HCA ID1748/1/12

The indispensable companion to Scottish transgender lifestyle, culture and current affairs

the Tartan Skirt

AUTUMN 2001/£6.00

ISSN 0968-4042



YOU THINK *WE'VE* GOT SOME PECULIAR HABITS!

DIVIDED WE FALL...
holding the solidarity movement apart

PASSING OUT
shocking treatment for the serious transgender

GETTING IT ON
...to get it off!

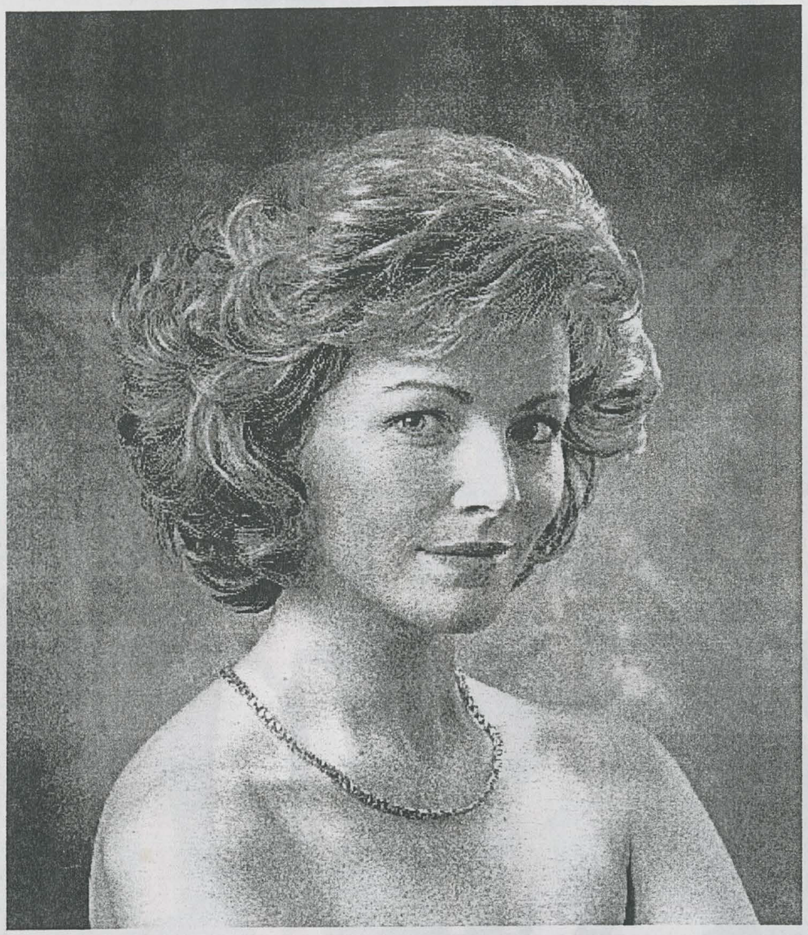
LIFE'S A LOTTERY
checked your ticket recently!

THE CORRECT POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE
a guide to operative statements for the political person of transgender

A LITTLE MOOD MUSIC
just the thing to relate to

TALKING TO LeROY
would you give a fish a medal for swimming all the time?

YOUR ALTERNATE HAIR.....



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The **TARTAN SKIRT** is the magazine of the Scottish Transgender Community brought to you through the efforts of members of the community and friends.

We are proud to acknowledge the generosity of all concerned who selflessly contribute to these pages giving freely of their time, expertise and experience.

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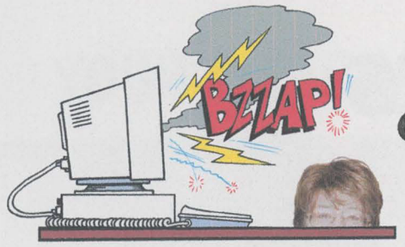
COVER: Cross-dressed 'theme' wedding

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The views expressed in articles and contributions are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor. All items are published in good faith. No responsibility is accepted by the Tartan Skirt for items or services featured or advertised.

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editorial

You don't know how close I came to hanging up my editorial shade this summer! I wasn't sure why I should continue. I was so angry at having to face a massive bill to put the magazine's computer back in operation following a major systems failure. But that's another bitter and angry path I'm walking. To get back to the magazine... I had to foot the bill myself as the magazine is non-profit making - and that really pissed me off, especially as I was saving the money for something else.

Then I realised what I'd done! I'd committed myself to producing the magazine for the next hundred years as the only way of clawing back what it owes me. Bugger! I really am my own worst enemy.

So the good news is... the Tartan Skirt has appeared once more. The bad news is... this can *only* continue so long as it doesn't become a drain on my own monetary resources.

Now, I need your help more than ever to get it onto a sound financial footing - the only guarantee it will survive. I need you to buy the magazine, to tell your friends about it, to promote sales of the magazine ANY WAY YOU CAN! Be creative - sell it at the street corner while you're waiting, if you have to! And *please* help me increase advertising revenues by ***telling me who you buy from.*** The magazine has always endeavoured to support the community – IT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT NOW!

It's too late when it's gone.

It never rains but it pours. At least it can feel like that at times. Besides being unable to reach me by e-mail for the best part of June and July because the computer was out of commission, there is also the distinct possibility that some people will have written to the magazine around that time who are asking themselves why they haven't received any communication from me. I regret to have to explain this by saying that a theft of cash and mail intended for the magazine appears to have occurred around the same time. The extent of this setback is not clear. So please, if you've written to me and not heard anything, or if perhaps you've taken out a subscription and your cheque hasn't been cashed, please get in touch again.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please note that the telephone number for the Tartan Skirt is now 01463-[redacted].

Also, following major technical difficulties, the Tartan Skirt's e-mail address has been changed to [redacted]

If you attempted to contact the magazine by e-mail at any time since June 16th using the address [redacted] this mail may not have been delivered. *If you think you may have been affected by this, please check with me that I am in receipt of your communication.*

Lastly, I regret the necessity of implementing a price increase for the Tartan Skirt. It's make or break time, girls, if it doesn't work now... *that's it!*

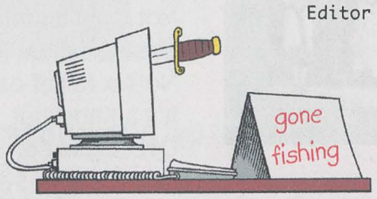
Editor

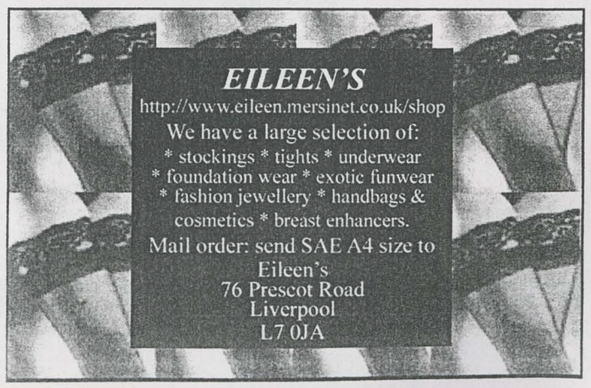
God, this is depressing!

As I struggle to break into the refrain from that memorable film *'The Life Of Brian'*, I'll try to look on the bright side and end this on a cheerier note. There's a lot of good stuff in the magazine this issue with something for everyone. Not everyone will be happy with what they read, however, and that's how I intend it to be – controversial, thought provoking and stimulating! So keep up the good work by letting me have your views and experiences as articles for the Tartan Skirt, Scotland's number one (ok, only) magazine.

Julia Gordon

Editor and tea lady





The Eonist Autumn Wedding Weekend
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e-mail [redacted]

Scottish TV/TS Group Buffet and Disco
Saturday 15th December
The Minto Hotel
Tickets - £7 per head
details and tickets from Irene:
Tel 0775[redacted]
e-mail [redacted]

Please Note:
Deadline for all advertising and submissions for the Autumn 2001 issue of the Tartan Skirt is:
15th October 2001
DEADLINES ARE FIRM!

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTION!
'Grandtully Weekend'
9th to 16th February 2002
Self catering rate £7 - 10 per day per person (to be finalised)
For further information contact Irene on 0775[redacted] or e-mail: [redacted]

Crosslynx Programme
Sept. 12th - Chief Inspector Nanette Pollock will be giving advice on police complaints procedure for any trans-gendered person who is/has been a target of harassment, attacks, violence, etc.

Miss TV Scotland Weekend
October 26th - 28th
Minto Hotel - Edinburgh.
For details contact Loraine at Hide & Sleek
Tel: 01592[redacted]

AROUND THE COUNTRY

LIVINGSTON LEADS THE WAY...

The West Lothian Transgender Support Group had the first of, hopefully, many indoor boot sales, and raised £60 for the group. They've now set their sights on staging a week in a charity shop in December, again with all moneys raised going to the group.

The group informs me it has a new community education worker to help with future funding. This on the tail of their efforts to raise over £2200 for a project worker. And they're looking forward to meeting with a WPC from Livingston who has expressed a willingness to help and work with the group.

HIGHLAND HOSPITALITY

Since Julia Gordon stepped down as co-ordinator, the Highland T-Group has been working hard to attract new members under the management of it's new committee. Their efforts are now beginning to pay off with attendance in double figures. As a result, doors are opening at 6.00pm to give people greater opportunity to get changed before the meeting gets under way.

GRAMPIAN IN SHAKE-UP

The Grampian Gender Group have lost their long-standing co-ordinator, Andrea Rowe, to the pressures of getting on with her life. Without doubt she'll be sorely missed and her departure has been a challenge to the membership to find a suitable replacement.

CROSSLYNX

Following health problems Crosslynx co-ordinator and Scottish Regional organiser for the Beaumont Society, Ruth Stewart, has found it necessary to take some time out from group and BS activities. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery, Ruth. Carol Taylor will be filling in for her at Crosslynx.

A NEW GROUP IS BORN!

A new Scottish support group has come into existence. Like MAST (Motivation And Support For Transsexuals) TRANSLOTHIAN aims to help individuals with gender dysphoria, "a distressing and painful genetic condition". Driving force behind the initiative is Andrea Brown who can be reached at: HYPERLINK mailto: [redacted]

EDINBURGH TV/TS GROUP

The new venue for Edinburgh meetings, the Phoenix Cellar Bar in Broughton Street, seems to have met with everyone's approval. Irene tells me she has been busy negotiating behind the scenes to organise an away event at Grandtully. Those of you who attended the Grandtully weekends in the past will no doubt be pleased to hear there is the likelihood of them running again next year.



The Sexing of Rebecca Pine

None So Pretty

by Reg McKay

Main Stream Publishing ISBN 1 84018 175 3 (1999) £14.99

Until he reached 64, Robert Pine led a life both ordinary and extraordinary. Born into the English middle class in Birmingham, Robert had a lifelong secret passion - he used to love to dress as a woman. But it was always done in the strictest privacy.

Throughout his career in the army, and later as a teacher, a sales manager, and a shopkeeper, Robert did what was expected of him; he had girlfriends, he endorsed the family life, he supported his dependants. Robert was domestically a husband and father, and then a divorcee. He married a second time and became a stepfather and a grandfather. But he kept asking himself, "Who and what am I?"

Robert's early life is detailed in the early chapters of this book and any cross-dresser or transsexual will feel that his life was and is one that could perhaps have been written not just about him - but about any of us!

In later life Robert and his second wife Jean (with her children) set up home in the beautiful fishing village of Tarbert, half way down the Kintyre peninsula.

They opened up a local paper and convenience shop and settled into the community by taking part in as much of the local social life as they could, especially dancing. In an area notorious for usually only accepting foreigners (anyone from outside Argyll and Bute) as locals when they have been in their grave for 50 years, the Pines became an integral part and pillars of the community. The story tells much of the Pines' struggles to cope after Jean was injured in an accident with a crazy motorist that left her badly damaged and crippled for many years, and of the support given to them by the community in this time of stress.



But in his early 60's, with Jean mostly recovered, and 15 years after settling in Tarbert, Robert finally decided to settle the question of his own gender paradox. He spent quite a lot of his private time in dresses and skirts, to the consternation of Jean; she accepted his 'hobby' with reluctance but in the knowledge that Robert's love for her was undiminished and that her life would be unbearable without him.

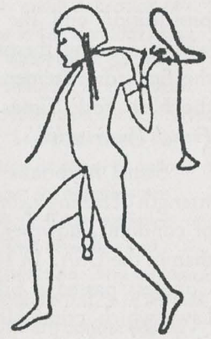
Robert knew the answer to his conundrum - and had done for many years - but none the less it was a brave decision in such a close community to proclaim in a letter to every house in the neighbourhood that in future he would be living his life as a woman - Rebecca. The book tells of the shockwaves that rippled through the small Highland community - but one that nevertheless came to accept Rebecca as she wanted to be and of the dramatic events leading up to and following his full gender change.

McKay 's book is a highly readable story of the life leading up to Robert's transformation to Rebecca and one almost becomes a part of this close Highland community as one reads it. It is also a love story, as Jean struggles to accept the changes in their lives, and a story of strength in the face of adversity, of the courage to be true to one's self and of faith in human nature.

Danielle



The History of the condom



The earliest evidence for condoms is found in Egyptian paintings over 3,000 years old. Constructed from oiled animal bladders and sections of intestine, it is unclear whether the ancient Egyptian wore them for sexual or ritual reasons. The Romans, however, used sheep intestines to protect them from disease and may be responsible for giving it its name - the Latic *condus* meaning 'receptacle'.

The condom appears next in cave paintings at Les Combarelles, in southern France, dated around 100 CE and the first written documentation of a penis-covering barrier is found in the writings of Italian anatomist Gabriel Fallopius in 1564. He designed a medicated sheath to go over the tip of the penis and under the foreskin. It was held on by a pink ribbon so that it would appeal to women! He also designed one to meet the need of the circumcised Italian stallion which was 8" in length!! However, this was not born out of any desire to prevent pregnancy - that was the woman's responsibility - they were actually a response to the growing epidemic of syphilis which was spreading throughout Italy and the rest of Europe from north Africa.

The oldest surviving condoms were discovered in the foundations of Dudley Castle near Birmingham, England. Dating back to 1640 they were made of animal and fish intestine and were probably used to prevent transmission of sexually transmitted infections by soldiers during the civil war between the forces of Oliver Cromwell and King Charles I. Another explanation for how the device got its name is often credited to the court physician of King Charles II, the Earl of Condom, who was charged with inventing something as protection against syphilis.

Literature of the 1700s suggest that, by now, the condom's contraceptive (rather than prophylactic) properties had already been realised. By 1766 many shops were producing handbills and advertisements promoting the sale of condoms.

Moralists of the day derided their use, claiming they would lead to the deterioration of the human race by encouraging premarital sex, sex with prostitutes and the demise of marriage. As if to bear witness to this fact, a libertine of no less stature than Casanova was reputed to employ a linen condom in his trysts, referring to it as his *'redingote Anglaise'* (English riding coat).

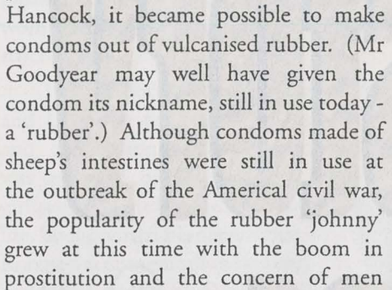


Just about anything of a suitable shape has been tried at some time by someone. The Chinese used oiled silk paper, the Japanese had two forms of condom; the *kawagata*, which were made of thin leather, and *kabutogata* (hard helmets), made of thin tortoise shell or horn, and in the first part of the last century it was reported that tribal women in Africa used seed pods as a form of female condom.

In 1843, with the revolutionary process invented by Goodyear and Hancock, it became possible to make condoms out of vulcanised rubber. (Mr Goodyear may well have given the condom its nickname, still in use today - a 'rubber'.) Although condoms made of sheep's intestines were still in use at the outbreak of the Americal civil war, the popularity of the rubber 'johnny' grew at this time with the boom in prostitution and the concern of men with protecting themselves. 1861 saw the first advertisement for condoms in the New York Times, for *'Dr. Power's French Preservatives'.*

Social historians inform us of the strength of feeling against the use and sale of condoms, however, nowhere greater than in the USA. In 1873 the American Congress passed a bill (the Comstock Law) which criminalised any form of birth control advertising. More than 65,000 condoms were seized during this time and many people were arrested and fined for manufacturing or promoting them. Despite this form of prohibition, people were still having sex and wanting to find ways of protecting themselves in the process. Hence the discovery of the latex condom in 1880.

