Educational TV Channel ETVC

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME TEN, NUMBER 4 JANUARY–FEBRUARY, 1992

ETVC COTILLION '92 - JANUARY 11

Where is it appropriate to wear the glitziest gowns and the highest heels, the fluffiest hair and the most dazzling jewelry? Not the mall, certainly. Not the grocery store, I mean really. The place to flaunt your most feminine fantasies is our own Cotillion. The dictionary defines cotillion as the elaborate dancing of formal balls. (sick) In this case the dancers are the eight contestants for Miss ETVC, who reigns as queen of our club and represents us at many formal affairs.

The Cotillion brings out the best entertainment our club has to offer in both contestants and special acts, with our emcee none other than the lively Miss Tommi Rose, the elegant and vivacious Mistress of Ceremonies at Finocchio's.

The evening includes a scrumptious buffet dinner supplied under the tutelage of our own Barbi and a dessert ensemble provided by our Significant Others Support group.

There is an array of door prizes that usually includes a professional make-over, and all debutantes have an opportunity to be presented on stage for all to behold. Don't miss this great way to start your public life!

Tickets are $18 in advance and $25 at the door. Take advantage of the opportunity to save by getting your tickets at Lily's, the Chez Mollet, or from any officer you can find. This is one of our biggest events of the year and aptly displays our group's talent and teamwork. Don't miss it. See you at the California Club,1750 Clay Street (between Van Ness & Polk) 7 pm til Midnight.



Romancing the Self

by Reneé Chinquapin

What compels any man to crave looking and acting like a woman, falling in love with himself en femme in the mirror? To do so is to defy Patriarchy's sternest taboo, risking shame and ridicule by mimicking the supposedly subordinate sex. I am struck by clients' fierce struggle with a mysterious, irrepressible female entity within them, yearning for expression. If they succumb to this forbidden urge, such tremendous amounts of joyous energy are released that they almost appear possessed by this long-suppressed feminine aspect, until the cycle of guilty remorse returns things to "normal," and the femme self gets shoved back into that Pandora's Box, the closet.

This dynamic defies logical explanation. Crossdressers risk ridicule, beatings, and loss of their relationships, family, jobs...everything. Whatever for? This pattern of irresistible behavior is much too powerful to be taken lightly; something important is happening in the inmost being of a crossdresser, something well worth exploring.

Although many men have this urge, no one seems to understand it, perhaps because European society denied its existence and validity for so long, ruthlessly punishing it wherever it timidly asserted itself, except during cathartic pre-Christian festivals like Mardi Gras and Halloween. Until recently, crossdressing was relegated to the kinky netherworld of gay bars and the privacy of the bedroom, a taboo, or "weird" behavior no one treated with respect. Attempts to explain crossgender behavior have either been medical/scientific studies of a pathology, or else sensationalistic media exploitation of its purely sexual aspects.

Just as it is important and helpful to examine genetic, familial and sociological explanations of transgendered behavior, this feminine self, too, deserves closer scrutiny, with its new name, attitudes and enormous reserves of energy. In line with the writings of C.W. Jung and his followers, this feminine aspect of self, the anima archetype, resides within men as a balancing reservoir of feminine energies, behaviors and wisdom. Composed of memories of real, media and mythological images of women, this anima aspect of a man also contains forbidden behaviors he has learned he can only have in his life by bonding with an actual woman.

Men seek in their wives and lovers qualities that also exist to a lesser degree within themselves, such as empathy, relatedness, vulnerability, emotionality, intuition, and groundedness in the here and now. Patriarchy has long encouraged these in women but frowned upon them in heterosexual men. Whether projected upon a real woman, or discovered within himself, a man's anima serves to enrich his creative, emotional, sexual and spiritual being. It manifests in dreams, art, poetry, and religious symbology. The anima guides a man through the rich storehouse of spontaneity and wisdom latent in his unconscious.

Sooner or later a husband realizes that his wife or lover is a real person in her own right who cannot or will not carry his anima archetype any longer. She can then, instead, become his role model, helping him discover his own unique blend of feminine qualities. Opening up to his own anima sets the stage for major transformations in a man's mid-life. He may change careers, "get religion," search for his anima in a new, often younger lover, seek it in some creative project or return to nature. This anima archetype often appears in a man's dreams as a woman guiding him deeper into intimate relationships and creative work and play. It carries what Jung calls "numinosity," a sort of magical specialness, an excitement and deep knowingness. It

cont. on pg. 9

ETVC NEWSLETTER

ETVC is a non-sexual, membership based organization with the purpose of serving the educational, social, and recreational needs of gender-challenged people, their spouses, significant others, family members, friends, and professionals in the helping services.

For details about ETVC programs, membership, newsletter subscriptions, and classified ads, please write to: ETVC Secretary, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486.

OFFICERS

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Outreach	Lauren & Telzey
Social	Zia & Vanessa

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership (as of 11/30/91)	346
1990 Membership	337
New members this year	54

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance on 10/1/91	$5,327.39
October income	2,444.80
October expenses	2,855.51
Balance on 10/31/91	4,916.68
November income	1,360.40
November expenses	1,761.27
Balance on 11/30/91	4,515.81

The ETVC Newsletter is published the last week of February, April, June, August, October and December. Materials for publication should be sent to ETVC by the first weekend of each of those months. Newsletter contents reflect the opinions of the contributors and the editor, and are not necessarily those of ETVC.

Other organizations may reprint or reproduce portions of the newsletter for their members, provided ETVC is acknowledged.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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AD RATES

	per issue	per year
Business Card	$20	$100
4" x 5"	$50	$250

PERSONAL ADS

ETVC will accept personal ads from ETVC members at the rate of $1 per 3 lines. We will not accept ads with a purely sexual objective.

Send ad copy and a check for the appropriate amount to: ETVC, PO Box 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486.

Ad deadlines are the first day of the month of publication (June, August, October, December, February and April).

HOTLINE 510-[redacted]

Editor's Notes

by Roxanne de Lyon

In wondering how best to use this monthly opportunity to speak out, I find assistance from Christine Beatty through her well stated letter to the editor this month. It's as if Christine read my mind when I wrote wHEELS because she is alluding to what I felt and failed to communicate.

In my presentation to the International Forum on New Science, I focused on the power of being exactly who you really are, as opposed to what you or society thinks you ought to be; and on the definition of perfect health as being exactly who you're really supposed to be.

Society thinks all people and animals are supposed to be either male or female. If society is treating you as a male because they think your body looks male, and that doesn't seem to work for you because you know you are a female, what is your other choice? By society's rules, it is only to be female; there are no other choices currently in our culture.

If you take an "ordinary" male and put him in female attire, you do not have a transvestite, (or whatever label you want to use), you merely have a man in a dress. If you now cut off his penis, you don't have a transsexual; you have a man in a dress with his penis cut off.

Transvestites and transsexuals, all genderists, are psychologically different from the norm, no matter what the label, the chosen attire or the body appearance. Mother nature, in her wisdom, has designed a system of animal and human beings where it is possible, though not very probable, perhaps, to be something other than male or female, and that is what I believe we (genderists) are. I definitely intend to include transsexuals in this group. When I wrote the statement, "without the need to pretend to be women," to which Christine objects, I had been thinking about my practice as a healer and my vow to help others to freely become exactly who they really are, in spite of society's labels. Who you really are includes accepting yourself exactly as you have found yourself, physically, psychologically, spiritually and sexually. The problem is that society doesn't operate on that premise. They want you to fit into one of their two big boxes.

For the transsexual, in many cases, that seems to require a significant amount of physical and hormonal body alteration. If, however, each body was uniquely designed as a whole and complete operating system (the healer's approach), these physical and chemical alterations, if not done with complete knowledge of the system, and in harmony with its design, at best can be seen as tampering and at worst mutilation. (I sincerely apologize to all transsexuals for my editorial opinions, decisions and transgressions, but it takes a lot of rationalizations to put your body through those surgeries.) That society's rules and limited understanding of humanity should demand, require or motivate such action for a peaceful and harmonious life, infuriates me, and moves me to action.

My ideal vision of the future allows masculine and feminine and combination lifestyles, regardless of the maleness or femaleness of a body, whose characteristics would then only be important with regard to reproduction. Expression through clothing would enjoy complete freedom. Everyone would be conscious of their masculine or feminine treatment of another and would be *sexidextrous* meaning they could treat any person equally as either gender. In this world, "passing" would be a superfluous slang term. No one would ever be considered as pretending to be anything since all would be allowed free and equal access to the many forms of human (gender and all other) expression. You would only be pretending whenever you were not being who you really are.

