



The Femme Forum



MARCH, 1971

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SECURITY - NATIONAL AND LOCAL

In Beat Beat No. 3, Anne 22 4-3 raises some points on security at the chapter level that deserve an answer. With due apologies to her, I'm making it in the Forum to all members rather than direct to Beta. Not that what I have to say is all that definitive - it is really more of an invitation to think this through for yourselves, and let us know how it turns out. I do have something of an obligation to speak up; as one of the founders of the Interviewer system, I know all too well its limitations.

First, a word about what you can expect from your Interviewer. This is pretty well covered in the Membership Guidelines, distributed in July, 1970, but I'd rather put it my way. All that the Interviewer should be expected to do is check over the Provisional members and screen out the obvious security risks. She will then introduce them at the next meeting of the nearest chapter (if there is one), and then, back to her lonely sentry post. Subject to limitations of time and distance, this introduction may be personally or by letter of recommendation. (Note to Chapters - you should NOT burden her with a Chapter job also; it is too much responsibility to put on one girl's shoulders) What the Interviewer delivers is someone she is convinced is not a security risk: i.e., not a fugitive from justice, a homosexual seeking recruits, an over-zealous police officer (rare these days), a free-lance reporter seeking a "candid" story, an active addict on narcotics or alcohol, a psychotic, nor a transsexual trying to raise funds for that final trip.

Beyond that she is not obligated to go, but she may have a little extra to say about anyone who suffers from general uncouthness, or such a case of mirror-hypnosis that she goes out in broad daylight looking like King Kong in drag. Strictly, the Interviewer would then be speaking as a chapter member (which she has every right to do if she is a member of the Chapter to whom the newly certified member is introduced). From here on, it is the Chapter that must be considered and their problem is a little different. Whether they meet in a private home or a rented motel room, there is a question of the personal security of every girl present. To quote Anne: "The Chapter must be as conscious of the welfare of our brothers and their families, as it is of our own individual happiness. It means that the Chapter must concern itself as much with the inner peace and serenity of one girl, as it does with the vanity of another - as much with the development of one girl's lacks, as with the admiration of another's perfections."

"The Chapter cannot, and certainly should not try to prescribe limits on anyone's personal activities. By inversion, the Chapter cannot, and certainly should not try to prescribe extensions of anyone's personal activities. We would all appropriately resent a Chapter rule that said we could not go out alone. We might equally resent a Chapter rule that said we must go out. It is generally understood that those who do go out, do so at their own risk. We generally admire those that do so successfully. The member that is not successful need not be reminded that in such circumstances (finding herself exposed) her primary responsibilities become:

1. To divert attention from any other members in her immediate vicinity.
2. To behave in such fashion that she does not further discredit our kind
3. To protect confidential information on the Foundation, the Chapter, its activities, and its individual members."

"The security of any gathering of members should logically be a deep concern for any responsible Chapter. In practice, the security provisions at any meeting are totally overwhelmed by the momentary whims of the members, and the Chapter has absolutely nothing to say about it. I believe that it is wrong for us to fail to exercise reasonably mature and responsible control over the individual standards of security that each member acts upon in the vicinity of a meeting, or at the site itself. There is more than ample evidence that some members (including myself) actually relax their normal, carefully thought-out standards at meetings for a variety of reasons. These relaxing rationalizations do not in any sense justify their potential effect, ranging as they do from pure whim, to false confidence in flattery, to blatant bravado, to just "don't give a darn". There is NO safety in numbers in our case - quite the opposite is true. Whereas the potential publicity and loss to the members and the Foundation is far greater in the exposure of a group than it ever could be in the exposure of an individual, our security arrangements should be at their highest level - quite the opposite is true. The sobering truth is that the factors already cited combine to reduce the level of our collective security to a point below the standards of the least concerned, or most reckless member or guest present, and the standards of all others attending are compromised to that degree in which they differ from that lowest denominator."

"Group security should be established to reflect at least the standards of the majority, even if not the standards of the most circumspect. No individual member should be allowed to subject any other to any risk whatever, without her specific permission."

Anne then goes on to propose that any member who wants to come dressed to or leave dressed from the meeting place apply to the chapter for what amounts to a quality rating. To quote again: "These reviews would be held at regular meetings, and might well constitute the major activity



"Those phantom fanness are fantastic."