But, like so many other developments, it took two world wars to spark the real rubber revolution. During the Great War, the American Expeditionary Forces had the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections - 70 percent! So when the Second World War came along, the Armed Forces decided to try a new strategy of promoting the use of condoms. While the practical value was unquestioned, the moralists still raised Cain.



early rubber condoms



Casanova blowing up a condom - from *'The History of Contraceptives'* by Beryl Sutters, 1967.

One of the challenges that campaigners* for women's rights faced was the double standard regarding condom use for birth control. Doctors were allowed to 'prescribe' condoms to protect men from syphilis and gonorrhea when they had pre-marital or extra-marital sexual intercourse. Women, however, could not get condoms to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy! Similarly, in Germany, the Nazi government prohibited the use of condoms, or any other kind of birth control, by its citizens. They were expected to breed the one-race world of 'Aryans'. But the German military did sanction condom use by their armed forces to keep them on the front lines instead of crowding their barracks nursing illnesses caused by syphilis and gonorrhea.

By World War II, Allied government training films urged soldiers. *"Don't forget - put it on before you put it in."* In fact, in 1942, condoms were issued to soldiers during the landing at Dunkirk. They were used to cover and protect rifle barrels from being damaged by salt water as the soldiers waded ashore.

The sexual revolution of the '60s almost put an end to condom use. 'Good girls' were willing sex partners, so fewer men turned to professional sex workers, the most prevalent STIs - gonorrhea and syphilis - were easily treated, and the Pill and IUD provided the most effective reversible contraception the world had seen. When HIV, the virus that can lead to AIDS, was identified, the condom became an essential sexual accessory.

Recent developments in prophylactics has involved making them more consumer friendly. The reservoir tip on the skin-tight latex condom was introduced in the early '50s, as was the sensation-deadening condom designed to end premature ejaculation. The concept of 'mutual pleasure' emerged in 1973 with the release of the textured condom. Women were finally allowed into the act in 1993, when the female condom hit the market. And, most recently, the latest development to affect the condom today is its manufacture from a unique polyurethane material, twice as strong as latex, enabling a thinner, more sensitive film. □

*One campaigner of the time was Marie Stopes, born Marie Carmichael in Edinburgh in 1880. She was the first woman in Scotland to obtain a university degree (a double first class honours degree in botony and geology) but her experiences of being disallowed to attend lectures affirmed her as a passionate feminist. She was awarded a doctorate at Munich, Germany, for her work on fossilised plants. Marie Stopes is probably best remembered for her work with birth control, founding the UK's first family planning clinic in Holloway, north London, in 1921. She died in 1958.



Condom Factfile

❊ Condoms ('rubbers') are made of latex, plastic, or natural membranes and look like long, thin, deflated balloons. They prevent body fluids from mixing when two people have sex.

❊ You don't need a doctor's prescription to buy condoms, and if you are a minor, you don't need a note from your parents. You can buy condoms from any chemist and from supermarkets and stores. There are also a number of sites on the internet that have a great selection. Some agencies working in the field of family planning and sexual health give away condoms for free.

❊ Condoms are safe to use and are effective in reducing the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

❊ As a barrier method of birth control, among typical heterosexual couples who initiate use of latex condoms for men, about 14% will experience an accidental pregnancy in the first year. If condoms are used consistently and correctly, about 3% will become pregnant.

❊ Condoms come in a variety of colors, sizes, flavours, and styles (for example, with and without ribbing, with and without studs, with and without lubrication or spermicide).

❊ Only a few men experience difficulty maintaining an erection with a condom on. This does *not* happen for most men.

❊ Some people are allergic to latex. If allergy to condom use seems to be a problem, check to see if it's actually the latex that's causing the allergic reaction and not the spermicide. Some people are allergic to the spermicide Nonoxynol-9. (Test this by using a non-lubricated condom or a condom with a non-spermicidal lubricant.) If the allergic reaction persists, you may indeed be allergic to latex, although this allergy is less common than an allergy to spermicide. A solution may be to use polyurethane condoms.

HOW CONDOMS ARE MADE?

In the history of mankind there is perhaps no greater achievement of man's mind than the invention of the latex condom. What other creation allows us to engage in riotous promiscuous sex without fear of pregnancy or disease? Not that I necessarily approve of that.... but here's how it's done...

Step 1: The Great Harvest

The first step in condom production is collecting natural latex from commercial rubber trees. Latex is the natural sap found inside the trees. Most latex production is found in Africa and Asia. Trees are tapped by cutting a spiral groove in the bark and placing a cup at the bottom. Unlike synthetic rubber, natural latex contains many natural proteins which sometimes cause allergic reactions; hence the latex allergy. Because latex is similar in it's properties to milk and can go sour or curdle, several preservatives are added to it to ensure it's quality.

Step 2: The Big Dip

Processed latex is fed into temperature controlled tanks into which shaped glass forming molds are passed. As the moulds are passed through the tanks they pick up a thin layer of latex which is then dried with filtered air, to prevent contamination. Once dry, the moulds are dipped one more time to create a second coat. After drying a second time the open end of the latex is rolled to form the rim of the condom. While still on the moulds the latex is vulcanized (heated in the presence of sulphur), which gives the condoms their elasticity, strength, and stability. Condoms are then soaked, to release them from their moulds, and removed using high pressure water.

Step 3: Testing

The condoms are now ready to be packaged but before they do they will be tested in various ways. Condoms are electronically tested by placing them onto metal forms and subjected to high voltage. Any small detection of weakness results in the condom being rejected. Batch samples of condoms are also tested using an air-inflation test with random samples being inflated until they burst. Most condoms can hold up to 40 liters of air, or 9 gallons of water! Quality control samples are then selected, and random samples are filled with 300ml of water and suspended for 3 minutes. Any leakage is recorded and the whole batch is thrown out. Further tests are conducted to measure thickness and strength. Some samples are artificially aged to see how the condoms will hold up at the end of their five year life-span.

Step 4: Packaging

After testing, condoms are rolled and placed in their individual foils.



"Do you sell extra large condoms?"

"Yes, we do. Would you like to buy some?"

"No, but do you mind if I wait around till someone does?"



Dear Johnny,

"I can't work out what size to buy"

All men are created equal - except in the trouser department. A recent survey carried out by Durex, polling 3,000 individuals, revealed that the length of an erect penis can range from four to nine inches, while widths can vary from just over one inch to more than two. Almost half of all respondents said they felt the condom they used could have fitted them better. *"An ill-fitting condom can split or slip off, and won't feel comfy. You might even decide not to use it,"* says Mike Harrison, senior technician at Boots' Product Quality and Development Department.

Measure up

To gauge your girth before stepping into the chemist, wrap a measuring tape around your erect penis one inch up from the base. If you're more than five-and-a-quarter inches, you should try a larger condom. *"Girth is more important than length when it comes to safety - you can't roll it all the way down,"* says Dr Anthony Smith from La Trobe University in Australia, author of a year long study on condom usage. *"If the condom doesn't reach down the length of the shaft, you should try another brand."* Of the condoms on the market today, lengths vary from the Durex Featherlite, at 7ins, to the Durex Comfort, the largest condom on the market, at 8.2ins long. Base widths range from the Mates Conform at 1.93ins, to the Comfort at 2.2ins. *"There's no stigma in getting a size other than the largest,"* says Harrison. *"It's for protecting you and your partner, not impressing your mates down the pub."* Getting one that's too large is almost as bad as getting one that's too small, so don't delude yourself.

"It's always slipping off"

The ultimate sexual nightmare: just when you're going at it full-tilt, you suddenly feel dangerously under-dressed.

Bigger is better

Paradoxically, one of the most common reasons for a condom slipping off is that it's too tight - if not fully rolled down, the ring at the base can enter your partner and be dragged off. *"For this reason it's always best to go for wider condoms,"* says Hayman.

Adopt a rodeo style

"And if you're being particularly athletic, it's wise to hold onto the base with one hand," she advises.



"Putting it on is fiddly and takes ages"

"It's just a question of practice and making it an enjoyable part of sex," says Suzie Hayman, sex therapist.

Keep your hands off

"The best method, in my experience, is for the partner to apply the condom on the erect penis using their tongue, slipping his penis into their mouth as they do so," Hayman says. *"There certainly won't be any complaints."* The technique: your partner puts an unrolled condom on the tip of your chap, forms an O' with their mouth (importantly, covering their teeth so as not to risk tearing the condom) and pushes the condom down over your member, using their tongue to unroll the johnny around the edges. Similarly, Hayman advises that your partner diverts attention away from the matter at hand by caressing other parts of your body. *"Don't feel it has to be something that both of you have to concentrate on at the same time - you often get more impatient than your partner, so let them do it."*

Set the scene

If you want to master your technique, Hayman advises you recreate the most likely scenario ahead of the big night. *"There's little point doing it in broad daylight with both your hands, as this won't prepare you for the reality of the situation."*



"It's too dry for comfort"

"What you're missing is friction in the right places," says Keith Alcom from the National Aids Trust, *"This means lubricating inside as well as outside the condom."*

Lube-up...

"Before rolling on the condom, put two drops of lubrication on the head and shaft of your penis," says Alcorn. *"This allows the penis to slosh around in the condom, for a more real experience,"* he says. *"However, be careful not to over lubricate yourself, as this can cause it to slip off during sex."*

...but always read the label

When reaching for some lubrication, don't go for the first thing that comes to hand - many hand and massage lotions contain oils that cause latex condoms to rot in a matter of minutes. Vaseline will do the same. *"Always use a water-based lubricant such as KY-Jelly with latex, or use a plastic, polyurethane condom such as the Durex Avanti,"* Alcorn says. *"If you're unsure if the lubricant you're smearing on yourself is oil or water-based, rub the preparation between your thumb and forefinger and then rinse with water to see if it washes clean away - if it doesn't, it's oil-based."*

"The damned thing splits every time"

"Splits are caused primarily by misuse, not the condoms themselves," says Hayman. After checking that the packaging is still intact when you buy it, and that the condom has not passed its use-by date, there are three other options:

Wait for it

"Ensure that your partner is well lubricated or the condom can stick and literally be torn apart," warns Hayman.

Inside out

"Another common complaint about condoms splitting stems from people putting them on the wrong way round, forcing them down with the roll on the inside," says Hayman. *"This can also be extremely painful, pulling the penis over on itself."* If this is a regular problem, go for Durex Gold, which comes in a box that automatically pops the condom out the right way up for immediate use when fumbling in the dark.

Beware of sailors' hands!

Be careful not to snag the condom on anything rough. *"Even a healing cut on your hand can be enough to cause a minor tear,"* warns Hayman. *"But don't put on hand moisturiser immediately before rolling on a condom as the oils in the moisturiser can cause the latex to rot."* If it's a last-minute thing, just run your hands under warm water for a couple of minutes to soften the skin. And take off any jewellery!

"It feels like I'm wearing something made from sandpaper"

The good news: the latest condom designs, which place an emphasis on comfort and enjoyment through changes to their shape, have improved sensitivity compared to the traditional inner-tube style condoms of old. *"If it's contoured to fit, you'll feel more comfortable and you'll be more relaxed"*, says Harrison.

Take it for a test drive

Suzie Hayman suggests that, like clothes, users try out their condoms in private before wearing them out for real. *"We can spend so long making ourselves attractive to our partner, but we never seem to worry which condom will do the job best later in the evening."* Her advice is to buy one of each of a full range of condoms, take them to the privacy of your home and spend an unusual afternoon trying them out to see which one hits the mark.

"I pulled out but the condom didn't pull out with me"

It happens to the best of us, but there is a technique to prevent it:

Hold on tight

Once you've ejaculated, form a secure ring around the condom at the base of your penis with your thumb and forefinger, and hold onto the condom as you withdraw. *"Don't get carried away in the excitement of the moment and simply roll over,"* Hayman says. *"You won't be feeling relaxed for long if you do."*

Choose your weapon

HERE'S HOW THE TOP SELLERS BATTLE IT OUT FOR POLE POSITION:



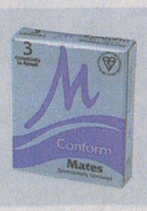
Name: Durex Avanti
Best for: Latex allergy
Price per 12 or equivalent: £24.98
Spermicide? No
Length: 180mm
Width: 64mm
Shape: Straight



Name: Durex Comfort
Best for: 'Big' men
Price per 12 or equivalent: £9.99
Spermicide? No
Length: 205mm
Width: 56mm
Shape: Shaped



Name: Durex Fetherlite
Best for: Extra sensitivity
Price per 12 or equivalent: £8.99
Spermicide? Yes
Length: 178mm
Width: 52mm
Shape: Straight



Name: Mates Conform
Best for: 'Smaller' men
Price per 12 or equivalent: £8.49
Spermicide? Yes
Length: 200mm
Width: 49mm
Shape: Tapered



Name: Durex Gold
Best for: Easiest to apply
Price per 12 or equivalent: £11.97
Spermicide? No
Length: 178mm
Width: 52mm
Shape: Straight

"The smell, and taste, put my partner off"

Although there are a range of flavoured condoms on the market only a small proportion of them carry the BSI Kitemark. It's often better to opt for add-on flavours.

Let your stomach decide

"Dive into the fridge for some inspiration," says Hayman. *"Go for cream, honey or jam... anything you like just as long as it's not oil-based."*

Don't wash or wipe

If it's the taste of the lubricant that's the problem, don't wash or wipe the condom. This can leave the condom brittle and may lead to it splitting. Simply buy a non-lubricated condom and add a water-based lubricant of your partner's choice, such as Boots Lubricating Jelly, £3.50 for 100ml.



"The little bugger won't flush away"

The last thing you want is a lifeless piece of rubber winking at you from the toilet bowl...

Bin it

"Apart from being extremely damaging to the environment, flushing a condom down the loo often requires loads of toilet paper and can leave you leafing through the Yellow Pages for a plumber," says Keith Alcorn.

"Tie a knot in the end, wrap it in tissues, put it in a plastic bag and dump it in the bin," advises Hayman.

ALL ABOUT LUBRICANTS

Water based personal lubricants are moistening substances which are used to make sexual activity more comfortable and pleasurable. Water based lubrication is important for the proper use of a condom. Most brands of condoms are lightly lubricated, but many people prefer to use additional lubricant. Inadequate lubrication while using a condom may result in irritation and discomfort during sexual activity. In addition, the friction created while using a condom with insufficient lubrication may result in condom breakage.

NEVER USE OIL-BASED LUBRICANTS like hand lotion, body lotion, baby oil, vegetable oil, massage oil, mineral oil or petroleum jelly when using condoms or other latex products. Oil based lubricants will quickly break down the latex causing the condom to tear.

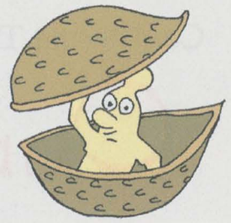
As with condoms there are many different kinds of lubricants. Some of the substances added to lubricants are spermicides such as Nonoxynol-9 (sperm killing substances - see warning below), flavours and chemicals which alter skin sensation.

TIP ON USING LUBRICANTS AND CONDOMS
Rub some water-based personal lubricant on the outside of the condom to reduce friction and lessen the chance of breakage. Many men say that putting a small dab of lubricant inside the tip of the condom before it is put on increases pleasurable feelings during sex.

A WORD ABOUT NONOXYNOL-9
Nonoxynol-9 is a mild chemical detergent that kills sperm and has been found to also kill some STD causing organisms. Some experts believe Nonoxynol-9 may kill the AIDS virus. However, some men and women have a sensitivity or allergic reaction to Nonoxynol-9 that may cause irritation of delicate tissue. If irritation occurs, discontinue use.