The dilemma I see for the transsexual is the desire not to have to lie about her(his) gender identity. S/he wants to be able to stick her chest out proudly and say, "I am a woman." S/he doesn't want the burden of the transsexual stereotype. S/he might be on shaky ground regarding identity and confidence, so s/he doesn't want to be associated with gender people for fear of acquiring that label. S/he just wants to be a "normal" woman. (S/he may live as one but I contend s/he will never be one any more than I will never be a normal man.) S/he doesn't want to live a lie. But after the surgery, she is confronted with her history, and the fact that her body was once male, and doesn't function exactly as a woman's does. So now she has to chose to be a woman and lie about her history, or appear as a woman, telling the truth about her history when appropriate, thus carrying the label of transsexual. It is hard to envision any part of the transsexual path where you do not have to live a lie. When you are in a lose-lose situation, something must be very far from the truth, and in this case it is society's notion that we are either male or female exclusively.

This desire to be a real woman, this need to blend and disappear is why TS's seem under represented in ETVC and this newsletter. Only TS's are qualified to represent themselves, and they habitually drop out of the ranks of the club after transition.

cont. on pg. 3

Letters to the Editor

It was with great interest that I read the rebuttal from the GAL board to your wHEELS OF DESTINY editorial. The point to this letter is to speak out on how transsexuals seem to be ignored in the gender movement. ETVC seems to be unrepresentative of transsexuals even though we say we include TS's in our organization. Well how can you say that when in the wHEELS editorial you talk of being who we are "without the need to pretend to be women." Excuse me?! That sounds pretty insensitive to transsexuals. Are you trying to tell us that we're just men running around in dresses with our penises cut off?

I can draw only two conclusions from that statement. One, that you believe that transsexuals are just mentally ill men, which you should come out and say if you really believe that. Two, that you just weren't thinking about transsexuals when you wrote that sentence, which means you were ignoring this minority of your readership, and thank you very much for making me feel invisible. In either case, I think you owe every transsexual who reads this newsletter an apology. Or you might as well quit purporting to represent us, too. Sincerely, –Christine Beatty

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Due to a recent change in federal tax law, the costs of "cosmetic surgery" are no longer tax deductible. Cosmetic surgery is defined as "any procedure which is directed at improving the patient's appearance and does not meaningfully promote the proper function of the body or prevent or treat illness or disease." It is likely that the IRS will interpret this definition of cosmetic surgery to include sex reassignment surgery. Since sex reassignment surgery is expensive and rarely covered by insurance, the question of its tax deductibility is significant to the gender community.

I would like to hear from anyone who is interested in this question. I am especially interested in talking to medical professionals and other tax practitioners, as well as members of the gender community. –Sandy 510[redacted]

Editor's Notes

(cont. from pg. 2)

I know I am a male. I also know I am different from the norm, I am clearly a genderist, the term encouraged by the G.A.L. that I fully agree with. I know I am not a female and I am not a transsexual. I confess, I don't have the slightest notion of what it is like to be either of them, and I won't even pretend to be knowledgeable about their issues. (However I'm willing to share my perspectives.) My feeling is that transsexuals are neither male nor female and are stuck pretending no matter which mode they try to live. If you are a TS and you find this opinion misinformed please take advantage of this forum to educate all of us; if you find this offensive, please accept my apology and know that my interest is to get the greatest freedom and happiness for the most people.

And a little voice tells me that for a long term goal we should work to change society's labels to conform with the truth about humanity as we know and live it.

And eventually the radical surgeries, procedures, chemicals, time and money that have become the hallmark of the transsexual will not be required.

And in the meantime I am very sad.

Yet being a transvestite (I probably prefer female mimic) is something that enhances, not degrades me. I am proud of it and glad to show it off. (Got it?; flaunt it!) It is a blessing of nature and an opportunity for me to pioneer new realms of human expression. Personally I am using it to get the attention I need to catalyze the cultural changes that I see are necessary to carry us into a healthy and prosperous future. Are you willing to embrace your personal truth and join me?

Hello, this is Elaine, one of the non-active members of ETVC. (But wish that I could be more active, or doing some good for the organization)

Anyway, in the latest newsletter I read in, On The wHEELS of Destiny, A Rebuttal, the article by the Gender Alternative League. What is their main goal? Are they the same as ETVC? I wrote a letter to them, but decided not to mail it. I'm not sure of what they're trying to say, so, I will send just a short note on, or, asking information about them.

I do know though, and what they said is true, all of us crossdressers or transvestites no longer need to live in the closet. It's killing me, to be stuck in my apartment, and go nowhere; it's like being in prison, no key to be free!

Anyway your latest copy was excellent. These newsletters are wonderful. Keep up the good work! (I mean that)! After I read the whole letter, I put on my makeup, wig, dress and went to my neighbor lady's house, had a cup of coffee with her. She told me that I was pretty, I look really good and that I did a really good job on my makeup. Then I went to my mother's place, and boy, did "bombs" ever fall!

She knows I dress up, and will only accept it to a limit! I tried to talk to her more about my being a transvestite; she told me that I looked a fool, and that wearing women's clothes will be my demise!

What is she ashamed of? She came down kinda hard, oh well, her loss, my gain, huh?

Anyway I wrote a letter to ETVC a while back, (I was down-in-the-mouth that day, and had no-one to talk to, so I wrote to ETVC).

I'll bet that Lauren Hotchkiss is quite a card. That poem and song she wrote was right-on! My best to her! Anyway I reread my newsletters that I have received, for they give me a lot of strength and courage! I sure hate being the lone stranger here in my home town and county! Oh well, life's a beach at times, huh? Well anyway I thought that I would write to you and thank you. Maybe I can thank you in person someday. Take care, Roxanne, and keep up the good work you are doing, it's excellent! Bye for now. Sincerely, –Elaine C.

It is letters like this that make all the writing and speaking and hotlines and committees and conventions and general hard work worthwhile. Next time you are asked to volunteer, remember Elaine. Bigger than all of us now, our gender movement seeks to make a world where we can all express ourselves freely and publicly. Thanks for the touching letter, Elaine. You bravely continue to seek your truth even though alone whereas we big city girls have companions. I hope we do meet someday, maybe at one of the national conventions. Save your pennies. Ed.

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CROSS-TALK

The Transgendered
Community's
Newsletter

for a sample issue
write to:



P.O. Box 944 Woodland Hills, CA 91365

SPECIAL EVENTS

Miss ETVC Cotillion
January 11

Dress as you would for the theater, opera or museum. This is the night to be a "socialite." Strut your stuff on this special Saturday night. Remember: Tickets at the Chez Mollet or Lily's in San Francisco, or from any club officer, for $18, advance sale. They're $25 at the door! See you at the California Club,1750 Clay Street (between Van Ness & Polk) 7 pm til Midnight.

Hair Secrets from Europe
January 20

This mid-month educational event features European hair stylist Franjon whose experience at beauty shows and with models for album covers will be taped to enlighten us on the use of the fluff and removal of the frizz in our coif. I'd like a new style, how 'bout you? Bring your brush, pick and tresses. 7 P.M. at Pearl's, 207 Amphlett Blvd, San Mateo. Off Bayshore 101, Pearl's is north of Third street on the west frontage road. If you arrive at the 3rd street train depot or you get lost, call Pearl's at [redacted] Models for this event will be selected at the December Social. Donation $3.

Another Evening at the Chez
January 30

Enjoy a night of music, fun and conversation. Members $3 and guests $5. 8 P.M. Chez Mollet, 527 Bryant St., San Francisco

Makeup Magic by Herman
February 8

This mystical magician brings his experience with stage makeup and Channel 5 for our edification. If you want to know how the best looking girls do it, they probably learned from Herman at a session like this one. Herman reveals all the "tricks" the beginner should know and the experienced should review. Perhaps you will be one of the girls whose photo brings ahs to all viewers. Models will be selected at the January social. Herman will be at Lily's, #4 Valencia, San Francisco on Saturday, February 8 at 2 P.M. Your donation of $3 will go directly to the AIDS Emergency Fund at Herman's Request.