"Sisters or not, I still got pregnant!"

of many evenings. Applicants would be judged on appearance, taste, movement, mannerism, voice, reactions to surprise, and general maturity, responsibility and self-confidence. Other elements of such a review would have to be extremely thorough and consistent. Each category would be given a point rating by each member of the board. All ratings would have to exceed a certain minimum point value for approval. A girl could apply for review at any meeting, and all of us would have to regard the entire procedure as a major development effort on the part of the Chapter and the review boards, for our own ultimate benefit. A girl who passed all of the reviews would be authorized, but not required, to exercise certain degrees of privilege. There might be a category that would permit a girl to leave a meeting, and another might authorize completely free access to the party or meeting sites. The key word is PRIVILEGE. Going out on our own, alone, might well be considered a right, and best luck. Going out in the vicinity of a meeting, where others are implicated by association, must be regarded as a privilege,

granted by the group that shares the risk."

By now, Beta has had a meeting and no doubt decided how to handle this problem. And it is a problem. I have noted many times that our femme personalities are less mature than our ordinary selves, and that the average FP "relaxes" down to a sub-teen level of social conscience as soon as she gets her hair-hat on. The fact that we have never had a meeting raided probably indicates that the general public is rather less interested in us than we always thought they were - it certainly is no tribute to our own "precautions". How is your group handling it? - or are they? I know of only one chapter that had a formal procedure. In 1966, Alpha Epsilon specified in their "House Rules" that all guests must have the permission of the hostess in whose apartment they met, to arrive or leave dressed. There may be other solutions - let's have them for the welfare of us all! (Be sure to provide some Kleenex for Miss Kong when the group gives her an X-rating - she will certainly be the least likely to expect it).

As Anne also mentions, the chapter has a responsibility to help those whose social graces are below par. No doubt most of those to whom such help is offered will be grateful for it, as I was when a very raw recruit some years ago. But, what if Miss Kong contends that she is 100% perfect, and intends to arrive dressed in spite of what anyone says? Virginia has gone on record that anyone worthy of full membership is also eligible to belong to a Chapter, while I have also gone on record that the Chapter must retain some power of decision for such special cases. But, Virginia has also indicated that while the group has an obligation to accept and help the new member, that same group retains the right to discipline or expell anyone who fails to abide by the customs, requests and by-laws of the chapter.

Sheila [redacted] 30 B-1
Field Coordinator

ALPHA EPSILON ELECTS OFFICERS

The following FPE members have been elected as officers of the Alpha Epsilon Chapter: Jan 5 H-14 President, Maria 5 T-10 Vice-President and Carole 5 S-12 Secretary-Treasurer. Epsilon boasts of 14 members currently. Perhaps the three new members in Region #940 will make it 17.

NEW MEMBERS QUALIFY FOR FPE

The following ladies have recently been enrolled into Phi Pi Epsilon. Let's all give a warm welcome to:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Area</u>
100	Lana	32 S-20	125
100	Tina	32 A-2	123
380	Jamie	42 M-1	378
800	Wilma	6 H-2	806
940	Linda	5 T-15	940
940	Carol	5 R-11	941
940	Joan	5 C-18	945
980	Carol	54 R-1	B.C. Canada
	** Soria	FN2 J-1	New Zealand
70	Nancy	30 M-2	077
142	Sally	32 B-7	139
210	Beverly	20 E-1	207

**Reinstated

NEW CHAPTER FORMED

Julie 13 M-7 reports that Sigma Tau has been formed in the St. Louis, Missouri area, Region #630. Beside Julie, other charter members are Florence 25 S-2 and Leslie 25 S-1 and Helen 25 R-1. Good luck, ladies!!!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR 1971 DUES

I greatly appreciate those of you who responded to the dues notices in the last two newsletters. As of this printing, we are about 60% paid, so we can at least set up our budget for 1971. If you hear of any member that has not received this issue of the Femme Forum, you might remind them that they have been removed from the mailing list because of non-payment of dues. For all of you current members who have paid, your card was mailed out either before or with this issue. Thanks again for your support of your organization.

