the unflavored kind. You can use this as a facial mask once or twice a week for 10 minutes. You can also use this daily; a very thin layer, watered down, works really well to absorb oil under makeup.

### ***Makeover Tips***

Always keep in mind the shape of your face, neck, nose, and mouth when planning your makeup. The foundation shade should range from a half tone darker to no more than one shade lighter. The object is to emphasize our good points, and play down bad points.

A helpful hint for determining which facial features stand out and where highlights and shading should go is to stand in front of a mirror in a darkened room and place a candle behind you.

Do not use bright colors if you want to blend in with a crowd. Always follow the "grain" of your face and neck—blending all makeup together after each step using obliquely downward and outward strokes of a makeup applicator.

Remember to start with your color base to cover up skin color deficiencies; the right color base/cover-up will end the need for excessive amounts of makeup - less can be more - and blend, blend, blend!

Set makeup with translucent powder. Proper makeup should keep the face open and let light shine in on the color created by the overall application.

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

### ***Feminine Figure by Rachel***

Women have narrow shoulders and wide hips, whereas men have wide shoulders and narrow hips. To achieve that feminine figure crossdressers have to minimize one and emphasize the other. There's not too much you can do about wide shoulders. You should always select fashions that don't have sleeves that are puffy at the shoulders. You will also need to clip the shoulder pads out of your dresses and blouses. Beyond that, the next best thing you can do is add padding to your hips to be more in balance with your wide shoulders.

Girdles with hip and buttock pads are available from a number of sources. Several of the catalog operations that cater to crossdressers have them, like Best Value Products (P.O. Box 156, Wyncote, PA 19095 or <http://www.bvpb.com>). Frederick's of Hollywood also has them in their catalog. Usually they cost from \$35-\$50. The one that I like best is available from Classic Curves (P.O. Box 115, Wilmington, CA 90748 or <http://www.clcrv.com>). It is a little more expensive (\$135), but it is custom designed from your measurements to give you just the right shape. Unlike many others, the padding is smooth and well tapered, so there aren't any tell tale bumps or ripples, even under a clingy dress or slacks.

If your problem is a little too much sand in your hourglass, the best way to remove it is diet and exercise. Even that has its limits. Flowing fashions that de-emphasize the waistline are an option. If you want to snug up the tummy a little, body shapers help a little. But very little. They just smooth out what is already there. If you really want to reduce your waist, you will have to go to a waist cincher or full lace up corset. These are usually available in the crossdresser catalogs, and they can be expensive (\$150). If you want to try one on before you buy, go to Dream Dresser, on Wisconsin Ave, just south of M Street in Georgetown (Washington DC). (From the Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter newsletter.)

### ***Feminine Faces Attract Women***

Given a choice between a dewy Leonardo DiCaprio type and a rugged Sean Connery sort of guy, women may be naturally attracted to the man with the more feminine face, researchers say. Scottish psychologists studying sexual behavior report that women tend to prefer the faces with more feminine features because they are perceived as gentler and more trustworthy. The researchers theorize that this preference is hard-wired into us: Evolution has seen to it that women choose men who are likely to be more loyal mates and better fathers.

Researchers of the University of St. Andrews in Fife, Scotland, created a digital composite "average" face for a man and a woman. The faces were altered at key points to make them more feminine or masculine and presented to 92 volunteers. Both men and women preferred more feminine faces. The study was published in the journal Nature. Associated Press, Aug 27 1998. Comment by Paula: I like the results of this study, but remember the research was done by Scottish folks who like to wear kilts! I hope they didn't skew the results!

*(From the newsletter of Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter.)*



## SPICE VII - A Great Wilderness Adventure

by Jane Ellen and Mary Frances Fairfax

We have just returned from a most glorious five days at the Spouses' and Partners' International Conference for Education! It was a mixture of fun times, serious discussions, relationship building and camaraderie, and we were sorry to see it end.

SPICE always opens with a really classy fun event, and this was no exception. This year's theme was "A Wilderness Adventure," and that's just what it was. On Wednesday we enjoyed a picnic and cookout on the lake at Ft. Snelling, near Minneapolis. Onnalee, an expert canoeist, gave lessons in the mysterious "J stroke." It was 90 degrees out there, and the only ones who managed to stay cool were the couple who fell into the drink! Under a shady tent, we enjoyed catfish fried crisp in beer batter and a panoply of picnic goodies. It was a time to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

The teaching seminars were outstanding. Virginia Prince, founder of Tri-Ess, was there as her "brother," Charles, to deliver the Keynote Address. The University of Minnesota's Program in Human Sexuality (PHS) gave some really helpful seminars on communication, negotiation, boundaries, sexuality, and telling the children. Coordinated by the ever popular Dr. Walter Bockting, the PHS staff were a wonderful team. In separate sections for husbands and wives, they divided us into small groups to consider such questions as, "Why is it best to tell the children?", "Why is it best not to tell them?", "When do you tell them?", and, "What approaches make telling them easier?" Then the husbands and wives got together to compare notes.