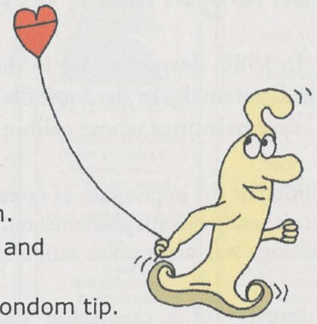


CONDOM USE - IN A NUTSHELL



The Dos

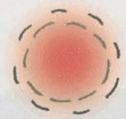
- Keep condoms available if there is any chance that you may need one.
- Practice putting condoms on so that you know what you are doing when it comes to the real thing.
- Check your condoms carry the kite mark showing that they comply with the British Standard.
- Put a condom on before any contact is made between your penis and any part of your partner's body. Those first drops of fluid that appear when you get excited (pre-cum) can contain sperm as well as the organisms that transmit STIs, including HIV.



- Take care not to damage the condom, either when removing it from its foil packet or when putting it on.
  - Use only water based lubricants both inside and outside the condom.
  - If using a spermicide, put some inside the condom tip.
  - Make putting the condom on a part of sexual activity rather than an interruption of it.

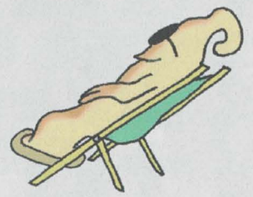


- Squeeze the air out of the tip of the condom before putting it on. Be sure the roll is on the outside.
- If the condom does not have a reservoir tip, pinch the tip enough to leave a half-inch space for the semen to collect.
  - Withdraw soon after ejaculation, before your penis has begun to lose its erection.
  - Hold the condom at the base of the penis on withdrawing.
- Dispose of condoms hygienically.
- Use a new condom for every act of intercourse.



And The Don'Ts

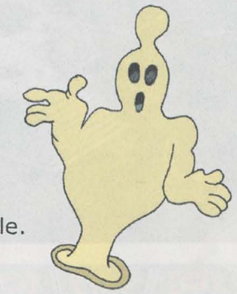
- Avoid storing condoms in strong sunlight. High temperatures can make latex go brittle or gummy (like an old balloon).
- And don't keep them in your pocket or wallet. Your body heat will damage them over time. The glove compartment may seem handy but don't leave them here either.



  - Don't use a condom if it has passed its use-by date.
  - Don't use your teeth, scissors or sharp nails when opening a condom wrapper and make sure you can see what you're doing!



  - Don't try to put a condom on if your penis is not erect.
  - Don't use lubricants that contain oils, fat or greases such as petroleum jelly (like Vaseline) baby oils or lotion, hand or body lotions, cooking oils or oily cosmetics like cold cream.
- Never use a condom more than once.
- Don't be tempted to take risks if a condom isn't available.
- Don't flush them down the toilet - they'll come back to haunt you!



Continuing Tales of Transgender ...

Our Forgotten History

Transgender Practice Revealed in Maya Cave Art

In 1980, deep in a cave in the southeastern corner of the department of Petén in Guatemala, in the foothills of the Maya mountains, was found a collection of cave paintings whose calibre and magnitude rocked the archaeological world.

Recognition of the importance of caves in Maya culture is hardly a recent phenomenon, although their archeology was never taken seriously ... until now.

The discovery of a cave called Naj Tunich changed all that. It preserves the richest collection of archeological material ever found in a Mesoamerican cave. It contains stone buildings and walled alcoves that may have served as tombs, as well as scattered areas of pottery and human bones.

Also within the cave was found an unprecedented collection of paintings, numbering around a hundred, dating to the eighth century CE. Of major significance is the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the paintings that tell of a Naj Tunich enmeshed in a political network involving numerous estates, local and distant, such as Ixkun, Ixtutz, Sacul and Caracol. Like other Maya caves with archeological remains, Naj Tunich was primarily a sacred shrine with a ritual function. Caves were seen as portals to the spirit world and in the Maya tradition pilgrimages were made to caves to encounter spirits through private acts of blood sacrifice, incense burning and other rites. Some of the Naj Tunich paintings depict these introspective moments in graphic detail, affording a unique window into a little-known aspect of Maya culture.





Above: Clay figurine showing a man incising his penis.

Left: Temple complex at Tokal.

Opposite page: Naj Tunich drawing number 18. This graphic scene of sexual intercourse has puzzled investigators. While the male on the left is anatomically accurate, the presumed female has masculine characteristics. This has prompted speculation that it is a homoerotic scene or that the right-hand figure is transgender. The latter suggestion seems more likely, given that the pigtail worn by this figure is an unmistakable sign of female gender.

Maya civilisation lasted almost 2,000 years and was the most widely spread of all the great cultures of ancient America. The ancient Maya were a complex and sophisticated people who occupied a widely varied territory that included parts of present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and the western parts of Honduras and El Salvador.



It is generally accepted that the first peoples entered the Americas from Asia at least 12,000 years ago during the last ice age. The emergence of settled Maya villages began in the first, or possibly the second, millennium BCE. By about 500 BCE, major centres such as Nakbé and El Mirador had been established in the central lowlands, the southern Highlands and in the northern parts of Yucatán with continued development taking place that led to the golden age of the Maya between 250-900 CE. The period following this, up to the early 1500s, is generally believed to represent a period of decline culminating in a rapid and dramatic extinction of the civilisation.

In the early phases of development, the Maya were extremely hostile toward the practice of homoeroticism as evidenced by the murder, on this account, of many Itza males. By the time of the Spanish conquest, however, the Maya appear to have become much more tolerant, for in the early fifteenth century, parents had begun acquiring young men to be the lovers of their own male offspring, explaining that the god Chin had introduced and sanctified this practice. Juan de Torquemada wrote in 1615: *"From that also began the law that if anyone approached the boy (the younger of the two men), they were ordered to pay for it, punishing them with the same penalties as those breaking the condition of a marriage."* In 1569, Tomas Lopez Medel reported homoerotically inclined transgendered male-born priests in the Maya temples of the Yucatán and Guatemala. Is the cave painting at Naj Tunich just such a representation of this practice? □

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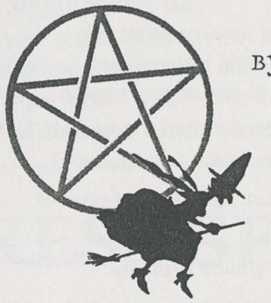
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THE GENDER ACTIVIST'S POLITICALLY CORRECT LANGUAGE UPDATE

capitalistic patriarchal hegemonic discourse - *the means by which the dominant culture and its institutions oppress the transgender community (amongst others)*

coself - *gender-neutral replacement for 'herself' and 'himself'*

decolonisation - *the act of freeing oneself from the bonds of one's oppressors*

ego-testicle point of view - *male perspective on life*

erasure - *the marginalisation of a group of people to the point where they become so powerless that they are, for all practical purposes, invisible to the mainstream of society (example: transvestites)*

false consciousness - *the failure to recognise one's arguments and beliefs as products of an oppressive social system and therefore irrelevant, useless and totally meaningless*

gender-enders - *sex-marked suffixes such as '-ess', 'enne', 'ix', and 'ette' where the implication is that the male is the norm and the female the aberration.*

gender-neutral - *gender blind*

gradualism - *a failure to challenge the fundamental causes of oppression through a willingness to accept changes as these may be agreed with the mainstream culture*

heterocentrism - *the belief that heterosexuality is somehow superior to, or more 'natural' and 'normal' than other forms of sexual expression*

heterosexism - *oppression of those sexual orientations other than heterosexual (includes transgender)*

h'orsh'it - *a gender-free pronoun contracted from 'he or she or it'*

inappropriate physical abuse - *police brutality*

internalised oppression - *false consciousness that leads members of unempowered groups to accept or actively support their own victimisation*

invisible - *a term denoting an individual or group so unempowered that their existence is scarcely noted in the day-to-day language, culture, and rituals of the mainstream (example: transsexual)*

misorientation - *the misguided belief held by certain members of unempowered groups, that they share the same history as the dominant culture*

obstacle to the elimination of oppression - *trying to pass as non-victimised*

oppression - *discrimination against or suppression of individuals or groups on the basis of stereotypes, generalisations and attitudes (conscious or (unconscious)*

person of gender - *a woman*

phallocentrism - *the belief that male generative power is, and should be, the driving force of society and therefore the subsequent tendency to view all other groups and cultures from the point of view of their sexual organs*

politics of difference *(also:* **identity politics***)* - *the growing movement by non-mainstream groups to use their collective identity as a vehicle for self-empowerment*

sexually active - *promiscuous*

sexually dysfunctional - *perverted (example: transvestite)*

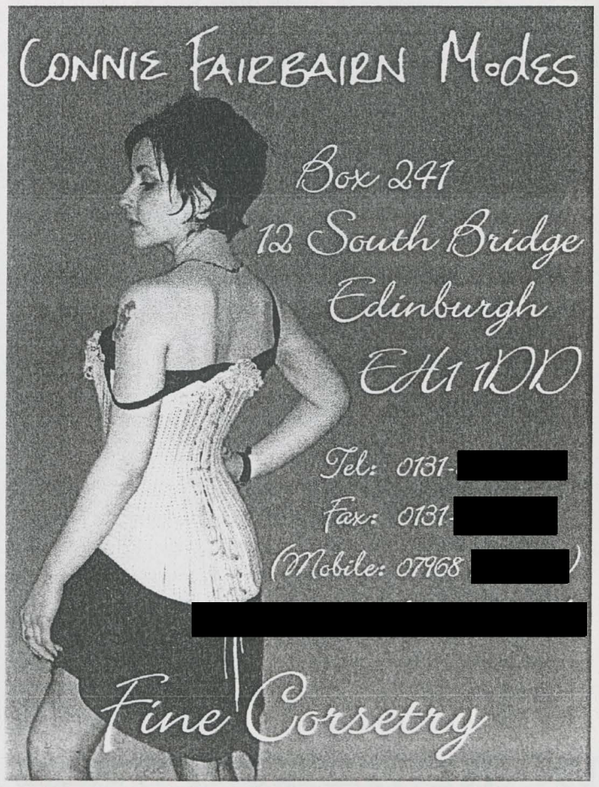
stealth woman - *a transsexual who chooses invisibility over self-empowerment*

traditionally underrepresented community - *minority group*

testosterone poisoning - *the naturally occurring hormonal balance of males*

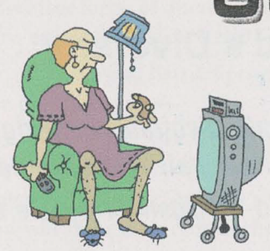
women-identified women *(also:* **gynocentric being***)* - *lesbians*

(Adapted from THE OFFICIAL POLITICALLY CORRECT DICTIONARY AND HANDBOOK *by Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf.)*



Always making excuses? Putting things off then running out of time? Try these delay-busting tips to...

Stop Putting Off Your Life!



From ***Secrets About Life Every Woman Should Know***
by Barbara De Angelis

THE TOP TIME-WASTING EXCUSES - *BUSTED!*

- ***"I'll do it later"***
  No you won't. You'll forget or panic when it's too late.
- ***"I'm too tired"***
  You'll feel more energised if you do something instead of sitting in front of the telly
- ***"It's too hard"***
  You don't know until you try – at least have a go!
- ***"I haven't time"***
  Why? Everyone has at least two hours a week they're fretting away. Find them and use them!

Our unconscious fear of failure can lock us into a viscious circle of not doing anything at all

✓ Pretend you're doing it for someone else

Sounds odd, but it really works. This takes the immediate pressure off you. It also helps you put what you're doing in perspective. If someone moaned to you that they couldn't do something, you'd reassure them and try and help them, wouldn't you? Well, do it to yourself. Imagine telling someone how to do what you're trying to do and see how easy it becomes.

✓ Stop being a perfectionist

It doesn't matter if what you're trying to do isn't perfect, as long as you've done *something*. The more you do, the better you'll feel. And you'll find yourself saying 'mañana' (tomorrow) less and less often.

✓ Don't tell everyone else what you're doing

By all means ask the advice of a trusted friend, but don't spread your plans round like the town cryer – you'll only heap added pressure on your own shoulders.

✓ Break tasks up into bite-sized chunks

Huge tasks, like decorating a room from scratch, can seem so overwhelming. Start straight away, but do a little bit at a time. Perhaps aim to strip the wallpaper off one wall in a day, rather than trying to do everything in a weekend. Then reward yourself with a treat for doing it!

✓ Do something small every day

Do something towards your goals. Take five minutes each day to make a list of everything you want to achieve – even small things like making phone calls and remembering dry cleaning – it'll feel great. Little things lead on to bigger things and you'll soon wonder what you were ever scared of!

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Building our future through partnership

(Stonewall Scotland - Autumn Newsletter)

On 12th July it was announced that a working group of four organisations (Stonewall Scotland, the Equality Network, Outright Scotland and Stonewall Youth Project) had received one of the Scottish Lottery's biggest grants to address discrimination and develop the infrastructure of the LGBT community in Scotland. This was the culmination of nearly a year's preparatory work and has resulted in an exciting project called Beyond Barriers.

Whilst there was an initial knee-jerk negative reaction from some of the more predictable sources, the response in general has been brilliant and although in the past some traditional religious views have slowed the inclusion of LGBT people into our diverse society, we saw a welcome advance in the reactions of the two main Churches. A spokesperson for the Roman Catholic Church broadly accepted the grant, agreeing that *"Discrimination on the grounds of a person's faith, colour or sexual orientation is unacceptable in a civilised society"* whilst the Moderator of the Church of Scotland said *"the church should be welcoming and including, and what Stonewall has done and intends to do with the grant is very much in keeping with what the General Assembly has expressed"*. Such support in itself is a huge step forward and does much to shift public and media perceptions and attitudes. I believe it represents a real opportunity to move into a new phase of dialogue and progress – particularly important in healing some of the worst excesses of the "Section 28 experience".

Beyond Barriers

Celebrating Scotland's Diversity

A partnership project of Stonewall Scotland, Outright Scotland, Equality Network and the Stonewall Youth Project

Recognising lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as equal citizens...

For the first time in Scotland a major award has been made by the Community Fund (formerly National Lottery Charities Board) to strengthen and develop the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community alongside other excluded groups.

The project, **Beyond Barriers**, is a national initiative to challenge prejudice and homophobia and to build links between minority and majority groups within Scottish society. It is the result of a year's preparation and development by a partnership of community organisations and will be managed over its three years by Stonewall Scotland.

The project has three main aims:

1. ***To enable lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people to gain the knowledge and skills to develop a more effective community infrastructure within the wider society.***
2. ***To ensure that local support and services exist and are publicised so that LGBT people (particularly in isolated areas) can live their lives free from discrimination and exclusion.***
3. ***To make 'equality of opportunity' widely recognised as a principle that must come to apply to all people in Scottish society - black and minority ethnic groups, disability groups, asylum seekers, and religious groups alongside other communities that are sometimes excluded.***

Beyond Barriers will achieve this through providing information, training, research and capacity building skills to groups and organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors across Scottish society. It will help strengthen local communities through a greater appreciation of their natural diversity.

Martin Sime, **Chief Executive of the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)** believes *"the project will create a much-needed resource in Scotland to combat discrimination and build our equality agenda. It is especially good to see a co-operative initiative with four organisations sharing their expertise and commitment."*

Ali Jarvis, **Co-ordinator of Stonewall Scotland** says *"We're just delighted! Investment in the inclusion of LGBT people in Scotland is long overdue. We need to help different sections of Scottish society gain a better understanding of what they have in common as opposed to the focus so often placed on where they differ."*

So how is the money to be spent? Beyond Barriers is a 3 year nation-wide project that will create 4 new jobs based in Glasgow. Whilst StonewalI Scotland will be responsible for the day to day management of the project (employing the staff team and supervising the Project Manager's role) the project will be run completely separately from Stonewall Scotland's normal work with a specially created Community Management Board guiding its strategic direction.

Beyond Barriers will build on existing foundations of policy and legislative change to strengthen and develop the LGBT community infrastructure and to build links with other communities, both communities who themselves face forms of discrimination, and the wider community, especially at local levels.

The Beyond Barriers project's main aims are stated on the preceeding page.

