

THE TRANSGENDERIST

AUGUST 1994

A Publication of Transgenderist's Independence Club, Albany, NY

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - Winnie [REDACTED]

Our meeting on July 7 was noteworthy for having a clean carpet, for the first time in about a year. Sandy said she got the itch to be a "French Maid" and brought her vacuum cleaner. Thanks, Sandy!

No one has yet volunteered to come forward and plan any special events for the Fall. I have enough to do with the regular operation of TGIC, so as I said last month, nothing will happen unless somebody else does the work. Don't delay, we need definite plans before we make an announcement in the newsletter, a couple of months in advance. *For an event in October, essential details must be nailed-down by August 25.*

POSTAGE DUE:

In trying to get the most for our money, TGIC and many other organizations mail a 10-page newsletter (5 sheets of ordinary copier paper) in a 4¼x9½ envelope, which is very close to the 1oz limit for 29¢ postage. We have never received a complaint from the Albany Post Office where we drop over 100 pieces every month. However, it seems that a postal worker at the receiving end will sometimes put our mailing on the scales and charge 23¢ postage due. If the addressee does not pay, it's sent back to us. We have occasionally had our newsletter returned for this reason, and paid postage due for other group's newsletters.

If anyone receiving our newsletter is charged postage due regularly, please let me know. To see how close we are, I put a sample of our July mailing on a chemical balance; it was 29.83 grams or 1.052 oz. Yes, over 1oz, but has anyone been ticketed for doing 58mph on an Interstate?

IN MEMORIUM

We have received the sad news that Ken, husband of Mariette Pathy Allen of New York City, passed away in early July after a long illness.

Mariette is a professional photographer and very good friend of the transgendered community. Since one of the early Fantasia Fairs, she has served as official photographer for many of our major events and conventions, and has taken most of the cover photos for *Tapestry* magazine. She is the author of the book *Transformations* and has had a number of public exhibitions of her work featuring people in the gender community.

I am sure that all readers will want to express their deep sympathy to Mariette. She has selected a New York high school charity for memorial donations. If you do not have her address, cards and contributions may be sent through TGIC.

JOSEFINA A. SPECKERT M.ED
PSYCHOTHERAPIST

(413) 499-5858

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RAVEN BEHAVIN' - Melodie [REDACTED]

The rank or pecking order is of great importance to the raven. When a dominant female, high in the ranking order of the group, pairs with a submissive low-ranking male, she will adopt male behavior - even taking the superior position during copulation. In such a relationship, the male accepts the submissive role along with other female behavior patterns.

- from Carrie Fisher's "Surrender the Pink"

LETTER TO EDITOR - Jackie

Dear TGIC,

July 7, 1994

I want to express with gratitude what the Thursday meetings at the Club Room mean to me as a post-op male to female TS. Even though I have been living as a woman for 18 years and had gender reassignment surgery 16 years ago, I still feel the strain of answering such questions as "What happened to your husband?" if I am talking about my children with my usual social crowd. I seem to always be defensive about my past. At the Thursday night club room meetings, I feel safe just being me without anything to hide. Not only do I find acceptance in TGIC, but understanding. With some members like Callan I find a more profound understanding than I have even encountered among transgender professionals.

Another reason I like the club is because it is an independent club. I hate things affiliated with other things, because I am never sure where things or people are coming from.

Although I am only a member of two months so far, I look forward to a happy membership for many years.

Winnie has my full permission and authorization to use this letter in the newsletter and she may edit it as she feels appropriate.

Best wishes, Jackie



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SEPT. 29 - OCT. 2, 1994

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Dreams: Do you want them to come true?

There's a song on the charts by Hal Ketchum, in which he sings about dreams: "Be careful what you dream, for it may one day come true." He further sings, "It's a shame to wake up and find your dream's been broken in two."

I find this an interesting thought, for we all have dreams, and without them, life would be hardly worth living. It's most important, however, that our dreams, if we definitely want them to come true, be reachable, and not fantasies.

In our gender world, we find realistic dreams mingled with fantasies. Much of crossdressing, in particular, is fantasy, which is fine; however, when fantasy takes over and blots out reality, there can be trouble.

A perfect example of this would be the person who lives a life that has many problems, and who believes that a change of sex would eliminate all of them. Their dream actually becomes an unrealistic and unhealthy fantasy, or even obsession. They cannot see that the old problems will remain if they have SRS, and with them, will come many more problems. Only those who are true transsexuals should consider SRS and follow the Standards of Care.