Fashion Fling
February 27

Wear your most chic outfit and show it off or just watch the fashion show of glamorous gowns at this fun event. Find out how much great clothes really cost and where the bargains really are. 8 P.M. Chez Mollet, 527 Bryant St., San Francisco. Members $3, guests $5.

Coming Together Working Together
HOUSTON '92

Presenting I.F.G.E.'s Sixth Annual
'COMING TOGETHER – WORKING TOGETHER' CONVENTION
Houston, Texas
April 6 – 12, 1992

Crossdressers, Transsexuals, Wives & Partners
Medical & Mental Health Professionals, Friends & Allies
Working together to build a happier and brighter future .

COME AND JOIN US!

For Information and Registration:
'COMING TOGETHER – WORKING TOGETHER' CONVENTION
P.O. Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778 (617)[redacted]

Can You Come to Our
Texas 'T' Party?
Fourth Annual
February 28, 29, and March 1 of 1992
in San Antonio Texas

A fun weekend for crossdressers and their friends.
Come for:
a weekend to dress with the girls
the Texas sun and warm weather
the activities, the outings,
meet friends, new and old.

Boulton & Park Society
Texas 'T' Party - P.O. Box 17, Bulverde, TX 78163
or call: (512)[redacted]

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26 YEARS SERVING SAN FRANCISCO
Dinner Nightly 5:30 - 10:30 **Sunday Brunch** 10:30 - 3:00
Sunday, Monday, Tuesday
Prime Rib
Dinner, Soup or Salad
$10.95
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N.Y. Steak Diane
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RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED
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SPECIAL ATTENTION GIVEN TO BIRTHDAY PARTIES
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WHERE PARKING IS A BLESSING

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TV/TS/TG GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

A Calendar of Events for January & February



JANUARY

1	Pac Ctr	TV/TS Rap	Meets 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510) [redacted]
3	RGA	Social	Starts at 8 PM	San Jose	(408)
4	**ETVC**	**Executive Committee**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**Oakland**	**(408)**
5	**ETVC**	**Cotillion Committee**	**3 - 6 PM**	**Chez Mollet**	**(408)**
7	....	Foxy Lady Social	7:30 - 9:30 PM	San Francisco	(415)
7	DVG	Social	Starts at 8 PM	Walnut Creek	(510)
9	**ETVC**	**Significant Others Support**	**Meets 8-10 PM**	**Oakland**	**(415)**
10	**ETVC**	**Poker Social**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**San Francisco**	**(415)**
11	**ETVC**	**Cotillion**	**Starts at 7 PM**	**California Club, SF**	**(510)**
13	RGA	Rap Group	Meets 8-10 PM	San Jose	(408)
15	Pac Ctr	TV/TS Rap	Meets 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)
17	RGA	Social	Starts at 8 PM	San Jose	(408)
20	**ETVC**	**Hair Secrets from Europe**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**Pearl's**	**(408)**
20	DVG	Social	Starts at 8 PM	Walnut Creek	(510)
23	**ETVC**	**Couples Social**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**Foster City**	**(415)**
24	RGA	Poker Social	Starts at 8 PM	Sunnyvale	(408)
25	SGA	Dinner/Social	Starts at 8 PM	Sacramento	(916)
30	**ETVC**	**Another Evening at the Chez**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**Chez Mollet**	**(415)**
31	Pac Ctr	Open Rap	Meets 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)

FEBRUARY

3	**ETVC**	**Outreach Committee**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**Newark**	**(510)** [redacted]
4	....	Foxy Lady Social	7:30 - 9:30 PM	San Francisco	(415)
4	DVG	Social	Starts at 8 PM	Walnut Creek	(510)
5	Pac Ctr	TV/TS Rap	Meets 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)
7	RGA	Social	Starts at 8 PM	San Jose	(408)
8	**ETVC**	**Education Committee**	**Meets at 12:30**	**Lily's**	**(408)**
8	**ETVC**	**Makeup Magic by Herman**	**Starts at 2 PM**	**Lily's**	**(408)**
8	**ETVC**	**Executive Committee**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**San Francisco**	**(408)**
10	RGA	Rap Group	Meets 8-10 PM	San Jose	(408)
13	**ETVC**	**Significant Others Support**	**Meets 8-10 PM**	**Palo Alto**	**(415)**
14	**ETVC**	**Poker Social**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**San Francisco**	**(415)**
17	DVG	Social	Starts at 8 PM	Walnut Creek	(510)
19	Pac Ctr	TV/TS Rap	Meets 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)
20	**ETVC**	**Couples Social**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**San Francisco**	**(415)**
21	RGA	Social	Starts at 8 PM	San Jose	(408)
22	....	Emperor/Empress Coronation	Starts at 7 PM	Fashion Center, SF	(415)
22	SGA	Dinner/Social	Starts at 8 PM	Sacramento	(916)
27	**ETVC**	**Fashion Fling**	**Starts at 8 PM**	**Chez Mollet**	**(415)**
28	RGA	Poker Social	Starts at 8 PM	Sunnyvale	(408)
28	Pac Ctr	Open Rap	Meets 8-10 PM	Berkeley	(510)

OTHER GROUPS

Pacific Center for Human Growth, a counseling-oriented growth center, sponsors all-inclusive gender support groups on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, and last Friday of the month at 8:00 PM. The Center is located at 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley. Call (510) [redacted] for more information.

Rainbow Gender Association (RGA) meets on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month at 8:00 PM at the New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. RGA can be contacted by writing: Rainbow Gender Association, PO Box 700730, San Jose, CA 95170.

Sacramento Gender Association (SGA) Blue Rose Chapter meets at 8PM on the fourth Saturday of each month at the Town & Country Inn's restaurant 2060 Auburn Blvd. Sacramento; call (916) [redacted] for directions. Write **Blue Rose Chapter**, PO Box 215456, Sacramento, CA 95821-1456 for more information.

Diablo Valley Girls (DVG) meets on the 1st Tuesday and 3rd Monday of every month at 8:00 PM at Just Rewards nightclub, 2520 Camino Diablo in Walnut Creek. For more information, write: DVG, PO Box 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885, or call (510) [redacted]

What The Hell Is GAL? *(I don't know what they're REALLY doing, but I've heard...)*

by Lauren Hotchkiss, Outreach Director, Gender Alternatives League

There has been some concern in the gender community regarding the Gender Alternatives League and its activities. It is to deal with this issue, and any misunderstandings that might exist, that this article is addressed.

Contrary to rumors that have arisen, G.A.L. is not in competition with any other organization. Its purpose is not to supplant any existing organization, but to work with each to further the goal of societal awareness of gender issues and to promote political consciousness through constructive action in the areas of civil and human rights. Many non-profit educational corporations are enjoined by law from political action. The Gender Alternatives League was specifically chartered for political action when it was incorporated with non-profit status.

To realize these goals we are taking action in two main areas: 1) identifying, and formulating plans to counter any laws which are detrimental to members of our community, and 2) actively lobbying with lawmakers toward passage and enactment of legislation giving genderists equal protection under the law.

In addition we are working closely with the American Psychiatric Association, issuers of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual, (DSM), endeavoring to have stricken any listing of transgendered or transsexual persons in the mental illness category of the forthcoming DSM IV. As many psychiatrists agree that Transsexuality and Transgenderism are not, of themselves, indicative of mental illness, there is a very good chance, with the support of our community, that we can achieve this goal.

Some members of the transsexual community have voiced the concern that removing their current classification in DSM III-R will result in their inability to gain the insurance benefits they now feel they can obtain to cover the costs of their sexual reassignment surgery. This concern, however, is no longer in keeping with the current trend in the insurance industry. Nearly all companies now have specific riders that prohibit the paying of benefits for such "cosmetic" surgery, maintaining that transsexuality is a "pre-existing" condition, and therefore not coverable. I would like to make clear that G.A.L. is, in no way, advocating the exclusion of transsexuality from DSM, but rather the relocation of its classification from the Mental Illness to the Medical category; to have it listed as a medical condition (which it is) and not as a mental condition (which it is not).

G.A.L. does not feel that transsexuality or transgenderism can be considered a mental aberration when, clearly, the problem does not lie within, but lies, rather, with the "society" and its treatment of transgendered behavior, that we all have allowed to continue. Ergo, if we are not sick it must be the "society" that is in need of treatment. Instead of treating the so called "patient," we might do better to educate the society that makes it so difficult for those of us who have gender challenges in our lives. Thus we advocate an active education and social awareness program.