COMPLAINTS DEPARTMENT

We appreciate receiving your thoughts on various aspects of FPE so that our lines of communication are varified as being open. Let's discuss a few complaints and see what is what. First of all, I am happy to announce that the dues envelope (the pink ones) have been used up and new larger ones are now available. It seems the old ones were too small to contain a money order without folding it; so that problem is taken care of. As to the new big envelopes that you receive the Femme Forum in, they were purchased so that we would not have to fold each issue and thus save hours in getting out the Forum. However, some of you are not happy because the larger ones won't fit into your P.O. boxes. Well, dears....I don't know what to say, because we have several thousand of the larger ones on hand. Actually, they can be folded over and put into the boxes if the post office people will cooperate. Now let's see....oh yes; we have gone to a new photocopy-type address



"Of course I bought it, but I was dressed as my brother."

label which should be much clearer than the "wet method". So let's hope that takes care of that one. Then there was the complaint about not wanting to read about the weather report in Wisconsin (referring to my opening remarks in each issue). Well then, let's cut it out this time and by next time perhaps I will think of something else to chat about at the beginning. Guess that about covers the most recent complaints!

IN MEMORY OF TWO WONDERFUL PEOPLE

I am most sorry to report that two very long-time members and truly fine people have passed on since the last issue. Our dear friend Myrtle 23 M-1 died last month. Myrtle was in her eighties and had contributed many stories and books to our membership. The story "Carnival" was one of her efforts and has been published by Virginia. May the thought of friendship and warmth of Annette 12 F-1, who was very young and died very suddenly in February, always be with us. Marilyn 47 I-1 has written a few lines about Annette which truly express the feelings of everyone who had ever known this beautiful person and her lovely family.

Annette - The Fairest of Them All

A Chicago businessman with whom Shel (Annette) recently had associated, remarked following his death that, "You meet a lot of people over a lifetime, but rarely do you come across the 'All American Boy'. And that", he said, "was Shel".

The characterization was indeed accurate, but those of us who knew Annette can add: She was "Miss America" as well. These words are not said lightly, for it is true that Annette had the rare quality of being respected and admired in his male self; being adored and envied as her female personality, and, yes, being loved dearly in both roles.

Hard working, skilled, strong (yet compassionate), highly regarded in a line of work which was "strictly masculine"; a wonderful husband; a fine father. But, transformed to Annette, she was feminine perfection: lovely, graceful, soft-spoken, delightful in every way.

Never one to swish, to exaggerate or to otherwise artificially draw attention to herself, all eyes nonetheless followed her every step because she carried herself gracefully and because she was strikingly beautiful.

Annette always found fun in TVism - as it should be. It was serious business to her to expertly prepare herself; still, once dressed and made up, the laughter flowed. She was able to laugh at herself but never at others. She always brought happiness - and love - to any gathering, be it large or small.

These then are rare qualities: the perfect blend, and the gift of joy and laughter for herself and those about her. Her physical presence will be missed dearly. But those of us who had the great fortune of knowing Annette (and Shel) have been touched by her in a manner that allows her to be ever present.

The "Fairest of them all" is gone.....and yet, really, she is here!