We who are partners and wives of gender-gifted men have dreams, too.

Often, our dreams of the perfect relationship, with the perfect man are dissipated with the rude awakening that our husbands are not as we expected them to be. We often react with shock and disbelief, some with abhorrence, and a few of us react with a "so what?" attitude. Often, relationships are not strong, with other major problems, and the crossdressing can be the straw that breaks the camel's back. For many women, though, it is such an emotional stunner, that they can't think straight, and may feel personally betrayed by the man they thought they knew so well.

That betrayal hurts so deeply, that I have heard some women say it is as though they had found out their husband was unfaithful. An aside here: In my support group, we have two wives, who upon finding strange women's clothing, immediately assumed their husbands were having an affair. When they found out that instead, the husbands were crossdressers, the relief was so intense, that they were able to feel much better about their husband's dressing - the crossdressing was, in their eyes, the "lesser evil," and much more acceptable. (Please don't assume that I, personally, find crossdressing an evil thing, for I do not. To me, it is just another part of my husband, one which I love as readily as I do his other facets.)

A woman dreams of the perfect man, the perfect relationship and family, all based on what society sees as the "norm." Unfortunately, society as a whole, fails to understand that not everyone fits into their description as "norm" and society very often reacts with scorn, laughter and cruelty to anyone who might just be different. How unfortunate that a country born of desire for freedom so brutally denies freedom to those who were born different, such as the gays and lesbians, the crossdresser, the transsexual.

To a woman suddenly confronted by someone she thought she knew so well and told that he is gender-gifted and thus different, the dreams she has had are often broken in two. Her dreams may have been unrealistic, for no man, or woman, is perfect. For the husband, whose dream is that his wife will accept and embrace this other part of him, he may find that it was a fantasy, an unrealistic dream. He places tremendous pressure on his wife, often without giving her the time, the education material, the caring she needs to handle such a blow. What we now have are two people in such intense personal pain, that neither can hear what the other is trying to say. They cannot leave their personal pain to realize that the other is equally hurting.

At this point, I think it is vital that they seek some form of counselling; hopefully, with a counsellor who knows something about Gender Dysphoria. Unfortunately, we can't often find such counsellors, who will be open to the needs of each partner; instead, it seems as though far too often, a counsellor will be biased toward one partner from the start, without giving that person the opportunity to express their needs.

This obvious lack of counsellors who have the information to help couples in a gender-related relationship **should** be the attack call of our gender communities to provide the counselling community with sound, documented educational material and studies by reputable members of our own community and theirs. Examples of this would be Dr. George Brown's study of 106 wives of crossdressers; the International Foundation for Gender Education's booth at the annual convention of the American Psychiatric Association; and the American Educational Gender Information Service, which provides an abundance of public service ads, advisory bulletins, seminars and workshops for professionals.

Professionals already involved in gender issue counselling should make it a priority to share their valuable experience with their colleagues.

Our professional counsellors need to be educated so that woman such as us, involved in a gender-issue relationship have someone qualified and educated who can fairly counsel us, and our partners.

How many women have no one to turn to when they are hurting so much?

Peer support groups for wives and partners are a big help, for women share like experiences. However, the need for professional facilitators for such wives/partners support groups is desperate. Those of us in leadership roles in such support groups are generally not professional. We need to have someone with a counselling background who can help us realistically deal with the gender issues in

our lives. Facilitators should not provide marriage counselling; instead, they should help a woman focus in a healthy way on the issues in her life, offering direction, but not making her decisions for her. Facilitators often do charge for this; however, I believe that professionals can, and should be found who will act as facilitators on a *pro bono* basis.

As humans, we dream in our sleep time, and we dream when awake. The difference is that our waking dreams are actually hopes for the future, things we desire or believe we need. It is very important that our dreams, if we really want them to come true, are realistic. We need to be very sure that we are ready to face the consequences of a dream and realize that if it comes true, it may not be exactly as we had dreamed it. If our dream is another person, we need to be able to face the fact that no person is perfect, that there are parts of each of us not visible, which are kept inside ourselves, and we need to know that at some point, that inner, secret self may well appear on the surface. Are we willing to accept all that is our partner -- or just the part we dreamed of?