Among many so called "transvestites" I have spoken to there is fear as well; a concern that a high-profile "visible" presence for our community could result in a possible loss of family and/or employment. Our feeling is that it is for each person to decide for themselves if and when to take a public position. It is not the intention of the Gender Alternatives League to make personal decisions for the individual. As a matter of organizational policy, "outing" is specifically prohibited in our by-laws.

It is time for us to take pride in ourselves. We must first respect ourselves, and each other, if we wish others to respect us. No one will do for us what we are not willing to do for ourselves. How do we achieve the freedom of expression we all desire and everyone deserves?

The answer lies, I feel, in frank and open communication both within our community and in our interaction with mainstream society. This can be achieved through unity of all segments of the gender and sexual minority communities, rather than the balkanized in-fighting that has kept us divided and separate.

It is important to affirm that we are worthwhile members of society, and not the sick, somehow inferior, people we have been conditioned to believe, and G.A.L.'s position is to lead in this area. It is not sameness that gives society its richness and vitality, but rather its differences and diversity. Differences are not shameful; they are merely...differences.

The best outreach we can do is to give "society" the chance to meet us face to face and accept us as people and not as the "faceless unknown." People only fear what they do not understand, and as fear is removed it paves the way toward understanding and acceptance. As we learn to forgive ourselves and others for any lack of understanding, realizing that we (and they) simply did not know any better, we grow closer to one another. The way to address ignorance is not through fear and anger, confrontation or violence, but through education, constructive action, and compassion, a willingness to look at things from the other person's perspective.

Being the Outreach Co-chair of ETVC as well as the Outreach Director for the Gender Alternatives League has often seemed a rather difficult balance; but it does not have to continue to be so. With your input and suggestions, our two organizations, working together, can make a positive impact.

Together we can achieve what the individual can only conceive.

We need your help and support. This is not OUR organization but it can be yours. We want to hear from you. We want and desire YOUR participation to be the best organization that we can be. Your opinions are important to us. It is time to say no to injustice and yes to freedom of gender expression and the civil and human rights to which we are entitled. ❣

For more information on the Gender Alternatives League, write: Gender Alternatives League, P.O Box 3392, Napa CA 94558

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I seem to be in a "back to basics" type of mood. Accordingly, I'm going to talk about some of the legal aspects of what we do. Please keep in mind that I am only discussing the law in California. If you live in, or visit, another state, be sure to check the local laws to avoid difficulty.

THE LEGALITY OF CROSS-DRESSING

The first question to ask is whether crossdressing is legal. There are still a number of otherwise excellent articles floating around in libraries, bulletin boards, and other sources which will list a number of states where cross-dressing is illegal, and will list California among them. Such was the case until 1984. Until then we had to live with Penal Code Section 650a, which made it illegal to appear in any public place with one's face fully or partially concealed by a mask or other regalia or paraphernalia with the purpose to conceal one's identity – unless, of course, it was done in good faith for amusement or entertainment.

It is fairly easy to recognize that the less enlightened members of the law enforcement community could construe "regalia or paraphernalia" to include make-up and a wig, and such was the case. Those who went out dressed in public, to be within the law, had to wear a sign announcing that they were male - this either made it amusement or disclaimed any intent to conceal identity.

Fortunately, things are easier now as the courts decided that the statute was unconstitutional in that it was too vague, and the legislature repealed it in 1984. With the repeal of Penal Code Section 650a, crossdressing became fully legal, and we can go out in public without worry of being arrested simply for expressing ourselves. The only similar existing statute makes it a crime to use a mask or something else to conceal identity during the commission of a public offense, or to escape capture after committing the same. By the way, speeding is a public offense, so if you get pulled over, be sure you don't try to hide who you are. Remember, the fact that you are crossdressed is, in and of itself, perfectly legal, and you will be fine as long as you don't try to conceal your identity from the police officer.

THE LADIES' ROOM

Now, once again rearing its head, is the age old debate of whether we are allowed, legally, to use the ladies' room. Good news! There is no state statute which says we cannot. There is, I understand, a local ordinance addressing the matter in San Diego, which only forbids our using the ladies' room in city owned rest rooms.

Do not, however, take this as an unqualified sanction to do what you like in the ladies' room. It is illegal to loiter in a public toilet to engage in lewd or lascivious acts, or any unlawful act. Lewd and lascivious mean the same thing and, according to the state Supreme Court, mean touching of the genitals, buttocks, or female breasts for sexual gratification or to be offensive. If you are in the ladies' room, carrying on and being obnoxious, or even just staring, you may upset someone, like one of the genetic ladies. Let's face it, if she complains that there is a pervert in there, she is the one likely to be believed.

The first choice is, of course, a single occupancy rest room. If, however, that is not available, it is still not a big deal if you follow these simple rules. Use the ladies' room but, (a) use it for the purpose for which it was intended, (b) be discrete, (c) mind your own business, and (d) leave promptly when you are finished. If you are still too nervous to do this, then use the men's room. You may raise an eyebrow or two, but the police will not question your right to be there.

STUN GUNS AND OTHER FORMS OF PROTECTION

This is new and old at the same time. We are different from society at large, and our difference lies in the area of gender, which upsets some narrowminded Neo-Nazi types. As long as this is the case, we are at some risk when out and about. If we are convincingly dressed, then we run the same risk of attack as women everywhere. A few of our number have taken to carrying stun guns for self protection.

Stun guns are, first of all, specifically designated in the Penal Code as legal to carry, except on school grounds, high school level and below. (This excludes tasers, which shoot a dart attached to a charged wire. These are illegal.) It is also stated that an assault with a stun gun is a felony. I know, you want this in English – the translation is this. You can use a stun gun for self defense under circumstances where it is appropriate. Appropriate is, unfortunately, not strictly defined. We have a right to defend ourselves in California and to use reasonable force. That is defined as the force a reasonable person, under the same or similar circumstances, would believe to be necessary for protection. Common sense can go a long way toward figuring out what can be done. If a guy puts his hand on your knee, and you find it offensive, you are entitled to move your knee, or perhaps slap his hand away. Punching him out is patently unreasonable and excessive, by this standard, and using your stun gun will land you in jail - possibly to be followed by prison. If, however, you are jumped by a person, or a group of people, who appear from a dark alley, using your stun gun is an appropriate response. This applies, of course, to any response to a threat, not just a stun gun.

The right to defend yourself is absolute, and if you act reasonably for the circumstances, you are immune from prosecution. The only real problem is that you can get hurt in the process - after all, you don't have anything to defend against unless someone is trying to hurt you in the first place. The best course of action is prevention. Try to stay in well lighted, populated areas where possible. Don't park in dark alleyways and, whenever possible, walk in groups.

The exercise of common sense and courtesy will go a long way toward keeping you on the right side of the law and making your expression of yourself an enjoyable, and safe, experience for many years. ❣

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Paul A. Walker, PhD

September 29, 1946 - November 16, 1991



Born in Baltimore, Md, Paul spent his junior high school years dancing frequently on the Buddy Deane Show (the inspiration for John Water's film Hairspray). Most of his junior year in college was spent on a world cruise as he discovered his love of travel. He completed his formal education when awarded a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Rochester (New York).

Paul served on the faculties of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (Baltimore) and the University of Texas Medical Branch (Galveston) before moving to San Francisco in 1980 to begin a private practice. He was internationally known and respected as a sex researcher and sex therapist and was founding president of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. As chairman of the committee, and a primary author, for the standards of care for transsexuals, he carries the gratitude of many of us.

Closing his practice in December 1988, due to medical disability (HIV disease), he continued to travel as often as he could. His ashes are to be spread in his beloved San Francisco Bay and the Chesapeake Bay, where the currents are expected to send him out once again to sea for his longest cruise ever. He is survived by his family in Baltimore and by many friends and former patients around the world. His longtime companion Samantha (a.k.a. Psycho Kitty) will miss him in between her frequent naps.

The Pursuit Of Perfection

by Julie

Over the summer I visited my parents who live in Washington. While there, we discussed the incident of a young man who had been found dead in a nearby park; what complicated the issue of determining whether he had been murdered or not was that he was an Israeli who had lived several years in Iran. It looked to the community, as well as the student body of the college he attended, that prejudice and bigotry had been at work and that he, indeed, was the victim of foul play. BUT, as it turned out later, to the embarrassment of many, he was NOT murdered, but rather a suicide due to severe depression as a result of low grades and the expectation of not achieving PERFECTION. A suicide note was found later.