Marilyn

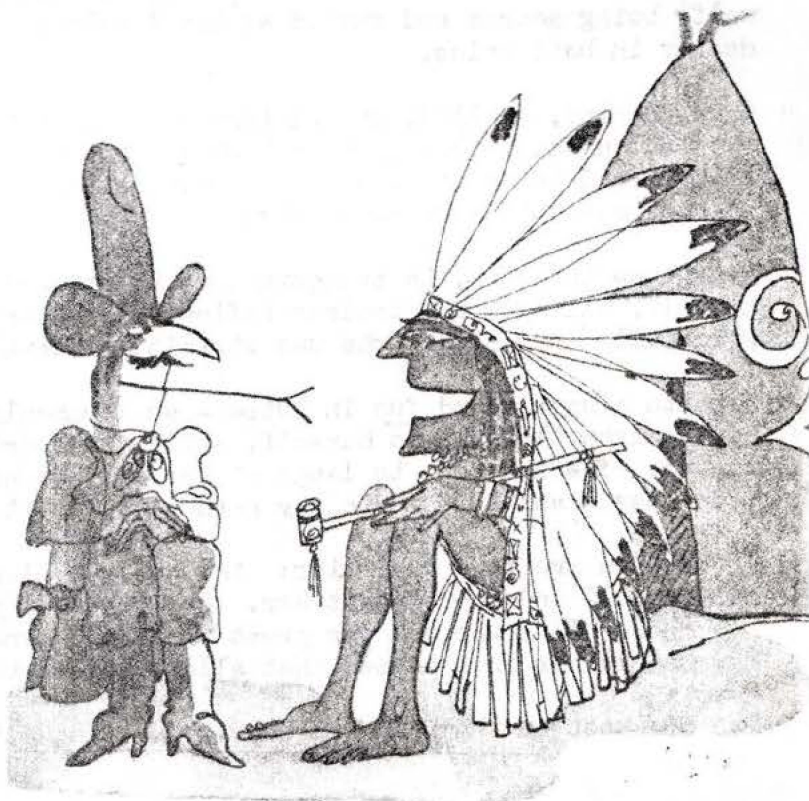
REPORT FROM SCANDINAVIA

We are still going strong over here in Scandinavia. We have about 125 members in all in Scandinavia, of which there are 40 here in Denmark especially concentrated in Copenhagen. We have many married couples where the wives are understanding and accepting. Here in Copenhagen, we have meetings each month with about 25 participants. We meet in an old, no-longer used Night Club which we hire all for ourselves. We have evenings with discussions, for example, about new medical and psychology books regarding the theme of the sex role, identity, TVism, etc., and we have plain evenings only where we come together and talk with each other, dance, etc. We have contacts now with an interested doctor who is chief physician at the National Hospital in Copenhagen, interested in sexology. He has given out a book for teachers' colleges about sexology and in that book he also writes about TVism and the address of FPE is mentioned in the book. He is invited to some of our meetings and he will come and discuss the subject of TVism with us. Also, a psychologist at the University of Copenhagen is very interested in our work and he has given out a book called, "Sex, Identity and Role", not especially about TVism, but about the difference between sex and gender, completely in the same style as our "Introduction". Also, he will visit us. Dr. Stürup (one of the doctors (psychiatrist) around the Christine Jorgensen case) has sent a letter to us in which he expresses that he agrees with us in our reflections in the "Introduction" and that our reflections cover his own view on the subject of TVism and he finds the things well expressed.

We have here in Denmark just gotten our new edition of the "Introduction". We have had it printed in the Danish language - and called it: "What is Transvestism?" We have made smaller alterations here and there and adapted it for the Scandinavians. We have printed 3,500 copies in Danish and it will be printed in Swedish next month. We have sent it all over the country and have gotten thank you letters from libraries, etc. As you see, we have a lot to do and have to sit at the typewriter just as Fran and Virginia now.

We had a nice Christmas meeting in December with tree, gifts, dining, etc. We are just going to have a carnival party or costume party. Our general meeting in So. Sweden was held at a hotel that we rented for a long weekend all to ourselves.

Now there are drag performances in Copenhagen (we have never had that before) and this gives us a good opportunity to send letters and "Introductions" to the newspapers and weekly magazines that tell about these performances. You see, we spread the word where we can. The married couple (psychologists) Inge and Sten Hegeler, still mention our addresses in their letter-boxes in the biggest afternoon newspaper in Denmark and in Sweden. It happens several times each month. We have a lot of shops



"I'll trade my pink feathers for your high-heeled boots!"

now where we can go and buy things as TVs. Also hairdressers, etc. If some of our American FPE members should come to Denmark, they can write ahead of time to our box: FPE, Box 48, 4100 Ringsted, Denmark. Then we shall try to meet them and maybe they can participate in one of our meetings. We have a very big meeting on May 15th, in Copenhagen and also big meetings in the Fall of 1971.

Some of the understanding wives have now started a wives group in order to help the TVs in buying things, talking with FP wives, etc.

Erna FD-J-1

DEAR FRAN

I don't really know whether the following information will be of surprise to the membership(it was to me when I learned of it). I was chatting recently with a friend of mine who works in the Social Security division of the Federal Government. He was opening his mail and came across a letter from the district office which concerned a decision relative to sex-change and the Social Security benefits of men versus women. My friend, not knowing of my TVism, showed me the ruling. It was full of technical jargon and legal phrases, but boiled down, it essentially came to this: a genetic male who began contributing to SS as such, and who began drawing benefits as such, is entitled to receive the benefits of the female from the point in time the sex-change operation is made.

If I read the report right, the government was never concerned with whether the benefits should be changed from what the man received to what a woman received, but whether the difference in payments should be retroactive, due to the fact that females are eligible for benefits at an earlier age than males. Regardless of how we may feel about TV versus TSism, I think this bears out Virginia's statement in the January, 1971 issue of the Forum: "The times, they are indeed a-changing."