The project will be delivered through four separate but related workstreams that will focus on ***information provision***, ***training***, ***research*** and ***community development*** and will meet the needs of those living in geographically remote areas alongside those in the more populated central belt. It will seek to build bridges with other excluded groups and help contribute to a wider understanding of how we can all work together to combat discrimination in any form and build a more inclusive Scotland.

Whilst sometimes it feels like it's taken forever to get the project to where it's at now, in reality the real work starts from hereon in. The next steps are to coordinate volunteers for the Community Management Board and recruit staff, and we're looking to have the project go live in the Autumn this year. There will be regular communication to ensure that people across Scotland are kept updated on progress and we look forward to sharing the tangible outcomes as Beyond Barriers moves from theory to reality. □



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The question is not, to whom do I talk, but who listens?

Of Connection...

Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth. Man does not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself.

Chief Seattle
His Address, 1853.

Of Disconnection...

He's a real nowhere man,
Sitting in his nowhere land,
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody.

Doesn't have a point of view,
Knows not where he's going to,
Isn't he a bit like you and me?

Nowhere man, please listen,
You don't know what you're missing,
Nowhere man, the world is at your command.

Lennon & McCartney

Of Re-joining

Just as the study of natural history was first an elaborate classification of the separate species (and only recently involved ecology, the study of the interrelation of species), so intelligence as a whole is at first no more than a division of the world into things and events. This overstresses the independence and separateness of things, and of ourselves from them, as things among things. It is the later task of intelligence to appreciate the inseparable relationships between the things so divided, and so to rediscover the universe as distinct from a mere multiverse. In so doing it will see its own limitations, see that intelligence alone is not enough - that it cannot operate, cannot *be* intelligence, without an approach to the world through instinctual feeling with its possibility of *knowing* relationship - as you know when you drink it that water is cold.

Alan Watts
This is IT and Other Essays on Zen and Spiritual Experience



Not only blondes ...

by Alexandrina

Aren't mobiles wonderful, girls? I was sure that I had (finally) mastered mine - although I still can't change the tune when it rings – so I switched it on confidently. "Oh, no!" Jane's name wasn't there. But I was *sure* I had tapped it in! The penny dropped. I had forgotten to *store* the number, an error I made once or twice before. Oh, you silly girl! I could have wept almost, having spent all that time with those fiddly little buttons, which are terrors to press with nails. Nothing for it. Just carry on.

I pulled up at the kerbside. Girls, do you have difficulty getting out of a car elegantly? I was wearing a skirt suit and tights. Jane had criticised me for wanting to wear stockings and suspenders. *'When you get out of the car, and you show bare thighs, you'll attract attention, so be demure.'* I wasn't sure which variety of hosiery was 'demure', although I know about denier. Anyway I wore tights to please her.

"Oh, no!" After driving for hours I had stopped for a 'comfort break' only to find the place closed until April. I checked my watch. 31st March. Sod's Law. The sign on the dual carriageway had indicated a tourist office and a welcoming WC. That makes you spit. I didn't have far to go, but when a girl has to 'go', she really has to.

Plenty of bushes around, and no people. I slipped behind the shrubbery. As I emerged adjusting my skirt, I breathed a sigh of relief. Now to 'phone Jane.

I had arranged to visit her and stay overnight. She had explained carefully - as I'm a little slow about technicalities - that her town house was in a restricted parking zone, the streets were paved with yellow doubles (or something like that), but I could stop for ten minutes to unload. All I had to do was 'phone her, she would be there to meet me, we could quickly take in my luggage (all six items), and hence I would avoid a parking ticket. I already had one for £30 lying somewhere in the house so I didn't want any more to clutter up the place.

I pressed the intercom. *"Hi, Jane. Alexandrina here."*

"I thought you were going to 'phone before you got here," she shrieked at the other end.

"Sorry, battery's flat."

"I'm in my knickers. Give me five minutes."

Her flat must be very warm, I thought, if she can wander around in just knickers. It was not so warm in the street. I walked up and down keeping an eye open for a traffic warden. You can easily recognise them as they're dressed like bumble bees, and I didn't want one of them stinging me.

I was looked up and down by a passing male, then realised my 'strolling' may have been giving the wrong impression. 'Jane, hurry up will you, before I'm arrested for soliciting.' At last she appeared and we started to unload my stuff.

Jane winced. *"It's a bit short, isn't it?"*

"The skirt?" I looked sheepish. Jane was wearing a long skirt.

"Yes, it's above the knee."

"Well, just a little. I thought it was quite a smart suit - very fashionable length, really."

Jane sniffed. *"Well, if we're going out for a meal this evening, you'll have to be more circumspect."*

I brightened at the mention of food, and asked where we would go. Jane twisted her mouth.

"I don't eat out much, but there is a place I know that's supposed to be trannie-friendly."

She booked a table for 8.30 pm so I only needed to start getting ready about 6.30.

"I simply must have a shower," said Jane, *"so don't be long in the bathroom."*

"No problem." I was searching my suitcase for a suitable bra. *"I had a bath last week."*

Jane didn't wince this time; she simply looked heavenwards for divine intervention.

I was struggling into my evening dress when Jane came in again. She almost shrieked.

"Those tights!"

"They're all the rage just now - lurex, you know. I like the silver shade. Do you think they're a bit ... er ... zany."

Jane twisted her mouth again. *"They don't go with that claret coloured dress."*

"They won't be seen much anyway with this long dress," I pouted, *"unless I hitch the dress up."*

"Just keep it hitched it down," Jane said. She looked up. *"Oh, my God! I can just about see your naval."*

"But it's fashionable to have a plunging neckline. The French call it collete - or something."

"I don't care what the French call it. I can't go out with you naked to the waist. Wait here." She beetled off and returned with a chiffon scarf in lovely ruby shades.

"Oh, it's lovely, Jane. Goes nicely with the dress," I said, admiring myself in the mirror. *"Thanks for the loan."*

"Just keep it hanging over your boobs and you won't get us thrown out of the restaurant."

I thought Jane might take exception to my long, flame red wig. She shrugged her shoulders in resignation. *"If you feel comfortable in it, that's what matters ... I suppose."*

"Do you think I'll be read?" I enquired, still preening myself at the mirror.

Jane really winced this time. *"Don't worry about it. My attitude is simple. If anyone doesn't like my lifestyle, I say that's their problem, not mine."*

I smiled at her. She really is a great pal.

◁▷

We were ushered to our table by a dumpy female dressed in a sweater top and leggings, both in black stretch.

"She's not very elegant," I whispered to Jane.

Jane was studying the menu, but I was having a good look round. The men, as usual when they eat out, were all scruffily dressed, and the women were not much better. Many were in trousers. Ugh!

"You know, Jane, I think we're the best dressed here."

She smiled agreement. *"I think I'll have this chicken dish."*

"I think I'll have the salmon." I flicked over the card and gasped, *"I've lost a nail."*

Jane looked up in disgust. *"Don't you carry spares? Judging by the amount of luggage you brought I would have though you had six of everything!"*

"No," I wailed, cursing my laziness for not putting on fresh stickers. I bent down to examine the carpet.

"For heaven's sake," hissed Jane, *"Get up off the floor."*

"But my nail! It's from my right hand too."

"Take the one off your left hand then."

"Yes," I sniffed, *"that may help a bit."*

I transferred the nail over and felt a bit better as I flashed my hand out to the passing waitress. *"May we order now, please?"* I hoped she recognised my sophistication. Alexandrina is a most refined lady, you know.



Jane was playing with her napkin. She looked up and winced, as she often does.

"What's wrong, honey," I asked.

"It's those eyelashes. They blind me every time you blink."

"Hm, they are a bit bright, but the silver on them matches my tights."

"I never realised eyelashes had to match tights."

Really! Jane is not up to the minute in fashion.

I went off to the loo after the main course. When I returned dumpy was waiting. *"Would you like to order a sweet, sir?"* I nearly died.

"How could she tell?" I whispered to Jane after she had gone.

"I can hardly imagine, dear," said Jane. *"But don't take it to heart. She's conditioned to know people as either men or women. You might want to make allowances."*

"Perhaps so," I sniffed, *"but I was so looking forward to being called 'madam'. I thought I might have passed."*

"Listen, Alexandrina." Jane pressed my hand. *"You look lovely tonight. And yes, we are the best dressed here."* I perked up.

I perked up even more when Jane went off to the loo. That gave me another chance to get down on my knees under the table in search of my missing nail. A glint caught my eye. *"I found it,"* I announced in triumph when she returned.

Jane smiled. *"Perhaps that will help make up for the 'sir' faux pas."*

A woman who was passing couldn't seem to keep her eyes off me. *"I wonder if she fancies me, Jane?"* I gave the female a wink and she quickly turned away. We both laughed.

"Do you think," I asked, *"that they think that we are gay?"*

"I keep telling you, Alexandrina. That's their problem, not ours."

I nodded. Yes, Jane is so realistic.

We went back to her house and Jane poured out a couple of glasses of wine.

"That was a lovely meal, Alexandrina. Thank you." She looked at me rather whimsically. *"I've learned something this evening."*

I looked up into her eyes, feeling quite romantic. *"Yes, what is it?"* I breathed as sexily as I could.

She raised an eyebrow mockingly. *"Not only blondes are dumb!"* □

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Strange Innocence

When J.T. LeRoy's first novel, *Sarah*, was published last year, the 20-year-old ex-child prostitute became an instant cult figure. The book, named for his mother (who dressed him like a girl and taught him her trade), is a fictionalised account of his life as a "lot lizard" (i.e., truck-stop hustler) and was embraced not only by the literary demimonde but also in *The Guardian* and *The New York Times.* Extremely shy and uncertain of his gender, he has rarely been photographed. With his second book, *The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things*, due out from Bloomsbury this month, LeRoy agreed to sit for MARY ELLEN MARK and talk with singer-songwriter TOM WAITS

J. T.'s stories are like stitches, like exit wounds, dispatches, depositions. He is the brilliant, gifted, and profound fly on the wall. You'll need handkerchiefs and Novocain to get through his new book. It is a golden diving bell crawling through the shark-infested waters of his childhood. He is the witness to all the tales that go on in the dark, and for all of us, long may he have the courage to remember.

Tom Waits: *The world is a hellish place, and bad writing is destroying the quality of our suffering. It cheapens and degrades the human experience, when it should inspire and elevate. You are an exception.*

J. T. LeRoy: Wow, thanks. One thing I realised is that to just have merely suffered isn't enough. One day I was in a bookstore trying to steal a book. This guy knew it and followed me. So to not seem like a thief, I asked him for transgressive books, a term I'd just learned and felt like a big shot bandying. He handed me a book by this guy who had been in prison and writing about his experiences. He had a really horrible life, but it was so horribly written that I just didn't care.

T.W. *After your initial success, did you find it difficult to avoid letting them all package you as a new product line instead of as an artist with a deep well?*

J.T.L. Yeah, I quit after I got my book deal. I quit writing for two years because I didn't want to be the poster boy for the dysfunctional-memoir bullshit. I felt that's what they were really hoping to make me into. So I took my money and ran. I wrote my journalism stuff for New York Press and other magazines. And I had the great fortune of being taken under their wing and guided by some of the best writers around.

T.W. *Do you believe that love and acceptance from the public have any ability to nurture or heal, or is it just like throwing peanuts at a gorilla?*

J.T.L. The thing that's so hard is I keep waiting for it to fix me, and I keep looking at my life and saying, "When does the magic fairy come along?" You know, it's the joke we have in my house: "Don't you know who I am? What do you mean I have to do the dishes? Or I have to go to therapy?"

T.W. *I think that's the thing about fame or any notoriety. It's an illusion that you don't have to play by the rules anymore, the rules of life.*

J.T.L. Yeah, like when we've gone out with Gus Van Sant a few times. We get the best table and everyone would be all over ... They'd give us stuff for free and everything. And I know these are places that I would not have been allowed in a number of years back. And I could see getting addicted to this.

T.W. *How do you stay so present in your stories? They're wet and alive, as if they're happening to you as you write.*

J.T.L. So much of what I do write is from stuff that I've absorbed around me. There's this beetle they use to make jewelry, and they supply it with material and thread and it just weaves it into this beautiful piece. Well, I think it actually consumes it and shits it out or something. And it becomes a really hip kind of jewelry. And I feel like I never know where something's going to come from. It could be from my past, but it could be something or other that I've taken in. I just sit at the computer and shit it into a weave.

T.W. *Do you have some kind of total or heightened recall when you're revisiting an experience? Are you remembering or are you conjuring?*

J.T.L. I think I have parts of me that get frozen in ice when something happens. It's like the "In Case of Emergency" box - writing is like hammering at that box or thawing it, and the words start to liquefy in my hands.

T.W. *Do you feel safe when you are writing all these things? You know, like wearing one of those dog suits? Did you ever see one of those dog suits that the police put on and then have the dogs attack them?*

J.T.L. Yeah. That's absolutely it. And as long as I was writing, the dogs could totally come at me. It was really weird, because once I put the pen down, it was as if I took off the suit and then I was vulnerable again.

T.W. *I see. The pen is mightier than the sword.*

J.T.L. Or the pit bull.

T.W. *There's a line in your new collection of stories where one of your characters is digging his finger into a telephone cord and asks, "I wonder if I can get electrocuted if I go too deep." Well, it jumped out at me as a metaphor for your writing. I wonder if I could get electrocuted by reading them because you are going so deep.*

J.T.L. Well, I appreciate you saying that. But it's like a shark. No one would say a shark is courageous for swimming all the time. □

(*Vanity Fair*, July 2001)

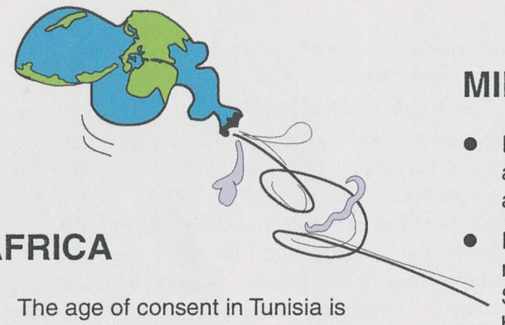
UNSAFE SEXUAL PRACTICES AROUND THE WORLD



In Britain, a woman can have sex with her grandson, but not her grandfather

EUROPE

- In the Netherlands, an adult can have sex with a twelve-year-old, providing he or she consents.
- In Britain, a woman can have sex with her grandson, but not her grandfather. You may also copulate with your uncles and nephews.
- Lesbian sex has always been legal because Queen Victoria refused to believe it existed and removed references to it from an 1885 criminal bill.
- Until 1987 in the UK, a man could be sentenced to life in prison for having anal sex with his wife.



AFRICA

- The age of consent in Tunisia is twenty. Homosexual acts are illegal.
- In September 2000, in the Nigerian state of Zamfara, a teenage girl, Bariya Ibrahim Magazu, became pregnant after being raped by three men. She was later charged with having pre-marital sex under Zamfara's Islamic law of Shari'a. Her punishment, 100 lashes by whip, was deferred until two weeks after the birth. The public flogging was performed in January this year, with a crowd of more than 100 watching. Mahmoud Shinkafi, the deputy governor of the district, claims that 'disgrace in public deters people from crime'.

In Lebanon, men are allowed to have sex with animals, but the animals must be female. Having sexual relations with a male animal is punishable by death

MIDDLE EAST

- In Lebanon, men are allowed to have sex with animals, but the animals must be female. Having sexual relations with a male animal is punishable by death.
- In all countries which have proclaimed Islam to be the state religion and/or Shari'a to be the principal source of law, such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, adultery (both sex before marriage and extra-marital sex) and homosexual acts are strictly forbidden. For all these offences, the traditional punishment is death by stoning for married people and 100 lashes of a whip for unmarried people. In 1980, a diplomatic furore was caused by the British docu-drama *'Death Of A Princess'*, which depicted the public execution – on her grandfather's orders – of a seventeen-year-old Saudi Arabian princess and her lover for adultery.