[Reprinted with permission from Cross-Talk #54. Linda Peacock is the director for wives' and partners' concerns on the Tri-Ess board of directors, and publisher of the Sweetheart Connection newsletter. She may be reached at P.O. Box 24031, Little Rock AR 72221.]

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I will not dwell much on this religious thing. It was the worst experience of my life. The garbage from my mother was a birthday party by comparison. I said before that it was occult in addition to being psychological madness. I will not go into detail on that except to say portions of my life were the same kind of thing that happens in a well written supernatural-psychological thriller where you don't know where the psychological stops and the supernatural begins. The first six months especially, but still afterwards, I experienced severe attacks of extreme anxiety. I sold the farm because I was very badly messed up on religious garbage and lies, no other reason. I did not seek therapy because I was already brainwashed into not trusting the "unsaved" while the "saved" drove me deeper and deeper into madness.

Today, eighteen years later, I am finally easing into the acceptance stage of grieving the loss of the farm. This was my "born again" experience. Reality turned on me, and kept turning on me. I was indeed brainwashed on a lot of sick, wacko religious junk and lies. Severe disorientation had me scared as hell. Life ceased to make any sense, everything was totally chaotic. By 1979 I started really losing it with mood swings that would repeat themselves over and over; black anger, black depression, then a light headed don't-give-a-shit giddiness, then back to black anger and the cycle would start again, each phase lasting an hour or two.

By 1979 I viciously hated God, and cursed him out more viciously than any flesh and blood person. Over the four years I had experienced seizure nightmares related to a phenomenon called "night terrors". During the experience I thought they were demonic. They turned out to be psychological, the result of extraordinary emotional oppression, repression, suppression. There was a writhing emotional snakepit in my gut continuously over the four year period. In the fall of 1979, I used all of my knowledge of therapeutic devices, and made a contract

with myself to put all religion, all religious people, all religious activity of any kind, all of it without exception absolutely for an initial period of one year. It took only three months to realize this contract was the right move. Healing had begun, and I returned to the real world of common sense, reality, and human beings.

It would be easy for me to spend the next five pages denouncing Man's expression of Christianity, religiosity, ninety-nine percent of which is poison to my system, and an abomination to me personally. I most certainly do denounce, despise, and preach against all authoritarian, fanatically driven fundamentalism.

My wife and a friend of hers introduced me to the teaching of Charles Taze Russel whose interpretation of the Bible is carried on by the Layman's Home Missionary Movement whose headquarters is in Chester Springs, Pa. Check it out if you wish. It is the ONLY biblical teaching that makes sense to me.

I mentioned way back that God would not let me cross-dress, or at least that very strong impression was with me. It was from 1976 to 1991, fifteen years! All attempts at serious cross-dressing met up with something physical or situational, that I took as a message from God saying, "No, that's off limits." One time, I got sick, another time I got clumsy and hurt myself. A few times I got spooked by a leftover fear reaction from the occult nature of the religious experience. There would always be "something" that would happen. I would sometimes engage in partial crossdressing, wearing tights, and short skirt, but not heels, never shaving my beard which I had from 1980 to 1992. That seemed OK. Then in January of 1992, I began again expecting that "something" to happen and it didn't. It just plain didn't. Was it God or my psyche? I don't know. I guess it may not have been the time to explore or even play with my transvestism. There certainly was enough other heavy shit to deal with. There

was no confessing or discussing my cross-dressing desires with any of the religious people. That religious experience generated its own madness, which totally shoved everything else into oblivion, while the madness created by the religious experience consumed everything.

The next five years was sane and peaceful, 1980 to 1985, while I healed from my religious experience. I had lost my farm, my home, where I had grown up. I had been pulled up by the roots and left that way. Now I was a drifter. I had landed a job doing electronic testing in a factory in Saratoga. In the spring of 1981, I quit and started a motorcycle trip all over the U.S. and parts of Canada. That was one of the most joyful things I ever did. It lasted one year. I've got stories, music and poetry from that trip that I'll be sharing for the rest of my life. I became a motorcycle hobo for a while and loved it. I didn't exactly unpack right away when I got back. I did a lot of camping for the next few years, living in a tent from Spring 'til Fall. In the summer of 1984, after being laid off by Coleco, I camped out in my Dodge van, plates removed, on unemployment, put money in the bank, and hit lots of folk festivals, including as far away as Galex, Va. That was a very enjoyable year.

Then I got married. That became another period of wretchedness.