The evenings were fabulous, with really top rate food followed by fun. One of the men brought a karaoke machine and sang for us. Another, who had experience in barbershop, got a quartet together. Called "The Sweet Spices," they introduced themselves as Cinnamon, Sweet Basil, and Oregano. Then the fourth member ran in, hollering, "I'm Cumin!" Then they launched into

"Sweet Adeline," "Let Me Call You 'Sweetheart'," and "Down by the Old Mill Stream."

Another evening the hosting couple, Sofronia's "brother" and Onnalee, presented in a comical dialogue a summary of their 40 years of marriage. We laughed till our sides split!

This couple conceived the "Wilderness Adventure" theme and did a humongous amount of planning and work to make this conference the success it was. Beta Gamma Chapter really got involved. Many came and enjoyed the event. Special praise goes to Karen's "brother," who ran the Registration Desk as smoothly as could be, and to Kim and Anya, who provided wonderful goodies at the Hospitality Room and bailed us out when we needed help with the Bookstore.

As the last dinner drew to a close, the men gathered outside and brought in long stem red roses for each of the ladies. Peggy Rudd, Director of the Tri-Ess Department of Spouses' and Partners' Support, was presented with a bouquet of red roses. Graciously, she invited each of the seven wives on the SPICE Planning Board to come up and take a rose from her bouquet.

After dinner Saturday night, Peggy summed up this SPICE in one word,

"HOPE," explaining that the "H" was for Honesty and Help, the "O" for Optimism, the "P" for Patience, and the "E" for Education.

Every year, at least one marriage is saved at SPICE. One couple came, wracked by conflict over crossdressing, and on the verge of separation. They left with hope in their hearts. Many left with their marriages visibly enhanced. Those happy tears will always be with us as we recall this Wilderness Adventure.

Next year's SPICE, July 12-16 in Houston, Texas, will have the theme: "2000: A SPICE Odyssey." Mark your calendars! This convention is an absolute must for spouses and couples. A dash of SPICE will enhance your life and relationships!







## Dream Dresses

by Diane Liegh

I am in the process of completing a new web site. It is called "Dream Dresses" and is meant to provide ANYONE with clothes that they desire.

We don't care if you are a genetic female, a cross dresser, or anyone else. If you are a HARD-TO-FIT individual, we can be of help. It doesn't matter if your measures read like a cone, a pyramid, a block or some other shape, we can make clothes to fit you - clothes that you want in the colors or patterns you want.

We will make clothes, costumes, etc. for you to your measurements, whether you are 6'4" or 4' 6". We will make these clothes from commercial patterns, photographs, sketches or drawings, or from an area which we call "Design Your Own".

"Design Your Own" has pictures of necklines, bodices, skirts, etc. which you can put together for the look you desire.

We also have the patterns for two of Scarlet O'Hara's dresses from "Gone With The Wind". We are working with Cypress Gardens of Florida to offer all of their "Southern Belle" Dresses to you also.

Prices for other than "Commercial Pattern" items will be based on size of garment, complexity of garment, and type of materials used. The prices for these dresses, made to your size, will not be in the price range of discount stores and will probably be more than most mid-price department stores. But these dresses WILL FIT YOU. They will fit at your shoulders. They will fit at your bosom. They will fit at your hips. They will fit at your waist. They will be the length that you want.

For more information, visit the web site at: [www.shop.flash.net/~inovate1/index](http://www.shop.flash.net/~inovate1/index) or email at [inovate1@flash.net](mailto:inovate1@flash.net)

## Makeup Shelf Life: Danger In Your Closet

by Melanie Yarborough

Makeup doesn't last forever. Like many Products, it can spoil, discolor, and lose its effectiveness over time. For many crossdressers who keep their makeup well hidden in hot stuffy places, or who only use it sporadically for Support Group Meetings or Shopping Trips, there's a serious danger of putting contaminated products on your skin.

Makeup is an excellent incubation place for bacteria which need moisture to grow. Makeup can harbor yeast, fungi, and mold if not checked regularly. The following products have a specific shelf life and warning signs:

**FOUNDATION:** Lasts a year or less. This is the most often used and thus the most exposed. When you apply it, use a sponge; avoid using germ-carrying fingers. Look for changes in consistency, like thickness or a clay-like smell.

**LIPSTICK:** Lasts two to three years; oil-based lipsticks are a little less prone to contamination. Consider storing them in the refrigerator. A sign of spoilage is color change or rancid smell. If it burns on application, throw it out.

**EYE & LIP PENCILS:** Last three years, as the wax keeps germs out. Remember to sharpen them and keep the cap on.

**MASCARA:** Has the shortest shelf life of all; 3-6 months! Remember, you're applying this to the most sensitive part of your face, your eyes. Never touch anything but lashes with the brush.