ASIA

- The legal age of consent is thirteen in both Japan and Korea.
- In Indonesia, the penalty for masturbation is decapitation.
- In Singapore, pornography is illegal. And in 1997, its Court of Appeal ruled that 'oral sex is a crime unless it is followed by penile-vaginal sex'.
- Homosexual acts are illegal and can be punished by life imprisonment.
- Homosexuality is a crime in Malaysia, carrying a sentence of up to twenty years and a mandatory whipping.
- In Thailand, leaving the house not wearing underwear is a crime.
- Homosexuality is not referred to at all in the Chinese penal code. Homosexual acts have, however, been prosecuted under the offence of 'hooliganism'.

In Thailand, leaving the house not wearing underwear is a crime

CARRIBEAN

- In Jamaica, homosexual sex is illegal. If you are caught, you can be punished by up to ten years' imprisonment and hard labour.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



- All 50 states had anti-sodomy statutes until 1961. Today, three states – Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas – still ban homosexual sex, with another twelve banning sexual acts such as oral and anal sex (whether they are conducted by heterosexual or gay couples).
- The Mormon state of Utah has extremely strict laws governing sexual conduct. Oral and anal sex are prohibited, as are adultery and pre-marital sex. All these offences are punishable by a fine of up to $1000 (£700) and/or six months' imprisonment.

In both Florida and Washington D.C., it is illegal to have sex in any position other than the missionary

- In California, sex in any shape or form must take place between two adults and only two.
- Under New York State law, a fine of $25 (£16) can be levied for flirting. This ancient law specifically prohibits men from 'looking at a woman in that way'.
- In both Florida and Washington D.C., it is illegal to have sex in any position other than the missionary.



- In Idaho, it is illegal for a man to give his sweetheart a box of candy or chocolates weighing less than 50lb.
- In Alabama, a law came into force in 1998 prohibiting the sale of sex toys, a 'crime' punishable by a $10,000 (£7,000) fine and one years' hard labour. An action to overturn it was filed by a group of women and, in 1999, the law was abolished.

AUSTRALIA

- Provided he or she is drunk, a person can have sex with a kangaroo.

"FREEDOM!"



"If it wasn't for... I'd do something about my situation." "It's not that I don't want to do anything, you understand." "What's the point? I could never pass, anyway." "It's OK for you, you're..." "I could never tell anyone. What would they think of me?"

Sound familiar? I'll bet it does. It's all you ever hear. Excuses... excuses... excuses... Rationalisations and justifications for opting out of life. It's what most transgendered folk do best - we opt out of life! *"It's too hard."*

Just go along to any support group and listen to the deafening silence when somebody suggests something. The awkward shuffling of stilletos under the table, the downward gaze - the fear of showing interest in the face of overwhelming apathy.

If there's one thing we want to avoid it's freedom because freedom means choosing to do, choosing to act. Choosing to do something means saying 'no' as well as 'yes', where 'no' means the rejection of what we have and know up until the point of choosing to act differently.

But isn't rejection what's done *to* us? Rejection isn't done *by* us, is it? *We* can't reject our situation, can we? *We* can't choose to act in our own interest, can we?

No, they can never take our freedom – we gave that away a long time ago.

The Jaggy Thistle

No tax relief on stripping assets

More news on dubious tax dodges, this time with a titillating twist.

It appears that the Danish tax authorities have stripped an 'exotic dancer' of her right to deduct the cost of breast implants from her taxes.

Stripper Pia Damen and her 'business assets' made a splash in the local news last September when a tax authority appeals board allowed the deduction because the implants were, in its view, a legitimate business expense.

Having spent nearly two grand on the enhancements, the 29-year-old stripper from Vejle took a very pragmatic view of her assets. *'To me they are work tools,'* she said.

Under Danish corporate tax law, investments to improve or maintain facilities for running a business are tax deductible.

Unfortunately for our Danish entertainer the national tax people objected, arguing that the implants could not be seen as business improvement and threw out the claim.

Obviously the authorities were concerned there was the possibility of personal use.

And no mention was made of a clothing allowance – presumably the increase in assets would have led to an expansion in the wardrobe.

Damen was said to be appealing – the ruling, that is.



"Have you allowed for inflation?"

There's a record by the late Kirsty MacColl with the title *'In These Shoes?'* Kirsty, who died so tragically whilst saving her son from a speeding speedboat, was a great favourite of mine and expressed the sentiments stated above more than once in that song. It's so typical of what passes my lips more and more as time goes by.

From the sixties until right up to a couple of years ago I would think nothing of lasting all night in my stilettos - be it on the dance floor or walking a distance back to the car. Whether they were in fashion or not, I stuck by them religiously and felt 'undressed' unless so shod. Now, I still wear them when the occasion warrants it, but I need to know just what the parameters are regarding the evening; where I may end up, how far I may have to walk, just how much dancing there is likely to be, etc. etc.

At the last count I have around eighty pairs of shoes, including sandals, ankle boots and thigh boots, so I'm not spoilt for choice, but I also have around thirty pairs of wedges, blocks, Paris heels, etc. These, of course, are much more comfortable with my advancing years, but they are just not the same. However, a girl has to walk as well as look good. On our regular visits to our haunts in Brighton we usually park in a spot that is a good five minutes walk from our favourite venue for dancing. We do have other favourites but this one is best for dancing in the company of lots of friendly lesbians. It's wild and very steamy! Therefore, choice of footwear is most important. We may go on from there to a party and, again, it may be within walking distance but... what exactly is 'walking distance'? It could end up 'hobbling distance', and that is just not elegant.



One sure solution is to have a big handbag. In fact, a very big handbag! For a spare pair of shoes is not a bad idea when a situation arises and a quick change into wedges or blocks can save the day. Flatties? Oh no, not flatties! They're so... well, flat is the best description. Yes, I have been known to change into flatties on the dance floor because some forms of dancing is performed best in these, but not for walking in the street. Well not for me, anyway. Too long a stiletto fan, you see. Now, I'm afraid it's usually the duller block heels etc. which I mostly wear when going out... with a pair of my sexy stilettos close at hand when I want to look glam. Well as glam as is possible when you've been around trannyworld as long as I have!

The fashion world keeps trying to dismiss the stiletto just as it does the mini, however I just ignore all those interruptions and go my own sweet way, promoting both of them continuously since they were introduced over forty years ago. What did I do before then? Well, skating skirts of course - what else?

But I do get caught out from time to time. It's the age thing you see. I'm sure it has to do with that computer thing at Newcastle. When they start sending you the long awaited pension, somehow an electronic signal is emitted, logs on to your brain, and you start forgetting things or become over ambitious...

It was a lovely summer evening last year. We had had a nice meal at a friendly seafront restaurant and a walk back along the promenade was a must. Now, whether it was in jest or not I can't remember, but Barbara said, *"Let's go for a walk on the pier."* I thought of all those inviting gaps between the planking and my instant reply was, *"What? In these shoes? I don't think so."* I wonder if Kirsty MacColl was listening up there. I do hope so. □

The Sound of Falling Paradigms

The human condition can direct us in behaviour that expresses our attraction to like and our repulsion from what is different. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in the arena of gender identity with it's own constructed language and intense protection of 'labelling'.

The following is an extract of a report by Katie Szymanski of an engagement between GenderPAC, the lobbying arm of the U.S. gender rights movement and a splinter group who left because of 'irreconcilable differences'.

The paradox is that we all believe in the same mission – but we all want to approach it differently.

Julia Gordon
Editor

(My thanks to Jamie Heckert for suggesting this item.)

It has been almost two weeks since a group of transgendered activists from all around the country sent an open letter of concern in regard to GenderPAC who, within the last year, has moved to Washington D.C., gained a full-time staff, and emphasised its desire to fight for gender rights on a more mainstream scale.

According to those who signed the letter, what this means is that GenderPAC now has a strategy that *"appears to involve de-emphasising its connection to the trans community"*. Many of those signatures belong to people who were once a part of GenderPAC. *"This new focus has resulted in the dropping of some of GenderPAC's transgender-focused projects,"* the letter continued. *"GenderPAC's call for its 'National Conference on Gender' next spring made it clear that proposals for trans-focused workshops would not be well-received."*

According to Riki Wilchins, GenderPAC's executive director and a well-known transsexual activist and writer, these criticisms are unfounded. *"Nobody is being squeezed out, they're just being included into a broader spectrum of people who need their right to express their gender,"* Wilchins added that proposals for the upcoming conference must be inclusive in all ways, and that someone presenting a seminar on women's issues was recently asked to revise the curriculum to include transgenders.

"Our mission and vision has always been to build a broad-based inclusive movement. In the early days it was just me and a handful of volunteers, so we took a lot of transgender cases. Nobody else was doing that work. Now we have a budget and staff and resources and we are able to begin fulfilling our mission and working on other cases." Wilchins pointed to two such cases: one that involves a woman who was fired from her job for refusing to wear makeup, and another that addresses the fact that a female athlete who looked 'too masculine' was assaulted and injured by security guards after leaving a women's bathroom. Neither victim identifies as 'transgender' and yet both were persecuted for not fitting into strict gender expectations.

"I think what we're hearing is the sound of paradigms falling," said Wilchins of the comments directed toward GenderPAC. *"I won't build another identity-based movement because I've been locked out of every one I tried to join. I'm not welcome at cross-dressing, feminist, or gay groups, and I'm not going to lock anybody else outside the door. We embrace everyone or we embrace no one."*

"It is ironic when people begin portraying inclusion and diversity as bad things," she added. *"We think bringing more people to the struggle is the only way to build a vibrant movement for the 21st century. And if you really think we're pulling away from transgender work, just look at our Web site. You'll see all the transgender stuff up there."*

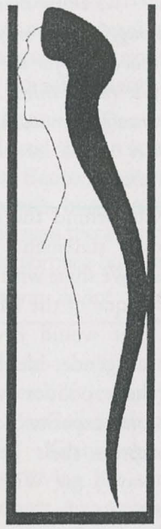
But the activists behind the open letter, a three-page statement that specifically declares, "We share with Riki Anne Wilchins a critique of the narrow 'identity politics' that would divorce the concerns of transgender-identified people from a broader politics which recognises oppressions experienced by all people who express their gender in non-normative ways", say Wilchins' rebuttal misses the point. In fact, they say, if transgenders are supposed to be embraced along with others, why are they hardly ever mentioned by name in contemporary GenderPAC statements, particularly on the Web site that Wilchins references?

They argue that, although Wilchins says she has reluctantly allowed people to keep their identity labels in GenderPac matters, in fact it is only the transgenders who have not consistently been labelled on the GenderPAC Web site. Posted news items about Brandon Teena (who may or may not have identified as 'trans' and others who have referred to themselves as 'transgender', for instance, almost never include the T-word, and in fact these stories are hard to recognise as GenderPAC presents them (in regard to Teena's situation, for instance, the story is presented as "a man in Nebraska is beaten and raped by two assailants who want to 'prove' he's really a woman").

To transsexual activist and writer James Green, this effort not to use 'transgender' goes overboard. *"I hate identity politics,"* says Green. *"And yet to a certain extent these issues are identity issues, and to say we're going to leave identity behind and not address things that have to*

* GenderPAC, based in Washington, D.C., was born from and until recently had focused upon trans-identified battles.

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do with identity is very short-sighted in my mind."

Green points to GenderPAC's filing of an **amicus brief** in the Brandon Teena wrongful death suit as an example of how GenderPAC's de-emphasis on identity could hurt their work. *"Any reference to 'trans' was taken out of that brief, and they were simply talking about Brandon's gender,"* says Green. *"There's also a point at which they went off on some tangent about how gender expression affects everyone. If I were the judge in this case I would say, 'What the hell are they talking about?' and toss it out."*

"Not only does their brief not speak to the facts of the case but it takes you into other areas irrelevant to the suit. Many of these paragraphs, if you don't say 'gender identity,' are meaningless. There are places it would be important to say that Brandon sought medical advice for gender dysphoria not for his gender," laughs Green. *"If you take away all of the qualifying language then you lose the specificity, and in law you must have specificity. So while of course I support the broad positions that everyone should be free from gender stereotyping, unless we talk about issues that face individuals, we'll never get to that place."*

✧✧✧

Once upon a time...

In a word far, far away, 'transgender' was supposed to be the language that would have solved this conflict. While 'transsexual' was exclusive to those who had transitioned to the 'opposite' sex, transgender could include everyone in between - the cross-dressers, the butch lesbians, the straight people who did not conform to rigid codes. In fact it was this word alone that was supposed to cover all these people, as witnessed by the national push to tack it on to non-discrimination laws that covered sexual orientation. Even if they did not identify as 'trans,' these people would be covered by a definition that allowed them to fall anywhere along the gender spectrum.

Yet little by little, transgender began to be interpreted both by common folk and queers, legislators and judges as transsexual, or, in simpler terms, as a person who had assumed a life as the other sex. There was no longer an 'in between' allowed, or maybe there never was in the first place. Just recently, for instance, the mayor of Portland, Oregon, proposed that the city expand its non-discrimination law to cover any person who dresses and/or identifies as a sex different from how they may be perceived. However, she was careful to emphasise that the law would cover only people who are 'consistent' with their behaviour and not those come to work "dressed as a man one day and a woman the next".

It was recognition of this problem, said Wilchins, that prompted GenderPAC to push for laws to cover more than those people who had fully transitioned.

But just what language should go into broader laws remains to be decided. Wilchins, for one, says that GenderPAC is 'agnostic' when it comes to language, but would be biased toward words like 'gender,' that are 'inclusive'.

But Green cautions that not pushing for 'transgender' or 'gender identity' will inevitably mean that the trans population will be left of protections, particularly since 'gender' is already a part of most non-discrimination ordinances. *"I don't believe that you can go back to the 1970s and say this ordinance means 'gender expression', when as it stands that word is universally understood to mean a person's sex,"* says Green, who believes a better way for GenderPAC to lobby would be to reclaim the original meaning of 'transgender' and work to make sure it is translated broadly. *"That was the whole reason we embraced the term to begin with,"* says Green. *"Unfortunately, GenderPAC does not see it that way."*

What GenderPAC does see, according to Wilchins, is a new understanding of the group as a result of the open letter. *"No matter how many times I tried to tell people about our mission, nobody believed me. They couldn't see or hear past my body,"* said Wilchins. *"Now that a group of transgender people are saying the same thing, it helps us explain our case."*

But the trans activists speaking out emphasise that it is not GenderPAC's mission they have a problem with, but rather the manner in which it is being pursued. As GenderPAC seeks the politics of non-identity, they say, the group may ironically achieve a result of exclusion.

"Quite honestly, when Riki talks about post-identity politics, she doesn't understand the nature of identity politics to begin with," said Pauline Park, a co-founder of NYAGRA (New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy). *"Identities form in relation to the oppression of marginalised groups and dropping identity-based labels does not end the oppression of those groups."*

Park also took issue with GenderPAC's implication that trans-identified activism is limited to one population. *"Riki is trying to create the impression that her critics are intent on creating a trans-exclusive organization, and that's not the case,"* said Park. *"NYAGRA, for instance, is identified as a trans organization, but our mission is to advocate on behalf of all gender variant people. And unlike GenderPaC, we can advocate for freedom of gender identity and expression without losing trans people, the most marginalised of the groups along the way."*

It's A Knockout!



There's a debate going on about just how safe breast implants are. One person who's convinced of their harm is Peter Tadbury. Peter suffered whiplash after his head was joggled between an enormous pair of silicone bosoms. The breasts in question belonged to a lap dancer called 'Busty' Stevens. *"To call her buxom is an understatement,"* said Mr Tadbury. *"She started to jiggle her assets in front of my face. It was fun to start with, but then she began hitting me with them. It felt like I was going a round with Mike Tyson."* He was eventually thrown backwards off his seat, knocking himself unconscious on the floor. *"I felt a right tit,"* he said.

To GenderPAC, this notion is absurd, particularly since half of its board members are trans-identified. *"I firmly believe in our mission,"* said Katherine Palmer, a trans-identified activist and co-chair of GenderPAC. *"I think this whole thing is an overreaction from within the trans community itself."*

Yet when asked to clarify her position on language and identity, Palmer, while touted by Wilchins as someone who 'gets it', seemed to come from an entirely different place, assuming quite generally, among other things, that *"a butch lesbian is not crossing gender, she's making a sexual statement,"* and *"cross-dressers don't consider themselves to be the opposite sex - they just know they're dressing differently."*

✧✧✧

Ahead of its time?