The marriage was the second most wretched thing in my life. Like the religious thing, it was another period in my life in which I was totally in the dark, and very miserable until I had broken away. Then the pieces of the puzzle fell into place. When you are being bombarded by something and experiencing a terrible reaction, your wretched state prevents you from seeing your own predicament clearly. You are at a great disadvantage to do your own problem solving when you are being brainwashed, or manipulated by somebody.

Carol and I had been friends for one year. Then it escalated to lovers in a moment. Then she started acting strange. Out of the blue sky, she would be relentlessly

forceful, and when she went into this will-forcing mode, she would be a juggernaut of raw forceful will. All reason and reality went out the window. Any thoughts and feelings I had did not count. I was not allowed to have my own thoughts and feelings. This is the deepest and deadliest form of rejection, and is basically the same thing that assailed me and drove me insane during the religious thing.

In their trip, you must be "an empty vessel so God can manifest Himself through you". In the system of authoritarian, fanatically driven religiosity, this is the door opening mechanism for brainwash. It also invites and satisfies many forms of insecurity because the insecure person has a whole new set of excuses to hide from himself (herself) and justify it with the "Not me but Jesus in me" stuff. Deadly!! Very, very deadly. During the religious thing, I felt like a robot. I felt like all this religious stuff was trying to make a robot out of me. It was! There was enough sense in me to resist it with all my might. So I was in misery fighting a hideous religiosity system bent on religious robot brainwash.

(To be continued next month)



Connections

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I have heard the statement from more than one CD: "I know I can never pass, but I don't care" ... usually followed by: "I am perfectly content to remain in the confines of my home, or an occasional CD function". I personally admire this thought process, but as time progresses, I am starting to doubt its validity. All of the periodicals that I have read are usually laced with letters from readers who state that feeling feminine is far more important than looking completely feminine. Again, the same publications tell of CDs coming out of the closet and into mainstream society, much like lemmings heading for the proverbial cliff. The point here is that everything printed offers the reader a direct conflict. Most publications leave the reader with the thought that, to be a real crossdresser, you must be out and about in society. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The problem is that there are some that -- no matter what they did to themselves -- could not pass through society unnoticed. It would seem that this could be very detrimental to the mental well-being of this particular CD, because he is now being told by his newfound peers, that he is an incomplete or inferior CD. To put it bluntly, this is just the opposite of what most support organizations set out to accomplish, but it's done by most organizations every day. Is there a solution to this dilemma? Probably not. The concept of letting the authors of various articles of each of the national publications and the authors of local newsletters know that they are writing possible harmful information is, in all probability, a waste of time. It has to be approached from the individual level. I am sure that most who read CD publications are of at least average intelligence and are capable of making decisions for themselves.

But even though we are intelligent enough to make our own decisions, the pressure exerted by other well meaning CDs writing articles is in some cases too much to handle.

Over the years I have written many articles for our newsletter -- which have been reprinted by national organizations -- which state that going public is a personal decision and one should not be coaxed into what may be a wrong or harmful decision for that particular individual. On the other hand, I have written as many articles describing my and others' escapades out in society. So I am as guilty as those well-meaning individuals I spoke of earlier.

The problem that exists for anyone writing articles for either local or national publications is that you must please everyone. If you must cater to all CDs, then you will find articles that directly oppose one another. In other words, articles that state "how great it is to be out in the big world, mingling with society, while dressed" and those that state "it is not necessary to leave the closet". Both concepts are correct, but apply to different people. **You have to decide which category is correct for you.**

Over the years, I have met many CDs who have chosen one of the above categories. I will, however, state that the larger percentage have chosen being out in public over staying within a controlled environment. The reason is not totally clear, except from a personal standpoint, but the action of going public does not make a better crossdresser. I have also met those that were comfortable with the controlled environment, but with time changed their mind and opted for venturing out. Was peer pressure a determining factor? Were they coaxed out by written delusions of grandeur? Did their personal life change in some way that offered them more freedom? Probably the answer to all of the above questions is yes.

I will interject at this point that some of the nicest, most caring people I have met, since being involved with the crossdressing community, have been those that did not see the need to pass or to be involved with the rest of society while

dressed. They truly cared about other people and were not preoccupied with their own physical appearance. I have also met those that were so good, the finished product allowed them to pass under the closest scrutiny. Are these "passers" better CDs? Emphatically, NO. They have only the benefit of being able to pass ... no more, no less. The thing that you were not made aware of is what this person that passes had to give up, or what the rest of his life is like. Remember, there always is a price to pay of one kind or another.