This incident led to a discussion of what our society expects of men - TO BE PERFECT. The perfect husband, the perfect provider, the perfect father and on and on. In an age where we continue to probe injustices to children (mental and physical abuse) and discrimination against women (in the work place, etc.) is it no wonder that we are not aware of what our society is doing to men. We all know about the vast numbers of homeless women and children, but do we know that 78% of the homeless are men? Is it not time to begin exploring what our culture expects of men and what that culture is doing to them? It was not until I became associated with the gender community that I had any concept at all that it was DIFFICULT being a man. I thought being male was a piece of cake. After all, who got the promotions, the better salaries, etc.? Who did not have to worry about being fat? Ugly? Growing old? Going out alone after dark? Secretly, however, wasn't it a relief for us, genetic women, NOT to have to worry about getting to the top, let alone staying on top? After joining the gender community, I became much more aware of the pressures on men. Just note the hostility in television audiences toward crossdressers! How dare a man want to be anything like a woman - how UNPERFECT! Perhaps if we allowed men more opportunities to fail without censure we would not have the tragedies as in Washington earlier this past summer.

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Leaving Home. Going Home

by Jane Kamper Bentley

"The marriage is over."

I had come to believe that no matter what I did, so long as I acted in love, somehow I would always have my family with me and that my wife and I would be parted only by death. Yet here we were, seated, of all places, on our bed, and we were still alive and I had just been told that after 26 years together we were finished.

Moments before I had announced that I was going to live full time as a woman. Now I tried to renege. What I really wanted was to stay with her and the children. To hell with full-time living. She wavered just a second before replying, "You are a goddamn manipulating bully. No, it's over."

One month later I moved out.

It is now six months later. These days, one week of my life could fill a novel by Proust. When I wrote the first of this two part article, I thought in the second part I would surprise my readers by revealing that I had discovered a deeper need than full-time living: I wanted to become a woman. For the past five months I was fairly convinced of it. Recently, however, I surprised myself with another discovery: I like being a man.

Hunh?

I find myself to be a person who meets resistance by pushing against it. Barriers which seemed insurmountable six months ago have fallen with surprising ease. The barrier of secrecy is down. My long hidden secret is a secret, no longer, at work or among friends, many of whom in and out of our community love and support me. The barrier of fear is down. I can go out the door as a woman whenever and wherever I wish. The barrier of ultimate gender taboo is down. Under a psychiatrist's care, I have been taking estrogen for two months. I have complete freedom to decide what it is I truly want.

There are many things we think we want until either we have them or we have to pay their price. How dreamy to have a smooth, beardless face. But the cost is thousands of dollars and immense pain. After five sessions of electrolysis, I quit.

How marvelous to see in the mirror a surgically transformed straight feminine nose, no Adam's apple and high, full cheekbones. But the beauty created would also be for me a kind of disfigurement, erasing not just my male looks, but nature's and time's map of my character.

Physically to become a woman—to completely change gender reality—how thrilling. Even ignoring the money it takes, or the time, what about the pain and dangers of this major surgery? I have witnessed both and they are sobering.

Lastly, consider sexual orientation. What would it be: men, women or both. I found that one dinner date with a man (a very nice man) was enough to convince me I did not want another. But dates with women have pretty well convinced me that I do not relate to them as a lesbian. Who, then, would I relate to—and how—after sex reassignment surgery?

About a week ago I woke up at 2 a.m. Something was stirring in my body, especially my breasts. I got up, stripped, and looked in the mirror to behold a slow process becoming physical fact; I had thought I noticed it before; now it was here, an undeniable reality. My hips and behind had grown. My breasts were noticeably rounded. My skin was softer. What a gift! I slipped back to bed and when I reawoke dashed into the kitchen to gulp down my daily 4 mg. dose of estradiol.

It was enough. My budding transformation was exquisite, but it was enough.

A fresh bottle of 99 tabs sits untouched in my dresser. Will I go back to them ever? I don't know. For the present I want to learn about myself as a man. Not the straw man I was, but the androgynous male I am.

Returning visitors to Paris realize that home can never be the same. My journey has taught me that the circumstance I called home was not really where I belonged. Maybe I knew it all along. Gender has been my Paris, but it doesn't feel like home either.

Wherever I'm at, that's home.

Romancing the Self

(cont. from pg. 1)

can appear as a traditional Venus or Virgin Mary figure, a film star, or as one's sister or friend.

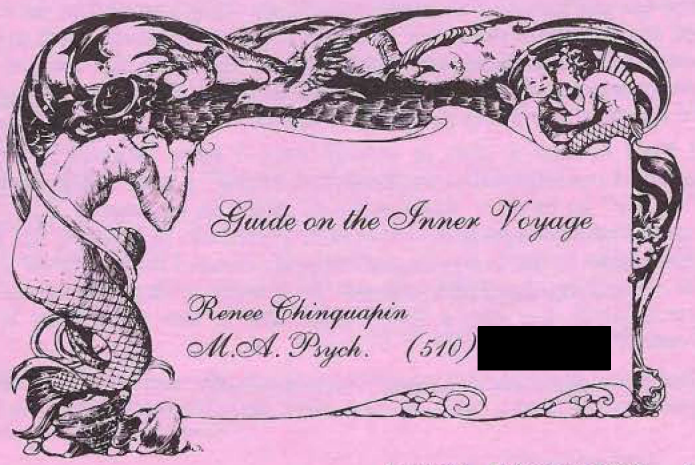
The mysterious feminine self that the crossdresser wrestles with is none other than this same anima that every man has to deal with in one way or another. It can bring him integrated wisdom, creativity, spirituality, intimacy, inner peace, sensuality and joy. Transgendered men have the capacity to manifest within themselves a concrete incarnation of their animas. Their ritualistic crossdressing allows them to transcend Patriarchy's gender straightjacket and homophobic prohibitions.

With acceptance of the anima concept, clients report a sense of liberation, explosive excitement, and willingness to consider outlooks and behaviors previously dreaded. Their life energy suddenly gushes into new areas; their lives deepen and come into new focus, and they come to perceive the opposite sex with newly empathetic eyes, helping their relationships blossom.

Instead of falling in love with the Feminine in an actual woman, a transgendered man falls in love with a repressed part of himself. This narcissism can be fetishistic and off-putting at first. The anima offers a man access to his own split-off softer, creative and spiritual feminine side, but only if he chooses to accept its guidance and proffered wisdom. Crossdressing can become a ritual leading to a self-fulfillment, infinitely more rewarding than merely putting on clothes.

How a man expresses and integrates his anima, or whether he chooses to surrender himself to it entirely, as transsexuals do, is his greatest mid-life challenge. To ignore or trivialize the anima is to treat one's own feminine energy with the disrespect with which Patriarchy treats women in general. The crossdresser has an advantage over other men in that he can literally meet his anima in the mirror and through others' responses to this femme self. It is up to each individual man to summon up the courage to gratefully honor his anima's guidance and sacredness–to proudly romance his own Self.

RENEE CHINQUAPIN has an MA in Psychology, and welcomes gender clients in her Berkeley counseling practice. She specializes in working with couples, as well as in-depth Jungian, feminist exploration of Self through dream work, gestalt, owning projections, art and guided imagery.



The Challenge of the Relationship For The Transgendered

by Lauren Hotchkiss

Beyond the obvious challenge of living a lifestyle for which one has not been trained or conditioned, there comes the further difficulty of integrating a relationship with a significant other into one's life.

For some of us, the situation arises during the relationship, and so the couple must try to work together to redefine a relationship which began on a different basis. Others of us must contend with the prospect of initiating a relationship with this consideration in mind. This can be somewhat intimidating because of our fear of being rejected due to our choice of gender status.

Though we are consistently moving forward toward the goal of self acceptance, and are learning to become more comfortable with ourselves, still we are challenged by the real and imagined judgments of others. This can be particularly difficult when it involves a person or persons for whom we care a great deal.

Recent polls have shown a substantial majority of our community with a heterosexual orientation, and the remainder divided between gay, lesbian, bisexual and asexual orientation.