Perhaps, as Wilchins herself has surmised, GenderPAC's lack of identity politics might be ahead of its time, even for those who have remained on board. At times, said Wilchins, it's as if the questions she faces, *"are being asked in German, and I'm answering in Spanish."*

But although their language may be different, both sides of the debate seem to be arguing the same thing: that gender rights belong to everyone, not just people who live their lives on a binary male/female system. And both sides also agree that GenderPAC may not be the avenue that fulfils all the needs of the trans-identified community.

"We will always do transgender advocacy, because you can't have a gender rights movement without it," said Wilchins, and even people like Green agree that GenderPAC's transgender work will continue. *"But there are issues that remain specifically transsexual which other organisations might do a better job at addressing,"* added Wilchins.

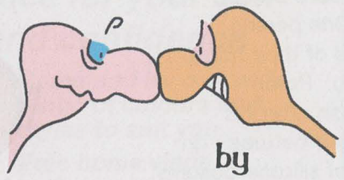
It is for this reason, says Green, that he signed the letter.

"I wanted to open the dialogue about what we need to create at the national level. There are still people giving money to GenderPAC and thinking they're helping the trans community when they're not going to be able to rely on GenderPAC to meet their needs."

If a national transgender group is started, Wilchins has vowed to support it any way she can, but GenderPAC, she maintains, has always come from a different place. *"The centrifugal forces of 20th century identity politics have in many ways driven us farther apart from one another. We need to try a post identity form of organising that stresses our commonalties instead of our differences."* □

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Moods and Relationships



by Rev. Andrew Hunter

It is common in relationships for either party to 'have a mood'.

This can be brought on by a number of factors, such as...

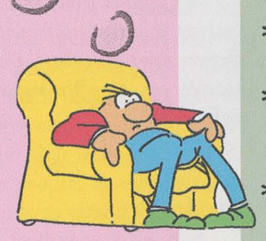
- genuine depression
- a natural tendency (learned behaviour) towards being down, pessimistic, or cynical
- our response to a particular situation which makes us feel either negative or positive - note that the intensity of the situation eg. the death of a relative, can determine the depth and length of the mood state
- situations which create in us anxiety or eager anticipation
- our natural buoyant and almost 'hyper' state - always ready to see the good
- our psychological and physical nutrition creating positive or negative moods
- exercise or a lack of it affecting our moods.

Research (at California State University) has shown that we have strategies for managing our moods and these include:*

Category A

About 33% of the strategies affect our physiology...

* taking regular energising exercise
* avoiding coffee, or minimising it to two cups in the morning
* getting appropriate sleep
* taking regular bits of time out for rest roughly every 90 minutes
* restricting alcohol to a maximum of two glasses of wine (equivalent) each day
* eating a balanced diet – protein at lunch, snack in the afternoon (when our body's natural energy cycle is low anyway), carbohydrates mainly in the evening
* we take up meditation, relaxation, or perhaps a stress management programme
* learn to accept and deal with another's moodiness



** which ones could you use more of?*

Category B

About 20% of the strategies involve taking diversionary tactics...

* engaging in pleasing activities
* taking up a hobby
* making light of a situation (appropriately) - good use of humour
* catching up on simple odd-jobs and light tasks
* reading, going for a walk, watching TV
* withdrawing, avoiding the source of any conflict or unpleasantness

Category C

About 15% of the strategies we employ are more cognitive, ie...

* we convert any negative thinking into positive thinking
* we use positive affirmations
* we visualise positive outcomes
* we analyse the situation, challenge any irrational thinking, seek a different perspective

Category D

About 15% of the strategies involve others, eg...

* avoiding the person whose behaviour may be triggering our mood
* seeking out a friend or colleague to talk with
* in serious situations, seeking counselling, therapy, medical intervention
* seeking an outlet for sexual gratification

You cannot change someone else's mood though you can perhaps sensitively suggest some of the above.

*You can use the above menu any time you find yourself in a mood. Often a physical shift in energy (**Category A**) is sufficient to bring about a change in the mood. If it persists, perhaps you need to seek help (**Category D**).*

TINA'S TRAVELS



Courage to be Confused

A report which stresses *'the importance of a compassionate, caring response to transsexuals by the church - and the acceptance of their human rights'* has been produced by the Evangelical Alliance, that band of hope for all us sinners. It has been prepared as a submission to the Westminster Government's ongoing consultation exercise concerning the amendment of birth certificates, and as an attempt to provide guidance to church leaders who are having to contend with frequent outbreaks of sex-changing clerics and worshippers. Pained by the accusations of homophobia, bigotry and lack of compassion, they go out of their way to stress that they do not condemn transgender people – only that our 'confused' lifestyle is incompatible with Christian teachings. So too, apparently, is one of their own number, the evangelical Christian charity 'Courage Trust', which has recently admitted that it's crusade to 'cure' gays was actually misguided. This 'confused' change of heart isn't likely to earn it much compassion from the Evangelical Alliance, however. When I was growing up my church taught me values of right and wrong – now, it seems, we're either right or 'confused'. I think I felt better when I just got it plain wrong!

A Club calling a Spade...

I guess it could be rightly argued to be *'ungentlemanly behaviour'* for a man to change his name to Sheryl Willows and wear women's clothes and make up, but to use a visit to the ladies loo as the excuse to revoke his 21-year membership of the Newfoundpool Working Men's Club is one ruling the girl is not at all content to abide by. Mind you, I'm reminded of Groucho Marx's comment about belonging to any club that would have him as a member. Who would want to listen to comments like, *"Look at the Brad Pitts on that"* and *"Give us a flash"*, over their pint of bitter, anyhow. Leave it dear – haven't you got the message? How about trying the WRI instead?

'Wot aba't t' trannies?

Like so many others, I struggled to work up enthusiasm for the General Election. What a dismal bunch of haddies we've handed over control of our lives to - not enough brain cells between them to realise most of us gave up on them a long time ago and decided to get on with the things that really mattered, like taking care of our nails. Well...I suppose I did look up briefly from my haggis supper when my auditory senses alerted me to the use of that bloody awful word 'transsexual', as the candidate for the Crawley constituency was introduced by a highly agitated political commentator for whatever channel it was – take your pick they were all determined to feed us a constant diet of tripe and hogwash. Given the reference to this individual having been a former life-long conservative voter and now standing for the Monster Raving Loony Party, *and* introducing her as Lady Penelope Thunderbird, I listened in stunned disbelief as she said, *"If I get elected MP at least I will be able to understand the needs of both men and women."* Don't count on it, dear.

No-one can hear you scream!!

When *will* people come to accept that *anyone* can be raped? Statistics for male rape are hard to come by – for obvious reasons – but I have a sneeking suspicion that the transgender community has more than it's fair share of sexual harassment, assault and rape *per capita* than some. Take Josephine Perez, who was attacked in the street, dragged into a secluded area then anally penetrated. Unemployed and homeless, Josephine can't afford the surgery that would bring her sex into alignment with her gender identity, nor can she afford hormone therapy. She's a vulnerable individual, part of a vulnerable community in New York who maintain that discrimination is commonplace among city workers. Josephine will vouch for that. New York's Human Resources Administration put her into an all-male homeless shelter because her official identification identifies her as male - her attacker was a fellow shelter resident who had been pestering her since her arrival - and police refused to believe her account of the attack and told her *"anyone with a penis can't be raped."*

Party Poopers

In New Orleans, it's said, the slightest occasion is cause for celebration, an opportunity to dress up

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and have fun. But when some parents learned of the Recreation Department's proposal to organise a party in the park for 11 and 12-year-old kids which meant them dressing up as the opposite sex, they voiced their objections. Christine Gallatig, a spokeswoman for the Mayor's office, said *"The opposite-sex party is a summer camp tradition."* Parks director Charlene Lowther said, *"The only thing we are trying to do is give the kids a fun summer."* Spokesperson for concerned parents, Mary Sayles, said the event was *"a subtle part of the overall homosexual agenda to progressively indoctrinate our society with specified efforts toward our children and young people."* I say, a surefire way to get kids to do something is to tell them they can't do it!

Working it out

When transsexual Naira Bajo Gonzalez, who has not had a sex change operation, joined her local gym both men and women protested when she used their dressing rooms - so she was asked to use the laundry instead. As any transsexual in a similar situation would do, she took the gym to court claiming sexual discrimination. The court, however, ruled in favour of the company, and her appeal was also unsuccessful. To date, Naira has steadfastly refused to change in the laundry, claiming she should not have to change in an atmosphere of sweaty garments and towels!!!

All pull together now...

In Hawaii they take their paddling very seriously and ever since transsexuals Tammy Wronski and Li Anne Taft made up their minds to paddle with the girls there's been white water between all parties involved. Following the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association's request that they submit to DNA tests to establish their sex before allowing them to compete on women's paddling teams, Wronski and Taft filed grievances with the Hawaiian Civil Rights Commission. Worried that the Racing Association might not be able to fight off lawsuits if they continued to insist on DNA tests, their board felt obliged to reverse it's decision. With the involvement of the American Civil Liberties Union, representing Wronski, the Hawaiian Civil Rights Commission, were much relieved to hear of the Association's change of heart as they didn't have the financial clout to take on the Union. The Commission's President Michael Tongg, however, did say that many women had come up to him to complain that the new policy is unfair as most of them are not as strong as the transsexuals... as they hurried off to put their names down for the same team as Wronski and Taft. Well, if you can't beat 'em.

Love thine enemies

Jessica Park runs a security business in Hong Kong, was a flight lieutenant in the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force, and is a member in several women's organisations and chairwoman of the Hong Kong Security Association - being first elected as a man and later re-elected as a woman. Not everyone regards her as an achiever, however. To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints she represents a sin and an abomination. They have excommunicated her, preventing her from worshipping in any of the 22 Mormon churches and meeting houses in Hong Kong. In return, Ms. Park has filed a counter suit against the church and three church elders, claiming they unlawfully discriminated against her. *"What I needed was help. And what I received was the stick,"* Ms Park said of the church's actions. *"It is my church. I have a problem with how some of the local leaders have handled this."* Doesn't sound as if there's any love lost between them. Now, what was Christ's message, again?

Thais and tribulations

The internationally famous Kathoey (Thailand's transvestite and transsexual community) Beauty Pageant was held in Pattaya in April, this year. But beneath it all, what they really want, the Kathoeys say, is to be accepted and treated equally by the same people who want to be entertained by them and yet are unwilling to give them a role offstage. Two-time Tiffany Universe winner Nong Som describes being a transvestite in Thailand as a 'suffocating' experience. She said, *"In terms of being accepted in society, superficially, it seems anybody can accept us transvestites. But in reality, it's not that way at all. It's impossible to apply for most jobs."*

The fact that German law recognises transsexuals as women after sex-change operations, might go some way to explaining the mass exudus of Thais to Germany in recent times. Up to 5,000 have entered the country so far on false passports. (This might go some way to explaining our own government's reluctance to acknowledge trans-gender status.) And in a move aimed at helping the large number of transsexual Thais now married and living in Germany and facing legal problems over their identity, the Thai government has agreed to allow transsexuals to display male and female photos in their passports. This exception was done after sex-changed Thais complained they were facing awkward questions from customs officials.

Mind you, if customs officials in Thailand have the upper hand, being a religious enforcement officer isn't exactly proving to be a lot of fun, by all accounts. Earlier in the summer, three cops were punched and hit with handbags when they tried to arrest two transvestites in Penang!

Malaise in Malaysia

There are reckoned to be around 50,000 transsexuals in Malaysia. Problems surrounding this community are centred on their jobs because many are qualified for certain posts but are turned away because they are still regarded as male. As a result, many become sex workers to make a living, while a few end up in the entertainment industry or professions traditionally associated with women. Popularly referred to as *maknyah*, they are calling upon the Government to declare them women. It is suggested that only by classifying transsexuals as 'women' will the authorities be rid of social problems that come about as a result of discrimination. Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil of the newly-formed Women's Affairs Ministry said she would take up the issue and give them a definition which is more dignified. Takes one to know one!

Chinese Take-away

Hoping to pay for your electrolysis from the proceeds of a 'smash and grab' raid? Or maybe from mugging an old lady? If so, don't make the mistake of wearing a tight-fitting mini-skirt or high heels in case you have to make a quick getaway! Unable to find employment after quitting her last job as a 'show girl', Chinese transsexual Hsu Kuo-wei robbed a woman of her purse in Taipei's busy Chinhsi Street but failed to get very far before being brought down by two men who gave chase from a nearby restaurant.

Well, hello, hello, hello...

And speaking of misdemeanours - following the advertising campaign earlier this year by Lothian and Borders police to recruit gays into their ranks, Central police force are now appealing for individuals from a transgender background to come and help them fight crime. When I heard this amazing news I was immediately reminded of the time I was talked into putting on a policewoman's uniform (actually, didn't take much persuasion) to accompany my PC friend on patrol, and fondly recalled the heady intoxication of power as we pulled speeding motorists over for a warning. I should add, this was a very long time ago and down south. All the same, the next time I come up against a policewoman *I'll* be the one taking notes! □



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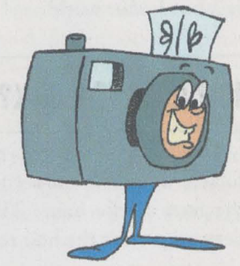
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Glasgow G2 3DH

Aren't digital cameras great?

A real godsend for all us TV's. At last we can take hundreds of pics of ourselves in all our best gear, in our most exciting poses, then download and view them on our computer in total privacy, knowing no-one else need ever know about our feminine side, just brilliant! Well, that's what I thought before the experience I'm about to relate.

OVER EXPOSED!



Just before Christmas I decided to buy myself a digital camera, something I've been wanting to do for some time. A fairly simple one, not too expensive, but it promised to do everything I wanted. The combination of new camera and having the house to myself for four days felt almost too good to be true. I bought some new make up, looked out all my female clothes out and got busy with the iron before shooting hundreds of pics of myself, in literally dozens of different outfits, in all sorts of poses - as we do! What a success! I loaded all the pics into my computer, then dumped them from the memory of the camera.

Some time later I was preparing to leave the country to work abroad for a couple of months and in the course of conversation with my best male friend I suggested he might like to borrow my new digital camera for the duration I was away - an offer he quickly accepted.

When I returned we met up for a beer and I asked him how he'd got on with the camera. "Great," he said, but *did I know about the file on the camera's memory that had all the photos of some woman in it?*

My heart thumping, and in as steady a voice as I could muster, I said there shouldn't have been anything there because I had dumped all the files before I gave him it. My friend, who knows all there is to know about a computer, proceeded to account for this happening. I wish I could have followed his technical explanation for future reference!

It's perhaps a warning to everyone that if you're not careful you may find yourself very over exposed! My friend, however, is a very understanding guy - or could it be I'm more convincing than I thought? Nah! I'll stick with the first option.

Lorraine

MANAGING ELECTROLYSIS

If you aspire to passing regularly or to living fully in female role, you'll probably want to consider complete and permanent removal of your beard growth. While it's nice to dress up and look as good as possible, it becomes a complete pain if it requires twenty minutes of shaving closely and expertly blending in beard cover just to nip out to buy milk. Removing the facial hair means you will pass more often and with less effort.

WHY ELECTROLYSIS?

There are alternatives to electrolysis, but I've yet to hear a convincing account from anyone who cleared their face by any other method. I, personally, spent well over £2,000 on alternative miracle cures. The hideously expensive laser didn't even dent my beard, while the non-invasive treatment I tried left me with a temporarily peachy face until my beard returned completely. It was with a reluctant heart that I turned to electrolysis, since I knew it would be very time consuming and painful. It is... but it *does* work!

HOW DOES IT WORK?

An extremely fine needle is inserted into the hair follicle down which a current is then passed to destroy the root of the hair. The type of current applied will determine how the hair root is destroyed.

Most hairs will take several 'zaps' before they finally admit defeat. This is because the follicle must be destroyed when it is actively growing, which is only about a third of the time. Besides which, male facial hair is usually very strong and takes a deal of killing. As time goes on, the areas treated will become increasingly sparse, with the remaining hairs becoming finer and finer.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

To clear a male beard takes an average of 200 hours of electrolysis, although this figure can vary considerably from individual to individual. (I've read reports on the web of complete clearance taking anything from 70 to 350 hours.)