**LOOSE POWDER:** Lasts for years, but can deteriorate if overexposed to light or heat. Keep it tightly closed. If it looks lumpy, it's hit moisture and should be discarded.

**NAIL POLISH:** Lasts two years, and is sometimes stamped with an expiration date. Over time, pigments separate, so shaking is necessary. If a good shaking doesn't mix it, get rid of it. Danger signs: thick, dried out, hard to apply smoothly.

**POWDER COMPACTS-FACE/CHEEK/EYE COLOR:** Lasts three years. Look for ghostly color, chalky texture, or cracking as signs of wear.

**PERFUME:** Lasts three years. Keep in original box, store in a cool dark place. Watch for a darkening color or a vinegary smell.

Some people recommend a "cooling off time" of an hour or more after shaving and before applying makeup. Freshly shaven skin is very sensitive, and immediate makeup application can clog pores and lead to pimples. The bathroom is a bad storage place, as it gets exposed to heat and steam. And above all, do not share your make-up!

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



# Lessons in Feminine Deportment

by Kristen

Our Ladies Night Out for April featured a roundtable discussion and demonstration of feminine deportment. Gary Schuyler guided the session for an appreciative, well dressed member turnout of seventeen. Gary asked everyone to think of three adjectives to describe their femme side. From this he developed the thesis that was the central theme of the evening: Who you are, what you are, and how you want to be seen, is more than what you have on. Once you have established in your minds' eye your persona then you can create your femme side that you were meant to be, even if only on a part-time basis. Find people that you admire and emulate them, recognizing that there is as much variability in women as there is in men. Find clothes and makeup styles that fit your personality and you will discover that your dress affects how you carry yourself. The visual aspect of sitting femininely (we all "passed") illustrated how women are more centered and take up less space.

Demonstrations of walking were made with Gary instructing Stephanie Ann, Jayne, and Michelle as models. Sandie was the star pupil in a wonderfully professional powder blue suit and matching high heels. Lead from the hips & relax, swinging your arms casually with your thumbs brushing your body. Arm flexure should be more in the wrist & lower arm than in the upper arm as a male does. It will lead to a more feminine gait & sway.

Toni made several great points: that women call their friends often and will frequently bring covered dishes, write notes, or present small gifts to their hosts. While not solely the domain of women, cultivating these traits helps integrate the feminine side of yourself to create a complete person. Call & invite someone to dinner, take in a movie, have tea—these all create the totality of experiencing your femme side and move us beyond the *guy thing*. Look at what women do & not what you think woman do.

Lesley commented that "we are frequently too afraid that we will be recognized, that we won't pass, and we become too afraid of our own shadow walking behind us; learn to relax, to emanate what you feel-what you think is what you're going to emanate." Stephanie Ann noted that it takes awhile to get comfortable-practice, and putting yourself in appropriate circumstances dressed properly, builds confidence. Be aware of your surroundings and conduct yourself in a way that will be appropriate for you & your femme side. Above all, have fun and enjoy the experience. (Reprinted from *The Cactus Flower*, newsletter of Alpha Zeta Chapter.)

# On Being A Lady

by Lucy Stone

Let's look at what it means to be a lady. Our wives are all lovely ladies, and we who are crossdressers all try to emulate them when we are crossdressed. But what exactly is each of us trying to achieve? What is a lady?

My definition of a lady as applied to the transgender community is anyone who develops the capability to emulate society's concept for the actions, dress, manners, speech and mannerisms of refined women in polite society. I believe the underlying principle for every action of a lady is no different than for the deeds of a gentleman, and that principle is The Golden Rule.

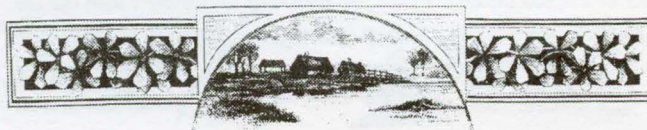
Building on The Golden Rule, a lady is always kind and gentle in her demeanor. She is strong without being threatening. Most often, she asserts herself and achieves her goals without being overtly aggressive. Wherever possible, she is pleasant and avoids offending those with whom she interacts.

Her clothes, hair and makeup express her individuality, while at the same time blending well with other ladies in her community. All of her movements are fluid, never jerky. When she sits her knees are together, and except when reaching, she keeps her elbows close to her sides.

Her voice is soft and melodic, and as she speaks she varies the pitch, rather than the volume when she wants to add emphasis to the words she is speaking. She rarely, if ever, resorts to using profanity or vulgar expressions. She is polite, and seeks to influence others by seeking their concurrence rather than by being dogmatic. Society permits her to express more emotionality than her male counterparts, but she rarely loses control.