What, though, are "masculine" and "feminine" but outmoded sociosexist concepts that no longer have any purpose? Perhaps at one time they were necessary for humankind's survival, but that time is now long past. I feel it is time to leave behind this gender role separatism so that we can open ourselves up to the next level of our evolution.

I wonder whether part of our motivation in crossdressing stems from the fact that we are perhaps subconsciously trying to transform ourselves into the mate that we have never found. We have been so conditioned to believe that we must look outside of ourselves in order to find someone with whom we can become complete, though constantly disappointed in the attempt, that we have lost sight of the fact that wholeness comes from within. Because of this misperception, we have found it necessary to create this second person within ourselves, and manifest them externally, in order to fill a self-perceived void.

Perhaps the time will come when we will no longer have to think in terms of "crossdressing," or of expressing the "appropriate" gender, but can just be ourselves.

It seems to me that perhaps a successful relationship for the transgendered person requires finding a partner in touch with his or her own bisexuality (at least on an energy level); someone attracted to a person capable of manifesting both the male and female essences of their inner self.

I have found too, in talking to persons of many different segments of the gender community, that common relationship challenges exist despite sexual or gender orientation.

Although I've raised some interesting points here, I certainly don't claim to have any "answers," nor can I claim to be any kind of expert, not having been able to save my own marriage. I did not yet have the consciousness to do what I needed to do to be at peace with myself. I've dated a couple of times since my separation, but somehow it just hasn't felt right for me yet; perhaps as much due to the after-effects of my divorce as to fear of rejection due to my gender orientation.

I have noticed a shift in myself since I have become single again; I no longer feel the desperate "need" I once felt around "having" to be in a relationship in order to be happy. Yes, I sometimes feel lonely, but that it is preferable to living a lie. I don't want to again have a partner with whom I must pretend to be something that I am not, nor do I want to desperately and prematurely get into a relationship that is not right, only to repeat the same mistakes.

Because I often present myself androgynously, and use feminine gestures, even as a man, women often perceive me as gay. Do I use this as a defense to keep me from getting involved? I'm not sure. It's an area I'm still exploring.

Though I am not currently putting any energy into situations where I might meet a potential mate, I am keeping an open mind toward what the future may hold for me. I always make it a point to never say the words "always" and "never."

Until next time, Sayonara. ❣

I invite your comments on the views expressed in this article. Please address correspondence to:

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Significant Other Support Group

The Significant Other Support Group wants to invite all Significant Others to attend our SOS group meetings. Group members define Significant Others as wives, lovers, friends, children and others close to TV/TS persons but are themselves not TV/TS. We encourage you to ask the SO in your own life to come to these meetings, particularly if the SO feels they need support from their peers in dealing with their feelings about the TV/TS in their lives. It is important to emphasize that all meetings are kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. This is to help insure that a safe, supportive environment is created in which all attendees will feel secure enough to really be able to share and talk about their feelings. We are frequently assisted by a helping professional with a specialty in our area of concern.

The SOS group meets the second Thursday of each month from 8 to 10 p.m. Our next meetings are scheduled for January 9 and February 13. You are all welcome with open arms. For more information call Ginny at [redacted]

Can a Man Become a Woman? (And Vice-Versa) or Why I Wear a Lapel Button Which Reads "Biology is Not Destiny"

by Dallas Denny, Director, American Educational Gender Information Service

I'm writing this in response to Christine Beatty's article, "Could This Be Why Women Hate Crossdressers?" in the November-December ETVC News Letter. As usual, Christine has made me put on my thinking cap and another little cap which says "Devil's Advocate."

When British model Caroline Cossey (Tula) appeared in Playboy, Atlanta-based columnist Lewis Grizzard fired off a column titled, "Even Playboy No Longer Lets Boys be Boys," lamenting the fact that "Playboy used to be for heterosexual men." In a letter I wrote in response to his column, I told Grizzard, "Ms. Cossey is a woman and has been so for most of her life. She is not a him/her, but a her. The fact that she may have once had different genitalia is as irrelevant as the fact that you once shat your diapers. She is what she is; not what she once was."

That's what I wrote, and I stand by it. We are not irretrievably locked into a single expression of gender, but are free to experiment with and change ourselves. And the change is real. Grizzard's typical Playboy bunny, "Tanya, 19, who enjoys swimming and sunbathing and is planning to study to be an archaeologist or a brain surgeon," is not the person she was 18 years ago, or will be 18 years hence. She is what she is now. If Grizzard were to take her to bed, he would not be molesting a child; nor would he be with a thirty-seven year-old woman. He would be with Tanya, 19. It's that simple.

There are many roads to a destination. The fact that the "Tanyas" of this world receive Barbie dolls for their fifth birthday and the Barry Cosseys get dump trucks is proof of that. It is the end-point, and not the route, which is important. After all—lots of girls get dump trucks for their fifth birthday nowadays. Do dump trucks diminish the femininity of little girls? Of course not. And they don't diminish the femininity of Barry Cosseys, either.

Giving birth and menstruating are things, it is often said, that transsexual women cannot do; Christine, in fact, dredges up that argument. She's right. But many nontranssexual women have never borne children, and many women do not menstruate, (including most girls under eleven, most women over fifty, women who have had hysterectomies, and women who have physical problems affecting their reproductive systems). As Devo might ask, "Are they not women?" You know the answer to that one.

Many transsexual people engineer the social and physical changes which they deem necessary and thereafter function seamlessly in their new roles. Lewis Grizzard and those who are like him interact with and sometimes unknowingly marry transsexual people. And who knows, Lewis (I'm sending him a copy of this article), maybe "Tanya, 19" was once named Tim. And if so, what of it? Does that make her less a "Tanya?"

No it doesn't, Lewis, so you can rest easy in your fragile heterosexuality.

When transsexual people reach the point of 'realness'— when they are integrated in society and cannot be "read" or "clocked" (as we say in the South), then they have become what they have been trying to become. They don't just walk like a duck and talk like a duck. They are ducks. They function entirely as men and women, with bodies which are consonant with their place in society as men and women.

Admittedly, many, and perhaps most, transsexual women never reach this point of total integration. Their voices, physical characteristics, and mannerisms convey their transsexualism to the astute observer and keep them transsexual. But some women and most men leave their transsexualism behind. Their pasts are real (for were they not, like "Tanya, 19," once babies?), but their pasts are relevant only as pasts, and not as limiters of the present.

If a man like Billy Tipton lives, marries, raises children and dies a man, does the revelation upon his death that he has a vagina make him less a man?

No! Manhood is a social phenomenon and has nothing whatsoever to do with genitalia. Billy Tipton was a man, and Caroline Cossey is a woman.

Some women indeed do have problems with transgendered people (and the word problem may be an understatement. A woman was expelled from the 16th Annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival for being a suspected transsexual). Some object to less than perfect presentations, some to stereotyped presentations, and some to the mere idea that someone who was originally assigned to one sex would dare to live in the gender role normally reserved for the other sex. But no one objected to Billy Tipton, and no one was objecting to Caroline Cossey before she was brutally outed by a British tabloid. People like them are men and women. No more, no less. ❣

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by Lou Sullivan

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An unusually interesting article on crossdressing in the December issue of Mirabella magazine had this interesting observation from a book called Vested Interests: Crossdressing and Cultural Anxiety by Marjorie Garber:

"She (Garber) takes transvestism to be the ultimate metaphor for our society, the barometer of the culture's self-image, symptom of its unconscious. For Garber, the transvestite shatters the world as we know it, suggesting the impossiblility of fixing anyone as truly masculine or feminine. In her utopian vision, the TV stands as no less than a harbinger of a new, more fluid, gender system."

Whew! I always knew we were special, but it is awfully nice to hear it from people outside the community.

Though much of this article is a discussion of what crossdressing might symbolize for society, what I really liked about it was that it recognized that gender issues, not sexual fantasies, are the central characteristics of crossdressing. I did have a few problems with the story, not the least of which was that the author didn't actually talk to any crossdressers, but it was still very nice that such a finely crafted story about our community appeared in a high quality magazine.

Articles like this one prove to me that perceptions about us are shifting. We are definitely being taken much more seriously by both the public and the media. For example, I can clearly remember conversations with colleagues and friends about crossdressing in the 1980s in which I would find myself defending crossdressers against charges that we were either crazy or perverted or both. Now when the subject comes up it is gender issues that they want to talk about.