Let me take this opportunity, Fran, to say how much I enjoy and appreciate your fine effort in putting together the Forum and spearheading FPE. One of these days I'll bring to fruition the promise of help for our cause I made to Virginia several years ago.

Jean 5 A-8



"Pop won't come out unless he can wear his nightie."



"Perhaps some hip boots instead, sir!"

SOCIAL NEWS

Some of you may be dissatisfied because there is no Social Report this time. Well I am dissatisfied also, but there just wasn't time for me to put one together from the gobs of material that I have. As you know, Sheila Niles is our Social Reporter and does an outstanding job covering the many group activities and chapter happenings. But Sheila must have your material in sufficient time to write her column. That means that you must condense your social news down to one or two paragraphs and get it to Sheila no later than the latter part of the month preceeding the month in which the Femme Forum is issued. To put it more exact, your Social Editor or Corresponding Secretary should have the news items written and off to Sheila no later than the 20th of December, February, April, August and October. This schedule will give Sheila about ten days to put things together and get it off to me (Fran 49 C-1) by the first of the month in which we publish this newsletter. I must rely on Sheila for the Social Column because there just isn't time for me to write it and also put the entire newsletter together, print it and get it in the mail. So, dears.....please take the following steps: First, designate a Social Reporter or Corresponding Secretary for your group, region, chapter, etc., and Secondly, have her mail her report directly to Sheila according to the above schedule. If you do not have Sheila's address, let me know and I will see that you get it. Both Sheila and I will greatly appreciate your help in this area. Thank you ladies!!!



"Your wish for a more feminine life, sir!"

ARTICLE ENCLOSED

We have reprinted an article by Dr. Walter C. Alvarez which appeared in the February 8th issue of Modern Medicine (Volume 39, Number 35). We believe this article is an excellent third-party influence and that every member should have it in her possession. I am sure that you will find it helpful and useful. We greatly appreciate Dr. Alvarez's kind consideration as well as his liberal use of Virginia's thoughts on the subject.

Doctor: The best thing for you, young man, is to give up drinking, smoking and women.

Patient: I don't deserve the best, Doc. What's second best?

See you next time!

Fran 49 C-1
Executive Secretary

THE NEED FOR EXPRESSION OF FEMININITY IN A MAN

By

Walter C. Alvarez, M.D.

(Reprinted February 8, 1971 in Modern Medicine)

A good friend of mine, a good-looking and interesting woman, started out in life as a male, but is today living as Virginia Prince. For many years, Miss Prince lived and worked as a man by day, and as a woman by night; or she would take vacations during which she would spend all her time as Virginia. In recent years, Virginia has "emerged", as she says, completely, and she lives and dresses now always as a woman. I find her totally believable as a woman - feminine and highly intelligent. She has devoted her life to helping to educate doctors and laymen about transvestites, and she travels widely, lecturing, and meeting and talking with people who are interested in sex problems. She writes very well, and edits a journal called Transvestia, to help transvestites and their wives understand the problems encountered because of this mental quirk.

In the "Journal of Sex Research" (May, 1967) is an article by Miss Prince in which she discussed the remarkable desire of a normal-appearing, masculine-seeming man, married to a woman and perhaps the father of several children, to dress occasionally as a woman. Why does he feel such an overpowering need for dressing at times as a woman, and why does he get such pleasure out of this behaviour?

As Miss Prince points out, although it is not easy to be a transvestite in terms of society's disapproval, and the wife's disapproval, as well as carrying guilt, fear of discovery, and expense and difficulty of acquiring feminine garb as a man, in spite of all this, to give it up is even harder, because it deprives the individual of some satisfactions that he feels are basic to his nature - basic in the sense that they are deeper than, and beyond, any current social conventions.

Miss Prince emphasizes that transvestites, or TVs, do not desire a surgical removal of their male genitalia, as do transsexuals, those women in men's bodies whom Dr. Harry Benjamin has studied so expertly and written about so well in his book "The Transsexual Phenomenon (Julian Press, New York, 1966). In my very interesting conversations with Miss Prince, she stressed that we doctors need to become more aware today of the difference between sex and gender. As she says, "I think of sex as a matter of physiology and anatomy, and I think of gender as a matter of psychology and sociology. Or, to put it in the vernacular, sex is below the belt, gender is above it." Also, she noted that male and female animals show little difference in general behavior, except in relation to the reproductive act, the birth and the rearing of offspring, while in the humal species, there are hundreds of ways in which males and females differ and live on purely psychological and social levels; it is these differences between human males and females which collectively are called gender, and are, in her opinion, "in large measure arbitrary and artificial."