Each of us is very much aware that all of the above and so much more is part of being a lady. We who are crossdressers start way behind our wives and significant others, who have been immersed in their roles since birth. However, by following their example and taking full advantage of any coaching they offer, each of us can learn the skills for being perceived as a lady. First, we have to develop a passable image. Then we must learn to sustain it for every minute that we are dressed.

(From the newsletter of Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter.)





## The Pill

*Would You Take It?*

by Lucy Stone

How would you answer the following question? If a pill were invented that could eliminate any trace of your crossdressing, would you take it? Recently, one of our sisters asked me that question, which earlier had been asked of her.

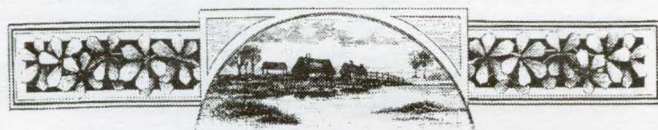
After thinking about it for a while my response was an emphatic no. Perhaps this appears to be a strange answer, given the many difficult problems a crossdresser encounters. Certainly, taking such a pill would eliminate all such problems, but it also would erase an important part of me, a part that has exercised my emotions greatly and in the process helped me to develop far greater sensitivity and compassion. I wouldn't want to lose that.

Besides, I enjoy dressing up and going out, and I finally am becoming very comfortable with who I am. It took me almost forty years to get over the guilt of not being satisfied to just be a guy. Certainly, I enjoy being a guy, especially being a husband, father and grandfather. But I also like my feminine side, and I absolutely adore dressing up and permitting my second self to come forward.

When I am crossdressed, I have always tried to be a lady, and I find that the same genteel qualities that I have tried to develop when Lucy is out of the closet have helped Don to become more compassionate. Certainly, experiencing some of the prejudicial behavior to which women are subjected every day has made me more sensitive to what Joan must put up with.

In turn, Joan was asked whether she would want me to take such a pill. Certainly, the removal of crossdressing from our relationship would eliminate an area of concern for her; but without hesitation, she also said no. She reasoned that crossdressing is very much a part of me and to have my second self disappear would be like having part of me die, and she did not want that to happen.

Well dear sisters, both crossdressers and spouses and significant others, how would each of you answer this question? Consider it carefully; you may gain insights into yourself and your partner.



## Girl Talk

By Becky

At a party the other evening I heard one of our sisters being ribbed about an alleged disconnect between the image she was presenting and her actions. Our sister insisted that not only did she want to dress en femme, she wanted to behave en femme! To which a *significant other* responded that if "You want to dress like a girl, then work like a girl - and that means cleaning toilets, cooking, ironing - not just walking and wearing the dress."

Then two days later I receive a copy of *Psychology Today*. And there on the cover (no, not our sister or the significant other, but had you fooled!) is a woman all wrapped up in Christmas ribbons and with a look of maximum stress on her face. This cover was tied in with the lead article of how to survive *Holiday Hell*.

My thesis is that these two apparently isolated incidents are indeed inter-related and have a great deal to do with some of the underlying issue of acceptance of our crossdressing by our spouses and significant others.

Just think for a minute, dear sisters. Who really does the scut work around the house, whose hours are not from eight to four or nine to five? When we are working en drab, doing our male thing around the house and yard on weekends, what is she doing-lying on a settee, eating bonbons? And who does the bulk of the holiday shopping and preparation? Sometimes our male participation is limited to a last minute gift or two for her and *paying the bills*. But in many households that latter point isn't even true because she is doing that, too - balancing the household budget. Dressing as a girl is only part of the picture -if it is the whole picture then maybe crossdressing is purely erotic.

But I sense that with many of us, dressing is only part of the picture. I have heard many spouses and SO's maintain that they were drawn to their spouse because "not only was he all man, he also had this certain quality of consideration; of compassion; of awareness; of gentleness." The attributes are varied and they are numerous but they all point to the possession on our (the crossdressers') part of characteristics that our culture attributes only to the feminine gender but are appreciated because they do make life better for everyone. Let's be all we can be!

Let us not just "dress" the part. Let us also show that we can walk *the walk*, talk *the talk* and we can also share seemingly never-ending tasks. This way we can demonstrate that we, and our partners, are blessed with a truly "second self."

*(From the newsletter of Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter.)*



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## My First Time Out

by Diane

My first time out as Diane was everything I had dreamed of, and more. I had the pleasure of going to the dinner meeting of Chi Epsilon Sigma with Lucy, Joan, Katherine, and Nikki. We were all staying at a hotel near the meeting place. Lucy called my room and asked me to join them in their room before we left. I liked this idea, as it would give me time to get my nerve up.

Once I exited my room I was nervous, excited, and scared. Lucy's room was on the opposite side of the hotel. Due to the hotel design I would have to go to the first floor, walk to the other side and back up to the third floor. Walking down the hall to the elevator, I passed several people who didn't seem to pay any attention to me. I felt a little relieved as I entered the elevator alone. By the time I got on the elevator and took a good breath, it was time to get off.