I think that what has happened is that people are slowly recognizing that gender identity and roles may be as varied and diverse as sexual identity, probably because of the good work of the gay rights and women's movements. It is not much of a leap from accepting these concepts to accepting the fact that transvestites and transsexuals have a legitimate and important role in our society.

To me, that role is to demonstrate that it is truly possible for a person to merge the best characteristics of both genders. If we can do this, and I know that we can, we may indeed be the harbingers of a new kind of human being.

By the way, the author of the article in Mirabella was W. Ruby Rich. Write Ms. Rich at Mirabella, 200 W. Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016 after you've had a chance to read it yourself.

LETTER WRITING really is an effective way to influence the media. Now, whenever I see a disparaging item or a cheap shot passing reference to transvestites or transsexuals I write to the publication. I'm very polite, but what I usually ask the editor is that the next time they write about us they should consider whether they would write about gays or blacks or Asians or Hispanics or women or other minorities in so insensitive a manner.

THE SILICONE LADY is apparently not a myth. I have it on excellent authority that this woman has been around town again and has been giving liquid silicone injections to some very stupid members of our community. Stay away from this person. If you really want to enlarge your breasts or hips or change your facial contours, see a qualified medical doctor.

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE ALAMEDA COURT? A former Empress has resigned, been stripped of her title and been made "persona non grata" by the court's board of directors. This a very big deal in the court system where titles are taken very seriously. Meanwhile, a major award was taken away from another well-known member of the court who allegedly has been seeking to form a "renegade" court in Alameda's territory. Letters have gone out to courts around the country asking them not to recognize the new court. I know there was some major grumbling inside this court about who won and lost their recent coronation but I haven't been able to get all the straight poop on whether that is the root of their problems.

The Alameda court isn't the only one having problems lately. According to the publication Cross-Talk, the Valley Girls of the San Fernando Valley have disbanded. Lack of interest in group activities and the rejuvenation of a local Tri-Ess chapter were cited.

Meanwhile, the XX Minutes newsletter of the Hartford, CT XX Club is ceasing publication, according to Cross-Talk. Frankly, I'm glad to see it die. This newsletter had a nasty, angry habit of taking cheap shots at transvestites. Some people apparently felt it was also a good source of information for transsexuals; I thought it was piece of crap.

NEW PLACES TO GO If you haven't been to Lily's at the corner of Market and Valencia you really owe it to your self to visit. Named after the late great drag queen and former Empress of San Francisco, Lily Street, this bar loves our community and has permitted us to use their back room theatre for our education seminars. Do visit on a weekend and you're certain to run into someone (or two or three) from our community. It is a place that is worthy of our support.

I admit that I've been to the Black Rose, the infamous drag hooker bar in the Tenderloin, and I couldn't wait to get out of there. For those of you who are interested in that scene, check out the Motherlode in the Polk Street area. It is a lot nicer neighborhood and worth a stop if you are bar hopping. Parking stinks though.

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Profile: Joan Sheldon

by Cindy Martin



Joan Sheldon is one of the founding members of ETVC and has been active in the gender community since the early 1970's. Many of you may know Joanie through her Pajaro Dunes and Tahoe getaways. She is also very active in the Thursday Irregulars, a group that meets for lunch in the South Bay. A retired Navy aviator, Joan was at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked and saw combat in World War II. She left the service in the early 1960's and says that was when her crossdressing began to become an increasingly important part of her life.

Q: You've been part of this community for many years now. How does crossdressing fit into your life?

Joan: I look at it like this: we're all dealt a hand of cards, we just happen to have gotten a lot of queens. That ain't so bad, because there are a lot of people out there who got nothing but deuces...

For a long time I kept throwing my cards back in, I wasn't satisfied with them. But then I learned you have to play with what you were dealt with. Once you learn that, once you accept yourself, then life can be a blast.

Q: Because of your experiences with Pajaro and ETVC you've helped a lot of people out of the closet. What have you observed about newcomers generally?

Joan: Sometimes we forget just how hard it is for people to come out. We should never forget that it takes a tremendous amount of courage for many of us to overcome our fears and the powerful peer pressures we feel...(coming out) also takes a really honest person, because you have to be honest to yourself. It also takes a lot of intelligence to want to find out what this is all about...All these things are why we see so many quality people in ETVC and at things like Pajaro. It takes a lot to take that first step.

Q: All that time you were in the service, did you crossdress?

Joan: Hardly ever...then I got married and she thought and I thought it would go away, of course it didn't but the times I dressed were few and far between....At that time I really thought I was the only one in the whole world...Then in the early 1960s I got some information about it and found out that not only was I not the only guy but that it wasn't so bad.

After my wife died in 1973 I went to Hawaii for 10 days as Joan. It was a very important experience because I learned that that water was too deep for me and I was glad to come back...I had found out my level of satisfaction.

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Q: That's interesting because so many wives worry that crossdressing will just progressively intensify, maybe even to the point of transsexualism. You've been out for years and found that not to be true. Would you recommend that others try and spend some extended time en femme as a way to find their own level?

Joan: This is a fantasy for me, but everybody is different. I don't think it could hurt to find some place where you can go for a period of time and immerse yourself...That is a little bit of what Pajaro is about. I've seen many people come and they could hardly stand a day dressed while others were positively despondent about having to go back to being a man.

Q: What got you interested in doing your events at Pajaro?

Joan: You should know that Pajaro just isn't about dressing, it's also about communing with nature...I think about just watching the moonlight bouncing off the waves, it is such a fulfilling experience...we call it magical. Anyway, about 10 years ago my wife and I started it because we wanted to do something where families could be together. We especially wanted to do something where the wives would be comfortable...At our last one a guy came for a day and had to go back home but he asked if he could come back with his wife later...Like a lot of wives, she'd never been with other crossdressers before and she was a little hesitant. Later she said she was very impressed with the quality of the people. What I liked the most was that she said (crossdressing) wasn't a feminine thing or a masculine thing, but that it was a people thing.

Q: Just how did ETVC get started anyway?

Joan: It actually started on my patio on a Sunday afternoon in 1982, I think. But it certainly wasn't just me. Elfreda, Ken Pool and Diahanna were very involved...At this time I was president of FPE in Oakland and we were also doing something in the South Bay but these were all at private homes and we wanted a public venue... You can thank Elfreda for finding the Chez Mollet, because that is what really made it take off.

Anyway, the concept from the start was to have it as a social group and to keep the business part of the organization as a separate thing...we didn't want to put people to sleep with long business meetings.

A lot has changed since those early days, and for the good, mostly because new people were always feeding into the power structure. You don't want cliques running things. I really believe that no one should be in a club office more than 2 years.

Q: What are the biggest changes you've seen over the last 30 years?

Joan: More people are coming to terms with themselves than ever and of course we are getting a lot more people projecting themselves better...But I think it still all comes down to finding out what your level of satisfaction is. The lady I went to Hawaii with had a sex change operation at age 65 at Stanford, she could not be satisfied as she was...I feel so fortunate because she had to ante up far more than I did...I can go to Macy's and ante up $29 and pretty much be okay, she had to go to Stanford.

Q: I've always been jealous about how beautifully you pass. What's your secret?

Joan: I'm not into passing, I'm into being...When I was younger I was worried about everybody reading me, but people are so busy with their own problems that they are not too concerned about you as long as you are pretty much par for the course. The only thing I would say is always make a little eye contact, have a slight smile and then look away. That says I'm okay and you're okay.

One other thing: (Crossdressing) can be a pretty serious thing, especially if you have a family, but you shouldn't take it too seriously. Have fun with it.

Outreach Miscellany

by Telzey

For the new year, I'll mention a few of Outreach's old and new programs and interests:

Big and Little Sisters. We aren't pushing this, but it's available and quite a few people have found it very rewarding on both sides. See a committee member for applications. New members will find one in their New Member's Packets. All those who asked for a Big Sister form, please fill it out and return it. We try to match experienced and novice members of similar age, interests, and geographical location. Big Sisters, it's hoped, will provide help and advice and generally "light the way" out of the closet.