In the future I will probably write more articles on clothing and makeup tips, but remember, they are not designed to insinuate that you must use these tips for the rest of the world to see. All of my writings are designed to be somewhat informative, but always lighthearted. I have never been able to take crossdressing, or for that matter, life in general, seriously. Most of what I write, except for this article, I write with humorous overtones, in hopes that none of us takes this stuff too seriously. My only helpful hint at this time is that from now on, when reading any CD publication, do it with both eyes open. Learn to read between the lines, so to speak. Learn to recognize the fertilizer from the shoe polish.

To finalize this dissertation, we must maintain our common sense and make our own decisions. We as CDs can not be swayed by what appears to be glamorous escapades written by other well meaning CDs, if that's not what we want. We as CDs can also not afford to measure another's worth by whether they pass or not. Looking at the big picture, passing is but a speck of sand on the beach. The grass is not greener on the other side, it just appears that way because of the fertilizer being spread. A crossdresser is a crossdresser, no matter where the action is carried out. This is not the Boy Scouts; there are no merit badges given. Your rank will never change for achievement of activities. You are a plain old crossdresser whether at home or out in public and will probably die a plain old crossdresser.

As always, have fun and do what you do to the best of your ability, with dignity and within the restrictions placed upon you, either by yourself or by others.

[Reprinted with permission from Cross-Talk #53, from the newsletter of the Sierra Silver Belles, South Lake Tahoe, CA.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POLICY: Short announcements and advertisements from Club Members are published free for two consecutive months, unless cancelled by the originator or a specific request to continue is made.

LOVE IS A MANY GENDERED THING GIFT (*Gender Identity for Families in Transition*) is an educational seminar for the families and friends of transsexuals, to be held on Sunday, October 2, 1994 from 10 am to 4 pm at the Northshore Holiday Inn in Skokie, Illinois. Presenters are Randi Ettner, Ph.D., a noted clinical psychologist and expert in the field of gender dysphoria, and her husband Fred Ettner, M.D., a family physician and lecturer. Registration prior to August 31 is \$75 single, \$50 for additional guests (\$85/\$60 after August 31), mailed to:

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CALENDAR

Regular Meetings are held every Thursday at the TGIC Club Room on Central Avenue in Albany, 7:30 - 10:30 pm. Some come earlier and stay later, but it is wise call if you are not a Keyholder or if it is your first visit. Come dressed either way, meet and talk with friends. Many continue to socialize at one of the Central Ave. night spots after the meetings.

AUGUST 1994

Aug 4 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Aug 11 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Aug 18 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Aug 25 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

SEPTEMBER 1994

Sep 1 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Sep 8 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Sep 10 **Saturday Dinner**, 8:00 pm
 Northway Inn
 Sep 15 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Sep 22 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm
 Sep 29 Thursday Meeting, 7:30 pm

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MAJOR COMING EVENTS

Contact TGIC for more information. Some registration brochures are available in the Club Room

Aug 17-21 *3rd Annual Transgender Law and Policy Conference (TRANSGEN '94)*, Houston, TX
 Sep 15-18 *Paradise in the Poconos*, PA
 9/29-10/2 *Southern Comfort*, Atlanta, GA
 Oct 4-7 *Dignity Cruise V*, Pittsburgh
 Oct 6-10 *Tiffany Club Fall Fling*, Provincetown, MA
 Oct 16-23 *Fantasia Fair*, Provincetown
 Nov 10-13 *Tri-Ess Holiday en Femme*, NY, NY
 Nov 17-20 *Fall Harvest '94*, Iowa City

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TGIC

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 (518) 436-4513 (live Thurs. 8-10 pm)

Transgenderist's Independence Club (TGIC) is a nonprofit, educational, non-sexual social support group for persons wishing to explore beyond the conventional boundaries of gender, including crossdressers, transsexuals and their friends.

TGIC Officers

President	Winnie
Vice President	Joan
Secretary	Joyce
Treasurer	Winnie
Newsletter Editor	Winnie

The *Transgenderist* is the newsletter of TGIC, published monthly and mailed First Class to members, prospective members, friends, professionals, and exchange publications.

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TGIC General Membership Dues: \$40/yr