As I exited the elevator, though, I had a choice. If I turned right I would have to go through the lobby. If I went left, I would have to go through the pool area. I chose the pool because it was closed earlier. However, when I got to the pool entrance, there were people swimming with kids running around, so the third option was to go outside and around the building. About half way around the building, I heard someone say, "Hey, Baby!" and whistles and honking horns. I just kept going, not even looking their way.

As I reentered the hotel I passed several more people who did not seem to notice me. So I proceeded to an elevator and once again found it empty. As I reached the third floor and thought, "I'm almost there," the door opened and there were several people waiting to get on. Once I made it to Lucy's room I was relieved.

About the time I started relaxing it was time to go to the restaurant. At least this time I was with other people. After meeting up with everyone we left for Central Station restaurant. I was a bit nervous, but after meeting so many people like myself and their wives, I started enjoying myself. After a short while, I did not want the night to end.

When I got back to my room after the dinner meeting, I couldn't sleep. I could only think, "What a wonderful evening!" I can't wait until the next meeting. Thanks to all who took the time to set up this wonderful evening out and a special thanks to Lucy and Joan. Without their support I would not have made it this far in exploring my second self. I wish the very best to all my newfound sisters.

*(from the Chi Epsilon Sigma newsletter)*



## Pardon, Your Slip Is NOT Showing

by Diane Liegh

During my time spent reading about crossdressing in newsletters and other published materials I have seen many articles on panties, pantyhose, girdles, bras, corsets and other lingerie. I have not, however, seen anything written about slips.

Slips, as we know them, have been in existence for a relatively short period of time. They were first worn to protect the woman from the rough, coarse clothing she wore and later to protect the fine, delicate materials from the body oils of the woman. Women discovered other benefits of wearing a slip too. For instance, a slip reduced "static cling," allowing a skirt or dress to "hang" properly. Women also found that they liked the feel of the fabric against their underclothing or their skin. They also found that many men became fascinated by the mere sight of a trace of their slip.

During a part of this time period, slips were worn also for modesty's sake. Many blouse, dress and skirt materials were very thin or so sheer that anyone could see right through them. Some materials that appeared opaque (when looked at from between a light source and the material) became transparent when the light source was moved behind the material.

We have all had occasion to see a woman walking, passing between us and a strong light source. Many times we were able to see through her clothing as though we had Superman's X-ray vision. Her legs and lower torso appeared to be only slightly covered by a diaphanous material. In some cases, this view was supplied by the subject intentionally. In other cases it was merely a case of ignorance or unawareness. Had these women been wearing slips, this viewing situation would not have existed.

The viewing described above is a pleasure to most males. Seeing the outline of the female form through her clothing has a certain deliciousness to it.

The same deliciousness does not exist when the person wearing that same semi-transparent skirt is a crossdresser!

I have seen this sight time and time again. A crossdresser, beautifully outfitted, gets between me and a light source, and standing there shows more than I, or anyone else, cares to see. I have heard females say, "If he is going to dress like a woman, why doesn't he display some modesty as a woman?"

Spouses and significant others, do your crossdresser a favor and advise him of the purpose of wearing a slip and its propriety.

The newer crossdressers aren't the only guilty ones. I have seen men who have been crossdressing for many years appear in public sans slip. It is obvious to everyone else, if not them, what they have not worn. This antagonizes almost all who see the show, promoting an unfavorable attitude toward ALL crossdressers.

Crossdressers - those of you who have gone slip-less in the past - please reconsider the consequences of this action in the future. If your dress or skirt is lined, then it is a whole different story.

I have been told that the hem of your slip should come within an inch or so of the hem of your skirt or dress. With today's multiple length skirts, the slip should be the longest that you have that will not show below your skirt or dress hem under any circumstances or positions (bending, stooping, etc.). (Reprinted from The Rose, newsletter of the Dallas- Ft. Worth Metroplex CD club.)

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## Questions About Tri-Ess Membership, Publications, Or Programs?

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

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

Questions about membership fees or membership status, or notifications of change of address, go to Membership Director Donna Martin at: **DJMTRIS@aol.com**

Questions about the Big Sister Program or the Mail Forwarding Service go to Marlene at: **TriChi1@aol.com**

Questions about SPICE, or wives' and partners' or couples' support, go to Peggy Rudd at: **melpg@phoenix.net**

Questions having to do with chapters go to Director of Chapter Networking and Support, Judy Daniels, at: **judytriess@angelfire.com**

Anything having to do with the crossdressers' online forum, CDTRIESS, goes to Sofronia Anne Strong, its Moderator, at: **sas@tri-ess.com**

Anything having to do with the spouses' online forum, CDSO, or the couples' forum, TRIESS42, goes to Beverly at: **CDSO@hotmail.com**