Get Out Of Town Events. Check the ads in this newsletter, and the last issue, for details of the "Texas T-Party" in February, the IFGE Convention in April, and "Esprit 92" in May. Also in March is Joan Sheldon's Pajaro Dunes Weekend, near Monterey. Write her at P.O. Box 7761, San Jose, CA 95150. She's usually at the ETVC Thursday Social. And April 29 - May 3 is the 2nd annual "California Dreamin" in L.A. Write: PPOC, P.O. Box 9091, Anaheim, CA 92812, or call: 714 779-9013. Actually, unfortunately, very few ETVC members go to these things, citing lack of time, money or interest. Or they are afraid; conventions can be addictive! For new members, especially, they're a great way to experience crossdressing as a day (and night) long part of a larger program, to make new friends, pick up new skills, or just be free of the fear of meeting your brother-in-law as you walk into a restaurant while "en femme." I'd really like to see a good turnout for the IFGE in Houston. Those Texas girls know how to throw a good party.

Info Folders And Surveys. Our "Transsexual Basics" pamphlet has been revised and punched up by Christine B., and the Boulton and Park Society of San Antonio has sent us 5 folders of basic info for and about the transgendered person, about hormones, and transsexualism, and information for spouses. These are in a "Question and Answer" format, good for sharing with the curious. Pick up all these at our Thursday social, or send a SASE to me at the club P.O. Box. The Boulton and Park Society also sent us a "Transgender Research Questionnaire," a '10 pages in 10 minutes' type survey, actually fun to do, all multiple choice. They hope to get at least a thousand replies and publish the results for both helping professionals and the general public. I've been pushing these on everyone, and they're available in the same way as the folders.

Newsletters. We exchange with about 30 clubs in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and England. Everything from one page flyers to professional type journals comes back to us. Look through the selection of the best, always available at our Last Thursday Socials. Someday we might even exchange with the elusive Elizabeth Club of Tokyo, now that I'm sure it exists. Transcare, from Wellington, New Zealand, had a long charming letter from a member of the Elizabeth Club. He says it's over 10 years old, with 6000 members in Japan, and very active, actually a for profit club, with its own building, open every day. Going to Japan? Write them at: Elizabeth Club, 2-8-4 Kanda-suda-cho Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101 Japan. (To get an answer you should send a self addressed envelope and postage reply coupons from the Post Office,) Or, take a chance on reaching an English speaker and call: 03-3254-6446. (From the U.S., put 011-81 in front.)

Speakers Bureau. Always looking for new people. We can put you in the spotlight, or quietly off to the side, if you prefer, in the beginning. Contact Thalia or anyone from Outreach.

Advertising. Under Melissa's able control, you can find our address and phone number in publications ranging from "TV EPIC," mostly personal ads and found in adult book stores, to the "Classified Flea Market," found everywhere and a great place to buy or sell a used car. Both produce serious prospects for the club and some very mixed up people too. Others have found us as referrals from our friends at the Pacific Center and the San Francisco Sex Information Switchboard, or from one of the many helping professionals who know about ETVC.

Next Outreach Committee meeting is February 3rd in Newark, at a restaurant just off I-880 and Highway 84. Come share some ideas, tell us what's right or wrong with the club, or just come dressed for dinner. For more information, call Telzey at 510 [redacted] or see me or Lauren at Club events.

Finally the Imperial Court of San Francisco will present Coronation, 1992, "OZ, Where The Rainbow Begins," February 22, 1992, at the San Francisco Fashion Center. Dress is as elaborate or wild as you like. ETVC will have its own table, and those who wish may walk the runway and be presented for the court and public. Call their hotline/Message Center, 415 255-8490. For places at our table contact Ginny, at socials, or 415 [redacted] This is always an incredible show.

Education

by Ronda

LIVING WITHIN OUR RIGHTS

This is a sumary of the information covered by Kim Stuart at the Education mid-month talk on October 15. Transgendered people are at the whim of the power structure because they want to blend in and be invisible, and have little sense of community. Gays and lesbians have rights because they fought for them. In at least one case, so have we: TS's can now get their gender changed on their driver's licenses because of one person, Sister Mary Elizabeth, who worked hard for a long time to get the rules changed, and finally succeeded in 1978. We won't get more rights until others of us are similarly willing to stand up for them. We must publicly demand rights being denied us, just as the founders of our country did. We are very diverse, and that makes it hard for us to cooperate in fighting for our rights. Concentrating our work with the mental health and medical communities and with politicians, to broaden public and professional acceptance, win parental rights, and obtain the right for TS's to change their records in other states, may prove the most fruitful. Parents are commonly denied rights to their children because of transgender behavior and jobs are often lost. Publications such as Transsexual Voice and Chrysalis Quarterly are trying to bring the issue out of the closet. The ACLU has saved the jobs of many TS's and done much good.

Gays and lesbians learned over time how important it is to feel good about yourself and to consciously work to develop self esteem. We gender people need to realize the same thing. Standing up for freedom of gender expression should be something we are all proud of. We need to encourage each other to start doing it.

KIM STUART ON JOBS

In addition to being a writer on a wide range of subjects including transsexuality, Kim Stuart has been a director of counseling for employment development. She says the present job market is the worst she's ever seen. If you want to work as a woman, you need to make a special effort to be credible and passable. Like all applicants, you must: work on how to be interviewed, get a good resume, and know the background of the company you want to work for. Identify what problem they want solved and why you are the best candidate to help them do that. We are fortunate that (as a legacy of the Jerry Brown administration) the California Dept. of Rehabilitation considers transsexualism as a disability and, therefore, transsexuals are eligible for state help for retraining. Many TS's have been helped that way, even though no other California department will help them.

SAFETY

In the previous newsletter we inserted an obituary for Lynn (Horace Lee Therrett). The facts for this case do not, apparently, speak for themselves. It seems that Lynn was on her way to meet some friends when she was assaulted after which she was either dragged or stumbled to her destination hotel, or perhaps she was attacked there. At this time, someone reported a possible drunk which, of course seeing this was in the Tenderloin, did not elicit a police response. Only later when the friends she was to visit became concerned was she found in a coma with severe brain damage, so severe that in less than two weeks, family and doctors withdrew life support.

The point of all this is: as women (if passing) or as men dressed as women (if not passing), we are just as, or more, vulnerable to being set upon than females; we must develop the same defenses women grow up with; we should never go into unknown territory alone (or even familiar territory if it has a reputation, which the tenderloin definitely has AND the area around the Chez may deserve); and we should see others safely to their door, be it home or vehicle. In view of a recently reported incident, everyone leaving an ETVC sponsored event is to ask two people to walk them to their car. Two people so no one person is left on their own.

In my October mobile home park newsletter, a well timed article appeared with instructions to women on how to defend themselves, while in a vehicle, against attackers. What follows is an overview of that article. Be alert when entering dangerous or unknown areas. Lock all doors, closing all windows, leaving one open about one inch. Should someone acting in a criminal manner persist in an attack, women should start yelling for help, blow their car horn, and turn the radio really loud. This should disperse the undesired person(s). If not the women may try Mace (if available), flashing their headlights (on and off), or any other means available to attract attention. The final suggestion [not recommended–Martina], have your wheels turned for aggressive action to whack the criminals for a coup de grace. Last words–good luck to all you ladies. Yes, I know, it was not intended for us, but most of it is good advice.

NOMINATIONS

At the February Executive Committee meeting we will be naming our 1992 Nominations Committee. They will advance their candidates for office for the new membership year, in March at the social. Are you interested in serving ETVC as an officer? Or would you like to participate in nominating the new officers? Now is the time to make your desires known. Remember, self nominations are always accepted, but last year's March fiasco will not be.

After nominations have been advanced the Nominations Committee helps the candidates write a bio/campaign brief for inclusion with the ballot and/or news letter. The last duty of the Nominations Committee is to help count the ballots at the May social. (This last duty is usually with the assistance of lame duck officers.)

Secretarial Notes

Jane Kamper Bentley was installed as a nominee for Secretary of ETVC following the resignation of Carol Clark whose leadership, organization and hard work will surely be missed. Vanessa was installed as a nominee for Social Co-chair to work with Zia whose hard work, creativity and dedication are duly appreciated each month. Both nominations are subject to the approval of the general membership. We thank both ladies for taking these positions and ask for your support to help them work successfully.

Tapestry Magazine will do a "Cover Girl" feature on our own Miss ETVC, Tiffany, along with an article submitted by ETVC on our club. The Executive Committee unanimously supported this project at its December 7 meeting. Submit any relevant information to Roxanne or Martina immediately.



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