The longest session I normally have is 20 minutes - quite long enough for me! I average 70 minutes a week, which translates to something around three and a half years of electrolysis. This may seem a lot, but I know post-op girls who are into their *seventh* year of electrolysis.

Some operators will do long sessions lasting over an hour. Be warned, though, that electrolysis is very exacting for the operator and concentration can be difficult to maintain over this period of time. That's why my salon insists on shorter sessions.

HOW MUCH DOES IT HURT?

Not surprisingly, a hot needle stuck into your face hurts. How much depends on the individual, so I can only give a subjective opinion of this. I've never yet had to stop a session, but can find it quite difficult to bear on a bad day. Those parts of the face where the bone is near the skin, such as cheekbones and the jaw line can be especially painful while these pale into insignificance when it comes to the dreaded upper lip. Try plucking just one hair from directly underneath your nose to get an idea. It really H-U-R-T-S.

The importance of a lack of beard shadow when trying to pass was brought home to me following my disappointing experience with a non-invasive method of hair removal. This particular method involved my beard hair being plucked from my face! This was extremely painful and exhausting, and after three and a half hours of this I staggered out looking as if I'd fallen into a wasp's nest. It did settle quickly though, and for about a week I had no beard shadow whatsoever.

That was when I found I was having no trouble passing... unless I tried to pass as a guy that is! I found myself getting 'read' as a girl when shopping, when my dress code consisted of scruffy jeans and an army sweatshirt. The confusion when I spoke was both very evident and most gratifying. Initially, I thought it was my inner girlie self shining through, but I was soon disabused of this when my fuzz returned and everyone greeted me as a male again.



Heather

FINDING AN ELECTROLOGIST

It can be tempting to approach colleges, where students will work on you very cheaply. I'd have no qualms about a student hairdresser doing my hair as this will grow back, but if a novice operator damages the skin below the epidermis you will be marked for life. Using qualified operators will greatly reduce the risk of permanent scarring.

Like doctors and dentists, the best way to find a good electrologist is a recommendation from a satisfied customer. Failing that, you should satisfy yourself of the following when you go for a consultation. Does it seem to an efficient and busy salon? Are the staff well qualified and experienced? Are they realistic with you about the nature of the treatment?

Cost shouldn't be your primary consideration, although some clinics tend to over charge. Expect to pay around £12.50 to £15.00 for 20-30 minutes. That's an average of about £7,500 to clear your face eventually. You will have to budget for this.

PREPARING FOR TREATMENT

Although there's no definitive proof, it's popularly assumed that electrolysis is more effectiveness if one is on a testosterone blocker such as spironolactone. It won't stop hair growth (neither will an orchidectomy or vaginoplasty) but it will slow re-growth and weaken the hair. My own operator reported a huge increase in the efficacy of the treatment on one of her patients after their vaginoplasty.

Shaving should be avoided once an area has been treated, as it encourages re-growth. This can be annoying in the early stages, although plucking will mitigate this. Some amount of hair growth will have to be endured.

MANAGING THE PAIN

This is the real trick! There are days when no matter what you do it seems to hurt like hell. However, I also have days when it can be a breeze. The following will work for me:

- ✓ **sleep** – If you're tired or ill, your pain threshold will be lower. A good night's sleep beforehand makes a big difference.
- ✓ **Ametop Gel** – This is a non-prescription per-cutaneous anaesthetic manufactured by Smith & Nephew. It costs £1.90 for a 1.5g tube, which is sufficient to cover an area two inches by two and a half. It must be covered by an airtight dressing (clingfilm) for at least 30 minutes to allow it to penetrate the skin. Once it has numbed an area, the effects last for several hours. It can be patchy in its effectiveness, but it makes a tremendous difference on those areas where it has worked. Highly recommended.
- ✓ **Cuprofen** - I usually take a 400mg Cuprofen tablet half an hour before the treatment is due to start. This is a strong dose of Ibuprofen, which is a painkiller and anti-inflammatory. It helps to take some of the edge off the pain.
- ✓ **relaxation** – The prospect of pain is often far more stressful than the actual experience. I personally find that concentrating on breathing steadily is a great help. It stops one tensing up and holding one's breath ten times a minute before the needle goes in, which is understandably quite stressful.
- ✓ **local anaesthesia** – The Holy Grail of electrolysis, and the way I can manage to endure getting my upper lip done. I have a very understanding dentist, who for a nominal sum numbs my upper lip completely with a dental anaesthetic. It lasts for several hours and you feel nothing, even with the needle set far higher than normal. I get my upper lip done for half an hour every three weeks, and after four treatments the dark hairs on my lip have all but disappeared. It has limitations though, as it requires allowing one's hair to grow for a week beforehand and leaves a very sore looking lip for up to a week afterwards. It's not a technique, therefore, that is particularly appropriate to someone living full time, but concentrating on this sensitive area intensively *before* going full time will make things easier in the long run.

LIVING WITH THE AFTERMATH

Electrolysis is a complete and utter bind. Aside from the pain and the time involved, it leaves the face red and swollen afterwards. Invariably, this is just fading when the same area is to be done again. The net effect is a horrid red birthmark travelling slowly across one's face for several years. All one can do is to try to mollify this with the following treatments:

- ✚ **lavender oil** – This can be bought from most chemists and is very effective at soothing troubled skin if applied immediately after treatment.
- ✚ **cleanliness** – Dozens of follicles are left open to infection after a treatment. The skin therefore has to be kept scrupulously clean to avoid infection. Unfortunately, make up, the very thing that can conceal the after effects of electrolysis, can be

as harmful as dirt in causing infection. This is the unfortunate paradox of electrolysis - in making you more passable in the future it renders you *less* passable in the present.

- **moisturiser** – Keeping the skin moist will help it recover from the inflammatory effects of the treatment. Applied liberally, it also provides some protection against dirt getting into open follicles. After my tri-weekly blitz on my upper lip I keep it saturated with moisturiser for several days, which is very effective at preventing a bad reaction.
- **make-up** – Good cosmetic cover will hide your blotchy skin. Both Charles H Fox and Dermablend offer a selection of excellent cosmetic products to do this.

BE PATIENT

Successful electrolysis requires a lot of time, money and planning. Bear in mind the difficulties this will impose on you if you go full time early on in your transition as electrolysis will actually make you less passable in the short term. A few years of intensive electrolysis beforehand could save many years of annoying electrolysis once one is living full time. □

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION...

http://www.tsroadmap.com/default.htm A superb site for male to female transsexuals. It gives an excellent account of how the author, Andrea James, managed her own electrolysis.

http://www.hairfacts.com/ Another excellent site by Andrea James on the many types of hair removal available.

http://www.smith-nephew.com/UK/Wound/ClientTemplates/Category.asp?UniqueId=0%2E9%2E393%2E2045%2E2046 A summary of product characteristics for Ametop gel.

http://www.cix.co.uk/~cyberville/medizine/ibuprofe.htm Information on Ibuprofen.

http://savina.com/confluence/hormone/m2f/flat.htm Excellent site on hormone therapy for male to female transsexuals.

http://www.execpc.com/~goodscnt/data/es1007471.html More information than you'll ever need about lavender oil.

http://www.charlesfox.co.uk/ Charles H Fox's site still appears to be under construction, although it does give contact information.

http://www.dermablend.com/ Dermablend's superb site gives extensive information on it's range of products and how to apply them.

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All mailings are in plain envelopes or packets with no outside indication of contents or sender. Magazines are sent in tough opaque polythene envelopes with a strong seal for extra security. There will be no follow up mailings unless you write again to us.

CARE TIPS FOR SYNTHETIC WIGS

The proper care of your wig will keep it looking like new. (You may find it helpful to have a back-up wig to use while allowing the necessary time for cleaning and drying your regular one.)

To maintain it's style and shape after wearing, replace your wig on a polystyrene head and lightly smooth the hair back into place using a styling comb.

To wash your wig...

- ◇ Fill a basin with cool or lukewarm water.
- ◇ Add a little shampoo and swish the wig gently in the water. (Use a shampoo specifically formulated to clean wigs.)
- ◇ Let it soak for 15-20 minutes.
- ◇ Rinse the wig thoroughly in cold water.
- ◇ Refill the basin with with clean cool water and add a little wig conditioner.
- ◇ Immerse your wig and allow to soak for 5 minutes.
- ◇ Remove it and gently shake it out.
- ◇ Blot dry on a towel and then gently shake.
- ◇ Allow to drip dry over the bath tap or similar support.
- ◇ Brush wig into desired shape when completely dry. (Spray lightly with hairspray if desired.)

In between washes, spray with a synthetic fibre conditioner to keep your wig soft and supple.

Some definite *don'ts*...

- × Never use curling irons or curling kits on wigs.
- × Don't brush wigs when wet.
- × Be careful not to expose your wig to open flame or excessive heat. (take care opening the oven!)
- × Do not attempt to hasten the wig's drying using a tumble-dryer, even with a low temparature setting.
- × Don't use hair dryers or curling tongs on your wig. The use of a professional hairstylist or wig specialist is recommended for restyling.

Win a year's subscription to the Tartan Skirt!

CAPTION COMPETITION

All you have to do is think of a funny caption for the picture and send it in.

The winning entry will appear in the next issue of the magazine.

Closing date for entries:

31st October 2001.

From 'Some Like It Hot' 1959



Winner of the Summer 2001 Caption Competition is Pam from Airdrie with...





your stars with seòras

Although summer is more or less over, hopefully, we will still have a few more days of warm sunshine before winter is upon us. For the old Celts, *Samhain*, now known as Halloween, was the start of the New Year. Once the fruit and grain had been harvested there was a period death and decay before the rebirth. I hope you have had a good year and I wish you all the best for the one to come. And don't forget that in November we will have a Blue Moon (two full moons in one month), and that this year Halloween night will also see a full moon, so be careful if you are out and about then - there's bound to be a bumper crop of scaries!

Aries
March 21st - April 20th

September: You are the diva of the month. *"I want to be alone"* is undoubtedly your motto. On the other hand, you have plenty of energy encircling you. Beware of entering meaningless arguments, especially with colleagues, around the 10th April.

October: *"Somewhere, over the rainbow"* Don't be such a drama-queen - appreciate what you have instead of chasing illusions. And try to be a little bit kinder to others as social niceties never go amiss.

November: Let yourself go and experience what life can offer to you. You are very much at ease with any group situation right now so enjoy - but be realistic, this is a time for fun, not for looking for your knight in shining armour.

Taurus
April 21st - June 21st

September: You want to start something new, but people might be not very supportive, especially around the 8th and the 22nd. This may cause you some confusion and you might feel the need to make closer contact with your surroundings - but don't pretend to be anybody other than yourself!

October: Take some time out and treat yourself. Relax and reflect on life. Come to appreciate your experiences and once more you'll see that life really is worth living. And no, it isn't the fault of others!

November: Difficult to think about anything else? This month, sex is very important to you. Your sexual partner(s) won't realise what hit them! And will you care, anyhow?

Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st

September: You can't face dealing with people right now. Pick yourself up, go out and about with your head held high - but that doesn't mean being arrogant. Show your caring side towards your colleagues – this will stand you in good stead later on.

October: Yes, we are back to the good old split personality. On the one hand you want to paint the town red, on the other, you feel very insecure. Be patient, from the 25th onwards things should become clearer.

November: It's a shame Siegmund Freud is no longer with us – he would most certainly be eating his heart out. You analyse everybody and everything meticulously this month - but are you sure that you can still see the trees in all those woods?

Cancer
June 22nd - July 22nd

September: See, you shouldn't have done it in the first place! No use crying over spilt milk. Now is a very active time for you so get out and meet new people - then you can escape that routine.

October: Your maternal instincts come to the fore! I hope you have made plenty of chutney and jam as you are inviting lots of people round for tasting sessions. And don't take it too personal if someone is allergic to nuts!

November: You seem a little bit lethargic this month. Perhaps you shouldn't have taken on all these extra responsibilities. See how you can become a little bit more effective, and don't feel you can't delegate.

Leo
July 23rd - August 23rd

September: Aren't we worrying a little bit too much about money? Yes, it is handy, but don't lose sight of all the other things of value in your life. And what about that jealous streak – why can't you trust that special person in your life right now?

October: It's getting darker, and you are beginning to feel you are on your own more than you'd like, Is it something you have said or done? Probably, so swallow your pride and make up, otherwise you will regret it even more than usual.

November: One step forward and two back? Don't worry, you'll get there in the end. Your home surroundings will offer you some comfort to help you through this bleak period. Try some meditation and you might begin again to realise what is really important to you.

Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd

September: Oh no, not this time of year again! You are very much aware of yourself *and* experiencing all the emotional tensions within relationships. Make sure you express yourself, and keep a clear head – especially in business matters.

October: It's no use, you seem to have lost your talent for communication and organisation. There is a silver lining on the horizon, however, when Mercury turns direct on the 23rd, then you'll be able to make up for the last three lost weeks.

November: So many things happening at once - work, significant others, and a little enlightenment. Don't be afraid if everything seems to be a bit chaotic right now, you'll eventually be able to find a meaning for all these influences in your life.

Libra
September 24th - October 23rd

September: Yes, we all know that you occasionally need some quality time on your own, but is it a good idea to alienate others in order to achieve this? Think about it - and try to stay in touch with those close to you.

October: So many things happening - and aren't you just loving it! In days gone by you might have been called a "wee floosy", nowadays you are simply enjoying lots of social contact. Look after your health, though, or you might wake up with a nasty surprise!

November: Now is the time you will notice whether or not you planned far enough ahead. Have you collected sufficient nuts for the winter? If not, learn your lesson and try to be more prudent next year.

Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd

September: Aren't we energetic this month - one party after another - so many new and interesting people. Take care not to overdue it, though. or your health might suffer.

October: Doom and gloom! Just take a broom, and clear out your room. It's time for you to get your life sorted out again. You have acquired so much extra baggage your back is aching. Take a look and see what you still need to hold on to and thrown the rest out!

November: A new year, a new beginning, so who cares what happened yesterday. Life is to be enjoyed right now. This seems to be the right attitude, with the weather as depressing as it is outside. Just make sure not to wake up with a hang-over too often.

Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st

September: I hope you have not been keeping something hidden at work as it is bound to come out sooner rather than later. I know all these changes are scary, but at least it stops you getting bored. A time to think about what you would like to achieve in life.

October: Stay in bed and feel sorry for yourself? Or you could just phone up your bosom pal and go on a 'tea-jenny' trip. Remember, a little chin-wag can work wonders.

November: Other people do a major spring cleaning but you have to go one better. I have to admit there is never a wrong time for a good clear-out, but don't forget that people have feelings – try not to hurt them so close to your birthday!

Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th

September: You want to broaden your horizons but your routine won't let you fully experience new influences in your life. Break out and find new friends who will help you become a little bit less boring.

October: People will suspect you of not being very honest, but this doesn't matter to you as you just want to experience life to the full this month. And why not? A sense of familiarity and security returns by the end of the month.

November: The stars are your limit, especially around the 15th. Friends will be with you all the way and at last you can relax a little and get on with the things that are important to you.

Aquarius
January 21st - February 19th

September: Bad hair day? You should be so lucky - it's going to feel more like a bad hair *month*! At least you'll find out who your real friends are. Think about what went wrong and learn from it.

October: Touchy-feely? *"Who, me?"* Yes, you are indeed, but around the 14th you'll get a burst of energy and you will be able to start something you have wanted to do for a very long time!

November: The month starts on a very positive note for you. You might meet somebody you'll click with straight away, or if you are already in a relationship, this will move to a new level. It might feel scary to start with but it's ok to feel scared now and then.

Pisces
February 20th - March 20th

September: Honestly, you can hardly see that spot – and no, it doesn't look like a volcano about to erupt! Your hormones seem to be wreaking havoc in your life. There are plenty of people around you who care about you – trust them!

October: You are still quite intense, but relax, you have nothing to fear. There will be pleasing experiences in store for you around the middle of the month – perhaps cupid might pay you a little visit.