Anything having to do with "The Sweetheart Connection" goes to Onnalee, its Editor, at: **spice@tri-ess.com**

Questions about the "Membership Directory" should be addressed to Denise Peters at: **chitriess@aol.com**

Questions and comments about the "The Femme Mirror" and materials for publication should be sent to Frances Fairfax, its Editor, at: **JEFTRIS@aol.com**

Requests for information on joining Tri-Ess, questions about the Holiday En Femme, Tri-Ess Outreach or the workings of Tri-Ess, plus those you are not sure how to direct, should be sent to me at: **TRIESSINFO@aol.com**

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

Your sister, Jane Ellen Fairfax, Chair

## Sarong and Thanks for the Memories

by Paula Evans

This past summer Shirley and I went with a group of people from Baltimore to the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival in upstate New York. For three days and nights we experienced great weather, inspiring music and warm feelings from fellow folk fans.

During the weekend we saw MANY men wearing skirts. Most of them were in the dance hall, but a friend also pointed out to me the kilt-wearing doctor in the first aid tent. Up and down the midway we saw guys in peasant skirts and sarongs. Most weren't trying to "pass" as women as a transsexual or a crossdresser might. They weren't wearing any makeup (but who would anyway on a warm day at a folk festival?) and one guy even showed off his hairy chest above his skirt.

SO...you can guess where this is leading....after two days of watching I could resist no longer. Shirley and I bought two ankle-length cotton sarongs with interesting prints from a vendor at the fair. On Sunday morning I donned my wrap-around sarong, Baltimore Songwriters Association T-shirt, and straw hat, put on my sandals and headed down the hill from our campsite. When I first slipped out of the campsite I felt sort of like a marine...you know "the few, the proud, the brave". I was breaking new ground for men to wear skirts and not feel self conscious about it. I wound up wearing it all day. 12 hours straight, making a new record for me of consecutive hours in a skirt! And my first time wearing a skirt without any intention of "passing". Although it was a bit of chore to keep it tied in a secure knot and the "spot-a-pots" were cramped quarters for anyone in a long skirt, I did keep cool thanks to the light fabric, and my legs were protected from sunburn.

Did I hear any laughs, get any strange looks? No! As a matter of fact we got into a discussion with one woman who said I looked very attractive in my sarong! I even have a picture of Patty Larkin (one of the performers) and me while I was wearing my skirt! I was dancing in the front of the main stage on Sunday during Patty Larkin's set. She played "Dear Diary" (one of my favorites). I was singing along and weaving my body in a wild fashion. During the song she looked over and smiled. When the song had finished she thanked the "mosh pit" for our enthusiasm. (Note: I wasn't moshing, just dancing enthusiastically in my sarong.)

My friend Joanne talked about how the festival was like a utopia where everyone's needs were met, everyone was equal, and everyone treated with respect. We trusted one another. I saw no violence, heard of no crimes, I felt safe and secure. Complete strangers would start up conversations and musical jams sprouted everywhere. I will miss that feeling of community all year long. If you enjoy folk music or the community feel free to join us next year at Falcon Ridge.

I will be packing a skirt!

(From the Chi Epsilon Sigma Chapter newsletter.)



## CALENDAR OF TRI-ESS EVENTS

### November 1999

- 10-14 Holiday En Femme**, Houston, TX, Brenda Thomas, 14601 Bellaire #334, Houston TX 77083, Phone 281-495-8009 (after 7PM), E-Mail: [brenda@firstnethou.com](mailto:brenda@firstnethou.com).
- 14-21 Holiday At Sea/ Dignity Cruise #11**, Houston, TX-Calico-Cancun-Cozumel-Roatan, Honduras-Houston, CRUISEONE, INC., Anne McLaughlin, 1-800-699-6631, International 281-679-1399.

### July 2000

- 12-16: SPICE VIII - 2000: A Spice Odyssey**, Houston, TX Desiree Liegh, SPICE 2000, 7120 Rufe Snow Drive, Suite 106, Fort Worth, TX 76148-1867; E-Mail: [inovatel@flash.net](mailto:inovatel@flash.net) Or call: 918-343-1053 Mary Jane (Central Time), 215-860-9271 Evelyn (Eastern Time). Fax: 281-347-8747 Websites: [www.pmpub.com](http://www.pmpub.com) OR [www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/SPICE.html](http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/Garden/6280/SPICE.html)

### November 2000

- 8-12 Holiday En Femme 2000 - A Millennial Spectacular**, Los Angeles, CA. Alpha Chapter, PO Box 411352, Eagle Rock Station, Los Angeles, CA 90041; Phone (Linda): (310) 798-5637; E-Mail (Linda): [l\\_wade@earthlink.net](mailto:l_wade@earthlink.net), Website: <http://www.3dcom.com/tg/alpha/alpha.htm>
- 13-17 Dignity Cruise #12 - Celebrate The Millennium** Aboard a Ship Called THE HOLIDAY- Round Trip from Los Angeles, visiting Catalina Island and Ensenada; Call Cruises and Tours of the World, Anne Fleetwood, Toll Free 800-699-6631, or 281-558-2799. Fax 281-579-1037. Ask for the *Holiday En Femme Dignity Cruise*. E-Mail: [Mermaiden@aol.com](mailto:Mermaiden@aol.com) or [melppeg@pmpub.com](mailto:melppeg@pmpub.com).