She also points out what I, as a lifelong student on anthropology, have often noted and found curious, that what is considered proper masculine or feminine behavior or appearance in one culture or period of history may differ greatly from that of another culture or another period of history. For example, I, as a Spaniard in Spain, would think nothing of giving a male friend an "abrazo," a close hug of affection, and perhaps kiss him on each cheek. I exchanged this type of greeting with my dear friend Dr. Felix Marti-Ibanez, one of the most interesting and highly educated Spaniards I know. But men in the United States, even close friends, generally refrain from hugging, and shake hands instead. As an American, I would feel a bit uncomfortable hugging and kissing on both cheeks even a very old and dear friend that I met at a medical meeting.

I was much interested in a questionnaire that Virginia Prince sent out to transvestites subscribing to her journal. There were 272 questionnaires returned, and of these, 74% were from married men, 69% of whom had children. Only 25% of the men reported having had any homosexual experience, and this figure is appreciably lower than the 37% of the male population at large given by the late Dr. Kinsey. I was surprised to see that a number of persons between 60 and 83 years of age were still "cross-dressing", even though their overt sexual activities had ceased, or had greatly lessened in frequency.

When I asked Miss Prince what she thought the motivations are that make it so important for a man at times to wear women's clothes, she said that there are several possible motivations. She feels that in some boys there are traits and personal desires which are culturally defined as feminine and therefore the boy is expected to suppress them. "Thus", as she says, "in our culture, males are supposed to be strong and brave, dignified and firm, aggressive, decisive, and authoritarian, and to exhibit these traits primarily in an environment based on reason. Females on the other hand, are expected to be tender and gentle, loving and compassionate, timid, indecisive and capricious. It is considered unmanly for a boy to be gentle, dainty, and considerate, or to cry or to be touched emotionally by events and scenes. He is forced to discard and suppress those patterns and traits which his particular culture says do not conform to the standards for his sex. Girls are subject to limitations too, but not in the same ways or to the same degree. They are permitted more freedom. Thus 'tomboy' doesn't carry the stigma of 'sissy'."

Miss Prince, who says she has personally met probably 200 transvestites, and maintains a mail contact with 500 or 600 more, says that after discussing the problem with many of them she thinks that the boy who may in due time become a transvestite is one who relates the femininity in his nature to the social aspect of womanhood - the women he sees on the streets, in stores, at parties, in magazines. Although he may be able to function socially and sexually in his male role as a husband and father, he sees woman "as a person who represents everything he is not, who while permitted to do and be and wear almost everything that is permitted to him, still has her own world apart, a world he is not permitted to share. It is a world of silk and satin, of lace and perfume, of grace, beauty and adornment and, ideally, of virtue. His greatest delight is to take full advantage of all the whims, caprices and freedoms available through feminine attire, makeup and personal adornment." Cross-dressing seems to relieve the tension that transvestites describe when they must suppress their desire to express feminine traits. Interestingly, Miss Prince says, "Being just a woman with women is an end in itself."

Often

Various forms of treatment have been used to cure transvestites of their desire for cross-dressing, from psychotherapy to the so-called aversion treatment, which consists of giving a nauseating drug or electric shock while the man is attired in women's clothing. Of the transvestites questioned by Miss Prince, few even desired to change, and as might be expected in such a case, psychotherapy by persons not familiar with the particular problems of the transvestite had not cured them.

Miss Prince emphasizes that when there is a wife involved, as there usually is, counseling should involve the two persons together, and in some cases, the woman can come to understand her husband's problem without finding it frightening or disgusting. Although some women insist on a divorce as soon as they discover their husband's quirk - when they perhaps came home early from an evening out and found their husband wearing their high heels and a dress - in a surprisingly large number of cases the woman may decide that she wants to save the marriage, especially if the husband is in all other ways attentive, loving, and a good provider.

Virginia Prince is doing an excellent job of helping to educate people about transvestites. Through her journal she encourages them to talk frankly about their problems and the ways in which they have met them and solved them. I am grateful to her for opening up to me a world that I, even with my lifelong study of sexual problems, knew very little about.

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