November: Around the 5th your dream will expand beyond all recognition. Remember, though, don't dream it – BE IT! This is also a time you find it easy to study new topics. Use this wisely.

dear Auntie Dot

Let Dorothy help with any difficulties you encounter in your life as a result of your transgender experience.
Write in confidence C/o The Tartan Skirt

I wrote to you a few weeks ago about me being forced to take a job in a burger bar working as a girl. I am now writing with an update. I spoke to my sister about it and it turned out that she instigated it as a 'giggle'. In her defence, though, she didn't know her friend would take it so far. Anyway I took the job, but I'm going to have to give it up. Don't get me wrong, I love working as Suzi but it is so time consuming. I am spending the day at school as Phillip, coming home and getting changed and made up and spending the evening as Suzi. I don't get any time to myself. My days off are spent washing my wig which stinks of frying, and I am worried about traces of makeup that I might miss. I love the attention I am getting and enjoy being chatted up, but the first time I had my bum pinched I almost broke character. So now I have another problem. When I give the job up, do I let them know I'm really a boy or do I keep quiet? Also, because of all the time I am spending as Suzi, and I love the attention she gets, does that mean I'm transsexual or gay?

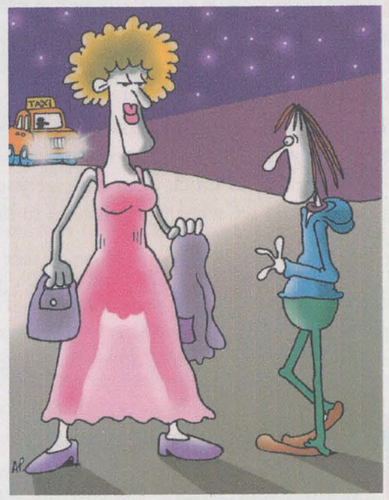
I guess you are discovering how difficult and confusing it can be to make decisions about what is right for you as you become a young adult and the people who once told you what to think, what to do, your teachers, your parents, are being left behind. When you are being pulled in different directions it's usually a good idea to take stock of your situation. Just how important are each of the following to you - your education, your job, the attention you get as Suzi, the time you spend with your self? If you could only choose three of these, which would you set aside? If you could only choose two of the remaining three, which of these would you give up? If you had to choose between these two, which one could you let go? This will help you realise the importance of each which should then help you apportion your time and direct your energy to greater effect.

Ask yourself why you feel you might want to let your boss know you're really a boy. In what way might this profit you, beyond feeding your ego with the dubious satisfaction of having let him know you outsmarted him.

It's not possible for *anyone* to tell you what your sexuality is – only you will come to know this in time - and be aware the road can take many turns. The danger is in being prevented from considering all possibilities because of the prejudice and hostility directed at sexual orientations other than heterosexuality.

I've been divorced for some years. My wife never knew about my cross-dressing. I've always thought of myself as heterosexual but I'm getting more and more into having casual sex with men when I'm dressed. I feel driven to do this but I feel really let down afterwards. I never did find it easy to have girlfriends in the past and although I long for a relationship with a woman again I can't seem to stop what I'm doing. It's ruining how I want my life to be.

You seem to know what you want in your life, a relationship with a woman, and what is unsatisfactory with your life, the disappointment of the sexual encounters you have when you're cross-dressed. Perhaps the reason you feel disappointed and let down in your casual relationships is because they are precisely that, casual relationships, and as such, offer you only a barren soil in which to try to raise the seeds of a caring relationship. That's not to say they don't serve a purpose. We are all sexual as well as emotional beings and to suppress either need is to live a life less lived. It may only be damaging for you if you interpret your present sexual relations as having a quality of communion they would not claim for themselves - they serve another purpose. Being loved is not sheer chance or fate. You can influence it more than you might think by being available to it. Take a look at your availability to a relationship with a woman and ask yourself if there is room for some work here.



Dug's date with 'Barbara' was going well until the taxi lights shone through her dress.

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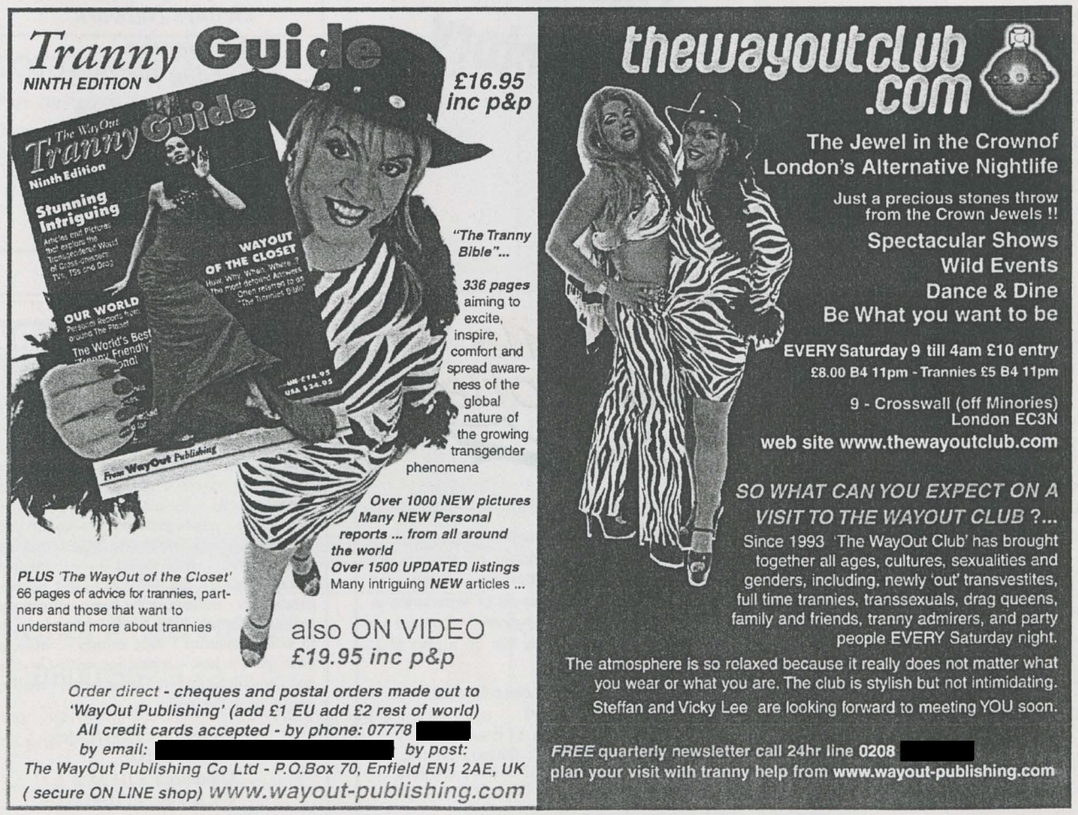
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Equality Network

The Equality network campaigns to remove the inequalities facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gender people in the laws and institutions of Scotland.

THE EQUALITY NETWORK
58a Broughton Street
Edinburgh
EH1 3SA

Tel: 07020 [redacted]
Fax: 07020 [redacted]
Web site: www.diversity.org.uk/equality/
Email: [redacted]

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Press For Change
BM Network
London WC1N 3XX

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SCOTLAND CO-ORDINATOR: 01463-[redacted]
Rank Outsiders, BCM Box 8431, London WC1N 3XX
e-mail: [redacted]

CALL IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE

the Tartan Skirt Directory

Gendys Network

For all who have encountered gender identity problems personally, transsexuals, trans-gendered people and gender dysphoric people of either sex, and for those who provide care, both professional and lay.

For further information, write to:

Gendys Network
BM Gendys
London WC1N 3XX

e-mail: [redacted]

Scottish representative:
Sue Robb
3 Station cottages
Strathcarron
Ross-shire IV54 8YR

The Beaumont Society

The Beaumont Society is a nationwide self-help organisation for all those who cross dress. We hold many open social meetings around the country. The Beaumont Society is a welcoming membership organisation with its own magazine and newsletter.

For further details of Beaumont Society publications and events write to:

The Beaumont Society,
27, Old Gloucester Street,
London WC1N 3XCX

or telephone our Information Line:

01582 [redacted]

Web site - http://members.aol.com/Bmontsoc
E mail - [redacted]

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Human Resources Director
Pride Scofland

58a Broughton Street Edinburgh EH1 3SA and 11 Dixon Street Glasgow G1 4AL
Tel/Fax: 0131 [redacted] Tel: 0141 [redacted]
Fax: 0141 [redacted]

OUTRIGHT SCOTLAND

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3G GRAMPIAN GENDER GROUP

Meetings are held in Aberdeen on the third Saturday of the month.

Contact: *Gillian*
Tel: 01224-[redacted]
(6.30 - 9.30 pm, Mondays & Tuesdays)

E-mail: [redacted]

There is also an information page on the Press & Journal website -
http://beehive.thisisnorthscotland.co.uk/Grampian3G

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GLASGOW AND WEST OF SCOTLAND TV/TS SUPPORT GROUP
C/O SGLS, PO BOX 38, GLASGOW, G2 2QF
Meetings are held on the second Wednesday evening of each month.

CROSSLYNX HELPLINE: 0141-[redacted] *(7.30 - 9.30 MONDAYS)*
SGLS SWQITCHBOARD: 0141-[redacted] (7.00 - 10.00pm EVERY EVENING)
e-mail: [redacted]
website: www.geocities.com/crosslynx

SCOTTISH TV/TS SUPPORT GROUP

Meetings are held on the last Saturday of the month from from 1-5 pm.

The June meeting will be held at LGB Centre, 63 Broughton Street, Edinburgh. Thereafter, meetings will be held at:

The Phoenix Cellar Bar
46 Broughton Street
Edinburgh

Contact: Irene Tel: 0775-[redacted]

WLTSG
west lothian transgender support group

Meetings are held on the second and last Saturday of the month from 5 pm onwards, and on every Tuesday and Friday evening from 6.30 till 9.30pm, at CROFTHEAD FARM COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE, TEMPLAR RISE, DEDRIDGE, LIVINGSTON.

Contact John at tel: 0780-[redacted] (Monday to Thursday, 6-9pm)
E-mail contact: [redacted]
Website: http://www.westlothiantsg.co.uk

transgender, family and friends .....

The Impotence Association

The Helpline 0181 [redacted]

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National AIDS Helpline

0800 [redacted]

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Highland T-Group

Information and support for the Transgender Community in the North of Scotland. Meetings are held in Inverness at REACH Out Highland on the first Friday of every month, from 7-10 pm.

Contact: Vikki [redacted] at [redacted]
or Aileen at [redacted]
or REACH OUT Highland:
Tel. 01463-[redacted]
Fax. 01463-[redacted]
or write to: The Highland T-Group, c/o REACH OUT Highland, 34 Waterloo Place, Inverness, IV1 1DG.

back issues



- For Vol. 7, Nos. 1-8, send £1.60 per magazine
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A Retrospective Look Up The Tartan Skirt, Setting The Standards, London Pride '98, Male Erectile Dysfunction, AIUK.GLBT Network, Demet Demir, Our Forgotten History: Transgender in Myth and Legend, Gendys '98 Report, How to Love Yourself, Droit De Seigneur, The Bench test: Sugaring, The Compliment, The Transgender Resource, and much more.

Vol. 7, No. 2

Equality For All: 1998 Equality Network Conference Report, Hepatitis: Know your A, B and C's, Interview With Alice Purnell, Transgender Agenda: Report On The Third International Conference On Sex And Gender, Self-Esteem, The Bench Test: Niplettes, Hide And Sleek's Christmas Bash, A Trio Of Trannies, Tiffany's Tit-Bits, Our Forgotten History: Continuing Tales Of Transgender In Myth And Legend, News, Personal Listings, and much more.

Vol. 7, No. 3

The Brussels Experience, Carolyn's Corner, Wigs, Tiffany's Tit-Bits, Just Another Bottle Of Prozac, Having Your Cake... And Eating It, Whatever I Feel, News From Around The World, Shaping Up, Our Forgotten History: Continuing Tales Of Transgender In Myth And Legend, Equality At Holyrood, Minto Fashion Show, Millennium menu, The Purple Nails, Personal Listings, and much more.

Vol. 7, No. 4

Pride Scotland 1999, Our Forgotten History: Continuing Tales Of Transgender In Myth And Legend, Fash Bash At The Minto, Crossdress To Impress, London Pride, Potty Training: The Legal View In Scotland, Love, You Can't Change What You're Born With, Can You? SNAP: Quietly Progressing, I Wasn't Born In The Wrong Body, I Am Nothing Without Clothes, Released After 43 Years, and much more.

Vol. 7, No. 5

HIV And AIDS: Living Your Life By Choice - Not Chance, Our Forgotten History: Continuing Tales Of Transgender In Myth And Legend, Livingston Update, A Day In The Life, Healing Yourself, News From Around The World, A Day At The Races, The Tartan Skirt Interview: Yvonne Sinclair, Transgender Horoscope, Personal Listings, and much more.

Vol. 7, No. 6

The Missing Voice, Hormone Therapy In Male To Female Sex Reassignment Therapy, Know Your Rights: Harassment, Tiffany Tuesday's Tit-Blitz! Our Forgotten History: Continuing tales Of Transgender In Myth And Legend, Hide And Sleek's Beauty Festival, Vikki's Webwatch, Make-up Video review, Report On The 1999 Interpride Conference, Transgender Horoscope, News, and much more.

Vol. 7, No. 7 OUT OF STOCK

Vol. 7, No. 8

The Chester Finishing School, Breast Augmentation Surgery, A Voice? You And The Law: Searches, Personal development: Push Pull, Butterfly - Image Of The Soul, Pitlochry Pleasures, Our Forgotten History: Continuing Tales Of Transgender In Myth And Legend, Tina's Travels, Promoting Confidence Within The NHS, Speak Out: Letters To The Editor, Vikki's Webwatch, and much more.

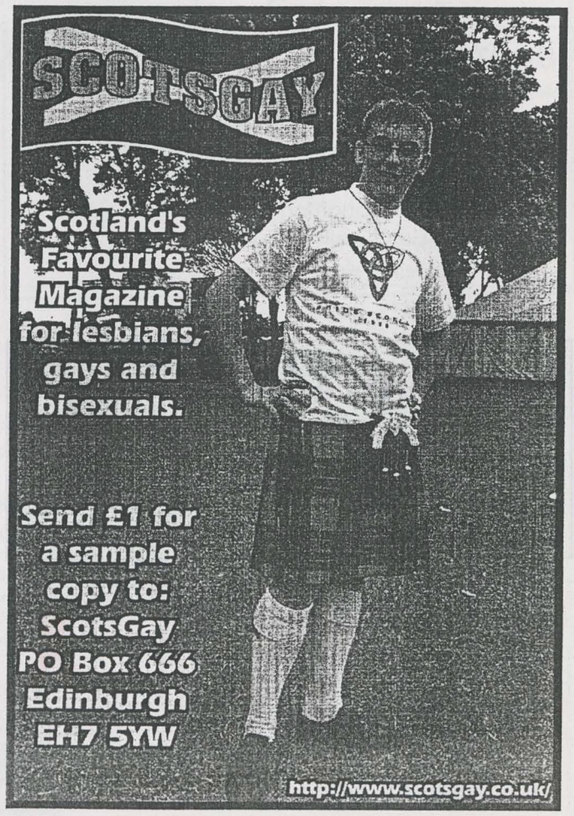
Winter 2000

Madame or Monsieur? Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont, The Story of Percy: Personality Theory, The Tartan Skirt Interview: Martine Rose, A Girl's Night Out ... For The Boys, You And The Law: Controlled Substances, Our Forgotten History: Ancient Transgendered Priesthoods, Personal Development: Visualisation, How To Be A Convincing Transvestite, Read All About It ... But Complain If It's Wrong! and much more.

Spring 2001

Miss TV Scotland 2000, Orchidectomy, Lassitude - Transgenerational Cross-Dressing, Personal Development: Affirmations, A Mint Weekend, In Charge Of The Bed, Vikki's Webwatch, Working With Diversity, Our Forgotten History: Gallae On The Palatine Hill, Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People, Seams To Me..., The Question is Not, To Whom Do I Talk, But Who Listens? and much more.

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