**CHAPTERS! Planning an EVENT? Send your information to:**

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

### BC/CD Stone Age Crossdressers

By Melissa Anne

DID YOU HEAR  
WHAT ROCKY  
DID?

WHAT ABOUT  
BETH?

GUESS WHO  
ALICE IS  
SEEING!

GOSSIP! GOSSIP! AND  
THEY TALK ABOUT  
US GENETIC GIRLS





# Security

by Cindy N.

The subject has come up again about security. I know you've all heard it before, but it still needs repeating from time to time.

In our membership, we have quite a large variety of people and professions represented. We have had members in highly visible political posts, doctors, engineers, construction workers, retirees, unemployed people, and just about everything you can imagine in between. Hmmm, wonder if we had any lingerie salespeople or bra fitters? Ah!! Yes, we did! But I'm not telling who it was!

Many of you know from past experience that getting information from our mailing list is almost impossible, and for good reason. We value each other's privacy and anonymity. There are only two other people who have a copy of the mailing list, and that is only in case I depart this earth without prior notice.

For the same security reasons, attendance at our meetings is limited to members, significant others, people who have gone through our orientation process, all Tri-Ess members, and guests that have been approved by the membership committee. Also, note here that the conduct of the guest is the responsibility of the member bringing them, and even though they are a guest, they are still expected to pay the meeting fees, the same as the rest of the attendees.

Too rigid, you say? I don't think so. Especially when you consider that careers, reputations, and in some cases, the very lives of people are at stake here.

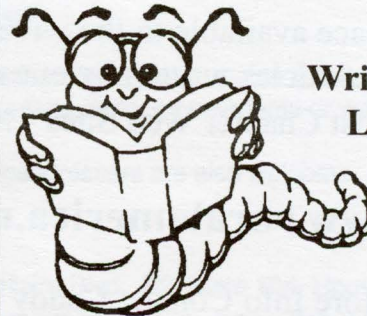
And just who is the membership committee? It is the elected officers and others who may be appointed as the need arises. We do have an established set of guidelines for orientation of prospective members. Notice here that several years ago we changed this from "screening session" to "orientation session." It's much less frightening to new members that way. This orientation, which all of you have gone through, consists of meeting face to face with the prospect, to explain the premise of the group and answer the many questions that the new prospect may have. In my years of meeting new people, I have rejected very few. In most cases when prospects figure out that Alpha Zeta is not what they are seeking, they have quietly disappeared into the woodwork and were never heard from again. In only a handful of cases, have I suggested that a local swap club, or possibly Apex would better fit their needs.

Meeting people in a chat room does not get the same results that a face to face meeting does. It is just too easy to misrepresent yourself in chat rooms. If the prospect is not willing to meet another person in public, I would have serious doubts as to their sincerity. Even talking to a prospect on the telephone is not always 100% accurate. After talking to many hundreds of people, I can usually spot someone who is not Alpha Zeta material, but according to our bylaws, a new member must be screened by the membership committee before they are invited to a meeting. Also, a personal orientation session usually helps to dispel any fears that the prospect might have, and reinforces the message that, "You Are Not Alone." Many times I have had prospects tell me that, "This is the first I have met and talked to another crossdresser." Yes, I have noticed that prospects are coming out of the closet a bit younger than 10 years ago, and they do seem to be better informed, thanks to the internet and dedicated chat rooms. But I still believe that the orientation process is necessary to insure security of all the members.

OK, it's now time to get off the soap box. Thanks for reading this far, and hope to see you at the meeting!

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

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

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

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

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Other, Please specify your optional or additional gift amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the appropriate statements:**  I am - OR  I am not - over eighteen (18) years of age.  
 I am -, OR  I am not - A CROSSDRESSER; - defined as an individual, typically a heterosexual male, who occasionally chooses to make a social role presentation considered appropriate for persons of the opposite genetic sex, for the purpose of personal expression, without the intention of entering a program leading to sex reassignment surgery, and without attempting to attract a partner of the same genetic sex. Note: your femme signature is satisfactory.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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For your security, The Society makes every effort to protect the confidentiality of all contributors, members and applicants. Your true identity, personal check and credit card information are safe with us.

\*One time payment in full is required for these categories. Crossdressers financially unable to afford the minimum annual contribution amounts shown above should write for optional payment plans, reduced payments or waiver.

[The terms used herein assume the Crossdresser is male. Female Crossdressers are also welcome. Please write Tri-Ess for detailed information.]

*the Society for the Second Self, inc.* 8880 Bellaire Blvd., B2, Suite 104, Houston TX 77036-4621  
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Donna Martin's E-mail:  
DJMTRIS@aol.com



**Tri-Ess Supporting Membership Information - also complete reverse side**

For privacy and security purposes, Crossdressers and their wives, and other members, may wish to use assumed names. Most Crossdressers adopt a feminine name. If you do not have a name, have fun! You might select one that is similar to your real name - 'Sam' becomes 'Samantha', 'Donald' can be 'Donna', or choose one that defines your femme personality; 'Hillary', 'Mae', 'Dolly', 'Marilyn', your first girlfriend or favorite movie actress. You can use your true surname, or choose a modification of it. However, it is usually advisable, and we recommend, that you create a completely different femme surname. Choices of your name(s) should be made thoughtfully to meet your personal security needs and preferences. Even your mailing name may be another pseudonym. For additional security and convenience, we encourage Crossdressers to use a US Post Office Box or similar commercial mail receiving service. Simply rent the box in your true name and list any other names, including your femme name and your mailing name, as authorized to receive mail.

If you have been a former member of Tri-Ess please give your membership number, if possible, state of residence at the time, and the femme name used for your previous membership

Previous Tri-Ess number \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ For "Individual" Crossdressers ( Wives may also join as an 'Individual')

\_\_\_ Check here to have a Tri-Ess "Big Sister" contact you by mail

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

\_\_\_ Check here to indicate a wife joining as an Individual

Mailing Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Please give the membership number of your Crossdressing partner \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Check here if you wish to to be contacted by the nearest Tri-Ess Chapter

\_\_\_ For "Couples" (Crossdresser and spouse or female partner)

Optional: Telephone Number in case we need to contact you

Crossdresser's femme name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Partner's name or other adopted name to be used \_\_\_\_\_

Ask for: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Optional: Secure E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

The "Friends of Tri-Ess" Supporting Membership categories below are intended for non-Crossdressers; individuals, organizations, vendors and other entities that support the educational aims and purposes of The Society. "Commercial" Members receive discounted advertising rates and other important benefits; write for complete details.

- |   |                      |                |                         |
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| ___ Friend of Tri-Ess "Annual" Membership | minimum contribution | \$24 per year  |                         |
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Mailing Name of Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address Line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

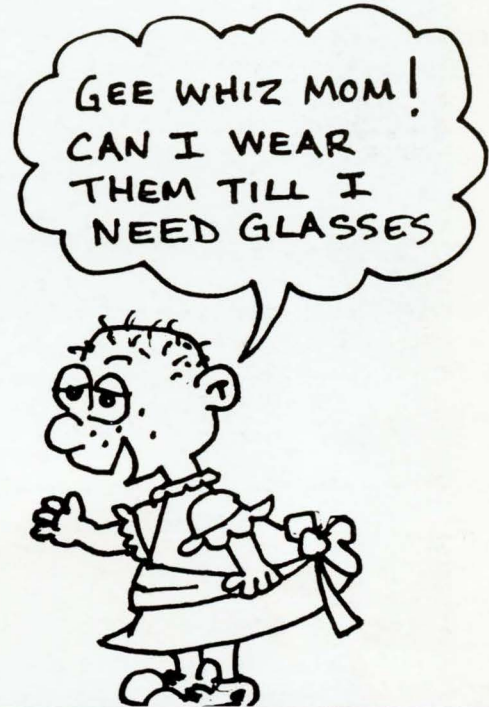
City, State and Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_



# Bizarre Humor

By Molly Anne

## CHILDHOOD MEMORYS





# **STARFISH**

Once upon a time there was a wise man  
who used to go to the ocean to do his writing.  
He had a habit of walking on the beach  
before he began his work.

One day he was walking along the shore.  
As he looked down the beach,  
he saw a human figure moving like a dancer.

He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day.  
So he began to walk faster to catch up.  
As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't  
dancing, but instead he was reaching down to the shore,  
picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean.  
As he got closer he called out, "Good morning! What are you doing?"

The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean."  
"I guess I should have asked, why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?"  
"The sun is up and the tide is going out.  
And if I don't throw them in they'll die."

"But, young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and  
starfish all along it? You can't possibly make a difference!"  
The young man listened politely. Then bent down, picked up another starfish  
and threw it into the sea past the breaking waves, and said,  
"It made a difference for that one."

There is something very special in each and every one of us.  
We have all been gifted with the ability to make a difference.  
And if we can become aware of that gift,  
we gain through the strength of our visions  
the power to shape the future.  
We must each find our starfish.  
And if we throw our stars wisely and well, the world will be blessed.

Attributed to Loren Easley

